

THE MODERN DIGITIZED LIBRARY SUPPORTS AND SUSTAINS THE TASTE FOR THE PRINTED BOOK. AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

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Abstract: Two years ago (2023), in a discussion about books and libraries with the Prime Minister of Romania at the time, he told me that one of the most modern libraries he had seen was the university library of the Land Forces Academy – Sibiu and recommended that it should be visited by as many people in the field as possible. I then called the commander of the Academy, Brigadier-general professor eng. Ghiță Bârsan Ph.D, I related the discussion to him and promised that maybe we would come with more representatives from the National Library Commission (CNB). Time passed, the financial resources at the CNB for such a visit could not be found, the composition of the CNB changed, other events arose and I did not manage to see the library until the spring of 2025.

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I entered the library located within the Academy with professional curiosity and saw, in a century-old building, a library with all the digital facilities for a teacher, a student or any other reader.

At the entrance, you are greeted by two desks with built-in computers, located under a display case with old books. As soon as you enter the first room of the library, you are greeted by the soothing atmosphere given by the books perfectly aligned on the shelves, the natural light, the computers that are not glaringly visible, the large display screens on which you can query and an exemplary cleanliness. The same is true throughout the library, on the three levels, with rooms dedicated to reading, collaborative work, self-loan, teaching on interactive boards.

The library is in the hands of every student. From mobile devices, as well as from the library website, any reader has access to the library's online catalog.

If you want to borrow a book, you don't have to ask the custodian. You simply take it from the shelf, pass it through the equipment that scans its identification, but you also identify yourself as a reader. On the attached

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screen, your personal loan situation immediately appears (how many books you have borrowed or if you have exceeded the return time). If you are a fair reader according to the established rules, the book you scanned for loan is added to your personal file and you can leave with it.

The library offers a collection of digital books stored in the library system and these can be borrowed with strict respect for copyright. The digital books are on an eContent platform, cloud Library, developed by the library. Digital document purchases are stored on the platform and are available online for any reader. Each library reader has an ID (an ID card), in fact a unique identifier that allows any student access not only to the library but also to all the facilities offered by the Academy. The identity card allows the student to consult, access, the eContent database with digital books, to borrow books, to have access to all the services offered by the library.

In a special, smaller room, connected computers and a large screen allow collaborative work.

In a classroom, in the library, a whiteboard screen connected to the Internet, but also to the Moodle system used in the teaching-learning process, offers teachers and students the familiar facilities of a computer-assisted learning process.

In another room, specifically military regulations, with free access to the shelf, but also computers that connect the reader to the entire library system.

In a computerized institution according to all the rules to provide quick and easy access to digital information and documents, in a space of passage from one floor to another, there is a group of wooden stands, in a modern design. It seems unnatural to be full of books of all kinds, apparently unarranged. It is a space where anyone who passes by can look and take a book that is interested in. No one asks questions or demands explanations. There are books donated for students, not to enter the library's funds. I've found out that the library had initiated a procedure by which packages of books becomes available for students from time to time, meaning they can take them for free, like those on the shelves between floors. I've learnt that students eagerly await this offer. Here it is a practical way to cultivate the taste for reading, for the written word.

In terms of functional structure, the library is supported by appropriate IT equipment, along with publications with free access to the shelf: five rooms with free access to the shelf; a room with six all-in-one systems for consulting the online catalog and other resources; an IT and Multimedia room equipped with thirty laptops, thirty headphones, three TVs equipped with HDMI cable, a Self Scan-Print-Copy point; book deposit; a study room with ten all-in-one systems, 10 headphones with microphone and a TV; an information and documentation room for consulting periodical

collections (131 titles); three infodesks spread over three levels, on an area of 700 square meters. The rooms provide 195 study places, with internet access.

The management of the printed document collection is based on the RFID (Radio-Frequency Identification) system. The implementation of RFID technology for managing library units has improved the way of capitalizing on the book collection by offering users a modern service of borrowing and returning documents, without assistance, through the SELFCHECK reader self-loan unit. The entire document collection is found in the OPAC – public query (On-line Public Access Catalogue), with the help of the Liberty Digital computerized management system, which manages a wide range of collections and facilities assisted by artificial intelligence AI.

Beyond the facilities offered by the library for study and research, the library staff carries out a series of works to support the educational process: in order to capitalize the most of its resources, the library makes available to students the mandatory bibliography by years of study, by faculties, specializations, disciplines and prepares bibliographies on request and cataloguing records of monographic and serial publications. Publications in electronic format, edited by the Land Forces Academy Publishing House, can be accessed based on username and password.

I visited the library both alone and together with the commander of the institution, along with a group of rectors who participated in the CNR (National Council of Rectors). All visitors unanimously appreciated the services offered by the library, the way the rooms are organized. From a management point of view, it is obvious that the entire library was treated as an integrated system in which the specific characteristics are combined with the pragmatic approach to the information-documentation needs of students and teachers.

After visiting the library and talking to the librarians, I understood why the library of the Land Forces Academy is said to be one of the most modern: a user-oriented library, aimed at satisfying the needs of information, training, research, which has adopted a modern, attractive manner of providing services as students are used to today – services based on modern information, communication, dissemination technologies. The combination of new technologies with free access to publications in classic format, access to publications on demand and free of charge, the relaxed and calm atmosphere have certainly contributed to the success of the library.

An example to be followed by other libraries, not only from the academic environment, but also from the public library network.

