

Law librarians and collective intelligence

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Abstract: Analysis on historic compilation of events on legal information and documentation in Brazil, conducted through an exploratory and qualitative systematic study. A bibliographic research on collective intelligence, related to librarianship and information science, was combined to questionnaire with outstanding professionals and leaderships of Brazilian legal information and documentation area. Three moments identified are represented by three distinct events (ENBJ: 1971-1994, ENDIJ: 1984-2000, SNDIJ: 2007-2013), which have their analysis detailed in the context of Law Librarianship. Finally, the interrelation of the Law librarians and the collective intelligence is discussed.

Keywords: Collective intelligence. Law librarian. Conference on Legal Information. Brazil. Professional organization.

1. Introduction

In an earlier study (Sousa and Napoleone, 2016), information on national events on legal information and documentation held in Brazil were compiled and systematized. On occasion was highlighted the importance of events as a space for creation, dissemination and exchange of experiences among Brazilian Law librarians. The role of Legal Information and Documentation Groups, librarians' Associations and Federation of Librarians' Associations, was highlighted the need for event organization, librarians meeting and exchanges of work experience as well as the contribution of these institutions to strengthening the librarian profession with social and economic structures of Brazilian society. In the current opportunity, a balance is made on legal information and documentation events and how they contribute to professionals' development and strengthening.

In this respect, the work objective is to study the prospects laid down in the previous study with regard to events and their promoting entities (groups and

professional associations), as well as to investigate and evaluate events as a collective intelligence expression among legal professionals.

Methodologically, this is an exploratory-qualitative study using bibliographical research on collective intelligence, related to librarianship and information science area, and field research with professionals in the legal information and documentation area. A questionnaire of nine questions was applied to fourteen respondents sample, selected for their outstanding professional, academic or associative performance, consulted by e-mail in April 2017. The literature studied set theoretical background for data analysis collected by the questionnaire and allowed to bring up considerations and perspectives for professional organization of law librarian.

2. Contribution of events on legal information and documentation

Over more than four decades, events on legal information and documentation have been held in Brazil and can be grouped into three moments identified through different event nomenclatures.

2.1. Law Librarians National Meetings (ENBJ - Encontro Nacional de Bibliotecários Jurídicos)

This set of 16 meetings was highlighted by work on the law librarian professional organization, of the Brazilian Commission on Legal Documentation (CBDJ, special committee of librarians Federation, FEBAB) and Legal Groups (executive board election, creation, deactivation and reactivation), alongside the efforts of drafting, presenting and disseminating publications (periodicals collective catalogs, law libraries guides, informative and legal groups folders, etc.), law and librarianship areas celebrations, besides the works presentation.

2.2. National Meetings on Legal Information and Documentation (ENIDJ - Encontro Nacional de Informação e Documentação Jurídica)

ENIDJs were carried out in order to integrate librarianship, law and IT professionals' areas, as well as to raise awareness public and private institutions the importance of standardizing legal documentation and automating their organization processes, data treatment and availability for access.

For that matter, 8 event editions were held, which had a broad recognition of the importance and contribution given to legal information and documentation area. Its existence and perform made it possible to broaden the professional perspectives in the labor market, moreover with repercussions for salaries improvement, resulting increased valorization of librarian activity.

2.3. National Seminars on Legal Documentation and Information (SNDIJ - Seminário Nacional de Documentação e Informação Jurídica)

These 4 seminars set so far (fifth event edition will be held in October 2017) has been marked by commitment for continuity in events on legal information and documentation, by initiative and support from Federal District Librarians Association and the librarian Edilenice Passos. Those are the most recent law librarians' national events and its philosophy to be an event organized by law librarians for law librarians. The editions are spaces for presentations, scientific works dissemination and professional valorization, through homages in each edition.

According Mueller, Campello and Dias (1996), institutionalization degree, area development and maturity knowledge can be measured by *scientific and professional literature existence, society or scientific association existence, regular courses existence for training new professionals*. At present, in Brazil there are not regular courses for law librarian formation or specialization, nor a society, association or commission, to currently, active in legal area. However, there is achievements in legal librarianship literature, in universities, periodicals and events (*Cadernos de Informação Jurídica*, launched in 2014 is the only Brazilian specialized journal in this area).

Precisely, the events are the presentation main channel for law librarians works, according Ohira et al (1998) and Passos (2004) studies. Hence, the events have had a significant role in relation to Law Librarianship, since they are knowledge sharing spaces, both with respect to academic production with work presentation and seminars, networking and best practices dissemination.

In the same way the events contribute to law librarian profession, in relation to its strengthening, dissemination and visibility improvement, in view regular courses inexistence, or associations absence. In relation to associative movement, the events have a historic role because they are the birthplace of Brazilian Commission on Legal Documentation (CBDJ) currently inactive (since 2013 there is a professionals group who conducts studies and efforts to reactivate it). They are also natural moments for professionals' fellowship allowing joint and tightening of ties.

Events often have a close relationship with groups and professional associations, because they are a source of visibility and funds for those professional organizations. On the other hand, groups and associations are the basic institutional infrastructure for the events accomplishment, that comes from contribution and collaboration of these institutions' participating members.

3. Current perception about events and associations on legal information and documentation area

The current perception is described below as an analysis of collected responses summarized from applied questionnaire.

3.1. Contribution of events on legal information and documentation towards building and systematizing legal knowledge.

Most respondents understand that these are spaces for exchanging professional experiences. It also functions as important relationships channels for updating or recycling knowledge. It is also highlighted these spaces and channels represent an important means of production and new knowledge spreading and excellent information sources. An appreciation of professional development events is observed. The participants consider the events important and fundamental for knowledge construction about legal information and documentation.

3.2. The contribution of professional associations and/or groups and law librarianship community.

It is considered primary or very important for most respondents. Such response was expected because the sample consists of professionals with a high degree participation, especially in groups and associations, or a considerable involvement in the academic field.

Although the objectives difference between legal groups, professional associations and practice communities, their contributions can be grouped into 4 axes:

- (1) Professional practice (exchange, sharing and best practices spread, daily needs solutions and concrete situations through communication channels);
- (2) peer cluster and professional representation (professionals fellowship, class spokesperson for rights awareness, exercise and profession strengthening);
- (3) source of professional and academic studies (inspiration for conducting and/or expanding studies, debate and area events, fill the gap of specific courses, study groups in research institutions);
- (4) structures for collective intelligence (joint learning of participating group, visibility materialization of professional collective).

Traditional institutions have also been criticized: they do not arouse professionals interest, consequently there is difficulty in forming leadership and weakening of profession and professional in the market. The lack of interest is possibly caused by agenda and/or mission insufficient or inappropriate towards professionals' needs, or by corporatism.

3.3. Contribution of personal participation in events, groups or associations for professional development.

According to the respondents, these spaces contribute to professional growth, also strengthen network and make knowledge and access to new professional practices possible.

3.4. Other professional development factors. Other relevant factors were pointed out:

- (1) Involvement in academic studies such as research, study groups and research groups. Provide deepening and reflection for professional practice;
- (2) Monitoring technological changes;
- (3) Digital transformations and world work;
- (4) Continuing education (courses participation, seminars, workshops, congresses and GIDJ' meetings).

Besides these elements, the national and international discussions list, social networks, national and foreign works reading and publications stood out. Traditional procedures and innovate resources were brought with Information and Communication technologies.

Overall, it is considered the engagement in activities that promote the Law Librarianship also collaborates for its own growth, expanding its action territory. Other points taken into account in some respondents' responses highlight the exchange and international cooperation among professionals and abroad events participation, as well as course of law graduation or even master degree, PhD and specialization in Legal Information and Documentation area. All as significant elements for professional development through continuing education.

However, it is general agreement getting in touch with professionals from different legal institutions is a very positive aspect for enrichment and professional development.

3.5. Virtual groups' growth x traditional professional entities undermine.

Assessment the two items, considerations are concentrate in three (3) aspects:

- (a) traditional institutions: Considered a moment of transition which the need to rethink the representation model or to think about a new adjusted model to digital relationship channels with multidisciplinary guidelines adoption capable of awakening a collective conscience with professional's competitive advantages and with the institutions approach, such as universities and similar associations (archival, for example). Respondents mentioned that traditional librarianship entities, from other countries, are still current and active, as well as adjusted in digital

- resources, whose structure is desirable for the achievement of practical and bureaucratic situations such as obtaining sponsorship;
- (b) Relation between traditional institutions fragility and new technologies: The causal link between these two points is not a common ground among the respondents, ranging from relationship inexistence to the direct cause-effect relationship. Most respondents believe in the complementarity between them and consider the situation an invitation to rethink models and practices;
 - (c) New technologies duty: New interfaces of social networks provide communication agility, professional joint, performance strengthening. It is a new space where professionals and active groups transit, but they require constant updating to use these instruments.

4. Collective intelligence perspectives for Law librarians

According to the French cyber theory specialist Pierre Lévy (2015), collective intelligence is "an intelligence distributed all over the place, incessantly valued, coordinated in real time, that results in an effective mobilization of competences". Its ideal "implies the technical, economic, legal and human rights of an intelligence distributed all over the place, to trigger a positive dynamic of recognition and mobilization of competences." For this, it uses the *engineering of the social tie*, defined as "the art of arousing intelligent collectives and valuing to the maximum the diversity of human qualities". Collective intelligence develops in the *Knowledge Space*, an anthropological space organized "around devices that translate a multiplicity of collective events or derives into a dynamic and qualitatively differentiated space (named space of signs." Although considered utopian, the knowledge Space is "a technical possibility, effective to compose personal temporalities for the creation of a collective subjectivity, and the possibility of retaining collective, emerging time, in individual subjectivities", so that individuals do not remain isolated, even at their own paces. In the Knowledge Space, the instrument of orientation is the cinemapa (cinécarte), arising from the interaction of the mobile informational universe and expressing the variety of relations that objects and actors of this universe maintain among themselves, but at the same time a "mobile mosaic, permanent re-composition, in which each fragment is a complete figure but acquires at every moment its meaning and value in a general configuration" (Levy, 2015, pp. 26, 27, 29, 102, 150-151, 157-158).

4.1. The events studied and the relation with the collective intelligence in the view of the respondents

Most respondents agree with the interpretation of events on legal information and documentation as an expression of collective intelligence. "Every area of knowledge or professional activity only consolidates in a collective manner". The combination of mobilization and skills, terms used by Lévy, is the "predominant tone that guides groups and events. The materialization of diverse experiences (articles, presentations of works, annals of congresses) will gather consolidated knowledge that will gain new unfolding", with dissemination

enhanced by the technologies of communication and information. "The knowledge and experiences shared in the events can be considered within the concept of the anthropological space because it is the knowledge that expands every day and is acquired from the relation between the individuals, in this case, from the professional relations." (Excerpts from the questionnaire answers).

Considered as "the main expression of collective intelligence within a professional segment, resulting in its strengthening", or "one of the most powerful forms of the construction and sharing of knowledge, given its greater agility and informality", through the events, "we constructed the collective knowledge of specialty "(Excerpts from the questionnaire answers).

In this sense, a more prominent role should be sought by groups that "hold more knowledge together than as individuals and need to conquer their space of knowledge and practices." In parallel with Wikipedia, they represent "the collective thought of a particular group, but specialized" (Excerpts from the questionnaire answers)

In the case of respondents who make restrictions on this interpretation, one of the main arguments is the question of effective sharing, collective application, and the practical resonance of ideas and discussions arising from events. Another caveat is the dispersion of information, without "official" registration channels of this collective intelligence, spread throughout the network.

4.2. Collective Intelligence and its approach to Librarianship and Information Science

The approximation and studies for the application of collective intelligence in several areas has its place in the literature.

In sight of librarianship and information science, some works have studied the approximation of the theoretical scope (Bembem and Santos, 2013; Bembem, Santos and Pinho Neto, 2014; Margoto and Fernandes, 2015; Bezerra and Pinho, 2016). There are studies on communities of practice (CoP) as a format for the emergence of collective intelligence (Guillaume, Remande and Quinqueneau, 2012; Silva et al, 2012). In the experience of professionals who work in the Audit Courts (Bibliocontas Group), "events/forums are important channels for the integration of a community of practice, the result of which engender the transformation of people and the formation of identities and the negotiation of meanings" (Silva et al., 2012, p.115).

For Howley (2016), "libraries are repositories and trusted guardians of community data, thus allowing them to be viewed as social businesses. They meet a community's collective intelligence in the 'virtuous circle' - date deepens brand storytelling and brand storytelling deepens the data insights (pp.15).

5. Final considerations

Specialized events are an asset to the areas of knowledge, a legacy to the new generations of professionals. There are insufficient, incomplete or missing records of events in the area, compromising their preservation and the professional memory of the community of librarians in legal documentation area. Its preservation constitutes on a specialized repository of collective intelligence.

There is a natural approximation between the collective intelligence and the area of librarianship and informational science, they all have an identification, with a high potential of application and use of the technologies of communication and information, but its effectiveness depends on elements, such as integration, interaction, continuity of a movement, operational performance or performance of a professional collective.

The historical retrospective demonstrates a difficulty of continuity of this collective effort with the discontinuity of the accomplishment of the events approached, and its replaced by others under different denomination. It should also be considered that there are no regular courses in Brazil to train professionals and researchers in the legal area; as well as the lack of associations and scientific entities on the legal information and documentation area. From the period of regular occurrence of events and the existence of an expressive number of professional groups, in Brazil, there are currently only two (2) active legal groups and promoters of local or regional events.

At the individual level, continuous updating and professional enhancement is a personal self-management strategy of knowledge. An attitude or procedure that the professional can implement for their own personal and professional development.

Such attitude helps to strengthen the constitution of a collective intelligence in which developed and personally improved professional experiences knowledge can be shared in a broader scope, reflecting the performance of a professional area. In a collective plan, there is a natural approximation between the work of legal librarians and the exercise of citizenship, in which there is an offering of primary legal information to laypeople: "there is no reason to believe that the dissemination of legal information cannot serve larger, deeper and even more important social and public purposes ". (Wise and Schauer, 2007, pp.282, pp. 238-229).

"Law librarians are a national icon and a national resource" (Walker, 2014, p.152). This statement made by the President of the NSW Court Appeal at a conference of Australian legal librarians is an invitation to build an up-to-date agenda with a social mission by legal librarians, which creates a strong sense of professional belonging, an idea strongly indicated by fellow participants on the

research. We extend the invitation to all colleagues to integrate Pierre Levy's project and consolidate a latent collective intelligence in the area.

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