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FIRST STEPS BEFORE THE JUMP: UKRAINIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANS SURVEY ABOUT OER

Objective. The authors study: 1) the level of awareness of librarians of Ukrainian universities about Open Educational Resources (OER); 2) the ability of librarians to provide support services for the development, creation and use of OER in teaching, learning, research. **Methods**. The study was conducted by methods of analysis of professional literature, online survey (questionnaires) and analysis of the results. The questionnaires "Library of Higher Education Institution in Support of Distance Learning: Open Educational Resources" was distributed from 20.04. until 20.05.2021 among 137 directors of libraries of higher education institutions of Ukraine. Responses came from 77 libraries. The questionnaire consisted of 9 open-ended and closed-ended questions to allow researchers to get a holistic picture of the research process. **Results**. The analysis of 77 questionnaires showed that the vast majority of free HEI libraries in Ukraine have extensive experience in working with electronic educational resources. Ranking by resource type prove that 95.89% of library collections are the own generation resources (HEI authors): databases, incl. repositories. The concept of "Open Educational Resources" (OERs) is familiar and understandable to 84.42% of respondents. At the same time, 75.32% are already involved in supporting the OER. Librarians may catalog them (21.92%) or not catalog (32.88%). Among the OER types supported by librarians, educational materials (77.05%) and textbooks (55.74%) predominate. The closest partnership of librarians in OER support (except for teachers) is with the specialists of IT services (66.13%). **Conclusions.** Despite the still spontaneous, chaotic and little-studied nature of the library movement towards OER, librarians are well aware of this issue. At the same time, 96.1% of respondents want to improve their competencies in the direction of supporting open educational resources. This is very important, because it is the understanding and acceptance of OER that is crucial for a long-term vision of this movement. That is why specific aspects, such as organizational, economic, personnel and motivational, need urgent further study.

Keywords: open educational resources; OER; librarians of Ukrainian universities; survey of librarians; awareness level of librarians

Introduction

University libraries around the world face the task of keeping up with major changes and trends in the field of librarianship, computer science and higher education in general. In the context of Covid-19, which seriously undermines education and training around the world, libraries face extremely difficult challenges.

The framework for action in the field of education for the period up to 2030 was adopted by 184 UNESCO member states in 2015. On the agenda in the field of sustainable development for the period up to 2030 education is perceived as a Sustainable Development Goal Quality Education (Sustainable Development Goal 4, n. d.). In addition, in November 2019, the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO unanimously adopted the Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER) (UNESCO, 2019) which supports the creation, use and adaptation of inclusive and quality OER and promotes international cooperation in this area. The document emphasizes that OER is the common name for all teaching, learning, and research

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materials that are fully open to access through a free license or public domain, which allows their free access, reuse, re-profiling, adaptation and dissemination in other ways without restrictions or with limited restrictions.

In 2018, SPARC Europe (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition), which is actively involved in supporting open education and OER, established a European Network of Open Education Librarians (ENOEL) (European Network of Open Education Librarians (ENOEL), n.d.). As of August 2021, ENOEL comprises 83 members from 25 European countries. Among the full members of ENOEL there is an Ambassador from Ukraine, Tetiana Kolesnykova, one of the authors of this article.

The rapid transition of educational institutions to distance and mixed education during the COVID-19 pandemic raised the question of the availability of resources for teaching and learning. The foreign educational community (teachers, students, librarians, etc.) note that this is most fully addressed through open educational resources (Kolesnykova, 2021a).

There is a clear need to manage at the institutional level the adoption of OER as a strategy to eliminate systemic inequalities, to improve access and success in universities.

Literature Review

Numerous foreign practices prove that libraries can play a significant role in the transformation of teaching and learning by implementing, promoting, identifying or maintaining OER (Ferguson, 2017). Why specifically libraries? In response, we will touch on, for example, technology. Technically, the creation of a new OER as an author's content is similar to the creation of any other educational resource, except that an unlimited open license to the material is applied. Virtually all methods between creating and setting up content are common: 1) find OER publishers at your university; 2) make your created / adapted OERs reviewable; 3) make your created / adapted OER editable; 4) make your created / adapted OER accessible (i.e., the condition for posting your own or adapted OER is their mandatory accessibility through open search engines on the Internet); 5) find administrators who will ensure the functioning of online platforms and the preservation of OER hosted there (Kolesnykova, 2021b). The help of librarians on each of the items can be quite real.

Libraries already meet institutional needs by providing funding for OER content creation and staffing, as well as expertise in areas such as copyright and licensing (Kolesnykova, 2019).

But for university libraries to continue to be actively involved in the creation, adaptation, storage and further development of open educational materials and resources, they must adapt to the needs of their faculty, staff and students.

To identify the level of such adaptation of library staff to OER, foreign universities conduct the case studies.

For example, a survey was conducted at Scottish universities (Thompson & Muir, 2019) to understand the level of knowledge, skills and abilities of librarians regarding OER. Motivation of librarians in this direction includes support for teaching and learning, as well as the development of teachers' digital skills and knowledge of copyright and open licenses. The results show that librarians place a strong emphasis on interpersonal and communication skills, as well as certain subject knowledge.

A study of copyright literacy and awareness among university librarians in Pakistan (Nawazish & Batool, 2021) shows that 74% (n = 125) of respondents understand the term "open educational resources" (as those in public domain or with an intellectual property license allowing their free use).

The results of a study among university librarians in the Philippines (Calilung, 2020) show that there are both sufficient and limited levels of awareness and practice in OER handling

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and management in terms of processing and storage, organization and marketing. There is emphasized the need for constant updating of knowledge of academic librarians by training and building the capacity of services in support of OER.

Nwaohiri N. M., a researcher at the Federal University of Technology Library (Owerri, Nigeria) (Nwaohiri, 2021) shares the results of a survey of 113 librarians from 3 Nigerian universities. Some of the conclusions are as follows: academic libraries should acquire information and promotional skills, thematic guides, seminars and workshops to raise awareness about OER, librarians should play an advisory role for faculties, integrating OER into their courses, give advice to institutions, academic staff. The study recommended the academic libraries, among other things, to launch an active and persistent information campaign and advocacy to increase the use of OER to improve teaching, learning and research.

For 15 years, libraries of Ukrainian universities have been actively supporting and promoting the development of digital infrastructure in their institutions and the state in general, including the means of distance and mixed learning and the creation of electronic open content. However, library staff do not always understand the differences between the concepts of "Electronic educational resources" (including open access) and "Open educational resources".

In Ukraine, which has not yet joined the extensive practices of creating, implementing or supporting OER at the national level or at the level of individual universities, the first all-Ukrainian webinar "Open Educational Resources (OER): The Role of University Libraries" was held in September 2021 (Kolesnykova, 2021b). The event was held within the framework of the "Anti-School of University Librarians" of NGO Ukrainian Library Association. The webinar is aimed at acquainting Ukrainian librarians with global and European trends in the evolution of the OER movement, as well as with the foreign libraries' practices of working with OER. For example, one of the tricks was to identify significant differences between the already well-known electronic educational resources and the relatively new for Ukraine open educational resources – OER (Kolesnykova, 2019; Kolesnykova, 2021a). These differences include openness, distribution, use, value as well.

At the same time, the level of understanding of these concepts by librarians of Ukraine has not yet been studied. That is why the *objective* of this study is to determine the level of awareness of librarians of Ukrainian universities about Open Educational Resources (OER) and their ability to provide support services for the development, creation and use of OER in teaching, learning, research.

Methods

The Scientific and Technical Library of the Dnipro National University of Railway Transport (DNURT Library, https://library.diit.edu.ua/) and the Section of University Libraries of the Ukrainian Library Association conducted an online survey "Library of Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Support of Distance Learning: Open Educational Resources".

The purpose of the survey is to find out the level of awareness of the librarians of HEI of III-IV accreditation levels about open educational resources – OER and to assess their ability to provide support services for the development, creation and use of OER in learning, teaching and research.

The questionnaire consisted of **9** open-ended and closed-ended questions to allow researchers to get a holistic picture of the research process. For review, the questionnaire was provided to specialists O. Bruy (PhD, director of the KPI Library) and Marenych T.

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(PhD, director of the SumDU Library). After minor remarks, the questionnaire was corrected and published.

Google Forms with the questionnaire was available for answers from 20.04. to 20.05.2021. The link to it was sent by e-mail to 137 directors of HEI libraries of Ukraine and posted on Facebook. It was suggested to provide one answer from an institution. We received from the respondents 82 completed questionnaires. After eliminating incomplete answers, we have 77 respondents left.

Results and Discussion

Questions **I** and **II** of the questionnaire provided answers about the name of the HEI, whose part the library is, and the name of its head with e-mail. The **III** question "Does the library have its own full-text collection of electronic educational resources (EER)?" was answered by 77 respondents (Fig. 1).
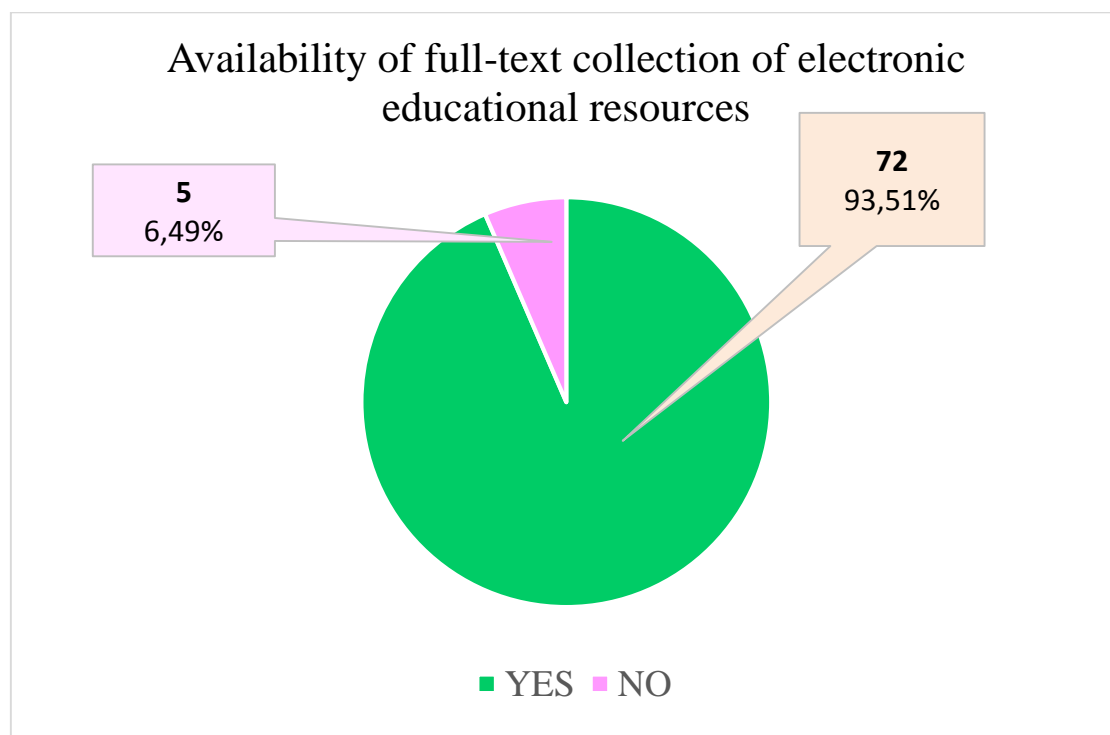

Fig.1. Availability of full-text collection of electronic educational resources

Question **IV:** "If YES, please provide an explanation". It has 3 subsections (4.1 - 4.3), the results of the answers to which are shown in Fig. 2 and in Tables 1 - 2.

4.1. *"How long is the collection stored (beginning of the collection creation)"*. Answers: up to 3 years (*n = 9*); 3-5 years (*n = 4*); 5-7 years (*n = 14*); 7-10 years (*n = 16*); over 10 years (*n = 29*). (see Fig. 2). Thus, (*n =72)* answered; (*n = 5*) did not answer.

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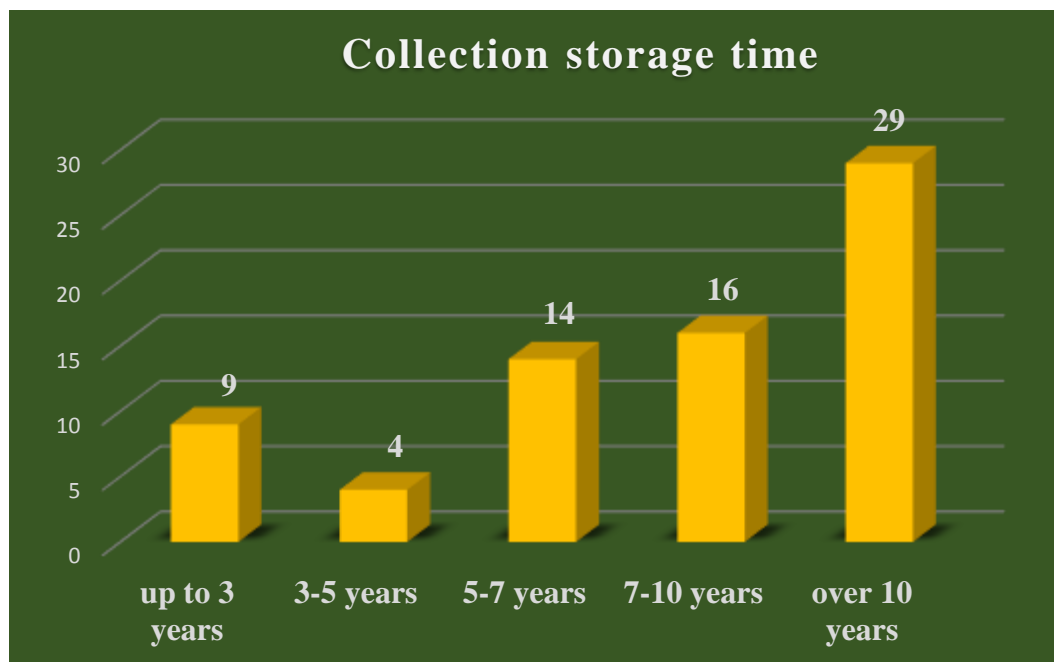LIBRARY SERVICES FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION SUPPORT

Fig. 2. Number of libraries with different OER storage periods

4.2. *"The full-text EER collection presents (one or more options)"*. Answers: • own generation resources (authors of HEI, incl. librarians): databases, incl. repositories (*n = 70*); • commercial e-resources on external media (inventoried and cataloged) (*n = 16*); • commercial e-resources (downloaded from commercial databases with the permission and the possibility of permanent storage) - cataloged (*n = 16*); • commercial e-resources (downloaded from commercial databases with permission and the possibility of permanent storage) – uncataloged (*n = 7*); • prepaid EER (like Springer) – cataloged (*n = 11*); • prepaid EER (like Springer) – uncataloged (*n = 24*); • open educational resources (with appropriate licenses) – cataloged (*n = 16*); • open educational resources (with appropriate licenses) – uncataloged (*n = 24*). (see Table 1). Thus, (*n = 73*) answered; (*n = 4*) did not answer.

Table 1

Full-text collection of EER

No.	Types of resources	Number	%
1.	own generation resources (authors of HEI, incl. librarians): databases, incl. repositories	70	95.89%
2.	prepaid **EER** (like Springer), Uncataloged	24	32.88%
3.	open educational resources (with appropriate licenses), uncataloged	24	32.88%
4.	commercial e-resources on external media (inventoried and cataloged)	16	21.92%

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5.	commercial e-resources (downloaded from commercial databases with the permission and the possibility of permanent storage), cataloged	16	21.92%
6.	open educational resources (with appropriate licenses), cataloged	16	21.92%
7.	prepaid EER (like Springer), cataloged	11	15.07%
8.	commercial e-resources (downloaded from commercial databases with the permission and the possibility of permanent storage), uncataloged	7	9.59%
9.	TOTAL	73	100%

4.3. *"What is the access to the own EER collection?"*. Answers: • internal (within the library) (*n* = 3); • internal (within the HEI network) (*n* = 9); • remote (for authorized users of the HEI community) (*n* = 12); • open (*n* = 19); • combined access (*n* = 30). (see Table 2). Thus, (*n* = 73) answered; (*n* = 4) did not answer.

Table 2

Access to the own EER collection

No.	Access	Number	%
1.	internal (within the library)	3	4.11%
2.	internal (within the HEI network)	9	12.33%
3.	remote (for authorized users of the HEI community)	12	16.44%
4.	open	19	26.03%
5.	combined access	30	41.10%
6.	TOTAL	73	100%

V question. "Management of EER (planning, search / creation, addition, analysis, cataloging, promotion of resources) in the structure of the library is carried out by employees of": • a separate department (*n* = 26); • separate sector (*n* = 3); • different departments / sectors (*n* = 42). (see Table 3). Thus, (*n* = 71) answered; (*n* = 6) did not answer

Table 3

EER management in the library structure

No.	ESD management is carried out by employees	Number	%
1.	separate sector	3	4.23%
2.	separate department	26	36.62%
3.	different departments / sectors	42	59.15%
4.	TOTAL	71	100.00%

VI question. "Are you familiar with the term OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER)?" Answers: Yes (*n* = 65); No (*n* = 0); Not in full (*n* = 12). (see Fig. 3). Thus, (*n* = 77) answered. That is, this term is familiar and understandable to 84.42% of respondents.

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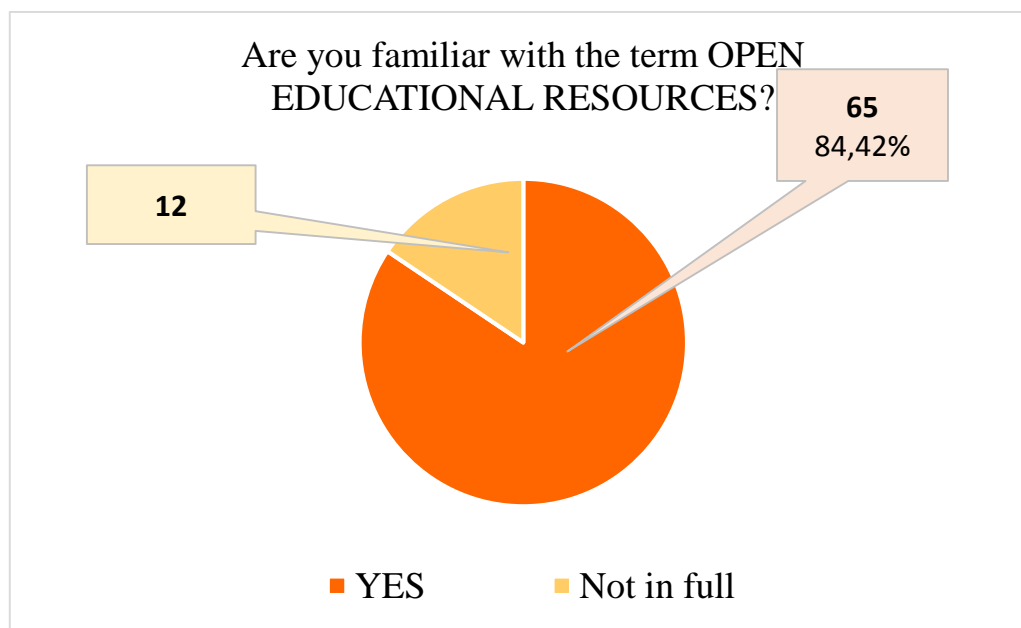LIBRARY SERVICES FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION SUPPORT

Fig. 3. Acquaintance with the term "OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES"

VII question. "Is your Library involved in supporting OER?" Answers: Yes ($n = 58$); No ($n = 16$). (see Fig. 4). Thus, ($n = 74$) answered; ($n = 3$) did not answer. That is, 75.32% of respondents say that they already participate in the support of OER.

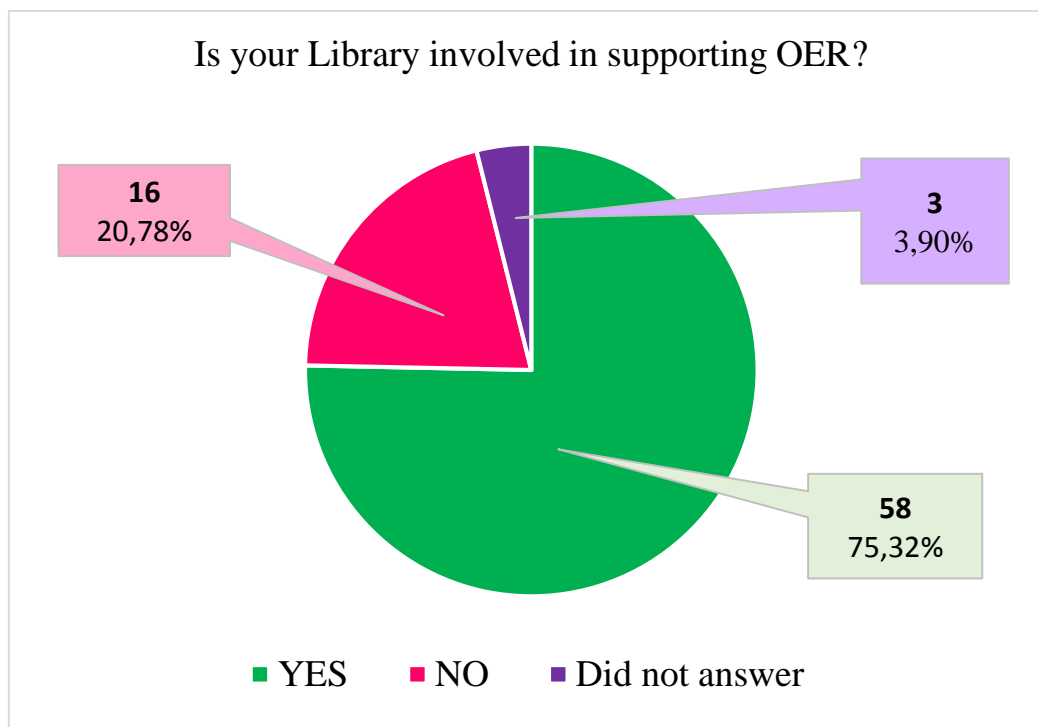Fig. 4. Participation in support of the OER

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VIII question. "If YES, please provide an explanation":

8.1. *"What type of OER does your library support? (one or more options)".* Answers:
• full courses ($n = 7$); • training materials ($n = 47$); • modules ($n = 5$); • textbooks ($n = 34$); • open licensed training videos (often streaming video), audio materials ($n = 7$); • tests ($n = 7$); • software ($n = 3$); • any other tools, materials or methods used to support access to knowledge ($n = 26$). (see Table 4). Thus, ($n = 61$) answered; ($n = 16$) did not answer

Table 4

What type of OER does your library support?

No.	OER types	Number	%
1.	training materials	47	77.05%
2.	textbooks	34	55.74%
3.	full courses	7	11.48%
4.	open licensed training videos (often streaming video), audio materials	7	11.48%
5.	tests	7	11.48%
6.	modules	5	8.20%
7.	software	3	4.92%
8.	any other tools, materials or methods used to support access to knowledge	26	42.62%

8.2. *"What services does your Library provide in support of OER? (one or more options)".* Answers: • assistance to teachers in finding OER ($n = 49$); • improving the awareness of teachers and students about OER, incl. by way of creating library instructions / methodological materials and providing consulting services ($n = 41$); • assistance in the development of information literacy skills required for the use of OER ($n = 45$); • advising on copyright, fair use of OER and CC licensing ($n = 33$); • providing tools and platforms for creating open textbooks ($n = 8$); • participation in the creation and adaptation of OER (together with teachers) ($n = 13$); • use of online tools to create interactive content, including gamification (quizzes, surveys, discussions, etc.) ($n = 5$); • cataloging of OER ($n = 21$); • popularization of OER, including open textbooks ($n = 39$). (see Table 5). 66 respondents answered, 11 did not answer.

Table 5

What services does your Library provide in support of OER?

No.	Services	Number	%
1.	assistance to teachers in finding OER	49	74.24%
2.	assistance in developing the information literacy skills required for the use of OER	45	68.18%
3.	improving the awareness of teachers and students about OER, including by way of creating library instructions / methodological materials and providing consulting services	41	62.12%
4.	popularization of OER, including open textbooks	39	59.09%

5.	advising on copyright, fair use of OER and CC licensing	33	50.0%
6.	cataloging of OER	21	31.82%
7.	participation in the creation and adaptation of OER (together with teachers)	13	19.70%
8.	providing tools and platforms for creating open textbooks	8	12.12%
9.	use of online tools to create interactive content, including gamification (quizzes, surveys, discussions, etc.)	5	7.58%

8.3. *"In partnership with which HEI structure specialists (not teachers) does the library work in support of OER?"* Answers: • IT services - ($n = 41$); • publishing houses ($n = 21$); • Department of Innovative Forms of Education ($n = 9$); • Education Quality Department ($n = 25$). (see Table 6). Thus, ($n = 62$) answered; ($n = 15$) did not answer.

Table 6

In partnership with which HEI structure specialists (not teachers) does the library work in support of OER

No.	Departments	Number	%
1.	IT Services	41	66.13%
2.	Education Quality Department	25	40.32%
3.	publishing houses	21	33.87%
4.	Department of Innovative Forms of Education	9	14.52%

IX question. "Do you think measures are needed to improve the skills of librarians (webinars, trainings, workshops, etc.) to support open educational resources, including providing services for the development, creation and use of OER in teaching and learning?" Answers: • YES (n = 74); • NO (n = 3). (see Fig. 5). That is, 96.1% of respondents prefer to improve further their competencies.
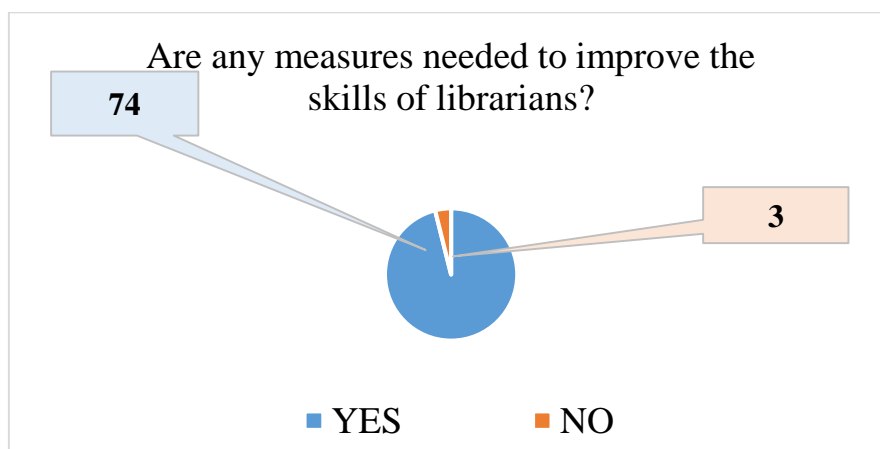

Fig. 5. Are any measures needed to improve the skills of librarians?

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Conclusions

The global COVID events of 2020-2021 provided an opportunity to rethink many aspects of our lives, including the approach to higher education. The analysis of the professional literature proves that high-quality, relevant and barrier-free open educational resources – OER should be central to the student-oriented, innovative digital system of higher education in Ukraine and around the world.

University libraries of Ukraine have always been focused on capacity building of their librarians as leaders in open education. In this study, we received confirmation of this by focusing not only on the already well-known electronic educational resources, but also on the relatively new for Ukraine OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES. And between these concepts there are significant differences, for example, in terms of openness, distribution, use, value.

The obtained results indicate a growing trend of interest of Ukrainian librarians in providing information support to distance and mixed processes of teaching, learning, research. At the same time, open education and open educational resources are still relatively new concepts in libraries.

The analysis of respondents' answers proves that the vast majority of HEI libraries of Ukraine have extensive experience in working with electronic educational resources. Evidence of this is their own full-text collections of e-resources to support education, in addition, most of them were created more than 10 years ago. Ranking by types of resources prove that 95.89% in library collections are own generation resources (authors of HEI, including librarians): databases, including repositories.

Management of EER (planning, search / creation, addition, analysis, cataloging, promotion of resources) in the structure of the library is carried out mainly by employees of different departments / sectors (59.15%).

Librarians are intensively involved in new openness initiatives, including open access (n = 19) and combined access (n = 30).

The concept of Open Educational Resources is familiar and understandable to 84.42% of respondents. At the same time, 75.32% are already involved in OER support.

Librarians, working with open educational resources (with appropriate licenses), may catalog them (21.92%) or not catalog (32.88%). Among the OER types supported by librarians, educational materials (77.05%) and textbooks (55.74%) predominate.

Findings on the services provided by libraries in support of OER are interesting. Predominant are as follows: • assistance to teachers in finding OER (74.24%); • assistance in the development of information literacy skills required for the use of OER (68.18%); • improving the awareness of teachers and students about OER (62.12%); • popularization of OER (59.09%); • consulting on copyright, fair use of OER and CC licensing (50.00%).

The closest partnership of librarians in support of OER (except for teachers) is with specialists of IT services (66.13%).

96.1% of respondents demonstrate the indisputable need to improve their own competencies in the direction of supporting open educational resources.

Thus, despite the still spontaneous, chaotic and little-studied nature of the library movement towards OER, librarians are well aware of this issue. This is very important, because it is the understanding and acceptance of OER that is crucial for a long-term vision of this movement.

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The readiness of librarians to accept OER as a strategy to eliminate systemic inequality, improve access and success in Ukrainian universities is unconditional. That is why specific aspects, such as organizational, economic, personnel and motivational, need urgent further study.

This study is the first step before the great jump of Ukrainian libraries in the motivated adoption of OER as a field of activity, which will certainly be in demand by university communities.

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ПЕРШІ КРОКИ ПЕРЕД СТРИБКОМ: ОПИТУВАННЯ БІБЛІОТЕКАРІВ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ УНІВЕРСИТЕТІВ ПРО OER

Мета. Автори досліджують: 1) рівень обізнаності бібліотекарів українських університетів щодо відкритих освітніх ресурсів (OER); 2) здатність бібліотекарів надавати допоміжні послуги для розробки, створення й використання OER у навчанні, викладанні, дослідженнях. **Методика.** Дослідження проводилося методоми аналізу фахової літератури, онлайн-опитування (анкетування) та аналізу отриманих результатів. Анкета "Бібліотека закладу вищої освіти в підтримці дистанційного навчання: Відкриті освітні ресурси" була розповсюджена з 20.04. до 20.05.2021 р. серед 137 директорів бібліотек закладів вищої освіти України. Відповіді надійшли від 77 бібліотек. Анкета складалася з 9 відкритих і закритих питань, щоб дозволити дослідникам отримати цілісну картину досліджуваного процесу. **Результати.** Аналіз 77 анкет показав, що переважна більшість бібліотек ЗВО України мають великий досвід роботи з електронними освітніми ресурсами. Ранжування за типами ресурсів доказують, що 95,89% в бібліотечних колекціях складають ресурси власної генерації (авторів ЗВО): бази даних, в т.ч. репозитарії. Поняття «Відкриті освітні ресурси» (OERs) є знайомим і зрозумілим 84,42% респондентів. При цьому 75,32% вже беруть участь у підтримці ВОР. Бібліотекарі можуть їх каталогізувати (21,92%) або не каталогізувати (32,88%). Серед типів ВОР, які підтримуються бібліотекарями, переважають навчальні матеріали (77,05%) і підручники (55,74%). Найбільш тісне партнерство бібліотекарів в підтримці ВОР (крім викладачів) – з фахівцями ІТ-служб (66,13%). **Висновки.** Незважаючи на досі стихійний, хаотичний і малодосліджений характер бібліотечного руху в напрямі OER, бібліотекарі є достатньо обізнаними в цьому питанні. В той же час 96,1% респондентів бажають покращення власних компетентностей в напрямі підтримки відкритих освітніх ресурсів. Це є дуже важливим, бо саме розуміння та прийняття OER має вирішальне значення для довгострокового бачення цього руху. І саме тому термінового подальшого вивчення потребують конкретні аспекти, такі як організаційні, економічні, кадрові та мотиваційні.

Ключові слова: відкриті освітні ресурси; OER; бібліотекарі університетів України; анкетування бібліотекарів; рівень обізнаності бібліотекарів