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Italian library blogs: A difficult trend to follow?☆

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Abstract This article analyses the results of a survey carried out on 82 Italian library blogs between December 2009 and February 2010. Several aspects were examined: year of creation, status, platform used, technical characteristics (such as internal search engine, chronological archives, blogroll, tags), number of posts and comments, reciprocal links between the blog and the library. Also the responsiveness of the libraries involved was tested. The results show that most of the Italian library blogs examined were created between 2008 and 2009 and are hosted by commercial platforms. Many of them are only sporadically updated, have little identifying data and contextualizing links, and low numbers of posts and users' comments. Most of them do not have a link to the library website and one third of the blogs and libraries do not offer a digital reference service. The libraries' response time to the users' e-mails was quite long: in many cases an answer was given after more than 2 working days and in about one fifth of cases it was not given at all.
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Introduction

Blogs - and library blogs - are no longer a novelty in Italy today. Six years ago Barbara Fiorentini (Fiorentini, 2004), in *Bollettino AIB*, explained to Italian librarians what a blog was, its functions, and how it could be used in libraries, and she reviewed some experiences abroad and a small number in Italy (library and information science blogs, reading groups blogs and only one library blog). In March 2005 Andrea Marchitelli started *BiblioWeblog*, a bimonthly column in *Biblioteche oggi*, which aimed to examine examples of library blogs entering a "world with indefinite boundaries

whose future was far from being granted" (Marchitelli, 2005, p. 90; translation by author, Mazzocchi). After two and a half years, in December 2007, the column ended because the "blog, a sign and a symbol of a certain communication between the library and its users, was no longer an emerging phenomenon, becoming more and more a habit, both for those who make it and for those who use it" (Marchitelli, 2007b, p. 62; translation by author, Mazzocchi). Since then two more years have passed. Where do Italian library blogs stand at present? What kind of practices have been created?

Although in the Italian professional literature the interest for libraries and Web 2.0 in general, and for the library blog phenomenon in particular, is still high (Biancu, 2007b, p. 46; Biblioteca Giovanni Spadolini, 2009; Biblioteca Luigi Crocetti, 2009; Gargiulo, 2009; Crowley, 2009; Zanin-Yost, 2009), in December 2009 there was no Italian library blog directory on the Internet. There were only a few lists of blogs about library topics, not necessarily managed by libraries, such as *Blog* by the Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova (n.d.) and *Biblio(a)tipici link* (Marchitelli, n.d.), announced by the column *BiblioWeblog* as a "directory of

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Table 1 Italian library blogs.

Name	URL	Year of creation*	Date of last post** [YYYY-MM-DD]
Biblioteca Alberto Monroy del Dipartimento di biologia cellulare e dello sviluppo dell'Università degli studi di Palermo	http://bibliotecamonroyalberto.blogspot.com/	2008	2009-04-13
Biblioteca Area 3. Tecnico-scientifica dell'Università degli studi di Trieste	http://btsbiblio.wordpress.com/	2008	2009-11-12
Biblioteca Area 3. Tecnico-scientifica dell'Università degli studi di Trieste	http://blog.sba.units.it/bts/	2008	2010-01-22
Biblioteca Area 5. Filosofia e Lingue dell'Università degli studi di Trieste	http://blog.sba.units.it/bfl/	2008	2008-09-26
Biblioteca Area 5. Filosofia e Lingue dell'Università degli studi di Trieste	http://biblel.wordpress.com/	2008	2008-09-26
Biblioteca Area 7. Formazione dell'Università degli studi di Trieste	http://blog.sba.units.it/bf/	2009	2009-12-15
Biblioteca "Ascanio Sobrero" della Facoltà di farmacia dell'Università degli studi del Piemonte Orientale "Amedeo Avogadro", <i>Pillole di Biblioteca</i>	http://bibliosobrero.wordpress.com/	2006	2009-12-14
Biblioteca biologico-medica "Antonio Vallisneri" e Biblioteca del Dipartimento di farmacologia "Egidio Meneghetti" dell'Università degli studi di Padova, <i>BiblioNews</i>	http://biblioteca-informa.blogspot.com/	2006	2009-12-28
Biblioteca biomedica dell'Università degli studi di Firenze, <i>Bibliomedica In-forma</i>	http://bibliotecabiomedica.wordpress.com/	2008	2010-01-22
Biblioteca centralizzata della Facoltà di economia dell'Università degli studi di Messina	http://bibliotecaeconomiaunime.blogspot.com/	2009	2009-12-15
Biblioteca civica "Mino Milani" di Garlasco	http://bibliogarlasco.blogspot.com/	2007	2009-12-23
Biblioteca civica di San Michele Mondovì, <i>Se una notte d'inverno</i>	http://zenodoto.wordpress.com/	2008	2009-12-24
Biblioteca comunale "A. Corsano" di Taurisano	http://bibliotecataurisano.blogspot.com/	2009	2009-11?
Biblioteca comunale "Enrico Minio" di Civita Castellana	http://bibliotecacomunalecivitacastellana.blogspot.com/	2008	2008-11-12
Biblioteca comunale Crocetta di Modena	http://www.comune.modena.it/biblioteche/crocetta/blogcr.php	2008	2010-01-21
Biblioteca comunale di Baranzate, <i>BiblioBaranzate</i>	http://bibliobaranzate.wordpress.com	2009	2010-01-21
Biblioteca comunale di Binago	http://bibliotecabinago.blogspot.com/	2008	2009-04-08
Biblioteca comunale di Borutta, <i>Tra un libro e l'altro</i>	http://biblioteca_borutta.blog.tiscali.it/	2008	2009-08-19
Biblioteca comunale di Caspoggio	http://caspoteca.blogspot.com/	2009	2009-12-14

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