

Access to Digital Information in the Pandemic: Some Data from Italy

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# Access to Digital Information in the Pandemic: Some Data from Italy- The Rumors Blog-Guest Post

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July 21, 2020

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by [Rossana Morriello](#) | Jul 21, 2020 | [0 comments](#)

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By: Guest Blogger [Rossana Morriello](#) Research Support Librarian, **Politecnico di Torino, Italy**

I am a member of the **Observatory on Libraries and Sustainable Development** (OBISS) of the **Italian Library Association** (AIB) dedicated to the implementation of the **United Nations Agenda 2030**. We work to raise awareness among Italian librarians on the [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#) that **UN** elaborated in 2015 and on the ways in which librarians can act effectively to help reach the goals of the Agenda. We participate in training and conferences, translate into Italian useful documents published in English, we opened a column on the newsletter "[AIB Notizie](#)" and collected an Italian bibliography on this topic that was included in [the international bibliography on the Green Library](#) maintained by **The German Green Library Network** and **IFLA ENSULIB**.

The **17 Sustainable Development Goals** are strictly related to the pandemic in many ways. Firstly, for the causes of spread of coronavirus that can be found in the actions of mankind on the eco-system and the consequent altering of the natural life cycle of animals, and of the natural world, and, secondly, for the consequences that the pandemic will have on our society. Some of the 17 Goals are particularly linked to that, like **SDG 3 – Good health and well-being for people**, **SDG 4 – Quality education**, **SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth**, **Goal 10: Reducing inequalities**, **GOAL 13 – Climate action**, and so on. The pandemic will directly affect our well-being and health, and has already done so, but also will have effects on education, for example, on higher education, since probably many people won't be able to move to enroll at our universities, and will have effects on the economy of our countries, and increasing inequalities.

IFLA, the **International Federation of Library Associations**, has been working a lot on the Agenda 2030 since its implementation, particularly in order to have culture and libraries included and considered as preminent actors for reaching all the goals. One of the main issues IFLA is constantly working on is access to information. Access to information, both in print and digital formats, is a key issue for all goals of the Agenda 2030 and of course a central issue for all libraries. The importance of access to information in all SDGs is summarized by [a poster on the IFLA website](#).

Access to information was deeply challenged during the pandemic and librarians were talking about the perceived increase in access to digital resources. However, perception is not enough; we need data to describe phenomena and we need to collect data about what happened during the pandemic. This will be extremely important to be able to transform the future after the pandemic in an opportunity for the advancement of library services. Therefore, OBISS decided to start to collect data about access to digital resources by asking directly to producers of digital platform and then publishing them in [an open document available on the website of the Observatory.](#)

We asked to compare the number of accesses, downloads, and digital lending of the first four months of 2020 (January-April) with the same data in January-April 2019. The results are quite interesting and show an increase in all kinds of measures taken. Views and downloads increased in variable quantity (with a striking +280% for **Casalini Torrossa**), digital lending of over 100% both for MLOL (**Media Library Online**) and **Rete Indaco**, the two main Italian platforms for digital lending. The national collective OPAC SBN has increased 34,15% for number of hits and 29,99% for number of searches. **Internet Culturale**, the platform promoted by the **Italian Ministry of Culture**, which hosts the **Italian Digital Library (Biblioteca Digitale Italiana)** with a large collection of digitized books, journals, manuscripts, maps, images and audio recordings, has a +116,25% in number of hits. Some interesting data (we hope to add more in the next weeks) from which to start a reflection about the role of digital resources in the pandemic and in the future of libraries.

For more information on OBISS – **Observatory on Libraries and Sustainable Development** (formerly Study group on Agenda 2030) of the **Italian Library Association**: <https://www.aib.it/struttura/osservatori/obiss/>

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