

Assessing digital resources at the Tampere University of Technology Library by star rating system

Licensing digital resources at technical universities has increased over past ten years. The process is a subject of the constant change because the system development and the service production have not been established. When the supply increases there is a need for more information on the digital resources to support the licensing decisions and thus speed up the process.

Other reasons for assessing digital resources are: getting better results of the trials, finding the key digital resources for strategic research fields and strong areas of competence, binding digital resources to e-learning environment, and finding an assessing method suitable for our use.

A star rating system was developed at the Tampere University of Technology (TUT) Library. The thinking behind the scheme is similar to the way people choose restaurants by stars from the Michelin guide.

Digital resources are evaluated on a scale of 1-5 on four collection development criteria: disciplines, comprehensiveness, teaching and usability. Scores are collected separately for full-text journals, databases, e-books and trials. The scores are added up and total score is a basis for the star rating ranging from one star to five stars. Five stars indicate the highest rank. Reliability of the digital resources is included in the requirements of criteria. For example the basic requirements to score 5 require from the criteria Disciplines that the resource is from TUT's strategic research field and has high quality or is peer-reviewed.

The final assessment is performed by a panel. The panel consists of subject specialists. External help from faculty is used in the evaluation of trials. The panel assembles every month and confirms the stars. With the help of the star rating system, we can get the better understanding about our digital resources. The information is used for licensing decision practices and collection policy development and marketing of resources. The star rating system supports research and teaching by pinpointing the most valuable digital resources.