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Competence development with iPads: to meet the new technological challenges in the digital future

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In early 2012 a collaborative project between the faculty and the library concerning the use of iPads in teaching was initiated at the Social Sciences Faculty at Lund University. The library is an integral partner in the project and supports the teachers.

As part of the collaboration project librarians had to be prepared to meet the users' new needs. All employees at the Social Sciences Faculty Library (Sambib) completed a course on iPads and apps. In order to improve the skills of the whole staff and not limit the knowledge to a small group of experts, all twelve librarians took the course, and also got their own iPad to work with.

To make use of the iPads as a tool for everyday work, the course was modeled after actual work tasks. It was divided into six different modules with built in progression. The participants' experiences and opinions were documented in a blog where the course information was published. After completing a module, everyone also filled out questionnaires to assess goal achievement, learning and the module itself. At the end of the course everyone participated in a joint discussion to assess the course as a whole and reflect on their experiences and learning.

The results were analyzed based on research about what expertise librarians need in the future and how to develop these skills. Theories of how to develop learning organizations and improve team learning have also been applied to the outcome.

Evaluation results show that the course not only led to a greater awareness of tablets and apps, it also gave a general competence in terms of new technology. The fact that all librarians participated in the course lead to a stronger team spirit, both within the workplace and towards the faculty and the university as a whole.