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Not information centers, but information generation centers

Shajimon Scaria

shajivaikom2012@gmail.com

Ponnaiyah Ramajayam Institute of Science and
Technology (PRIST), Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu

Dr. A. Ganesan

ayyapillaiganesan58@gmail.com

Ponnaiyah Ramajayam Institute of Science and
Technology (PRIST), Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu

ABSTRACT

Academic libraries are in a changing stage. Academic community is more aware of the advanced digital technologies and they like to have the information retrieval using these advanced technologies. The library users are in need of the information new in style, new in fervor and new in method. The librarians in the digital environment have to be aware of the online platforms, audio and video uploading, databases, networking and computer terminals. The influence occurred due to this digital wave in the production, dissemination, and retrieval of information may grasp the academic libraries to satisfy their information seekers in pursuing new modes of academic research and productivity. The digital libraries need very little physical space and they can occupy more information. Moreover that in digital system the information seekers can rapidly and easily access the books or any other information sources. Library has a specific role to create information using different types of media. Informative videos, slides, different types of arts and entertainment programmes can be generated and uploaded using the advanced digital technologies.

Keywords: Digital Platform, Information Generation, Digital Services, Library 3.0

1. INTRODUCTION

We know that we are living in an age where digital services are playing a vital role in every aspects of life. Online banking, online shopping and online marketing are very popular to the common people. What is the changing role of a college or university library in this scenario? Surveys show that it is not just for distributing the text books and journals but for collecting, organizing, preserving, and making knowledge accessible in all possible ways. Today the academic community is more aware of the advanced digital technologies and they like to have the information retrieval using these advanced technologies.

2. E-LITERACY

As we know almost all the academic institutions, universities and college libraries have been completely automated by library software and have become connected with Internet facilities. All these libraries are providing access to the e-journals and e-books by proxy-server based networks. As the academic community is in an e-learning environment the future of the academic library services rests upon its capacity for giving e-facilities. According to Gurjeetkaur "E-learning is a means of becoming literate, involving new mechanisms for communication, such as computer networks, multimedia, content portals, search engines, electronic libraries, distance learning, and web-enabled classrooms. Different web based applications such as email, real-time conference, Web Cam, etc. are being used as important tools in the process of e-learning"¹.

The library authorities have to think seriously on the following facts.

- Emergency of changing the overall activities of academic Libraries
- New interventions that the Academic Libraries have to make in the changing information environment.
- The library users are in need of the information new in style, new in fervor and new in method.

If we are not addressing the above mentioned facts, the libraries will become outdated and the academic community may go away from the information center of the campus. According to W. Lee Hisle, "At the outset of the twenty-first century, these institutions confront the need to reconceive and reconstruct the means by which they support faculty and students in research and education."² The libraries are working on a wholly transformed environment and the library professionals also should be aware of this drastic environmental change. The functional ability of academic libraries to disseminate authenticated and reliable information is continuously challenged by new technologies. As we know the demand and rush for various types of information is entirely different from those are in the past. The library managements have to introduce new strategies like new kinds of information services, collection from digital service providers, access to prominent databases and their digital collections, implementation of advanced software for advanced searching. The changes happened in the field of technology, research,

information search, learning, teaching and audio visual media are unimaginable. These changes increased the relevance of information generation and dissemination in most advanced and scholarly way.

How can a single library raise its standard as per the information needs of this present stage? It will be a herculean task unless we are having collaborative and collective way. The library professionals and library management must have an awareness of the urgency of this collaboration. According to W. Lee Hisle, "Necessarily, these forces of change encourage academic and research libraries to work together in new as well as collective ways. The fact that some libraries have resources and incentives to build and manage unique collections can allow others to focus more intensively on ensuring accessibility to the range of information now available from other libraries as well as from multifarious digital sources. A defining element of this moment is the capacity for academic and research libraries to accelerate their own transformation through collaborative action"³.

Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) convened a conference in Chicago in November 2006. The participants attended in that conference were popular academicians. Librarians from academic and research libraries from throughout the U.S attended in this conference. Academic experts of many Higher Education Institutions were also attended. Publishers of electronic journals, designers of electronic course management systems, providers of information resources through the Internet and other digital means were also invited to this conference. Their discussion was mainly on the emergency of changing the overall activities of academic libraries in this digital era.

3. ROLE OF LIBRARIAN

Librarians are no more custodians of the books in the closed shelves, but the facilitators of information. He has to do the role of an information navigator. Most of the times he has to act like scientist who is eagerly trying to find out the new invention. He has to lead the information seekers to the right and most suitable information. The librarians in the digital environment have to be aware of the online platforms, audio and video uploading, databases, networking and computer terminals. Conventional librarians had to disseminate the stored knowledge to the information seekers who comes their libraries. But the present day librarians have to create, store and disseminate the knowledge to the information seekers where they are sitting.

4. TRANSFORMATIONAL ROLE

The information explosion in this digital age has dramatically changed the information needs of the academic people. Timeliness of information is very important factor. The influence occurred due to this digital wave in the production, dissemination, and retrieval of information may grasp the academic libraries to satisfy their information seekers in pursuing new modes of academic research and productivity. Changes in the digital environment and the modes of academic research demand modern services from the academic libraries. According to W. Lee Hisle, "the challenges libraries now face are the same ones that confront any contender in the expanding market for information: there is a continuing need to adapt to rapid change, to keep pace with new developments in technology and new competition in the industry"⁴

The libraries and librarians need to be aware of these drastic changes and they have to deepen their ability to be creative to recast their identities in relation to the changing modes of knowledge creation and dissemination, and in relation to the academic communities they serve to.

Considering all these aspects the academic libraries have to undergo the following transitions urgently:

- First, the conventional concept of a library should be completely changed so as to face the advanced information needs of the users. Libraries should develop pathways to high-quality information in a variety of media and information sources.
- Second, the mindset of the library professional also must be changed so as to provide service and guidance in more useful ways like electronic format.
- Third, libraries must seek and find out their evolving roles and walk out of their conventional way.

5. CHANGING ROLE

New generation is extremely smart in technological awareness. They are excellent in multi-tasking. "They have a totally different approach towards their life and career as they prefer challenging and meaningful career and work environment. They are eager to learn and willing to try new pedagogical tools that engage their creative minds" (Sharma, 2011). According to Ashcroft "new developments need to be marketed and evaluated, and these are additional skills for information professionals to adopt" (Ashcroft, 2004). The challenges that the libraries have to face in the 21st century are nothing but the digital challenges. So the twenty-first century information professional must be occupied themselves with selection skills, digital content management, organization of information on intranets and the Internet, research services and developing and maintaining digital libraries. In this modern world information seekers are approaching the library for crucial and compact information. So the library professionals should be aware of the different facets of the library users.

6. DIGITIZED LIBRARIES

One of the major problems facing by the present day academic libraries is the space shortage. Here is the necessity and urgency of developing digital or virtual libraries. The digital libraries need very little physical space and they can occupy more information. Moreover that in digital system the information seekers can rapidly and easily access the books or any other information sources. Advanced versions of communication technology like wikis and blogs also can be introduced in this virtual platform so that the users may seriously be attracted to Digital libraries. Let us discuss some of the major other potentials of these digital libraries. Its virtual platform is the most important attraction. The users of a digital library need not to go to the library physically. They can access the library materials from anywhere in the world.

Another attraction of these digital libraries is its round the clock availability. Digital libraries will be available for its users at any time regardless of day or night.

One of the major problems facing by the physical library is the high cost of books. Some valuable books may be very less in number even in the university libraries. But the advantage of virtual libraries is that the same resource can be accessed by a number of users simultaneously.

Digital libraries are more user friendly than the physical libraries. With a single mouse click the users can reach to the information they required.

Information Generation Centers

Information generation is also important as far as the academic library is concerned. In this digital age information can be generated in all possible ways. Library has a specific role to create information using different types of media. Informative videos, slides, different types of arts and entertainment programmes can be generated and uploaded using the advanced digital technologies. Using these uploads updated information can be disseminated to the information seekers as per their taste.

Portal Libraries

A library portal is defined as "a combination of software components that unify the user experience of discovering and accessing information" in contrast to a "single technology" to provide "services that support discovery, access and effective use of information."^[2] When we are thinking of library portal the first thing that comes in our mind is online public access catalogue (OPAC). When OPAC was introduced it was used for accessing physical texts and at a later stage it was used to access OPAC is an outdated one and new user friendly advanced tools were introduced.

Library 3.0

Library services were updated from the oldest version library 1.0 to newest version library 3.0. The new Web 3.0 is known as the web of data and as the Semantic Web (Harris, 2008). The inspirations of Web 3.0 technologies include personalized learning, search using natural language, filter ad personalizes search results, intelligent agent, interact with more types of web content and provide learning from multiple resources. In education, Semantic Web will impact the knowledge construction, personal learning network maintenance and personal educational administration (Ohler, 2008). Semantic Web brings impact to online instructors and students, as it changes the teaching and learning environment. The e-learning 3.0 derived from Web 3.0 and it will use artificial intelligence to assist students to obtain a better understanding of the learning process (Rubens et al., 2011). Pedagogy is one that provides e-learning via collaboration, cooperation and communication, and conditional learning methods will be available (Beetham and Sharpe, 2007).

Semantic Web in Library 3.0

In digital environment the data must be shared and reused for all applications. A common framework is needed for this purpose. This frame work is called Semantic Web. All the unstructured documents and information on the web will be converted into a web data using this semantic web

7. CONCLUSION

Timeliness, sharpness and quality are the essential feature of information. Since the internet has made revolutionary growth in all the areas of science and technology, information dissemination also must reach the level of its standard. All the possibilities of internet have to be used for accessing virtual information thereby forming virtual libraries in academic institutions. Librarians also have to change their role as information scientists with ability for data mining. They have to be well equipped with IT skills. so that the right information have to be reached the information seekers in right time. Library staff also must be capable of working in this digital platform

8. REFERENCES

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