

CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT :-The information environment is greatly changing throughout the world. Present rapid development in communication system and recent innovation in technology witnessed as changing emphasis in the role of information and its management. The new technologies have facilitated the transformation of data into digital format. This paper defines the digital library, and analyses the changing role of the library professionals in digital environment and need of new skills for library professionals.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid advances in information processing, storage and communication technologies have revolutionised the role of world wide libraries in disseminating information services to their users. As a result, libraries are facing new challenges; new competitors, new demands, new expectations and a variety of information services from users tailored to their wants and needs. The new technologies have facilitated the transformation of data into digital format. Over the last few years information has been produced digitally and libraries have become major providers of information in digital format.

Definition of Digital Libraries:

Numerous terms are used by authors to denote the concept of digital libraries.

According to E.A. Fox the digital library may be defined as the “New way of carrying out the functions of libraries encompassing new types of information resources, new approaches to classification and cataloguing, intensive use of electronic systems and networks and dramatic shifts in intellectual, organizational and electronic practices”.

Larsen defines, “A digital library as a global virtual library- the library of thousands of networked electronic libraries”.

The Associations of Research Libraries (ARL) (1955), has identified five elements common to all definitions of digital library as under.

- 1 The digital library is not a single entity;
- 2 The digital library by requires technology to link resources of many;
- 3 These links are transparent to end-users;
- 4 Universal access to the digital libraries and information services in the goals; and
- 5 Digital library collections are not limited to document surrogates, but they also include digital artifacts that cannot be represented or distributed in printed formats.

In broad sense digital library is a computerized system that allows users to obtain a coherent means of access to an organized, electronically stored repository of information and data. The digital library is on electronic library consisting of information in the digital, analog and digitized form.

Characteristics of Digital Libraries

digitized library require digital technologies and is the combination of traditional and media collection. So they encompass both paper and electronic material. Digital library consisted of mostly electronic documents, which are of reference type.

- Digital Library is a digital object, which may be text, audio, video, image, and numeric multimedia components.
- Digital library can be accessed from users work place.
- Digital library support formal and informal learning procedures.
- Digital library provides remote to rare and expensive material.

Digital Library requires well tested and proven information technologies including the multimedia kit (Srivastav and Saxena 2004).

Changing Role of Librarians:

Change is the law of nature. The professional or the institution, which does not alter with the passage of time, always lags behind and goes into oblivion after some time. The modern society is information society. The progress and development of any society is directly dependant upon the extent of adoption to a changing environment. The modern world is of information

technology where we cannot find any area untouched with its effect. The library and information science field is no exception to this. Recent development in information technology forced a tradition to new method of operation for Libraries. Earlier the library professions were considered as the custodian of books. Today library professionals are known as information personnel. Present rapid development in communication system and recent innovation in technology witnessed a changing emphasis in the role of information and its management. This changing emphasis necessitates the information professionals to be exposed to the new technologies.

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan stated "Librarianship" is a noble profession. A librarian derives his joy by seeing the dawn of joy in the face of the readers, helped by him to find the right book at the right time.

Concept of librarianship has changed with the change of time. The early recognition of the librarian as a caretaker or custodian of books. Nowadays librarians equipped themselves with the skill of handling the new technologies. Electronic media such as CD-ROMs, DVD, and Floppy Disc etc is replacing physical form of books and journals. Libraries and library professionals as a discipline also therefore undergoing change therefore information literacy is necessary. The information professionals working in electronic information environment requires balance combination knowledge, skills.

INFORMATION LITERACY

"In 1974 Paul Zokawski, president of the Information Industry Association, introduced the concept of information literacy in a proposal submitted to the National Commission on Libraries and information Science. According to Zokawski, people trained in the application of information resources to their work can be called information literate"[P6].

At the end of the decade, the Final Report of the American Library Association Presidential Committee on information literacy (1989), not only recognized the importance of information literacy, but provided a definition i.e. terms of requisite skills. To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information [P.1].

Information literate person, proposing that such a person is one who recognizes the need for information, identifies

potential sources of information develops successful search strategies.

Library has become multimedia libraries electronic libraries, direct access above, computerized and digital libraries. The information technology in the form of Computers, Micro Electronic and Tele Communication has brought out electronically, and is same called as E-information.

E-INFORMATION LITERACY

Having entered electronic environments the expectation from upcoming librarians is quite high and complex; they are expected to have requisite level and depth of information technology knowledge and skills in the modern E-world. As far as information technology related skill required by them in the e-information concern means different levels of literacy. They should skill required for handling IT products, such as computer operating, software, telecommunication products, data file management, DTP, Word Processing etc. The next level of e-information literacy include skill requires to apply information technology for service management and information processing search and retrieval. This involves collection and organization of data in electronic form indexing techniques searching as well as CD-ROM databases. So nowadays librarianship requires a number of skills, tools and techniques, which are also required to manage traditional librarian ship.

UPDATING THE SKILL OF LIBRARY STAFF

In order to manage the changing library environment, the library staff will need to be trained in the application of necessary tools in their work environment. The modern storage media like, CD-ROM, Microfilms, Micro-text, optical laser disc, floppy discs, magnetic tapes and discs etc, play a vital role in the ever-growing information World-Daily routines and functions of the library have been impacted and influenced very much by the modern communication medias like e-mail, e-journal, fax, telex, satellite communication, telecommunications, online network communication etc. So it is very essential to provide approximate training to the library personnel. To handle and utilize the modern facilities librarian must have the Knowledge and Skills about the technologies and communication channels and should provide proper training to the staff.

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Existing information professionals do not go back to LIS Schools to learn about all the latest developments in the electronic information environment. Information science programmers should be framed keeping the view the new challenges so that the future information professionals can do justice to an extremely demanding profession short term courses, refresher courses, seminars and workshops would help the professionals to learn the new information technologies and it will assist the professionals in moving from the traditional outlook to the new electronic phase.

The quality of all the libraries and information services ultimately depend on the caliber, suitability and performance of their staff, properly trained and highly motivated workers are essential particularly in view of increasing complexities in information collection Organization and changing needs of the users.

CONCLUSION

Digital Library is the electronic library, which the information is stored in the digital form. With the advancement and new technology in the field of information librarians need to improve new skills using the new technology and it requires re-orientation of traditional skill of librarian ship information professional and librarians must acquire the new skills as networking and web based technologies, on live searching of electronic database CD-ROM Products e-journals etc. In Multi-Disciplinary Knowledge and Skills are required if information professionals have to survive.

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