Modern Librarian

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Abstract

The emergence of a vast storehouse of information on the Internet poses a different kind of conundrum Librarians, the traditional gatekeepers of knowledge are in danger of being bypassed, their skills are ignored, their advice unsought. Search engines send user straight to the information they require – or so users may think – without any need for an intermediary to classify, catalogue, cross reference, advice on sources.

Key words: software, skills, digitization

Introduction

The location and provision of information services has dramatically changed over the last decade. There is no need to leave the home or office to locate and access information now readily available on-line via digital gateways furnished by a wide variety of information providers (e.g. libraries, electronic publisher, businesses, organizations, individuals). Information is electronically accessible from a wide variety of globally distributed information repositories. Information is no longer simply text and pictures. It is electronically in a wide variety of formats, many of which are large, complex (i.e. video & audio) and often integrated (i.e. multimedia).

Traditional Library

In past time Libraries is like a store house where books are stored in one or two rooms. Where the access points such as, library catalogues as well as library collections are print based and their management is by and large manual.

Automated Library

Library automation which started in late 70s in few special libraries has now reached most of the college libraries. The library catalogue or index to the collection forms the base for most of the library activities such as acquisition, reference, bibliographic service, inter-library loan etc. The users of library card catalogue will appreciate how fast the retrieval is, search and printing in automated environment

Digital/ Virtual Library

What is a digital library? There is much confusion surrounding this phrase, stemming from three factors. First, the library community has used several different phrases over the years to denote this concept-electronic library, virtual library, library without walls-and it never was quite clear what each of these different phrases meant. "Digital library" is simply the most current and most widely accepted term and is now used almost exclusively at conferences, online, and in the literature.

Definition

According to Wiederhold "A digital library is popularly viewed as an electronic version of a library where storage is in digital form, allowing direct communication to obtain material and copying it from a master version.

"Digital Library is a combined technology and information resources to allow remote access, breaking down the physical barrier between resources".

Winensky viewed that 'the digital library will be a collection of distributed information services, producers will make it available, and consumers will find it through the automated agents.'

Digital Library is a "Collection of digital object (text, video, audio) along with method for access and retrieval, [as far as users are concerned] and also for selection, organization, and maintenance (from the point of view of librarian).

Ian Whitten. "The digital library is not merely equivalent to a digitized collection with information management tools. It is also a series of activities that brings together collections, services and people in support of the full life cycle of creation, dissemination, use and presentation of date, information and knowledge.

Advantage of Digital Library

Digital library has certain characteristics, which make them different from traditional library. It has expansive and accurate system of searching with large volumes of text, image and audio-video resources. Digital libraries do not need physical space to build collection and it can be accessed from anywhere, any time. Different people can access same source at the same time. The advantages of digital libraries are mentioned herein below:

· Preserve the valuable documents, rare and special collections of libraries, archives and museums.
· Provide faster access to the holding of libraries world wide through automated catalogues.
· Help to locate both physical and digitized versions of scholarly articles and books through single interface.
· Search optimization, simultaneous searches of the Internet make possible, preparing commercial databases and library collections.
· Offering online learning environment.
· Making short the chain from author to user.
· Save preparation/ conservation cost, space and money.
· Digital technology affords multiple, simultaneous user from a single original which are not possible for materials stored in any other form.

Disadvantage of Digital Library

New technology has brought many advantages but simultaneously it also has certain disadvantage

➢ Costly affair
➢ Technology obsolescence (Hardware & Software)
➢ Storage media relate
➢ Dominance of data creators and publishers
➢ Trained manpower
➢ User education and training
➢ Security against hacking & sabotage

Types of Resources

The resources provided by the digital libraries can be classified into in-house resources and external resources. In-house resources are those resources that are stored in the web server locally and made accessible through the network. E-books, course notes, and application notes etc. are examples of the in-house resources.

The external resources are those materials that are not stored in the web server. External resources include online journals, online databases, online e-books etc. External resources are provided by different publishers - ASME, ACM, IEEE, Oxford University Press Journal (OUP) and many more are there. The publisher provides access to their full text materials by two methods:

(i) Username and password
(ii) Internet Protocol (IP) address based Access Control Method

Changing Role of Library Professional in Digital Age

The ready availability of information on the Internet, and its widespread use, really presents

Librarians with an opportunity, not a threat. Technology Savvy users realize they need help, which Librarians can provide. Librarians now face difficulties and complicity challenges due to new trends in information access.

In the present technological/Internet era the professionals have to change themselves as the information profession is being changed. Now information specialists have to work as e-information resources in which various professional groups are expected to map strategies that leads to produce, manage, maintain and service the information. Information professional has to work as:

Librarian- In addition to being library managers they also act as collection development, technical processors and so on, taking care of information quality.

Information Manager- To meet information need of the user they should know how to manage and deliver appropriate information services.

Information adviser/instructor- Ensure that user/staff know how to access relevant sources of information (literacy).

System & Networking- For delivery of information to their users in an appropriate manner develop and design appropriate systems.

Skills, knowledge, competencies required for LIS Professionals

The basic goal of library and information profession has always been to provide access to information to those who need it. The activities realizing this goal have evolved and transformed over the years. This includes :

- Available technology, and need of an evolving information society. Information activities have been guided by the developments in the field of storages, presentation and archiving of knowledge, collection development and organization of knowledge, information explosion and computers in information retrieval. Librarian and information professional involved in information gathering, storage, retrieval and dissemination on one hand and on the other hand the computer specialists who supports the library and informational professionals in this endeavor. For successful implementation of Digital Library, it is essential that LIS professionals are well trained and possess requisite knowledge and skills in this respect.

Knowledge & Skills

Librarians need to know /understand:–

· Knowledge resources (books, journals, i.e. resources, Internet)

· Teleological facilities and resources (computer, online catalogues, websites, LANs file servers etc.)

· Financial resources (Budget) Human resources (Skills for manpower training)

Competencies that required to possess in LIS professional:

· Posses excellent communication skills, constantly update personal knowledge base by keeping in touch with the latest development

· Create awareness among the users, make them accept the changes

· Be an information management strategist, etc.

· Acceptance of change.

· Knowledge of user interaction with knowledge resources.

· Provide quality service.

· Be adoptive, flexible and resistant.

· Be resourceful

III) Technical Knowledge required :

· General purpose programming, Networking

· Web page Development and Content Management

· Information Retrieval software for online, CD-ROM and Internet.
· Library software packages, acquaintances with Digital Library Tools.
· Operating systems - Windows, UNIX, LINUX.
· World processing, Graphics, Spread sheet & Presentations.
· Database Management Systems including the skills in Bibliographic Database Management Systems.

Conclusion

The world of information is undergoing rapid change. An information age at a great turning point in the history of civilization. The day has arrived when it is most important to learn to access, analyze apply and evaluate such information. As traditional custodians of information, librarians need to be aware of the implications of these changes and develop technological and managerial skills, which will enable them to make effective use of information and to meet their organizations changing information need.

Development of information technology is playing a crucial role in restructuring of the libraries. Shift from human dependent operations to machine dependency, mechanization (data processing) to knowledge processing, stand alone system to network computing, local LAN to wireless access protocol systems. Document centered information to user (Access) centered information; print media to electronic (Access) media, data capture methods, human to machine oriented. Library automating (in-house) to web enabled services (WAN Access), Online information retrieval to CD-ROM Databases to Internet. These prolonged shift in application of innovative IT to library and information profession can be attributed to the changes emanated in the last 2 decades.

The role of librarian has changed in the digital library era. It is, therefore pertinent on the part of the librarian to acquire new skills required for developing and managing the digital libraries. The library and information professionals are required to acquire such knowledge and skills as the library is one of the highly IT influenced service profession. The empowerment of library and information professionals with IT skills is aimed at providing services that are expected of from the clientele in the new environment.

Digital age has brought a tremendous change in the way information is stored and accessed. This has brought about a change in the concept of librarian, their collection and services. Many new terms viz. Digital Librarian, Libraries without walls, virtual libraries, are emerging to describe the libraries of digital age.

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