

Collection Development of Resources in Electronic Environment

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Abstract

“It is the need of the time that every Library should meet the needs of the Readers. The library should be ready to collect and serve the electronic resources. Creating an integrated collection development policy which covers all media is then an important challenge. Electronic acquisitions have to fit into the overall provision. One major issue here is the balance between print and electronic services. Looking to the sources available in the Indian environment is also the issue for this advanced technology. . It is conceivable that a combination of copyright cleared readings and e-books may in the relatively short term be used to replace multiple copies of printed text books in short loan collections. The procedures for selecting and acquiring e-materials still need to be more settled in many institutions. There needs to be clear criteria for selection. In this paper the issues related to Policies, Acquisition, Licensing, Licensing, Management, Digital preservation, Content creation are discussed”

Key words: *need of readers, electronic environment, and collection development policies.*

Introduction

Library in the 21st century is changing the ways from the regular path of the storage and retrieval of the documents. It has become a Information centre not only storage but it is the information dissemination centre. Now it is the need of libraries their own that they should meet the needs of their Users. What is the user’s need? Library should arrange that kind of information. When we are considering the modern scenario it is very important that Library should go for the Online Information sources that are available in the market. It is again very tricky to sort out the perfect resources from the vast collection. A fund is also the issue for the Libraries. Metadata is the tool to search for the particular information sources about their

importance and authenticity. Here it has become a need to develop some policies to develop the collection of Online Resources in the library considering all the aspects related to it.

Policies

Shifting from regular resources to electronic resources could not be the only solutions to the present libraries. Of course, the infrastructure is only there to deliver the content. This leads on to collection development. Creating an integrated collection development policy which covers all media is then an important challenge. Electronic acquisitions have to fit into the overall provision. One major issue here is the balance between print and electronic services. The question of substitution is becoming an urgent one for many libraries. Should electronic sources *replace* printed ones? This is a question that was addressed for bibliographic resources several years ago (who still takes the ISI Citation Indexes in print form?) but is only now beginning to be faced for full text resources. As the situation is moving all of the time, this issue needs constant monitoring. It may however become more immediately relevant in particular areas. Key teaching texts are an example. It is conceivable that a combination of copyright cleared readings and e-books may in the relatively short term be used to replace multiple copies of printed text books in short loan collections.

The procedures for selecting and acquiring e-materials still need to be more settled in many institutions. There needs to be clear criteria for selection. What are the judgments which need to be made about the content and functionality of an e-resource? A large number of issues need to be considered which range from technical requirements through content to training and support implications. At the University of level the library committees are formed to develop a clear protocol for selecting e-journals which involves a subject librarian analysing the deal against a set of criteria. Such a system is often necessary if the library has some kind of electronic resources group which makes acquisition decisions.

Acquisition

The selection and acquisition process itself is often far more complex for electronic materials and includes liaising with suppliers, organising trials and demonstrations, and formal

evaluation. Once a decision has been made, it is ironic that the acquisition of e-resources can often take longer than the paper ones. Sometimes just getting a price from suppliers can take several weeks. Perhaps the reason for these delays is due to the inexperience both of publishers and libraries. It can however sometimes frustrate the expectations of users.

Licensing

The proliferation of electronic information materials means that the relationship between publishers and libraries is changing. In broad terms, there is a movement from the use of resources being determined by public law (copyright and fair dealing) to private agreement (licences). While looking in this issue the Digital Millennium Copyright act 1998 should be taken into consideration. License agreements are private arrangements between two parties. They place the provider in a much stronger position to specify how the information is used and who uses it. Libraries in the UK have been helped to negotiate licences assertively since much of this is done through national agencies, CHEST (for software and datasets) and NESLI (for e-journals). These agencies are currently in a state of flux and it is important that whatever replaces them in the long term is able to maintain a robust stance with publishers. In particular, the need for publishers to allow off-campus and multi-campus access to materials needs to be maintained.

Management

Once material has been acquired it needs to be managed. The management of e-journals is, for example, a particular problem. It is not possible to buy an e-journal package, make it available and then forget about it. There is always an *ongoing* maintenance problem. Packages seem to add and subtract titles on a regular basis. Access problems occur very frequently. Libraries have begun to develop in-house databases to streamline e-journal management for staff and delivery to users. Commercial products are also now being released. Perhaps there is a role here for subscription agents. Libraries will certainly welcome opportunities to hand over some of the laborious administration associated with e-journals to a reliable third party. But whoever manages e-journal delivery, there is an argument that suppliers themselves should be providing a better service here. Suppliers should provide regular updates on the contents of service, MARC records and assistance as standard. In Indian scenario again the problem of funding arise for the

renewal of the existing e-journals. Limitations of technology again may reduce the ratio of use of the e-journals and the funding institution will advise to suspend the subscription. Availability of resources to use such product like continuous power supply, advance devices, network availability with proper speed, security for the internet and also information literacy make effect in the proper use of the e-material. These cause the management of the e-material.

Digital preservation

Another important aspect of the management of e-materials is preservation. In the main, electronic resources have been acquired by libraries to satisfy immediate need. The issue of preservation of electronic materials has been side-stepped. In many areas, libraries have continued to acquire paper in parallel with e-versions. However, as the prospect of e-only versions of material becomes more immediate, the preservation issue becomes more pressing. However, the preservation question remains a key one for all libraries. It will have an impact on the whole direction of local e-collection development policies. Until the issue is nearer resolution, library managers will not have the confidence to move decisively from paper to electronic-only resources. For the proper preservation librarians are looking for the safe mode or devices which could be reliable to store and retrieve the information in future as per the need of users. The speed of advance technology is remarkable now a days, the medias are changing so fast the libraries have to shift form on device to another within the short term period. It resulting on the provision of the funds made in the budget.

Content creation

Of course, electronic resources are not only being *acquired* by libraries but also *created* by them. Libraries are increasingly active in digitising materials both to preserve the originals and to add value to them. Library staff are also increasingly involved in creating content for learning and teaching purposes. Such activity needs to be built into general collection development policies of libraries. Its importance needs to be recognised by library managers and academic staff. For this activity library needs the trained staff to perform the job. The academic libraries in India are not capable for this activity as it needs the technical staff as well as the infrastructure, which is not possible for the Indian college libraries. Although the University

libraries are doing this kind of work by joining the various projects run by the big organizations like UGC.

Systems and technical issues

Integration

Systems and technical issues are major challenges. The fundamental challenge is (still) integration – bringing the different components of the library together as a coherent whole. This is the challenge addressed by the eLib ‘hybrid library’ projects, and some interesting and useful work has been done. Some informative work has been carried out to conceptualise the role of the library in the hybrid information environment. But the practical challenge has not gone away.

One specific practical question highlighted by the hybrid library projects is the relationship between the OPAC and the other elements of the e-library. Is the OPAC at the centre of the hybrid or electronic library, or is it ‘just another database’? For example, many libraries have developed their web sites to be gateways to information resources available to users. They often contain direct links to e-journals, CD-ROMs, and quality web resources. Does the library also put records for all of these items on their OPACs or are these items only accessible via the library web site? Many libraries have developed databases behind their web site to provide access to these kinds of sources. The web site has become a search tool in its own right. With this and the fact web sites and web OPAC interfaces have increasingly been given a similar ‘look and feel’, the distinction between library web site and OPAC has become blurred.

Integration is also fast becoming a bigger problem. Libraries are no longer just dealing with digital textual resources but a wide range of different types of data. These include statistical, mapping, graphical, sound, and moving image materials to name a few. The challenge of creating a navigable online library environment which allows users to move between and around key resources continues to be a big one.

Cross searching and linking

Designing ways of navigating the wide range of resources is a major challenge. The use of various cross-searching and linking technologies is now high on the agenda. Perhaps one of the biggest problems is that there are major inconsistencies in the way in which MARC has been implemented in library OPACs.

New linking facilities are also beginning to emerge. Many of these provide links between different datasets – most usefully between bibliographic and full text resources. Services are now available from many database providers which allow these links to be set up for libraries. However, these linking services are often laborious to create, difficult to maintain and patchy in their coverage. Often the links provided by one data supplier do not correspond to the subscriptions of the library. This so-called ‘appropriate copy problem’ has led to the development of the new technology of Open URLs. The practical value of this technology is still being investigated but it has the potential to play a crucial role in helping users navigate between accessible information resources.

Content description schemas

Metadata remains a crucial issue. Some of the technologies and commercial products above create the potential to cross-search records produced according to different schemas – MARC (for libraries), ISADG (for archives), Dublin Core (for web sites). The problem of the relationship between these different schemas however remains. Can they be successfully cross-searched? Some have suggested that collection level descriptions (CLDs) may partly address this problem. Searching descriptions of collections of material may be a useful preliminary to searching at the item level.

Authentication, Authorisation and Personalisation

Another major technical issue that has major service implications is security, authentication and authorisation. The picture here is a complex one. The place of authentication in a cross-searching world (where users want to use a number of data sources simultaneously),

and the possibility of ‘quiet’ authentication (where authentication and authorisation information is passed behind the scenes without the user intervening) remain key questions.

The related issue of personalisation is also an ongoing challenge. Many of the eLib hybrid library projects did some useful work in this area. Much of this is now relevant for institutions beginning to look at developing portal-type facilities for their users to cover a wider range of services than just the e-library. One key issue, as with personalisation for e-library services, is the extent to which user intervention is required. Whilst users often respond positively to the suggestion that they should be able to tailor a service to their own needs, in practice most users do not do this to any large extent. Tailoring can however be done at a system level for users, presenting them with key information and services which fit their profile. Whilst this needs to be done sensitively, it is often more effective than services which require users to do it themselves. Issues of security and data protection need of course to be considered here.

The serials crisis

Publishers have embraced the electronic future at different rates and with different levels of enthusiasm but most academic publishers are now operating in the electronic environment. They are working to maintain (or increase) their market shares and profits in this new area. In many ways, this has led to the same problems created in the print environment being transferred to the electronic. Perhaps the most significant of these is the so called ‘serials crisis’.

The role of the library

Although the future shape of scholarly communication still remains unclear, what *is* clear is that library and information professionals have a key role to play here. First of all, the library is the natural home for an institutional e-service. Libraries have traditionally managed the key academic information resources of institutions. In the short term, librarians should be active in installing servers locally and smoothing the path for academics to contribute to them. Secondly, librarians should take the role of raising awareness about these issues amongst their academic colleagues and institutional managers. As the professionals who currently interface between publishers and academics, library staffs are in a good position to be well informed on the issues.

Conclusion

The last ten years has seen enormous change in library and information services. National initiatives have helped to facilitate rapid development. But change is set to continue in the next decade. Libraries are going to be expected more than ever to be fast-moving, innovative organisations which can still deliver stable services. Achieving this will involve energetic technical and content development. But it will also involve developing organisations with the right staff with the right skills working in the right structures. It is in this way that we will be better able to support the needs of our users. Though India is vast country and facilities are varies from area to area but still Indian libraries are ready to accept the change and also trying to meet the needs of the readers.

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