

ROLE OF E-RESOURCES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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Abstract:

New technologies have always been of interest for libraries both for the potential of increasing the quality of service and for improving efficiency of operations. At present libraries of all kinds whether public, research academic or special libraries are overwhelmingly looking forward to adopt new technologies mostly use of e-resources due to its potential for cost savings in operations and the management of collections and Patrons. E- Resources are digital objects containing electronic representation of books, journals and other form of reading materials and they are converted into a digitized form in order to be read by a computer.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern academic libraries, a conglomeration of printed books and journals as well as electronic resources (e- resources) where both forms of documents can be stored, retrieved and delivered *as* and when required. The library should have good number of Resources for teaching, learning and Research work. E- Resources offer creative possibilities for expanding access as well as changing learning, teaching and research work. Contents of E-Resources can be accessible, at any place regardless of time, to be read at personal computers. E-books would never to go out of print, and new editions can be easily created.

2. LIBRARY AUTOMATION

The main purpose of library automation is to improve the efficiency of library and to provide optimum user services. The automated library system is capable of handling large volumes of documents and of providing timely and effective information services to faculty, research scholars and students in achieving their goals.

The present Indian libraries are in transitional stage from traditional to modern. The Indian Library has moved from palm leaves, manuscripts etc. to CD-ROMs and digital books.

2.1. Need for Library Automation

- Faster communication and information retrieval, research results, new innovations are communicated speedily to the end users.
- Dissemination of information is very fast. Advances in communication Technology, such as e-mail, fax, image transfer, text transfer has made it possible to disseminate information and delivery of documents speedily to users at remote places.
- Access to unlimited Information resources accurately, efficiently and with up-date Information at their own places.
- Access to Electronic publications, Information on floppies, CD-ROMs excise easily possible.
- Database developments and their sharing on intranets (LAN, WAN) and Internet and access to websites etc are easily possible.
- Identification and loans of the print and non-print materials are easily tackled through bar code technologies.
- Library operation such as - acquisition, serial control, cataloguing, loans, maintenance of stock, documentation, information retrieval resources-sharing, library management, library budget and finance control.
- It gives ability to cope with the increased workload and control over the in-house activities efficiently accurately, cost, time and space effective.
- Provide networking and liaison with the other libraries which helps to the resources sharing among the library and information centers.

To achieve full advantage of technologies, all housekeeping operations of a library need to be computerized along with conversion of existing bibliographic databases to computer readable form.

Primarily hosts a user-friendly interface for browsing library database online replacing the old card catalogue of the library. Most of the integrated library automation systems are now providing web enabled online catalogue [Web OPAC].

3. TYPES OF E-RESPURCES: An e-database is an organized collection of information, of a particular subject or multidisciplinary subject areas. The information of an e-database can be searched and retrieved electronically. Contents

include journal articles, newspapers articles, books reviews and conference proceedings, etc. e-databases usually updated on a daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly basis. Full text databases contain the whole content of an article such as citation information, text, illustrations, diagrams and tables. Bibliographic databases only contain citation information of an article, such as author name, journal title, publication date and page numbers.

3.1 E- Books

An electronic book is a text and image-based publication in digital form produced on published by and readable on computers, other digital devices. E-books are usually read on dedicated hardware devices known as e-Readers or e-book devices. Personal computers and some cell phones can also be used to read e-books. E-books are preferred by the users for their features like portability, upgradeability, note making, citation, changeable font size, links to other relevant sites, searching etc. E-books can be transferred from library catalogue to users e-book readers for a fixed loan period and after which it is automatically taken back. An e-book can be offered indefinitely without ever going “out of print”.

3.2 E-Journals

An electronic journal, as its name implies is a serial containing research papers review articles, scholarly communication, issued periodically in electronic form, by using computer. E-journals may be defined very broadly as any journals, magazine, e-zine, webzine, newsletters or any type of electronic serial publication, which is available over the internet. In the electronic environment teaching, learning and research are being supported by e-journals as new powerful tools. E-journals have an impact not only on libraries but on authors and publishers too. Correct and timely information is a key to sound decisions. Hence, now-a-days majority of the users expect more relevant, up to-date and timely information from modern library and information centers. For these purposes library and information centers need accessibility to a variety of information resources and in various formats. Information from journals can easily, quickly, pin-pointedly and remotely be retrieved, provided the journals are available in electronic format

3.3 Aggregator

An aggregator is a database, collection of electronic publications, most commonly a searchable collection of electronic journals. It provides access to a large number of e-journals from a range of different publishers.⁵ Aggregator has come as a big solution to the librarians as there is no need of contacting each and every publisher for making their publication available for use. It has made it possible to present electronic content as a simplified access to a range of publishers and purchasing of a large collection, allow libraries to quickly address the information needs of their patrons.

3.4 Consortia

With the Information explosion, it is becoming difficult for the librarian to satisfy the increasing information need of the users. Due to economic reason no library is in a position to acquire all such information in print or other form. Due to cost effectiveness, librarians are coming together in the form of consortia for resources sharing. In India, CSIR Consortia, FORSA, IIM Library Consortia, INDEST Consortium and UGC-info net e journal consortium are some of the consortia serving the various kinds of institution in the country.

3.5 E-Reference Sources

Now various vendors and publishers are providing various reference sources in electronic form through their databases and web sites such as dictionaries yearbook, encyclopedia' sets. Some of them are dictionaries online (WWW.dictionaries.com, www.dic.leo.org); yearbooks online (www.uja.org); directories online (www.people.yahoo.com). Etc Wikipedia is a new form of reference source which does not have its printed counterparts. Lots of information are available in the Wikipedia and the most interesting thing is that new information can be added by the user and the information available can also be altered.

3.6 E-Thesis and Dissertation

This is a very useful service as far as the libraries in the academic field are concerned. It reduces the duplication of research works and gives assistance for the

selection of the research area to the users of the libraries. As these can be searched subject wise, it reduces the labor of the reference staff a lot.

4. Navigability In academic libraries to main attraction of the researcher is article of learned journals. Most of these scholarly resources are now available only in electronic form. Most of the electronic journals are now providing a lot of useful linking facilities where in citations are linked to their full text or at list abstract of the cited documents.

5. OPEN ACEESS ARTICLES

Another type of online journals, whose full-text are available in the web for viewing and downloading free of charge, called open access journals. Open Access Articles means online access without access charge to individuals and libraries. Open access can be achieved by two ways - by publishing an article in open access journals or depositing same in open access achieves or institutional repositories. A large number of important full text articles are available free of charges in the personal or institutional websites of few eminent personalities.

6. SELECTION OF E-RESOURCES:

Selection is not a new term to librarian and staff as they have been doing it since long back the libraries started acquiring printed material. However libraries are now focusing to adopt e-resources information technology approaching towards the e-resources rather than printed material as technology developed. In fact, the emergence of Internet, particularly the www (World Wide Web) has a triggered proliferation of web based full text online resources as a new media of information delivery. As the web has grown, not just in popularity and use, but also on content, librarians are trying to meet the needs of the user and identify new resources, such as online databases, web based resources, collections in digital library, e-books, e-journals etc.

The selection process should be done in relevant with the demands of the users, committee, focus group, users recommendation etc. Apart from this, it should taken into consideration the following steps:

- 1) to identify library needs;

- 2) to identify content and scope of the e-resources;
- 3) to evaluate quality of that particular resource and search capabilities;
- 4) to estimate the cost;
- 5) to check either subscription based or web based when acquiring ;
- 6) to evaluate the systems and technical support;
- 7) to review licensing agreements;
- 8) to evaluate application software and installation , updated sporadically or in regular schedule; and
- 9) to check the facilities for educational support and training

7. ROLE OF LIBRARIES

Publishers are mainly controlling the access of e-resources through IP address authentication. In this system, access is provided to all computers of the subscribing institutions. Which are connected to the internet? Although e-resources are accessible from every department, even from a small laboratory ‘of the subscribing institution.

Now, libraries are trying to gradually reduce the number of journals that they are currently subscribing as print resource.

8. NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARY CONSORTIA BASED RESOURCE SHARING

The word ‘consortia’ was originated from the Latin in early 19th century in the sense of partnership. Advanced learners Dictionary describes consortium as ‘a group of people’ countries. Companies etc. who are working together on a particular project.

Information is a national resource and it is necessary for national development. As information becomes a necessary resource and commodity in the digital Era, providing information service is more important to all types for organizations. In academic libraries, librarians are faced with the challenge of providing better services with decreased budget. Consortia can become an excellent way in the process of collection, digitizing organizing and making accessible the electronic resources.

The trend today is forming library consortia for sharing of electronic resources. E-publishing has brought a revolution in journals publication ;subscription

access and journals online has led to a new and still evolving, form of co-operation among libraries and information centers; every individual library now subscribes to a smaller number of journals, usually those most relevant o their organization.

9. DIGITAL LIBRARIES AND INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES:

Digital libraries are complex and advanced forms of information systems that can be endowed with a multiplicity of functions and features. The development of digital library is now considered as the latest craze for many institutions, universities and even undergraduate colleges in India. Without creating sufficient e-resources or digital contents, many organizations are investing a lot to develop digital library infrastructure especially state- of- the- art hardware.

10. CONCLUSION:

It took many years for digital libraries to reach the present state but the Librarian's goal of the fully integrated online digital gateways. Although a library already has a particular journal in print form, but most often, for the sake of integrity and rendering effective value-added services to the users, the library is compelled to subscribe the online access of the same journal for the same period.

In Indian scenario the digitization program.mes are in their initial stages and much needs to be done to prepare a long term strategy to sustain these efforts and preserve the digital resources for future use. There is a need for a proper policy frame work and on technology front there are problems like lack of multiple Indian language OCR facilities, lack of standards etc. which *need* to be developed and implemented.

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