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Importance of internet in library and information services

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the impact of internet on various library processes, services and products. It also emphasizes the challenging role of librarians and information professionals in the present internet era. Today the internet has revolutionized the traditional library activities viz document acquisition, technical processing, circulation, reference service, resource sharing, document delivery, etc. The paper also emphasizes the crucial role of librarians and information professionals in designing and maintaining libraries' web page/website leading to increase in library efficiency.

Keywords: Internet, impact of internet on library & information services, tools & services

Introduction

By the turn of the century, information, including access to the Internet, will be the basis for personal, economic, and political advancement. The popular name for the Internet is the information superhighway. Whether you want to find the latest financial news, browse through library catalogs or exchange information with colleagues, the Internet is the tool that will take you beyond telephones, faxes, and isolated computers to a burgeoning networked information frontier.

One of the most significant achievements in the information and communication sector is the introduction of advanced communication network i.e., the Internet, the technology connecting a computer with millions of computers in the network. The internet today has become one of the most important modes of communication and its services are being exploited by people in every walk of life such as by designing and maintaining library website. Libraries can also project their collections and activities on the site and supplement their services by exploiting the Internet. The scope is unlimited; all that is required is selective and imaginative applications to library activities. Before we see the opportunities the internet and the WWW offer to the library and information professionals, it is better to have brief about what internet is. In the field of library and information science, internet has become one of the most popular and talked about subject. In fact the library profession is one that has been most intensifying affected by the challenges of internet and the World Wide Web (WWW). The shift from collection management to information management, from ownership to access, and the change in nature, boundaries and structure of information all call for a change in mind set of library professionals

Internet has become a part of library environment today. It has added a great value to the library and information services. According to Greyz, "with the expansion of Internet a new class of electronic documents has emerged". Internet is playing an important role in transforming the library system and the way in which we view the library resources and the library services. With the help of web based library services in developed countries, users are attended around the clock. Internet provides links to various library sites, specializing in almost every topic and they can be accessed directly from any part of the world. As the libraries are going web based more and more libraries are becoming accessible via libraries 'web pages'. With an Internet connection, a student in any university of India can browse through the documents in computer of US National libraries or elsewhere in the globe. The Net therefore, provides instant access to billions of information sources which include books, reports, journals video films, sound recording and wide variety of others sources.

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Importance of internet to libraries & information services

Internet has become a part of library environment today. It has added a great value to the library and information services. According to Gryez, "with the expansion of internet a new class of electronic document has emerged, it was at once promising and attractive for its obvious advantage of speed and transmissibility and profoundly elusive and confounding to the library community because of its intangibility and malleability. Within the last ten years, the Internet has become global and ubiquitous. It reaches in hundreds of countries of all continents and is featured daily in the business sections of all major news papers.

Internet is playing an important role in transforming the library system and the way in which we view the library resources and the library services. With the help of web based library services in developed countries, users are attended round the clock. Internet provides links to various library sites, specializing in almost every topic and they can be accessed directly from any part of the world. As the libraries are going web based more and more libraries' are becoming accessible via libraries' web pages. With an internet connection, a student in any university of India can browse through the documents in computers of US National libraries or elsewhere in the globe. The Net therefore, provides instant access to billions of information sources which include books, reports, journals, video films, sound recording and wide variety of other sources. The library and information professionals have a vital role to play in organizing the information and bridging the information gap. Internet has created some of the following new and different service operations.

1. By designing clearly organized, easily accessible and well published library web sites librarians can extend the traditional librarianship to the use of information technology and seize a leadership role in both fields.
2. The Libraries can initiate Bulletin Board Service which gives complete information regarding services, products, and various events organized by them.
3. Ready reference service can be provided with greater speed and in much shorter time.
4. Books and journals can be ordered online, technical processing of the documents too can be done without much effort.
5. E-mail services can be used for delivering information to the users and communicating with the fellow information professionals.
6. E-SDI services can be used for delivering information to the users.
7. Access to various databases and OPAC of other libraries located in remote areas can be provided.

Impact of Internet on Library & Information Services

Perhaps no other recent innovation has impacted the library profession to such a great extent as Internet. Not only is our world becoming an interconnected global community, but this early use of the Internet has changed the fundamental roles, paradigms, and organizational culture of libraries and librarians as well, which created profound impact on L&IS

by offering new modes of information delivery and a vast information source. There is a continuing evolution of the roles and functions of libraries and librarians, which appears to parallel the growth of acceptance and use of the Internet by library professionals. The innovative use of Internet technologies enables us to reach both local and distant users much more easily and effectively than hither to possible. IJISSET - International Journal of Innovative Science, Engineering & Technology, Vol. 2 Issue 4, April 2015. www.ijiset.com ISSN 2348 – 7968 518 Technologies such as email and Web provide tremendous opportunities for library & Inf. Scientists to deliver the information to the desktops of our users. Web offers significant advantage by integrating different library & information services with a common user interface offered by Web browsers. Realizing the potentials, many libraries are rushing to getting the connectivity.

Issues and Challenges in Digital Libraries

Digital Libraries encounter various issues and challenges. In order to construct comprehensive resources such as books, journals, sound records, photographs, manuscripts etc., they must be transformed into digital shape. For that established standards and tools must be required for quality reproduction. Digital libraries appear to have an interaction between information technologists and libraries. Digital libraries are organized collection of digital information. Information resources and the information archives are preserved in the electronic form and transferred through leased line, whether it is through an earth station or gateway access to the internet. Conversion of paper into digital form is costlier and time consuming. Special hardware and software that are essential to view digital objects compounds the problem. Information widely communicated to be stored outside the human memory. Digital libraries organize collection of digital information. Electronic library archives are preserved in a digital form and transferred through leased line through earth station or gateway access to the internet. A complete management system is needed for one to gain control over the selection, acquisition and usage of the existing electronic resources of an institution. The management of e-resources becomes complex when the holdings of the library increased. Libraries need to embrace electronic books to keep up with changing needs of the user community and to develop flexible collection management strategies to meet their users' needs. Searching and retrieval tools compensate the incomplete cataloguing or descriptive information. We have to establish protocols and standards to facilitate the assembly of distributed digital libraries. It is essential to take care of legal concerns associated with access, copying and dissemination of physical and digital library resources.

Need of Library Professionals in the Internet Era

The library professionals need to focus and seize new opportunities and demonstrate how the tools of internet can be gainfully harnessed for improving library services. Internet can be viewed as the biggest library in the world in which information is not properly structured and organized; there are no standardized rules of classification or access. Recent/current literature shows that the best search engines on the internet allows access to only approximately 30% of the information corresponding to search. This underlines the

inadequate methods used to access information despite the best available search engines.

Moreover, there is no guarantee that same query expressed in the same language using various search engines will give same results. The information on the internet is stored in an unstructured way with innumerable databases, each having its own searching interface, also the volatile nature of sites, lack of information on these sites will come in the way of accessing the internet. Taking into account the current and foreseeable increase in the number of documents or the web sites on the internet, these issues will become the crucial problems in access to information. It is therefore, important to seek a definition of catalogue, indexes and thesauri and help of library professional which would provide homogeneous access to information and data.

Internet has many other drawbacks like lack of comprehensiveness, coverage, the inability to distinguish between popular material and research work, lack of controlled vocabulary and also a casual approach of the web page designer often makes the web databases more difficult to search.

Librarians can play a greater role in identification, listing, and classifying information sources and providing systematic approach to accessing the required information. This way they can take rightful place as human agent along side the search engine in searching the internet. In the due course of time the librarians will have to develop new indexing methods and evaluation techniques to tab information from the internet and also establish the classification modes in an open way to allow for those additions of new categories of document that may differ from original priorities. Hence, the uncertainties raised by some people that internet may be a threat to library and library science profession is no longer true.

The scope is only limited to the imagination of library professionals. All that is required by the today's professionals is a thorough understanding of change in concept of librarianship and psychological willingness to look upon the internet and the WWW as an opportunity and respond to the challenges of information resources management and information infrastructure development for harnessing the benefit of the much talk about internet technology in context of the libraries.

Conclusion

The internet has thus integrated nearly all aspects of the library activities, the librarians can now use the Internet for exploiting the catalogue of the other institutions, ordering books and journals online, participate in ILL, use e-mail and discuss through list serves, support reference service through remote databases and most important of all establish library/home pages to project their collection and services on the site. The scope is only limited to the imagination of library professionals. All that is required by the today's professionals is a thorough understanding of change in concept of librarianship and psychological willingness to look upon the internet and the WWW as an opportunity and respond to the challenges of information resource management and information infrastructure development for harnessing the benefit of the much talked about internet technology in context of the libraries.

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