Role of Academic Libraries in 21st Century

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Abstract:

The information technology explosion and its applications in every aspect of life have changed the entire scenario of the present world. The Internet, Web environment and associated sophisticated tools have given the library and librarian a new dynamic role to play and serve the new information based society in better ways. Because of people access information, and has opened up new possibilities in areas such as digital libraries, electronic libraries, virtual libraries, hybrid libraries, M-libraries for scientific information retrieval and dissemination using electronic tools. The paper describes the redefining role of library in present electronic era same as same required skills of librarian in present Information technology environments.

Introduction:

The 21st century is the age of information and Technology. Our society is moving through an electronics culture. Today libraries are changing in tune with electronic Resources. Librarians keep the library on a desktop and retrieve information to the users by using electronic resources like a e-journals, e-books, e-magazines, e-documents, e-newsletters, e-databases, e-records, CD, DVD, CD-ROM. This Article tangibly reflects paradigm shift emerging from technological developments required for effective and efficient services by the academic libraries of 21st Century. The open information culture has shifted focus from subject experts and limited modes to common man's participative

Academic libraries must redefine their role and make serious efforts to keep abreast with developing technology.

Academic Libraries in New Role:

domain where inputs can be simultaneously added and accessed and new modes of wikis, blogs, Web 2.0, information commons, instant messaging are in vogue, where academic libraries has great onus of quenching the quests of information seekers by incorporating the revolutionary technological changes to provide state of the art services.

Academic libraries are the intellectual heart and soul of academic institutions. They have a mission to support students, staff and academic faculties in their research and education by procuring and making the best print and electronic resources available. In recent years, there have been several changes in education models, student's profiles and technologies. Simultaneously, e-revolution has shown a great demand for remote and online access for learning materials in higher education. Library users require more information access options available, including access to full text volumes which can be searched, browsed and printed from desktops. To keep pace with the fulfilment the demand, traditional The abode of knowledge is in transition mode from Repositories to open access, dramatic and drastic changes in acquisition, process, storage and dissemination of information, harnessing and apt application of versatile technologies, gap between user needs and services rendered and from phobia of ICT developments to justify the inevitable changes required in e-environment for sustainability and future life. Libraries have been significantly transformed with the advent of Internet and the ability to provide resources to people who may never visit a physical building, but use resources intensively in their own homes or work places. The unimaginable developments in the information environment such as improved accessibility, interoperability and open access to educational materials has on one side facilitated the nature, role and services but on the other side pose a serious challenge to harness the technology and provide state of the art services, otherwise we will be left behind in the transformational phase. Academic libraries are changing dramatically by adopting new means of technology in all activities of print to e-environment like printed library card catalogues have been replaced by computerized OPAC system with a variety of web-based graphical user interface (GUI) functions, online accessibility for 24/7, availability of numerous e-databases, e-journals, information resources, services for users. To face the new information explosion, academic libraries will have to meet even more challenges and opportunities to serve students, faculty, staff, scholars and other users, all with much expectations and many more demands triggered by the growth of emerging and cutting edge technologies in academic learning environments.

Electronic Library and Academic Library Services:

The introduction of the electronic library service model has introduced more alternative variations of the traditional library services. For example, the traditional library is a server of print bibliography accessible only within the library facilities, but its variance in the electronic library environment is the provision of Internet access not only to the bibliography of the library holdings but also to its full text. Many contemporary libraries employ IT to convert their rare collections, reserve materials that are paper based to digital, and provide remote access to them.

In its attempt to provide services quickly and easily and provide e-library services that include the following:

Page16

➢ Online/offline access to digital information resources;
➢ Database searching;
➢ Public access services;
➢ Electronic reference;
➢ Public relations services;
➢ Library promotion and marketing; E-publishing;
➢ Information literacy programmes;
➢ Online circulation activities, such as electronic reserves;
➢ User Services and queries; and
➢ Online access to library catalogues, databases and the
➢ Internet.

Different Role of Librarian in Present Academic Library:

Today the librarian plays a significant role in information handling. He is rightly known as the information officer or information scientists, and is supposed to provide a service for maximum use of information with minimum cost and time. An information officer is known by this behaviour and capabilities of providing right information to right seeker at right time. Therefore librarians must need to overhaul themselves drastically so as to retain their identity in a rapidly developing information society.

Thus today librarian plays a significant role in a information handling. To become an excellent librarian in the modern time, one should be full qualified, trained with latest technology, should have the leadership, quality and be aware every on-going work of the library. Every product requires advertisement and it could be simple informative or educative. In case of library applications, both informative and educative approaches are required. Librarians are required to provide the user support using the information technology developments like email, chat services, web technology, etc. Multimedia Presentations, Road Shows, Workshops, User Manuals, Helpdesk are some the techniques for user education. The librarian presently play different role in their different work.

➢ Librarian as Knowledge Manager
➢ Librarian as Information Managers
➢ Librarian as Virtual Librarian
➢ Librarian as a Hybrid Librarian
➢ Librarian as a Solo librarian
➢ Librarian as a Cybraian

Required Skills for Librarian in Modern Academic Library:

In addition to the professional skills mentioned, the librarians and information professionals of the future must be equipped with a wide range of personal and transferable skills in order to manage the changing environment in which he or she works. The importance of transferable skills over information technology skills are highlighted here.

➢ Have knowledge of the digital library concepts, current and new advances in the scholarly communication systems, electronic publishing, and creating knowledge databases.
➢ Focus on the quality of information provided, which tends to lead to continuous improvement in achieving the objectives.
➢ Be mineled open and act responsive to the changing environment.
➢ Analyz whole library activities or systems.
➢ Be a strong promoter of diversity in the workplace. Establish trust and respectful relationships with customers and staff.
➢ Develop the skills of continuous learning from the lessons learned or best practices.
➢ Communicate effectively with the colleagues and customers. Keep track of all possible sources where one can have access to information.
➢ Experience in using, managing and troubleshooting computer systems and networks, MS Windows, the Unix operating system, TCP/IP protocol, other related protocols, the Internet, and World Wide Web. or get to solve trouble by others.

Conclusion:

The role of academic library is continuing to evolve with the adoption of Internet and World Wide Web into the profession of librarianship. The role of library has changed mooting in the digital library era. It is, therefore pertinent on the part of the librarian to acquire new skills required for related 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.

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