PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This Article discusses about the public libraries in the present age It also describes about the evolution of the libraries from a traditional library to hybrid library. It says about the need of the digitization of the public libraries & the position of the public libraries in the digital environment. It also explains the future of the public libraries in the digital environment. Finally, it is also explains about the services Digital Public Library.

KEYWORDS: Public libraries, Digital Environment

INTRODUCTON

Man is a social animal. He inherits the culture& collective experience of the community in which he lives. The library is the chief instrument in the accumulation & dissemination of man's intellectual heritage. A man's social status & his vocational occupations are facilitated by his educational attainments. The library is an effective institution for prolonged, systematic self education of man. Formal education at all levels can be conducted more effectively with well equipped libraries. Libraries in general & public libraries in particular have a very important role to play in the development of the social, economic, educational & culture life & progress in a country. Library services to all classes of people are a social necessity for the steady development of the social being. The public library is the social nerve centre of the locality

There are different types of libraries evolved in response to the need of the society

The Major types of libraries are

- **Public libraries**

- **Academic Libraries**

- **Special Libraries**

- **National Libraries**

Public libraries are institutions, meant for the democratization of knowledge. A public library is for all, irrespective of age, profession, race, sex, color or creed. Academic libraries such as school, college & University libraries are primarily intended for students, research scholars & teachers. Special libraries are attached to industrial & research organizations & fulfill the information needs of the personnel in their respective organizations.

CONCEPT & DEFINITION OF PUBLIC LIBRARY

It is difficult to arrive at a precise & agreed definition of the term public library. Though there is much literature

on public libraries, the definitions given for a public library are too elusive to state in simple terms.

A public library is freely upon by all, and in it there is free access to any literature required. It is why the people & enjoyed by the people, and is established by law and maintained at public expense out of local rates and sometimes by state taxes". A public library is established under the clear mandate of law. It is maintained wholly from public funds. A public library levies no direct fees from its users for any of its services. It is open for free & equal use by all members of the community.

Library Evolution

The development is already taking place. The traditional closed access libraries are shifting towards open access. The open access libraries which are shifting towards automated libraries, the automated one towards the electronics, the electronics to digital and finally the digital library end in the virtual library.

Traditional Library

The term traditional library is used to denote the old system of libraries. Where, the collection of the traditional libraries is mostly print media, manuscripts, etc. And are not well organized. The documents are deteriorating at a rapid rate, the collected information is not easy to locate and so does not easily reach to users, again the traditional libraries are confined term of within a physical boundary.

Automated Library

In automated libraries, functions such as library administration, resource acquisition, cataloguing, circulation & serial control are done through the use of computer technology. The holdings of this type of libraries are same as that the traditional libraries

Electronic Library

When automated libraries go to LAN (Local Area Networking) and CD ROM networking & started procuring e-journals and other similar kind of publications then known as electronic libraries. The resources of the electronic libraries are both in print & electronic form. The electronic media are used for storage, retrieval & delivery of information.

Digital Library

The digital library is a recent term to refer to information system & services that provide electronic document text files, digital sound, digital video available dynamic or archival repository. It is a later stage of the electronic library. In digital library high speed optical fiber is used for LAN & the access is over the WAN and provide a wide range of internet based services i.e. Audio and video conferencing and like other. The majority of the holding of a digital library is in the computer readable form and also acts as a point of access to other online sources

Hybrid Library

The libraries, which are working both in electronic or digital and print environment, are known as hybrid libraries. Actually, it is a transitional stage between print and digital environment. It is estimated that in near future libraries will be of a hybrid nature, the strong point in favor of this view is centuries old reading habit of paper, convenience of handling reading of the digitized document some equipment is needed.

FACTORS OF CHANGE TO DIGITAL LIRARIES

The limited buying power of libraries, complex nature of recent documents, storage problem etc. Some of the common factors which are influencing to change libraries to digital mode some other factor are

- Information explosion

- Searching problems in traditional libraries

- Low cost of technology

- Environment factor

- New generation needs

Influence of It on Public Libraries

Information explosion & the fast development of information technology forced to adopt faster methods of information storage and retrieval device. Public libraries are no exception to this change. The public libraries have to adopt this change to meet the ever changing needs of the public. Collection building, organization and retrieval of information are the basic functions of the library. Computer aided systems are more convenient, flexible & economical in the long run. Librarians have worked successfully in the past to integrate computer technology into the day to day library environment. Librarians have to prepare the facing competition & find the ways to make their ICT skills & services distinct from those offered by the competition from media companies, publishers, internet companies & intermediary service providers and also from technologist parking on traditional library territory with technical names for old fashioned library ideas. Librarians have to address the issue & maintain visibility while being part of a successful information infrastructure. In the wired world, the danger of librarians becoming marginalized in envisaged.

Library Automated and Networking

The computer has changed the lives of men in an unprecedented way more than the steam engine, electrical or nuclear energy or any other invention of industrialization. Today the term "Library Automation" is used to refer to the extensive use of computers, telecommunication and reprography technologies that facilitate information scanning and retrieval of micro & macro documents over vast distances in no time. But the information explosion made information handling work manually for storage and retrieval almost impossible. With the advent of computers, specific document or piece of information can be located & disseminated speedily & accurately.

Internet and its influence on public libraries

The internet is becoming an increasingly popular method to access library and information related products and services. The internet is changing the ways that the librarians organize, control and disseminate information. The internet connectivity enables users to log in to databases, send emails, read news, and development files remotely run programs on distant hosts and other applications. The internet has become quite successful in trapping entertainment factor. There are numerous games that may be downloaded from the internet for free. Chat room music, hobbies, news & more can be found shared on the internet. Today the internet has become the most ever powerful communication tool for man throughout the world. By the advent of the internet, our earth has reduced and attained the form of a global village

Online Information Services

Online information search is a method of accessing & searching from a remote terminal the information stored in a computer. Online search provides instant access to a vast resource of information stored in multiple databases for a time shared computer & searching relevant information among the accumulation of a large volume of information and scientific knowledge all over the world. Resource sharing is an effective medium of library cooperation through which a number of libraries join together to form a network of libraries. It is a cooperative endeavor that aims at extending access to the resources and services of member libraries to a wider category of user in the region.

Library Consortia

Due to shift of print editions to e-formats & their proliferation, we have felt the need of going into resource sharing through consortia purchasing due to escalating costs of journals; pricing & licensing models. In the Indian context, consortia deals are more acutely felt & initiatives started much later when compared to many developed countries. To begin with a small group like minded library professionals started coming together& made headways for negotiating consortia terms & conditions so as to access large amount of information with optimum payment as of now, we have a few consortia formed and each one is a model of its own as far as funding/affiliations are concerned. Consortia like INDEST & UGC INFONET function more professionally & are fully supported Government funds. Consortium's efforts are being very much appreciated by the campus wide boy and users as they are facilitated to access a large number of e-resources. Public libraries also benefited with this consortium.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

The public libraries have undergone the impact of the changing information environment from time to time. Advances in microforms, audio-visual formats have supplemented the collections of print the advantages of managing & marketing techniques helped them to promote library use to the optimum level. The application of statistical techniques facilitated to make good evidence based report was made & get grants from authorities. Some of the factors which had contributed to the growth of next generation libraries are

- Automation of library activities is inevitable

- Services conventional are not adequate needs to be supplemented with web based

- Fixed library hours replaced by global access for 24x7 hours

Under these changing circumstances all types of libraries are adopting the ICT & striving to sustain in the digital environment, public libraries are not an exception to the impact of ICT. The present day libraries are transforming themselves into LRCs (The Learning Resource Centers) in the academic institutions or environment, TCs (Technical Information Centers) in the research & Development centers, CIC (Community Information centers) CRCs (Community Resource Centers) in the rural or urban societies or environment, Information Therapy centers in the clinical/medical environment, Digital Libraries, Virtual Libraries, Online libraries, Wiki's, Blogs, Gateways, Portals etc. In the Web or internet environment.

Digital Library

A digital library is a library in which collections are stored in digital formats & accessible by computer. The digital content may be stored locally or accessed remotely via computer network. A digital library is a type of information retrieval system. Ray R. Larson defined that ' Digital library is a global virtual library. The library of thousands of networked electronic libraries

"Digital libraries are organized collections of digital information. They combine the structuring & gathering of information, which libraries & archives have always done, with the digital representation that computers have made possible.

THE COMPONENTS OF DIGITAL LIBRARIES

Repository

Repositories store & manage digital objects & other information. A large digital library may have many repositories of various types including modern repositories legacy databases and web servers. The interface to this repository is called the repository access protocol (RAP).

Handle System

Handles are general purpose identifies that can be identified internet resources, such as digital objects, over long periods of time and time to manage materials stored in any repository or database.

Search System

The design of the digital library system assumes that there will be many indexes & catalogs that can be searched to discover information before retrieving it from a repository

RESOURCES OF A DIGITAL LIBRARY

The resources of a digital library are those, which the computer can store, organize transmit and transmit & display without any intervening conversion process. It includes either print & electronic or Digital material. The Digital material may be of multimedia type or any other i.e. Only digital audio, video, full text information, photograph, drawing, digitized sound, e-book, v-book, electronic tax, map, image, 3D representation, etc. The collection may also include structured text, scanned images, graphic audios, video recording etc.

- E-book, v-book, Electronic tax, Map, Image, sound, Video & Multimedia

- Local database of traditional books in machine readable form

- LAN, MAN, WAN for browsing, e-mail etc.

- Well trained manpower for online help off line resources

  CD ROM, Jukebox. etc.

  Audio Visual aids, etc.

Digital Public Library Requires

- Locally developed database

- Email Service

- A local library system with adequate Personal Computers having LAN & CD ROM drives

- Network connection to have access to another database

- Well trained manpower

- Multimedia kit

- And other computer hardware & software

Future of the Public Libraries

The digital environment change to age old concept of libraries to migrate from "A hierarchical to a matrix structure'. In order to implement this change the library needs to develop a strategic plan. Its vision, values should be evaluated & redesigned based on critical success factors

- Customer oriented culture

- Innovation of new technologies

The Idea Future of the Public Library in Digital Environment

- Its own nothing

- Maintain nothing

- But surely it provides access to information

- At any time

- From anywhere

- To anybody

PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

The internet, digital library offers a variety of services used to create, browse, access, search, view & communicate information. Public library provides Digital library services to its users.

Online Catalogue of Library & Information Center

The machine readable catalogue of the library & Information centre can be made available through internet web

Shared Cataloguing

A librarian & information manager to use the catalogue information available in major universities. Library or a resource center cataloguing new publication added to the library. A document is catalogued only once at the time of the entry into the network, of other libraries, which procure that documents later need not spend time in the network, on other libraries, which procure that documents later need not spend time in cataloguing if but can download the cataloguing information from the network.

Electronic Mail (E-Mail)

E-mail was originally described for communication between pairs of individuals. It has been extended to provide communication among group & to provide communication with a computer program. As a result E-mail has become one of the most widely used services on the internet.

Current Awareness Services (CAS)

List of latest additions to the library, namely books, patents, periodicals, standards, audio visual & web for user attention

Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)

Users request is collected through E-mail. The description & matched against latest available documents & the required users are contacting through E-mail.

Bulletin Board Service (BBS)

The major Bulletin Board Service available on the internet is known as network news. Network news consists of thousand individual bulletin boards on topics as diverse as education, hobbies, science, politics, entertainment & employment opportunities.

World Wide Web (www)

Internet browsing service enhances information access in significant ways. It uses an interactive paradigm that allows a user to view documents from remove computer pre term tidings file transfer.

Externally Procedure Database

Silver Platter, INSPEC, IMAC, COMPENDEX, ISA, PROQUEST, MEDLINE, CAS

ADVANTAGES OF THE DIGITAL LIBRARY

The spoken words or the graphical display of a digital library is again having a different impact from the words that are printed. In the new environment, owning a document will not be problematic for the library because the user will pay for its use

No Physical Boundary

The users need not to go to the library physically. People from all over the world can gain access to the same information, as long as an internet connection is available.

Round The Clock Availability:

A major advantage is that people can gain access to the information at any time, night or day.

Multiple Accesses:

The same resources can be used at the same time by a number of users

Information Retrieval:

The user is able to use any search term bellowing to the world or phase of the entire collection. Libraries can provide very user friendly interfaces, giving clickable access to its resource

Preservation and Conservation:

An exact copy of the original can be made any number of times without any degradation in quality

Structured Approach:

Digital library provides access to much richer content in a more structured manner i.e. We can easily move from the catalog for the particular book them to a particular chapter and so on.

Space:

Whereas traditional libraries are limited by storage space, digital libraries have the potential to store much more information, simply because digital information requires very potential to store much more information, simply because digital information requires very little physical space to contain them. When the library had no space for extension digitization is the only solution.

Cost:

The cost of maintaining a digital library is much lower than that of a traditional library. A traditional library must spend large sums of money paying for staff, books rent & additional books. Digital libraries do away with all these

Networking

A particular digital library can provide the link to any other resources of other digital library very easily, thus a seamlessly integrated resource sharing can be achieved.

CONCLUSIONS

The demand for digital information has increased. So that in the future, it will be very important for a library to have its collection accessible, as well as the variety of the links it offers. There is the reason why we have to digitize our collection. Now a day we can find different forms of digital information such as information stored in CD ROMs and DVDs information created by the owner library by digitizing its collection, information obtained through the internet. It is a fact that the technological changes brought drastic change from a paper library to digital library i.e. The users are going for a piece of information from any remote source through the web. In other worlds, a library centered world view is shifted to user centered. Information in the future will be produced, transmitted & consumed more and more in electronic form.

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