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PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN DIGITAL LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on a collection development of conditions under which electronic resources are used in libraries. Collection development, organization and management of a collection are essential for satisfying users need in all types of libraries. The basic components of any library are collection, users and staff with the collection being the heart of it. Libraries are changing with time from mere storehouses of collection of documents to dynamic service centers. The present period is a period of digital libraries, electronic libraries and virtual libraries. All these changes demand development of modern skills to both library professionals as well as users. Collection as defined by the Webster Dictionary is a "publication containing a variety of works". However, in the connotations of library science, the term collection refers to book selection, library acquisition, building the collection and developing it (i.e. collection development). All these terms are used to describe the process of building a collection in the library,

KEYWORDS

digital libraries, collection development problems, electronic libraries.

INTRODUCTION

The library and information centre is a part of any educational institution, which is the hub of the teaching, and learning activities where students, teacher and researchers get their required information according to their need. In the libraries users have to spend much more time for searching a small piece of information and for that they have to depend mainly on the library professionals or library staff. But in the age of information communication technology, computers are being used for day-to-day housekeeping activity of the library, which saves the time of the end users, and library professionals also and at the same time avoid duplication of work and make the library service smooth and effective.

Information Technology has changed the world and has become the important tool for retrieving information. Now days, library collections are not limited to printed documents only but also electronic resources. Collection development represents not just the acquisition of information, but a strategic investment in knowledge. Ideally the guiding principles, goals, and strategies of this process are formally stated in collection development policies. These policies are based upon an understanding of the strengths and weakness of the collection.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Collection development and library services are the priority tasks for librarians. The qualitative library services provided only when qualitative collection is available in the library.

Term collection development is defined by many but ALA (1995) defined a very suitable definition as "A term which encompasses a number of activities related to the development of the library collection, including the determination and coordination of selection policy, assessment of potential user needs and, collection use studies, collection evaluation, identification of collection needs, selection of materials, planning for resource sharing, collection maintenance and weeding."

The process of collection development consists of:

- Collection development is not a single activity but a group of activities which involve the contribution of librarian, library committee, booksellers, publishers and the users for sole satisfaction of users from the collection.
- Planning for systematic and rational building of collection.
- Finally ALA defines "All the activities associated with building and shaping library collections, including planning, goal-setting, decision making, budgeting selecting, acquiring and evaluating hem."

NEED OF THE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

There are many factors which made librarians to consider while acquiring reading or information material for libraries like:

- Information explosion or information Overload.
- Increase in prices of documents.
- Increasing users demands due specialization.
- Limited and shrinking library budgets.
- Shift in demand of users from collection based services to information and access based services.
- More usage of e-documents.

OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

- Asses the user needs as well aim and objectives of parent body for collection building.
- Support to teaching, learning and research endeavors.
- Provide relevant information.

PROBLEMS OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN DIGITAL ERA**(1) PROBLEMS OF USER-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT**

We found that there were several inconveniences, including difficulties to find a terminal in the library (providing some electronic publications can only be accessed on the site), to locate specific database though the library resource portal and to search each individual database. A user-friendly environment (meaning both the

physical settings and the organization of user interface) is of great importance for the users who used to hesitate to try the unfamiliar electronic publications. To set up a wireless local area network (LAN) within the library coupled with proper management is an effective solution to the problem of physical inconvenience and at the same time without excessive investment in hardware by the library. The wireless LAN will make it much easier for users to enter the LAN at any place within the library to explore the e-journals with their own notebook PC, so a win-win situation will be created. With the limitation of location, the scheme may be acceptable to content providers. It is critical for users to feel comfortable with resource organization, both at the front page and at the back of the stage.

(2) PROBLEMS OF USER TRAINING

The problem regarding user training is important, henceforth, to upgrade the users' skill to access e-publication is training. The training is designed according to the uncertainty and mobility of readers within the public libraries (Williamson et al., 2003). Most public libraries have user-training programs but these free courses are not enough.

(3) PROBLEMS OF DIGITAL DIVIDE

Current day society is marked by a growing need for information skills at all levels, including school, university, workplace and ordinary life. This is in line with the increase in access to the internet and the diversity of people using the internet. Similarly, there is an increase in outcries to bridge the digital divide. Against the background that will be portrayed in the following paragraphs, the authors realized the increased urgency to bridge the digital divide. According to our interpretation the digital divide concerns much more than access to technology infrastructures and information seeking skills. Students often come from very diverse backgrounds in terms of their opportunities to access and use ICT. Students coming from rural areas often, for example, do not have access to ICT. It is generally assumed that such diversity might impact on their ability to function in the changing environment and to prosper. The problem, however, is more complicated.

(4) PROBLEM OF LIBRARY CLASSIFICATIONS

A library classification is a system of coding and organizing library materials according to their subjects that simplifies subject browsing. Library classification systems have been used by catalogers to classify books and other materials in physical libraries for over a century. The two major classification systems used today in libraries around the world are the Dewey Decimal Classification system and the Library of Congress Classification (LCC) system.

(5) PROBLEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

To successfully meet the future, we believe that libraries must change from static resource centers to dynamic centers of instruction, exploration and learning. Achievement of this ideal vision challenges many traditional conceptions of the library as a physical entity as well as a service provider. The relationships with various university constituencies and campus partners must be revisited and reframed, both internally from library staff members' points of view, as well as externally from faculty and students' viewpoints. In order to accomplish needed changes in perception and outcomes, we employ interactive planning to advance library staff members' capacity to make transformative design/redesign decisions. Our dialogue-driven staff development approach is based on systems thinking frameworks that create collaborative learning opportunities in the workplace. This serves to enhance participants' abilities to share information for innovative knowledge generation within work teams, learning communities, and social networks. Doing so will increase the perceived public value of the library in the academic purposes.

CHALLENGES OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN DIGITAL ERA

Although a large number of libraries keep some sort of electronic publications (mainly the formal publications on CD-ROM and online), the usage is quite different from one library to another. While the hardcopy business process is mature, the rules and regularities of electronic publications in libraries are under development; many business models are on a trial basis. What and how many of these electronic materials should be bought and brought to the users, and how they are used, are still embarrassing questions for librarians. As a part of the effort to improve the usage of electronic publications in public libraries, the authors made an inquiry into the current status of formal electronic publications, including e-books and e-journals within the two major library groups: public and university libraries. We found that although the e-book (including both the full-text contents and the hand-held readers) is well publicized in India, its development has been left behind by that of the e-journal. The e-books experienced a detour of development; some earlier projects of book imaging were trapped in the intellectual property problem. Currently very few commercial providers of e-books are in the market – even the biggest one can provide only a small portion of the books published every year, while many hardcopy book publishers would rather confine their electronic version service to their own homepages. On the other hand, e-journals have been coming in a comparatively smooth way. The foreign e-journal dealers, for example, Springer, Ebsco, Elsevier Science, etc., have also entered this market successfully. (Feng Bin and Qihao Miao, 2005).

1) CHALLENGES IN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN ELECTRONICALLY

The major challenges that we face today in this regard are: Complicated procurement and preservation system There are a very few reliable suppliers of digital documents in India. The lack of comprehensive and up to- date selection tools for digital documents further adds to the problems of a librarian. Foreign documents and far off markets are other problems in the way of electronic collection development. Even selective Digital archive will be massive. Who is to ensure that governments, organizations or publishers will maintain these archives for centuries in future? Hardware and software needed to preserve today's documents and use them decades later may not work. The hardware used to gain access to digital information changes radically and quite frequently. This means that preservation programmes must also involve considerations needed for access in future.

2) CHALLENGES REGARDING TECHNOLOGICAL UP GRADATION

Periodical transfer of digital material from one hardware/software configuration to another or from one generation of computer technology to a subsequent generation is quite a common trend and a big challenge to e-collection development. The purpose of this migration is to preserve the integrity of digital objects and to retain the ability for clients to retrieve, display and otherwise use them in the face of constantly changing technology (Nagar, 2003). Obsolescence of equipments required to access digital information directly affects the longevity of digital information (Bhatt & Singh, 2004).

To ensure longer life of the digital information a continuous development and up gradation of information storage and access techniques and technology is a must. Non compatibility of organizational culture to digital environment Organizational cultures of most of the libraries due to their following features becomes a great hindrance in the way of e-collection development (Deoghuria, 2004). The others are :(a)Non availability of full time highly skilled computer professional in libraries; (b) Lack of coordination between computer professionals within and outside the organization; (c) Lack of interest to keep track with the ever-changing information seeking behavior of library users;(d) Lack of interest to add values to their services;(e) Lack of interest to interact with users; (f) Lack of interest to utilize physical space of the library; and (g) In developing digital environment electricity/power plays a major role. We cannot think of digital library, which can work off efficiently without power for several hours. The other related problems like poor quality of telecommunication services, lack of technology standards, legal restrictions are also there.

3) CHALLENGES REGARDING FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS FOR COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Cost involved in the creation and maintenance of digital library environment is quite high. In this context, financial restraints are much more severe in developing nations like India than the developed ones. Nowhere in the world are library budgets keeping pace with the growth of information, documents and ever-increasing demand for them. The budget allotted to most of the libraries, however remain static year after year. Even if there is no such cut, the purchasing power of the allotted money goes on dwindling due to inflation. Though the problem of shrinking budget is a universal one, it is quite serious in India on many counts.

4) CHALLENGES REGARDING IT SKILL MANPOWER

Traditional library science education with less emphasis on IT skills still continues in Indian universities. As a consequence of it, the library personnel in most of the libraries in India are happy with the existing routine procedures and services. In the recent years many libraries have hired computer professionals to handle the purchase and other issues related to digital documents. This gives an assumption that computer professionals are taking precedence over the library professionals. It has happened so because many a time librarians have given responsibilities of selecting and handling electronic resources to computer professionals. Some complications are also there due to the advent of new resources. All these changes have happened quickly, and adapting to them is not always easy or comfortable.

There are no opportunities for continuing professional education for the collection development methods. Gradual shift-over towards digital info high-tech from traditional rudimentary adherence has given rise to certain fears in the minds of the library professionals (Das, 2004).

5) CHALLENGES OF USER SERVICE

Librarians need not to teach readers how to browse a hard copy book, but they may have to teach users how to use an internet browser. The status of so-called self-service, where the users themselves grope in the dark of virtual space, will inevitably harm the full exportation of e-journals. The situation will be improved substantially if librarians take a more proactive role to help users, especially newcomers. The accumulated experience of librarians in digging up bits of knowledge out of e-publications opens up a wide area of in-depth user service. Subject reference librarians can make use of advanced tools, from search engine to knowledge mining kit, in order to find an answer to the specific question rather than an article in certain journals (Connaway and Lawrence, 2003).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The advent of digital libraries at the turn of the twenty-first century has been mired with several aspects including the development of appropriate technologies, issues related to storage, rights management, and so on. Digital libraries, along with associated technologies and related issues, are still somewhat in infancy with very few fully established digital libraries the world over. The concept of digital libraries itself varies greatly with several known definitions. With digital library technologies maturing, storage capacities increasing and digital access improving, the focus needs to be crystallized on content for digital libraries. This clearly shows that digital library creators as of today focus less on content compared to other aspects. Consequently, it may be appropriate to conclude that copyright issues with regard to content in digital libraries are hardly on the radar of digital library creators. Although, digital library creators presently focus on areas other than content, the creators realize that content is the key for success. It has been reported that for the success of information gateways, the effective selection of high-quality content forms the chief rationale for the gateway approach. The content includes selection criteria, technical and policy issues, management, recommended standards and conventions, creation of metadata, provision of browsing and searching (Heery, 2000). Digital content creation requires strategic leadership, sustainability plans, and cognizance of best practice in the field. During creation of digital content, staff gains valuable skills that can be utilized by taking contract projects. This will also create new audiences for such types of material there by opening up the collections to the world. However, high-quality digital content creation is an expansive undertaking (McMenemy, 2007). It is well known that in a largely print based traditional library setting, acquiring the content is a relatively easy task. But this is not the case with digital libraries. The variability of digital content per se and the variability in the availability of content is increasingly becoming a problem for digital libraries. Variability of digital content per se include the types of content such as text, audio, video, pictures, etc. types of file formats such as DOC, PDF, JPEG, AVI, and so on. Normalizing, these and other varied content in digital libraries may be less challenging today owing to technological developments. But choosing content in light of copyright issues may be a daunting task. Although, the copyright issues with regard to digital content have been a subject of discussion in earlier studies, the same have not been looked at from the content creation point of view.

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