



Changing Role of Library Professionals in the Digital Age

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Abstract

The role of the library professionals is one undergoing continual change and growth due to the advancements occurred in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The role of the library professionals has become more dynamic and challenging in the digital age. The library professionals are facing new challenges because of unprecedented explosion of information and its availability in different forms which are created by globalization, privatization and liberalization of every aspect of human life in one way and emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its application in generation, communication and access of information in another way. To cope with these problems, the modern librarianship needs to be change in their philosophy and practices from custodian of document to information provider. There has been a paradigm shift in the way libraries used to manage as traditional store house to access providers. Therefore, the present digital environment has brought a lot of changes not only on the library and information services but also can the roles and expectations of the library professionals to satisfy their user's information demand. This paper covers the changing role of library professionals in the digital age.

Keywords: - Library Professionals, Information Professionals, Digital Libraries, Changing role of Library Professionals, Challenges in Libraries.

1. Introduction: -

In this age of Information Technology, there have been so many opportunities for the LIS professionals for involvement in an information-based society including electronic and multimedia publishing; Internet based- information services, global networking, and web based digital -resources etc. Now-a-days library is not judged by quantitative resources. This is widely used changes can be managed effectively and efficiently to provide accurate information the right time user. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) not only affected complex houses keeping the operation of the library, but collecting facilitating communication through the network for storage information dissemination and inter-based services have become a huge ocean.



As well as timelines, rapid development of information technology, new ways of communication have been implanted and the information previously modified, preserved and propagated has been modified. Now-a-days, electronic media such as CDs, DVDs, microfilms, videotapes are replacing the physical form of library documents. We also see books in other documents in electronic form as a source of information about the conversion of books into e-books, e-journals of online journaling, online e-papers. Those developments that can now fast and efficiently meet all user information requirements. All these conversions demand the transfer of library professionals from the traditional library system to digital and virtual libraries. ICT has changed as well as library professional technology is changing quickly so library professionals need to upgrade with new technical awareness, only then they can provide the best possible service of their target users.

2. Changing Role of Libraries:

At one time libraries were just regarded as storehouse of books whereas library professionals were merely as custodian of these books. With the advent of technology the scenario of libraries has changed. The rapid change in technology has become the major cause of revolution in the field of library & information services. It has changed the mode of delivery of services from traditional information sources to e-resources, online databases and online information storage & retrieval etc. Computers are being used in the libraries to process, store, retrieve and disseminate information. The combine of computer and communication technologies introduced a series of changes in the functioning and services of academic libraries. These changes are so substantial as not to spare any area or process in the library from them. The entire library is, more or less, put on scrutiny for change to avoid repetition and redundancy, time lag and delay in the whole working of the library, by new and novel communications and linkages possible due to the application of technology. This ICT based phase of library development has resulted into not only extending the access of library users to the documents extensively but also quick retrieval of bibliographical and textual information.

The rapid development of technology, digitalization of information, availability of e- resources and increasing demand of users has changed the scenario of libraries in the present era. Now-a-days libraries have reached beyond the four walls of building & have reached into digital or virtual libraries. The information and communication technology also brought the drastic change in traditional method of information storage, retrieval and dissemination, which posed challenges for library professionals to move from traditional role of Lecturer-Library to information or technology manager. Today's Lecturer -Library needs to update with the latest technology.



3. Changing Role of Library Professionals:

Lecturer-Library is a professionally trained person responsible for the care of a library and its contents, including the selection, processing and organization of resources and the delivery of information, instruction and loan service to meet the needs of its users.

In the traditional librarianship, the Lecturer-Library has to play role as Library Administrators, Classifier, Cataloguer, Indexer and Bibliographers, etc. The role of Lecturer - Library has been changing day to day, due to the changes occurred in the forms of information. In the Modern World, the role of the library professionals is adapting to changing technologies, information environment and customers expectations. Library professionals are increasingly responsible not only to provide traditional library information services but also to deliver online information services according to the actual user needs. Lecturer-Library need to keep us with their user expectations to survive and service them Lecturer-Library need to become information knowledge navigators who distill data into usable information.

In the present digital environment, advancement in ICT, options of sources, format of information and way to flow of information has great impact on the role of library professionals. The development of collection tools, approaches and techniques are become global. Therefore, the library professionals are forced to change the way. They are functioning in information need of their users. The change role requires different personalities of Lecturer - Library as well as different skills and knowledge. The focus is on power to draw together different forms of communication, smoothly integrating them within a digital environment and providing access to the stored information using ICT tools and services. The library professionals in libraries will become agents of accessibility and integration, linking users in a range of digital information available licensing agreements or other means. The rapid progress of technology has changed the role of library professionals from traditional libraries. Lecturer-Library today's play an important role in the preservation, management and retrieval of data electronics. They are playing a lot of role in the present era, information specialist, information provider, knowledge manager and technology expert etc. Today's academic library professionals are not just keepers of documents but they are information personnel.

4. Libraries in New Information Age:

The information has now become the most strategic asset that transforms the world economy. ICT changes have been brought about in 21st century; different aspects of human life new opportunities given by ICT business, education and communication etc. have been cast in a new society in the world knowledge society or information society. So, the world has become a global village. The library is basically one of the main areas affected by ICT information age backbone. For this reason, the library is the main information and the knowledge has been virtualized to expand beyond the walls of the library services and physical building. Each of the



information is increasingly growing at every high speed in the field of science and technology. Library professionals must keep pace with the shifted progress in the field of Information Technology (I.T.)

5. The Challenges Faced by Library Professional:

We know that all library professionals have not computer expert, and library professionals cannot go back to the library school to learn about the latest developments in the electronic data environment. Library professionals can be trained on the latest developments in the field of libraries. The library professionals in India were subjected to various challenges, the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the new digital technology was a big challenge for Lecturer-Library. It's about the conclusion was reached that the Lecturers- Library are ready to take part in the production process distribution of information and knowledge for life and education quality for all. Today's Lectures-Library has to train them to manage knowledge and fit the age of information acting as knowledge manager. In this context, the following challenges are faced by them-

- ◆ Library as a knowledge management center.
- ◆ Sharing existing knowledge.
- ◆ Library as access provider.
- ◆ Data transfer
- ◆ Data filtering

6. Advantages of Technological Library:

- ◆ Digital libraries can be accessed at any time, 24 hours a day and 365 days of the years.
- ◆ Provide quick access to libraries through internet/network.
- ◆ Offer online learning environment.
- ◆ Reduce the physical save taken up by library material.
- ◆ Library materials are available for users.
- ◆ Save the time of users as well as library professionals.

7. Disadvantages of Technological Library:

- ◆ Electronic media is not safe.
 - ◆ Hardware and software is costly.
 - ◆ Data creation and publication problems.
 - ◆ Downloading and printing often is in difficulty.
 - ◆ User need to remember different passwords for different folders.
 - ◆ Security threat.
 - ◆ Shortage of trained manpower.
 - ◆ Lack of knowledge to access required information.
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8. Future of Library Professionals:

Information technology is rapidly changing the whole world, creating new challenges and opportunities. Library professionals have to face a lot of complex challenges, make use of the technological opportunities and respond to all these changes positively. Library professionals with latest technological competencies are in great demand. They have great opportunities and bright career prospects until they improve their professional and technological competencies. Otherwise, it becomes even difficult to survive in the modern libraries. Those professionals that anticipate and embrace change constructively, creatively and intelligently will be the ones, who are most likely to survive, prosper, develop and succeed rather than decline and suffer in the future. Library professionals need vision for modern professional skills and technological competencies in order to survive to the 21st century.

9. Conclusion:

Today we all agree that to cope with the changing dimensions of digital environment. The explosion of information and information products today users are increasing unable to deal with the problem of information overload. The fundamental goal of library is to provide right information to right users at right time and to fulfill this goal. It is necessary for library professionals to keep pace with the changing need and demand of users in present digital environment. Technology will continue to change, and libraries and library professionals have to use the changing technology to provide the best access of resources and services to their users. Therefore, library professionals have to accept these challenges in the digital age and try to change their role from a custodian of knowledge to a knowledge manager or information facilitator for their utmost survival and sustain. The 21st century will be the age of paperless society and Lecturer-Library need to possess the knowledge of Hypertext mark-up language, auto-indexing system providing Current Awareness Service (CAS) through advanced technology, networking and multimedia technology with a special ability of digitization of data and digitally preservation of the same. For this purpose they need new skills and competencies to manage and create many information sources and services.

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