Capacity Building and Reformation of LIS Centers in the Present ICT Era

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Abstract

Capacity refers to the ability of an organization to achieve its mission, doing so effectively over time (Linnell, 2003). This paper discusses the basic aspects of library capacity building leading to reformation of library and information service centers in the present changing scenario of ICT. It also focuses on a conceptual framework of capacity building & library restructuring, role of capacity building in the area of user care, impact of competency, various challenges facing by the LIS centers. Capacity building involves human resource interfaces in organizations to increase operating efficiency, expertise and skills of personnel towards the achievement of organizational excellence and concurrently library capacity is focused on community building.

Keywords: Capacity Building, Library reformation, ICT

1. Introduction

In the discussion of LIS, capacity building promise a great reformation and renovation of systems, services, information infrastructures of library and information centers form meeting the topical elevated needs of users’ community. In conformity with the basic principles of capacity building, library and information professionals need to come out with novel ideas of restructuring their information infrastructure, systems, services, and all sorts of library operations for the fulfillment of comprehensive needs of each and every user pin-pointedly just in time. Therefore, it is quite essential for the information professionals to understand as to what constitute library capacity building. We have attempted to put focus on key considerations for capacity building and reformation of LIS centers.

2. Need for Library reformation

In the case of libraries, a feasible plan to enhance user services is to organize a library into subject divisions, with professional librarians located at each one of them. This plan is targeted to increase gradually the subject expertise of librarians working in each subject division through their experiences with users. To carry out this new modified organization, the conventional library setting needs to be changed from placing books according to their forms (e.g., monograph publications, periodicals and reference books), to organizing them according to theirs subjects (e.g., philosophy, economics, law, physics, computer science).

Taking the transformation a step further would be to allow technical services to be taken care of within each subject library as well (Shin and Kim, 2002) and this is a stepping stone to capacity building since restructuring and reorganizing can make room for amending the chance of scattering of information by the process of integration and reorganization of information under the specific subjects for effective and efficient traceability.
3. Library capacity

Library capacity consists of the staff in the library, its culture, attitude, environment, and appearance. It requires commitment to training to develop people skills. It requires libraries to identify and take advantage of opportunities and strengths. The Community Development Handbook identifies factors that confirm capacity is being built, “People are active, interested, and participating in what is going on. People may question, challenging and debating – but they will be debating what should do, without complaint. More people are getting involved, helping to identify issues, and taking action. Results are becoming obvious and the abilities, esteem and resources of many communities are growing as capacity grows.” These factors may also be used to indicate when library capacity is being built (Ashu and Clandening, 2007). Library capacity is basically focused on community building since it offers community meeting space, facilitate access to computers and the internet, provide public access to desired set of information needed for community building. Therefore, libraries can bring experience in restructuring and reorganizing information sources for the community’s development.

4. Library as capacity building initiator

Library as a community connector is rightly regarded as the capacity building initiator. Initiation of capacity of any set up can take its fuel from library. It can accommodate community meetings, discussions, forums, and events and activities for community building. In this ICT age, libraries are making great efforts to deliver information services to users’ desktops. Libraries can play an important role in building the skills needed to use the new technologies and in local access and training to use e-government initiatives. The digital divide isolates people who cannot afford the technologies and lack digital literacy skills or motivation to develop technical skills and it is the library which can initiate the process.

5. Digital libraries as capacity building indicator

Witten, et al. (2002) identify the following five key important areas where digital libraries can promote human development as a capacity builder:

5.1. Dissemination of humanitarian information.

Digital libraries, by decoupling production and distribution costs from intellectual property charges, offer a desperately needed lifeline.

5.2. Disaster relief.

To this effect digital library technology allows organized collections of information, graced with comprehensive searching and browsing capabilities, to be created very rapidly. Intelligence specific to the nature of a disaster, the geographical region and the logistic resources available for the relief effort can be gathered into a built-to-order digital library collection that combines targeted knowledge with general medical and sanitary information.

5.3. Preservation and propagation of indigenous culture.

Libraries and their close relatives, museums, have always been involved in preserving culture. These institutions collect literature and artifacts, and use them to disseminate knowledge and understanding of different times and cultures. Digital libraries, however, open up the possibility of far more flexible multimedia collections that are both fully searchable and browsable in multiple dimensions, and permit more active participation by indigenous people.
in preserving and disseminating their own culture. This strengthens individual cultures, promotes diversity and reduces the dominance of English in the global information infrastructure.

5.4. Locally-produced collections of information.

Digital library applications in culture preservation have the advantage that the relevant information.

5.5. New opportunities to enter the global marketplace.

Countries such as India, Romania and the Philippines have long undertaken low-level information-processing tasks like data entry and OCR – indeed. The varied demands of digital library development, such as collection organization, cataloging and information presentation, will greatly expand the range of tasks that the developing world, creating valuable new export markets.

6. The technological infrastructure

Modern information communication technology has changed the way in which information is delivered and how users want to receive information. Asking for librarians to search databases was no longer necessary as the search process became easy enough for users themselves to conduct. Libraries need to satisfy the users need in a variety of ways, including such measures as wider utilization of Inter Library Loan and Document Delivery Services (Shin and Kim, 2002). Anticipating the demand of network access, the structure and organization of digital libraries are rearranging their distribution media. Library websites are being regularly updated and free access to users is provided at all time. OPAC features are modified with references and cross references.

CDs/DVDs are properly preserved, organized and distributed. Computers in developing countries tend to be low-end, often with poorly-installed software. The computing environment is quite outside the control of system developers, and may lack network access, CD-ROM drives, browser software, adequate disk storage and main memory (Witten, 2002). Additionally, the online catalogue is capable of providing wide-ranging information service since it has potentially infinite linking power that can direct and connect library users to forever growing electronic resources, as well as physical collections. With the globalization of the online catalogue, the catalogue is no longer just a tool, as it used to be, when it meant stacks of static cards stored in separate little drawers; it has become a dynamic gateway to increasingly expanding information resources through constantly extending networks of hyperlinks. It is still important for librarians to prescribed standards and rules when working on bibliographic records, but we also have to adopt a user-centered and user-friendly approach to assembling, maintaining, and enhancing the online catalogue according to library users’ needs (Huang and Wong, 2006).

7. Constituent elements of costing provision of library services

Provision of efficient and effective library services depends on both materials and human resources. Costing elements should thus be based on a thorough analysis of what is provided, what should be provided, how it should be provided and by whom, with clear indication of quality (qualitative and quantitative) assessment indicators and the cost involved in each case. As library capacity building is a con-
9. Conclusion

Capacity building considerably depends on successful innovation within an existing set up that isoperated through technical and systematic desertion of old practices and services. Library capacity building though constitute reformation and reorganizing, however, it is not an easypreneurise since there are infinite methods of re-engineering of systems and services of libraries that come to the forefront as issues. Whatever may be the case, in order to keep pace with the progressive trends of ICT and information, the urge of the hour is to opt the library capacity building for expanding the horizon of information preservation, processing, and subsequent utilization.

References


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