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 discuss 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 focus 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 organizationalexcellence 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 formeeting 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 novelideas of restructuring their information infrastructure, systems, services, and allsorts of library operations for the fulfillment of comprehensive needs of each and every userpin-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 istargeted 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 theirsubjects (e.g. philosophy, economics, law, physics, computer science).

Taking the transformation a step further would be to allow technical services tobe taken care of within each subject library as well (Shin and Kim, 2002) and this is a steppingstone to capacity building since restructuring and reorganizing can make room for amending thechance 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 andappearance. It requires commitment to training to develop people skills. It requires libraries toidentify 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,withou complaint/.. More people are getting involved, helping to identifykey issues, and taking action. Results are becoming obvious and the abilities, esteem andresources of many communities are growing as capacity grows." These factors may also be usedto indicate when library capacity is being built (Ashu and Clandening, 2007).Library capacity is basically focused on community building since it offers community meetingspace, facilitate access to computers and the internet, provide public access to desired set ofinformation needed for community building, Therefore, libraries can bring experience inrestructuring 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. Initiationof 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 technologiesand in local access and training to use

e-government initiatives. The digital divide isolates peoplewho 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 canpromote human development as a capacity builder:

5.1. Dissemination of humanitarian information.

Digital libraries, by decoupling productionand distribution costs from intellectual property charges, offer a desperately neededlifeline.

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 veryrapidly. Intelligence specific to the nature of a disaster, the geographical region and thelogistic resources available for the relief effort can be gathered into a built-to-order digitallibrary collection that combines targeted knowledge with general medical and sanitaryinformation.

5.3. Preservation and propagation of indigenous culture.

Libraries and their close relatives,museums, have always been involved in preserving culture. These institutions collectliterature and artifacts, and use them to disseminate knowledge and understanding ofdifferent times and cultures. Digital libraries, however, open up the possibility of far moreflexible multimedia collections that are both fully searchable and browsablein multiple dimensions, and permit more active participation by indigenous people

inpreserving and disseminating their own culture. This strengthens individual cultures,promotes diversity and reduces the dominance of English in the global informationinfrastructure.

5.4. Locally-produced collections of information.

Digital library applications in culturepreservation have the advantage that the relevant information.

5.5. New opportunities to enter the global marketplace.

Countries such as India, Romania andthe Philippines have long undertaken low-level information-processing tasks like dataentry and OCR – indeed. The varied demands of digital library development, such ascollection organization, cataloging and informationpresentation, 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 tosearch databases was no longer necessary as the search process became easy enough for users themselves to conduct. Libraries need to satisfy the users need ina variety of ways, including such measures as wider utilization of Inter Library Loan andDocument Delivery Services (Shin andKim, 2002). Anticipating the demand of network access;the structure and organization of digital libraries are rearranging their distribution media. Librarywebsites are being regularly updated and free access to users is provided at all time. OPACfeatures 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. Thecomputing environment is quite outside the control of system developers, and may lack networkaccess, CD-ROM drives, browser software, adequate disk storage and main memory(Witten, 2002). Additionally, the online catalogue is capable of providing wide-ranging informationservice since it has potentially infinite linking power that can direct and connect library users toforever growing electronic resources, as well as physical collections. With the globalization of theonline catalogue, the catalogue is no longer just a tool, as it used to be, when it meant stacks of staticcards stored in separate little drawers; it has become a dynamic gateway to increasingly expandinginformation resources through constantly extending networks of hyperlinks. It is still important for librarians to prescribed standards and rules when workingon bibliographic records, but we also have to adopt a user-centered and user-friendly approach toassembling, 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 librarycapacity building is a con-

tinuous process, elements of this continuity should also be built in andclearly reflected in the costing exercise by allowing a certain percentage in the budget. Thus, in order to be comprehensive costing should be related to majorcomponents of a library: staff and staff development, collections and buildings, generaloperational costs, or along any budget lines that cover all activities undertaken by a particularlibrary, both capital and operation based (Nawe, 2004). The budgeting estimation should be clearcut and goal oriented.

8. Strategies for enhancing provision of services through external support

Strategies for enhancing provision of services through external support fall under two categories. The first category is that of colleagues elsewhere in the library profession. Libraries all over theworld depend on each other as no single library can meet all the needs of its users at any giventime. Through forming links, consortia and other forms of cooperative relationships, libraries cancut a lot on individual spending through sharing of resources. However, a precaution is neededwhen considering cutting on costs and meeting strategic needs of core users, although this elementin this era of ICT may be irrelevant when the connectivity problem is resolved. Nonetheless,copyright issues will need reconciliation. Apart from building capacity in the area of informationprovision, cooperation can also contribute significantly in human capacity building throughexchange of staff or exchanging experiences and publishing through the Web (Nawe, 2004) andthis in turn can be instrumental in strengthening the organizational efficiency.

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. Librarycapacity building though constitute reformation and reorganizing, however, it is not an easyenterprise since there are infinite methods of re-engineering of systems andservices of libraries that come to the forefront as issues. Whatever may be the case, in order tokeep pace with the progressive trends of ICT and information, the urge of the hour is to optthe library capacity building for expanding the horizon of information preservation,processing, and subsequent utilization.

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