E- Learning and E- Services in Higher Education with Special Reference to Library Support Services

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Abstract

This is an age of high-technology revolution for the foreseeable future, not only will it be necessary for everyone to be computer literatebutit will also be necessary for all to be occupied with computer skills. Of course, it is probably true to say that the growth of online learning and usage of e- services in higher education is increasing rapidly in the last decade. In addition, the impact of digitalization in the field of education, where through computer networks such as Internet has posed new challenges in higher education and online Library Support Services. The objective of this study is to provide overview of e- learning and e-services in higher education with special reference to online Library Support Services. Besides, present study also gives limpidity about e- learning tools and with the help of those tools it is required, for both the teacher and librarian, to re- evaluate their teaching methodology, services and resources.

Keywords: E- Learning, E- Services, Higher Education, E- library, Library Support Services

1. Introduction

This is an age of high-technology revolution for the foreseeable future, not only will it be necessary for everyone to be computer literate, it will be also be necessary for all to be occupied with computer skills. Now days, one can find new innovation and impact of Information Communication Technology in the field of education. It is truly said that, "education and library are twin sisters". Of course, it is probably true to say that the growth of online learning and usage of e- services in higher education is increasing rapidly in the last decade. According to Salmon, "the use of the World Wide Web (WWW) for learning and teaching was set to dramatically upsurge, and the onus was on all academics using technology to ensure that they familiarized themselves with the pedagogical skills necessary to ensure that the technology used effectively enhanced the learning experience of students (2000)".The impact of digitalization in the field of education, wherein with the help of computer networks such as Internet has posed new challenges in higher education and online Library Support Services. In fact, e- learners and traditional learners have now started to access online information via e- Library Services. Thus, it is with the help of new education technology, online applications and models both teachers and librarians require to re-evaluate their teaching methodology, services and resources. From the researchers perspective, the demand of e- learning and e-library is essential component of quality online learning system.

However, the roles of online libraries are the fore front of knowledge when it comes to systems and

services and that suits to the learners. In the same way, e- learning is always beneficial at institutional, national and international level to both learners and teachers. In the age of computer technology, the function of libraries have changed and due to e-library services computers are being used on the libraries to process, save, retrieve and broadcast information. Thus, the traditional concept of library is being redefined from place to access books from one 'house' to 'screen' with advanced media of Internet. There were days where libraries were judged by quantitative resources and now libraries are surrounded by computer network that is connected with Internet based systems. The objective of this study is to provide overview of e-learning and e- services in higher education with special reference to online Library Support Services.

2. Methodology

In this study, researchers have followed systematic search for publications on 'e-Learning', 'e- Services', 'Higher- Education' and 'Online Library Support Services'. Researchers used three digital libraries, LDRP Institute of Technology and Research, British Library and Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM). Besides, with the help of search engines, researchers searched published research papers, articles and e-books. Later on, researches prepared a brief report on Library Support Services and impact of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in higher education. Afterwards, researchers identified that e- libraries are more considered in educational environment. Furthermore, this paper focuses on need of e-learning; tools are used in e-learning, role of librarian and impact of e-learning. Besides, it is summarized with challenges and opportunities in online library services.

3. E- learning in Higher Education

Very first a question rose in the mind that 'Why e-learning been a widely used among the learners and teachers around the world?' Answer this question, one of the chief reason for that is with the help of e-sources access to knowledge is always open to all, at any time and at any place. The new age of Information Communication Technology (ICT), education system brings updated version of knowledge that one can access at their convenience in any part of the world. Really, e-learning is blissful for the students, teachers and librarians too.Rogers stated in his study, online learning and how it had impacted on their learning that, "majority of students believed that online learning is positive and positively impact on their study (2004)". In a nutshell e-learning and e-sources are popular in higher education because of the following reasons. Regina Brown, a freelance educator marked on blog that, e-learning are

a. Faster and easily accessible

b. Convenient and Cost- effective

c. A Collaborative learning system

d. Cultivating social capital (2014).

Furthermore, the term 'e- learning' covers the wide set of application where web- based learning, computer based learning and virtual classroom are included. Learners and teachers can easily connect with internet, intranet, extranet (LAN/WAN), CD-ROM etc. e-learning is developed to apply Information Communication Technology in the field of education to make it smoother and faster. Besides, since the last decade, globalization takes place in every field including education. Modernization and digitalization in education suggests that students

not only have to acquire skills and habit to work with systematic information but have to possess ability to get new knowledge to build the cognitive process in the surrounding Information and Technology (IT) environment.

The prefix "e" has become increasingly evident on the lives of people in ways may not have imagined a decade ago. In the same way, the "e" is used with activities like real estate, retailing, banking sector, entertainment, and now in the field of education. Generally, "e" stands for electronic and it relates the use of internet to undertake the wide range of activities. Most of the educators become familiar with the language of internet and it is becoming part of daily life and a few called it, 'dot.com age'. It seems to find everywhere 'http:// www' as an internet web site and it is mostly finding on flyers, visiting card, bill-book, letter-head, etc. Most of the educators have now started to use the terms like 'e-Learning', 'e- teaching', and 'e-education' as part of their daily vocabulary. By the way, e-library serves opportunity to the learners to explore newer resources. Again, the e-learning and e-service encompasses both the acquisition as well as use of knowledge distribution, and facilitated by electronic means. Truly, 'e-learning is Internet based learning'. In addition, e-learning provides faster, smoother and easier learning at nominal rates with vast access to both learners and teachers. There is no doubt to say that it is a demand to have e-resources, e- library to walk with world in the field of higher education.

3.1. Need for E- Learning

When the distance mode of education was introduced in education, it became essential to have e- sources, e- Library and e- learning. It is true that physical access of sources is limited and it is difficult

to reach in certain time limit. In the era of Google, whenever any student requires any curriculum of certain courses form certain universities, by one click he or she gets the curriculum. While in traditional approach students are required to visit particular university library to get the required information.It will be time consuming. "The use of technologies has modified the ways lecturers distribute course materials to students rarely do university students transcribe notes form blackboards. Course materials are disseminated online through files of course notes, Power Point (Microsoft,2009) presentations, podcasts, video casts, and web- links with e- dissemination enabled access to electronic learning resources (Littlejohn,2009)". Use of media also started in the field of education, many educational institute update their course and admission information's, curricular activities, announcement of seminars and placement via radio, newspaper and television. New technology has also brought alternative for students to record the lectures, and listen it again at their home. The true meaning of education is to empower the students at least in the advanced market. To sustain in the e-world one should have own skills, competencies and updated knowledge. For above all reason e-learning is the demand of time. Obviously, students need to access wider knowledge will be easily provided via online access of library.

3.2. Tools are used for E- Learning

There are many e-learning tools used in education for information exchanging, networking, providing instructions and to assign assignments.Most prominent among them are listed here.

❖ Electronic mail (E-mail)

❖ Blogs

❖ Social networking websites

❖ Video conferencing

❖ Web forms

❖ Learning portal

Some of the above tools are multi- functional. For example, tools like blog, where students get chance to become writer on e- page and can access material at anytime, anywhere. Learning portal helps building a complete virtual learning environment. Additionally, teacher can track the students' performance too. In addition form the above listed tools, along with few more, promote participation in the e- learning and teaching irrespective of location. Since face to face communication is not possible by 24x7, whereas tools like e-mail, usage of social networking websites, and video conferencing binds the learners groups.

Here, e-library services play vital role to provide facility to both learners and teachers. Therefore, a library professional with technical skills can readily contribute to various components of the e-learning process.

3.3. Advantages of E- Learning

E-Learning has transformed the landscape of learning environment. The following are key benefits of e-learning compared to traditional mode of classroom learning. They are:

❖ E-Learning is really what the students really want. With the help of it students can be in touch by 24x7 from any location.

❖ It is one of the fastest medium to share information, where learners and teachers can share it by one click only.

❖ E- Services have nominal cost and flexibility too.

❖ Via e-learning teacher can track the learners record easily

❖ With the help e-learning teacher can effortlessly reach the entire mass

❖ It is alternative of traditional teaching.

❖ E-Learning cuts down travel and accommodation cost, and

❖ E-Learning is eco- friendly, it saves papers.

3.4. Limitation of E- Learning

❖ Without proper and basic knowledge of E-learning source it is difficult to get the advantage of e-tool. Lack of computer is of the limitation of e-learning

❖ It is always learners and teacher both require depending on computer and internet.

❖ To have the better use of e-sources, well qualified and computer friendly staff members are required.

❖ Many of e-sources are expensive and they ask timely proper care.

❖ Sometimes updating software is time consuming.

❖ Poor internet connectivity doesn't allow completing the task with intime limit.

3.5. Issues in E- Learning

❖ It's found that compared to traditional classroom teaching, e-learning is easy to use. Almost it becomes an alternative of traditional classroom teaching. But still there are some issues and constraints when compared with the traditional learning. According to R.M Vatnal, Mahapati and et al, following are issues in e-learning:

Instruction and Training

❖ One of the major problems in e- learning is that learner should have proper knowledge to use Information Technology (IT).

Speed of Network

❖ Online learning or e-learning requires high speed of network with sufficient bandwidth.

Financial Support

❖ To run e-sources appropriate infrastructure such as hardware, software and manpower is required. For all these institute should have enough funding.

Copyright

❖ Libraries are required to distribute copies of the information to the learners and teachers. Besides, librarians must know the rights to acquire (2004).

3.6. Role of Librarian in E- Learning

In future e-library services will be active bridge between learners and information. The following are roles of Librarian in era of e-learning.

❖ The primary quality a librarian should have leadership quality and managerial skill. Librarian should enrich his or her managerial skill towards e-literacy.

❖ Librarians are the source of information and intermediaries who can help learner reach source.

❖ It is responsibility of librarians to provide right information at the right time. In words of J. Santhi, "Librarians have to play various roles as "e-librarian", "cybrarian", "web-librarian",

"e-learning information service officer", " Learning object librarians", " e-learning content manager", " information manager" and so on .

❖ Mason (1998) marked that 'the more there is on the web, the harder it becomes to find". Here, librarian is required to train the learners regarding efficient use of e- sources.

❖ Librarians also need to perform the role of evaluator. Librarians should update the link of website to retrieve correct information.

3.7. Impact of E- Learning in Library

Marshall McLuhan had aptly perceived "the future of communication in the wake of emerging information production and dissemination revolution though he did not live to see the proliferation of personal computers and the subsequent developments (1911-1980)." It is very clear form Marshall McLuhan point of view that library would continue to play facilitator role in the e-learning scenario. However, e-learning offers opportunities and challenges too.

❖ E- Learning provides opportunities to the learners across the world to work together and develop their professional knowledge.

❖ Online catalogue and indexing systems provide e-learner with easy access to have bibliographic information about scholarly articles.

❖ A library web site can function as an information gateway, with key components being the library catalogue and journal database.

❖ Librarians can take a creative and proactive approach to the digital room.

4. Online Library Support Services : Challenges and Opportunities

The most common means of providing electronic reference services to remote users has been e-mail, the advantages and disadvantages of which have been well documented in the literature (Slade, 2000).

❖ Communication via e-mail makes library support services smooth and speedy. With the help of e-mail users of library can send their request around the clock and around the world. Besides, it will be written records for librarians too. On the other hand, it is a challenge for librarians and users both. For the librarian e-mail services loose the face to face communication with the users of library. However, poor internet connectivity couldn't solve the queries. Additionally, librarians too got exasperate while answering number of e-mails. Online library services may create problems to the users too. They may not get quick responses and might not get opportunity to discuss and clarify.

❖ It is commonly found that online services are silent both librarian and users play silent and invisible role. Students explore online services with the help of search tools. Here, literacy of information communication tool plays vital role. Thus, it is true to say that lack of technological knowledge is a challenge to explore the usage of online library services.

❖ Online library serves multiple objectives. It facilitates organizing data, and sharing knowledge among the librarians and the students. Online libraries locate, select and describe quality of internet sources and users can find e-sources. Here, it is a challenge for the funding/budget. However, e-sources are easy to use, at the same time they are costly and need maintenance. Thus, the institutional support is very essential.

❖ Additionally, the researchers believed that E-learning software provides opportunities for professional development. At the same time, qualified trainers are required.

5. Conclusions

E-Learning and e-services support e-library and are very much significant and critical in higher education. The librarian can help in creating and developing e-sources forlearners. The emergence of ICT enables delivery of library services efficiently.However, e-learning is only a tool and its effectiveness depend upon the quality of the content including the learning resources and the use made of communication tool.

To conclude, the researchers believe that the major weakness of the technology is it can't answer your question, when librarians will be able to answer immediately, while searching data from the software may take too much time or might not be able to reach proper source. Thus, e-services, and e-learning in higher education have certainly made information more easily available but at the same time instructors play an important role to provide proper guidance to the learners.

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