# Role of Information Technology in Information Management

ABDUL MAJID BABA
Univ. of Kashmir, Srinagar - 190 002

## Abstract

The application of Information Technologies in the libraries have made the task of disseminating information more easier. Information Technology is a combination of information science, computer technology, communication technology and management science. The author provides the activities of information production and the reasons why information is under utilised. For proper utilisation of information, the libraries should evolve effective methods of its marketing, assess the information needs of organizations, and develop attractive means of information management. These developments shall make the library, not simply the store house of publications, but an electronic access point for global information in the 21st century.

## Introduction

One of the benefits of recent rapid changes in computer technology is that government and business organisations have been made aware of the potential of efficient information management. The power of information has been realized by the top executives for shaping policies of organization as well as meeting the competition in the market. The management has visualized that the ability of science and industry to grow and compete depends to a high degree on the availability of reliable information at the right time. Organisations with good access to information will surely rise shoulder high above others.

Libraries / information centres can play dominant role in the dissemination of right information at the right time and it is only through the libraries that one can have the access to the information. The application of technologies in the libraries have made the task of disseminating information more easier. There is no doubt in saying that libraries can play a main role in the national development and production.

## What is information technology (IT)

IT is the combination of four important disciplines. They are :

    i) Information Science;

ii) Computer Technology;

iii) Communication Technology;

iv) Management Science.

People tend to label the software and hardware industry as the IT industry. A typical IT industry is one which treats information as a commodity and involves economics of information viz. production, costing and marketing, which is the integration of the four above mentioned disciplines.

## Information production

Major activities involved in producing and marketing of information are :

i) Data / information collection;

ii) Analysis;

iii) Data processing;

iv) Information storage;

v) Information dissemination;

vi) Management.

## Reasons of under utilisation of information

i) The information user does not either know what information they want nor what value it will be when they get it;

ii) Individuals do not realise they have an information problem;

iii) They are unaware of the facilities available in a library / information centre;

iv) The users have had bad experience of past or present services;

v) Talking to colleagues is preferable to reading books;

vi) The information system does not meet the subject requirements of users.

## Marketing information services

Information services cannot be effective unless their function and utility are fully understood by users. To highlight the utility of these services, the librarian / information manager should evolve an effective method of communication for marketing and selling the information services to users. Marketing solutions put forth before users of information available. Top management desperately needs information, and by meeting

this demand regularly, the librarian can impress upon the higher authorities that information management is an unique and value-added service to the organisation. This information need will be an ideal target for marketing information services.

Marketing should be directed towards information users keeping in view the following channels of communication :

i) Downward communication, used by management for transmitting policies, procedures, corporate goals and objectives to subordinates;

ii) Upward communication, sent by subordinates to management to meet the objectives etc., for the organisation. Selective dissemination of information should be done regularly and not just when management wants it;

iii) Horizontal communication between people of the same level which also covers selective dissemination of information.

The next important approach is to make oneself knowledgeable about the corporate goals and needs of the organisation one serves. The overall aim of information service should be to analyse the information needs of the organisation and provide an effective range of information system in support of the work of the parent organisation to find out about the short-term and long-term objectives and to identify current and future information needs.

## Information needs of organisations

Finding information is not difficult. However, the expertise of the librarian lies in the ability to evaluate and analyse what is not there and to organise it in a manner that gives decision makers the best information to meet the challenges of their business and research problems.

## Approach to Information Management

To evince interest of users in information service, the librarian must demonstrate through systematic information management that information service is not merely a collection and storage of publications but a vital aspect for decision making in an organisation. Supplying tailor made information to users is one sure way of impressing the utility of information. Once the management gets a 'feel' of the vast technical and commercial information and its advantages, it will not only be a regular user of information service but its confirmed supporter as well. By establishing effective information system let everyone know that we

manage the firms information needs. Considering the involvement in such an important activity which is targetted towards development of the organisation, the librarian needs to have a befitting status in the organisation. Devotion to duties and evolving various facilities for fast circulation of information will surely help in gaining the coveted status.

## Approach to Information Service

i) Make both, the organisation's goals and the needs as the focus of service;

ii) Know users needs;

iii) Information users are decision makers technoscientists, marketing, administration and finance personnel. Hence, information service should not be menu-type but must be user oriented;

iv) Selecting and acquiring document and information relevant to these needs;

v) Organisation and storage of the information acquired;

vi) In-house publications play a vital role in information management. As vehicles of communication selling information service, they need to be attractively produced. The other important aspect related to their contents which should be concise and limited to few pages. A monthly list of selected articles, daily circulation of newspaper clippings are appreciated by users;

vii) Knowing sources of information is the backbone of the system;

viii) Check feedback for information users to evaluate the system;

ix) Know the latest information retrieval system such as on-line global information search, CD-ROM databases, Internet etc.

## Conclusion

Now the world is in our net. The world has become smaller and time has shortened with the rapid evolution of communication technology.

Unlike the present day library / information centre having a collection of publications, the 21st century library will not be a storage house but will be an electronic access point. The libraries will be riding the "electronic highways" for scanning information through global online search.

The fast pace of computer technology has brought the global information at users "fingertips". The gigantic leap of international

networks has connected libraries the world over for fast access of information.

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