DEVELOPING DIGITAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN INDIA

by

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ABSTRACT

University libraries have vast store of information in various forms. These sources of information can be accessed through Internet from any corner of the world. But Indian University libraries are lagging behind in this direction. But they can not afford to remain isolated form the world of information. There is a need to cat up with modern trends, which is possible only through digitization of libraries. The present paper tries to analyse the present scenario of Indian University libraries and made an attempt to propose digital libraries in Indian Universities. The proposed development of Digital University libraries have been suggested in three phases .Phase I: Acquiring Materials in Digital form; Phase II.: Digitization of Thesis, Dissertations, Manuscripts and Rare Books. Phase III: digitization of books and Journals . Lastly author has suggested that INFLIBNET which has taken up automation and networking of university libraries in India should extend its programmes to digitization of university libraries.

Keywords: Digitization – University Libraries

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0   Introduction

The world of ICT has brought about a tremendous change and made possible the information access to a vast population world over. The sources of information can be accessed through Internet from any corner of the world. Databases of various libraries are available online and some libraries are also providing access to full text databases. But Indian university libraries are lagging behind in this direction. The world trends in ICT compel the libraries to move on par with other areas of development. Indian university libraries are no exception to this. University libraries in India cannot afford to still remain the same. There is a need to catch up with modern trends, which is possible only through digitization of libraries. The huge number of university libraries all over India with extensive information sources cannot afford to remain isolated from the world of information. Hence, it is imperative to change the university libraries into digital libraries. The present paper tries to analyse the present Indian university libraries and makes an attempt to propose digital libraries in Indian Universities.

University libraries not only possess vast store of information in the form of books, bound volumes of journals, journals and information generated by researchers, but. some of them have good collection of manuscripts which are precious and valuable sources of information. The direct access to this huge source of information can be made available all over the world only by digitization of University libraries in India.

1.   Digitization of University Libraries in India: Present Scenario

The Digital libraries in India are still in the embryonic stage. This concept was recognized in India during the Fifteenth Annual Convention and Conference on Digital Libraries, organised by the Society for Information Science at Bangalore from 18-20 January 1996. Though, here and there, a few libraries had made attempts in this direction earlier also. The scenario on the Indian horizon is changing at a snail's pace; but is has to gain momentum to survive in the competitive world. Some of the ongoing projects in this direction are discussed below:

?? **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore**

IISc, a premier scientific institute in India, has established a digital library, using IBM's digital library software running on fast computers. The IISc produces about a thousand research papers and around two hundred doctoral dissertations every year. The digital version of these documents and the journals published by IISc is also available. Information sources in CD-ROM's are also available in its digital library.

?? **Indira Gandhi Memorial Library, University of Hyderabad**

Indira Gandhi Memorial Library at University of Hyderabad (UOH), a premier
institute of post-graduate teaching and research, is developing a Digital Library for the University. Locuz, Sun and VTLS have come together to put up the Digital Library for the University by using VTLS application and Oracle as the Database platform.

Steps that are followed in planning and implementation of the project are as follows: –

1. Digitization of the entire physical medium
2. Cataloging and indexing the content
3. Standards for Digital library development
4. Delivery Protocols and appropriate resources
5. Representation of content

The first phase of implementation would be to put the content online for the users within the University and eventually make it available over the Internet. The University would provision it by using high bandwidth connectivity to the Internet and then implement the necessary security to ensure protected access. The project is going to be completed very shortly.

2 Developing Digital University Libraries: A Proposal

The proposed development of Digital University Libraries can be under taken in the following phases:

I PHASE   Acquiring Materials in Digital Form

II PHASE   Digitization of Theses, Dissertations, Manuscripts & Rare Books

III PHASE   Digitization of Books and Journals

In the first phase, University Libraries should acquire materials like indexing and abstracting periodical in digital form, subscribing to e-journals and purchase of e-books to partially develop digital university libraries initially.

In the second phase, the digitisation of existing collection of theses, dissertations manuscripts and rare books of all university libraries should be taken up. The university authorities should insist the researchers to submit their theses and dissertations in digital form i.e. on CD-ROM.

In the third phase, the digitisation of books and journals should be taken up. The university libraries in India will have more or less similar books and journals. Digitizing all books and journals in university libraries will result in duplication of process and wastage of time, money and manpower. So it is necessary to identify the university libraries which are having specialised collection and are digitising their books and journals. Some of the university libraries which have special collection are shown below:

Science and Technology	- IISc Library, Bangalore
Medicine	- All India Institute of Medical Sciences Library, New Delhi
Social Sciences	- M.S.University Library, Baroda
Arts & Humanities	- Baranas Hindu University Library, Varanasi
Humanities	- Ramesh Mohan Library, CIEFL, Hyderabad
(Foreign Languages)	
Management	- Indian Institute of Management Library, Kolkata
Agriculture	- Indian Agricultural Research Institute Library, New Delhi
Dairy Science	- National Dairy Research Institute Library, Karnal
Veterinary Science	- Indian Veterinary Research Institute Library, Izzatnagar

Digitizing the above university libraries and sharing their resources over Internet or proposed VSAT network of UGC will be sufficient to meet the information requirements regarding books and journals. Wherever the problem of copyright arises, the University Library/Libraries should obtain permission from the copyright holder for digitization of documents. This would provide solution to one of the major problems in digitization of documents.

The process of digitization involves a lot of financial input, trained manpower, modern infrastructure facilities. The apex bodies should take an initiative to meet the challenges in digitisation process with their expertise and financial assistance.

3   Suggestions

INFLIBNET which has takenup automation and networking of university libraries in India, should extend its programmes to digitisation of University libraries by providing:

?? initial grants to University libraries for purchase of infrastructure required for digitisation process.
?? training the personnel in skills of digitisation.
?? technical know-how and expertise in digitisation

Thus, the university libraries in India can share their information among the universities in India and can be made available to rest of the world through Internet.

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