

Using ICT in ODL System for Providing Library and Information Services

R J Maurya

Sarvesh Kumar

Keywords : ICT, Information Services, ODL System, Distance Learning, E- Learning

1. Introduction

In the present age of knowledge society it is hoped that information communication technologies (ICT) will lead us to fast information, increased knowledge and other productive library and information services. Library and Information Services must meet the needs of all their faculty, students and academic support personnel, regardless of where they are located. This need of LIS has enforced to the library managers and policy makers to utilize the facilities of ICTs in delivering library and information services.

In the open learning system the use of ICT in Library and Information services will curb the technology induced educational elitism i.e. new elitism and in so doing help contribute to overcome the information/knowledge gap. Open Distance Learning (ODL) System rapidly become a major element in higher educational opportunities; an increase in the number of unique environment where educational opportunities are offered; an increase recognition of the need for library resources and services at locations other than main campuses; an increased concern and demand for equitable service for all students in higher education, no matter where the classroom may be; a greater demand for library and information services by faculty and staff at distance learning sites. The nature and opportunities in distance learning have made it mandatory to use the ICT for quick responses and better performance of the library services.

2. Information Communication Technology

It is used in communicating the information from generator to the user of the information. For communicating the information any type of communication system is applied such as verbal, telephone etc. The convergence of communication technology offers distance education institutions an array of options to deliver library and information services. The expanded use of ICT in the delivery of library and information services has served to reduce the barriers to library and information services that are occasioned by distance for distance learners. In order to provide library and information services to distance learners, libraries can place their services on line. The ICT has impacted not only on the delivery of library and information services to those who learn at a distance but also on the delivery of library services to other clients; and this impact of ICT on library and information services has led to the development of new professional paradigms within the field of librarianship.

3. What is ODL System?

Open distance learning (ODL) covers a wide spectrum of labels ranging from correspondence education to distance learning, distance education, resource based learning, flexi studies, open learning etc. ODL System is a method of study that is pursued by students who are physically separated from

their tutors and institution of instruction for the greater part of their study. There are two main open Distance Learning modes:

1. Learning totally at a distance from the institution of instruction, peers and course tutors (total distance)
2. Learning at a distance with some from of institution / peer / tutor contact (mixed mode)

The method of education is specially helpful to those potential students who desire higher education but can not leave their native place / place of living and commitments for regular study. Some important distinguishing aspects of open distance learning (ODL) system are:

- ◆ separation of teacher and learner ;
- ◆ the role of educational organisation ;
- ◆ the use of technical media ;
- ◆ the provision of two way communication ;
- ◆ industrial type operation ; and
- ◆ separation of the learner from his peer group.

4. Library and Information Services in ODL System

The Library and Information Services offered to distance learning community should be designed to meet effectively a wide range of information, bibliographic and user needs. The basic need for the library and information services distance learners are -

- ◆ Access to information resources, such as text, supplementary reading and reference services,
- ◆ Learning how to find the information they need from the information that is available,
- ◆ Developing ways to apply the information gleaned and to make sound, information based decisions.

The distance education institution is responsible for providing convenient, direct physical and electronic access to library resources for distance learning programs equivalent to those provided in traditional settings and in sufficient quality, depth, number, scope, correctness and formats to:

- ◆ Meet the students needs in fulfilling course assignments and enrich the academic programs;
- ◆ Meet teaching and research needs;
- ◆ Facilities the acquisition of lifelong learning skills; and
- ◆ Accommodate other informational needs of the distance learning community as appropriate.

In traditional Library services students go to the library to access the range of information services that they need to satisfy their learning needs. In distance education a cocktail of modalities have to be used to take library services to distance learners. The Library and Information services provided to distance learners should include:

- ◆ reference assistance ;
- ◆ computer based bibliographic and informational services ;

-
- ◆ reliable, rapid, secure access to institutional and other networks, including the internet ;
 - ◆ consultation services ;
 - ◆ a programme of library user instruction design to instill independent and effective information literacy skills while specifically meeting the learner support needs of distance learning community ;
 - ◆ assistance with and instruction in the use of non-print media and equipment ;
 - ◆ reciprocal or contractual borrowing, or inter-library loan services using broadest application of fair use of copyrighted materials ;
 - ◆ prompt document delivery, such as a courier system and / or electronic transmission ;
 - ◆ access to reserve materials in accordance with copyright fair use policies ;
 - ◆ adequate service hours for optimum access by users ; and
 - ◆ promotion of library services to the distance learning community, including documented and updated policies, regulations and procedures for systematic development, and management of information resources.

5. Library and Information Services through ICT

The rapid spread of ICT, recent reduction in technology costs and connection services due to economics of scale, and a rise in personal ownership of ICTs are making ICT use for distance library information services seem more attractive. The implementation of ICT in the libraries has demanded new forms of library services to get more user satisfaction. Library and information services with the use of ICT may be delivered effectively if;

- ◆ The distance education institution is committed to providing a high level of library services to distance learners;
- ◆ The initial and ongoing cost of hardware, software and connectivity charges are within the institution's financial means; and
- ◆ End users (students and faculty) have access to the ICT at their location.

The most important factors related to library and information services in ODL are -

- ◆ Timeliness of services;
- ◆ Maintaining a high level and equality of access to library materials; and
- ◆ Where possible personal contact with students and faculty.

These issues may be effectively solved through the application of ICT in providing library and information services. Being as a tool of ODL, ICT provides access to web, library databases, electronic journals, CD-ROM search services and email facilities etc. Libraries are using ICT for providing campus-wide access of resources to the users by -

- ◆ Networking study centers, regional centers and central library;
- ◆ Access of different course contents;
- ◆ Helping rural students in preparation of assignments and supplementary study; and
- ◆ E-mail facility for easy communication between students and tutors.

The digitalization of information makes it possible to take library and information services to distance students regardless of their location. In addition to On-line catalogue (OPACs), students are able to search databases, examine abstracts and in some instances read full text document.

In addition ICT provides online courses to the users as part of library and information services in distance learning.

6. Areas of Application of ICTs in ODL library services

The application of ICT has made prompt and easy to deliver library services. Libraries use ICT as their main method of delivering information services through On-line chat-rooms, e-mail services, list-servs, fee based or free online databases and reference services, teleconferencing and through toll-free numbers. As far as distance education through library and information services is concerned, ICT may be used in the following areas -

- ◆ Acquisition of print and non-print materials;
- ◆ Organizing information resources;
- ◆ Storage of information;
- ◆ Access to materials and document delivery;
- ◆ Consultation services;
- ◆ Reference services;
- ◆ Bibliographic searches;
- ◆ for giving bibliographic instruction and information literacy instruction.
- ◆ Networking of study centers, regional centers and headquarters libraries;
- ◆ Management of study centers and regional centers library and information services;
- ◆ On-line services and OPAC;
- ◆ Communication between students, teachers and library personnel;
- ◆ Maintaining quality library and information services;
- ◆ In method of submitting requests to library e.g. via telephone, facsimile, e-mail, www. Pest etc.;
- ◆ User services such as membership and query;
- ◆ Inter library loan service;
- ◆ Electronic reference disk; and
- ◆ In the management of library stabilities and budgetary control etc.

7. Conclusion

In the analysis carried out throughout this paper the numerous advantages of the application of the ICT in library and information services in ODL became clear. The application of ICT has changed what is common in general library and information services. The ICT has reduced the distance between library services and students. The skills and job opportunities in ODL Library and information services have given a new role to play in educational set up. In order to spread quality distance education, we need to promote library and information services to students and faculty and this is possible only through the exhaustive and proper use of ICT in library services.

References

1. Dinwiddie, M.M. and Lillarel, L.L. Distance Education Library Services: An Opportunity for Personalized Customer Services. Paper presented at the 17th Annual conference on Distance Teaching and Learning, 2001. p. 127 - 131.
2. Heanning, J.C. Distance Library Services: A South African Model. 2nd National NADEOSA Conference, 2000.
3. Watson, E.F. Library Service to Distance Learners: New Professional Paradigms (Available at <http://www.col.org/forum/PCF/paper/Watsen.pdf>).
4. Brophy, P. Off-campus Library Services: a Model for the Future. Journal of Library Services for Distance Education, 1990. (Available at- <http://www.westage.edu/library/ilsde/voll/1/Pbrophy.html>.)
5. Haward, S. Libraries in distance education. Canadian Journal of Continuing Education .XI (1), 1999. p. 45-57.
6. Association of College and Research Libraries. ACRL Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services (Available at <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/guidelinesdistancelearning.cfm>).
7. Stevenson, Christine. Distance no object: bridging the library and information gap for distance learners. (Available at <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/newsletters/28/ART4.RTF>).
8. Drigas, A.S., Koukianakis, L.G. and Glentzes, J.G. An ODL System and Virtual Class for the Electrical Engineering Sector. WSEAS International Multi-conference in Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, December 16-18, 2005.
9. Minishi-Majanja, Mabel K. Integration of ICTs in Library and Information Science Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. World Library and Information Congress: 73rd IFLA General Conference and Council. Durban, South Africa. August 19-23, 2007.
10. Vinitha, K., Kanthimathi, S and Devi, K. Tharani. Impact of Information and Communication Technology on Library and its Services. DRTC-ICT Conference on Digital Learning Enviroment, DRTC, Banglore. January 11-13, 2006.

About Authors

Mr. R J Maurya, Asst. Librarian, Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University,
E-mail : rjmaurya_81@rediffmail.com

Mr. Sarvesh Kumar, Research Scholar, Lib. & Inf. Sci., Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon
Open University, Allahabad
E-mail : Sarveshji@yahoo.co.in