E-JOURNAL MANAGEMENT: THE ROLE OF TRAINING IN THE EFFECTIVE USE OF ELECTRONIC JOURNALS

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Abstract

"Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information" – American Literacy Association,

Presidential committee on information Literacy final Report 1989.

Online access to scholarly scientific content is growing, Electronic journals (e-journals), in particular is an increasing important resource for research and academic community and plays a significant role in scholarly communication. Library and information professionals and end-users will have to develop learning attitude and network related competencies to reap the benefits being made available to us by the information and communication technologies. The paper emphasizes the role of training and awareness programme, both for staff and users of the library for ensuring effective use of electronic journals.

Keywords : Electronic Journals, E-resources, Trainings.

1. INTRODUCTION

Information is the basis for knowledge.[13] It is not surprising to realize that man has always been interested in information in producing it, in using it and presenting it.[6] In the emerging information society, the availability and use of information contributes towards development of individuals and nations. The value of information can not be undermined in research. Progress in research is not possible and no decision can be taken infact without the support of information. One needs advanced and scholarly literature to improve the quality of education and research work.

With the advent of information technology, internet and rapid development of communication systems and digital technology, information is available in abundance on the World Wide Web. Due to the phenomenal growth of information at an exponential rate, there is a 'paradigm shift' and the accessing and utilization of vast amount of information has become the major concern.[10]

Technological development such as computers, word processing programmes, desktop publishing electronic publishing and web publishing technology have profoundly transformed the publishing and distribution industry.

Now a days majority of publishers are interested in publishing their documents in electronic format. Electronic publishing is the process of publishing and distribution of documents in electronic format by using computer, communication and electronic technologies. Two major fields of electronic publishing are electronic journals (e-journals) and electronic books (e-books).

Scholarly journals considered as the most preferred channels for communicating and exchanging results. This has become an integral part of the professional advancement of researches. Immense growth of scholarly journals available in electronic form made it necessary for the library professionals to acquire,

enhance, process and manage the electronic journals to meet the demand of their clients effectively and efficiently. It is estimated that about 2250 electronic journals are available free of cost over the internet. In addition to this libraries are subscribing the journals or databases through consortium basis.

No library which has huge collection of electronic journals and databases in the world will be of any consequences if users are neither aware of its existence nor have sufficient training to use it. The users and the staff of the library should be able to gain access to electronic journals to meet their need.

Here Awareness programme or training plays an important role. Both library staff and library users have to be trained to use the electronic journals effectively and efficiently and be kept up-to-date with important changes both content and interface.

2. BACKGROUND STUDY

The 3rd Annual Report of the Jubilee Project (2003)[15] a study on students use of electronic resources over several years, conducted by Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) of the Higher Education Funding Councils at U.K. identified that acceptance or level of take up of services by students is dependent on factors such as training, awareness and promotion to and by academic staff.

Mallet and Smith (2001)[9] from Aston University, reports a very positive of electronic journals by undergraduate as well as post graduates and staff is depending on the promotion of sources to staff who then recommend these sources to the students.

Results of an electronic survey by the Max Planck Society Research (1999)[11] have revealed that there is a significantly high acceptance of electronic journals and an unwillingness to return to print versions only.

Bonthron, Karen and et. al.[3] in their study 'The trends in use of electronic journals in higher education in U.K. views of academic staff and students suggested that specialized training by library will certainly decrease the disciplinary differences in the use of e-journals by academic staff and students.

Ashcroft, Linda and Langdon, Colin (2003)[2] in their article "electronic journals and library collections" discussed the various methods used to promote electronic journals and mentioned that 78% of North American and 55% of U.K. Institutions use workshops and classroom presentations as the major method of promoting their electronic journals.

The above study reveals the importance of training and user education for staff and users of the library to maximize the usage of electronic journals

3. TRAINING

Training is often used to refer to learning that is associated with the development of very specific skills and behaviour that are required in the workplace.

According to Longman Dictionary of English Language (1984) defines the term, 'Training' as 'the training of a person to a desired degree of proficiency in some activity or skills'.

According to Gates training is "the process where by individuals acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes, through experience, reflection, study or instruction. Learning is the modification of behaviour through experience and training.

The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed. (1989) defined training as 'Systematic instruction and exercise in some art profession or occupation with a view to proficiency in it'.[1]

4. NEED FOR TRAINING TO USE ELECTRONIC JOURNALS

Training is essential part of the development of professionals. The immense growth of electronic sources, online bibliographic databases, electronic journals, is influencing Information centers. The information managers must acquire necessary skills to exploit these electronic resources.

In the present learning environment, the learners have to depend on self study and they have to recognize the problems, to determine which information is needed to solve the problem at hand, and able to search for this information, evaluate and apply it to solve the problem at hand. The library clientele are also becoming non-sophisticated in their demands for information and expect librarians to respond their needs in an efficient and up-to-date manner. Electronic Journals will meet the needs of both librarians and the personal needs of the users. Users need to be made aware of the electronic journals available in the library and trained in their use.

5. OBJECTIVES OF TRAINING TO USE ELECTRONIC JOURNAL

1. To make professionals and users fully aware of the electronic journals of information available in the electronic journals and develop skills for exploiting these resources.

2. To provide the users and professionals with the practical skills necessary to organize, collect, search an article and preserving and disseminate the information in a systematic way.

3. To raise the level of expertise.

4. Train the users and professionals how to access for relevant information, and how to set queries for getting relevant results in electronic journals.

5. Alerting the users about the legalities for using the information.

6. Explaining the users how the information is organized and stored for supporting their orientation in the information world.

7. To introduce electronic search techniques.[12]

6. VARIOUS METHODS OF TRAINING

The type of training to use electronic journal will vary depending on the organization, human and monetary resources available and the type of users. In many academic institutions self guided tutorials are available for users to find out how to access and search various e-journal resources.

7. PROCEDURAL AND CONCEPTUAL TRAINING

Training and Awareness Programme/Package should focus on the use of internet, training on various search techniques in the use of electronic journals, how to access abstract, or full text of an article, how to save, read or print electronic article how to keep up-to-date with the latest table of contents of their favourite journals. This is known procedural training. Unlike traditional journals, electronic journals do not have a uniform user interface. In order to be able to proceed, the user has to be equipped and familiar with the number of desktop tools for viewing, converting and uncompressing files.

Conceptual training deals with issues such as limitations of search tools, quality control and copyright. Training courses should focus on the issues such as licensing and national consortium arrangements for accessing electronic journals.[7]

The library staff should be trained to handle new systems and services and the following issues should be covered in the training programme.

- a grounding in electronic journal subscription

- Understanding how electronic journals can support library staff in their work.

- Knowing how to search articles according to users queries.

- Using Electronic journals to support reader development activities.

- To know how to use electronic journals to improve their own professional efficiency and to reduce administrative bureaucratic burdens.[14]

Many organizations in developed countries like, a working group of Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL)at U.K. and Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy and the Association of College and Research Libraries Institute for Information Literacy in U.S. as well as individual libraries in many countries are working to make their users information literate.

In an academic environment, e-journal training for students might be provided through a compulsory component, or module, which, ideally, should be closely related to the subject content of their studies. Libraries are acquiring electronic journals through consortia purchase. In India, INFLIBNET centre has been conducting number of training and awareness programmes to guide the research and academic community for accessing and browsing the e-journals, which are being provided by UGC-Infonet E-journals Consortium Programme. The Centre has also launched a quick reference guide (prepared with the help of different Publishers) to facilitate the user for accessing, retrieving and downloading users required information. This quick reference guide contains information about the publishers, key features of the journals, search facilities (search tips and archive searching), downloading (Print and save), E-mail alerts, e-mailing and so many other important features and links from publishers site. Now days all the major publishers, aggregators and vendors of e-journals are conducting awareness programme or training to the users and staff of various institutions libraries.[8]

8.   CONCLUSION

Library is a bridge between knowledge generator and knowledge user. The role of the librarian is absolutely crucial in the digital environment. Users have their own set of values in relation to access, concerned with identifiable values such as need, level, quality, use, currency and perceived end use or value. The library professionals are required to work as facilitators to the end users in catering to their information needs.

With the emergence of internet the prominence of e-journal is felt greatly. Chakraborthy H.K.and Chakraborthy, Banani (2004)[4] in their article e-journal: Coming of age, opines that the present century will be dominated by e-journal as information service concerned. According to him e-journal is coming of age" The librarians and the users with newly acquired skills can play a meaningful and leading role in the networked information society of the millennium. Colvin, John and Keene, Judith (2002)[5] in their study indicated that effective collaboration between academic and library staff, the timely embedding of e-journal induction into the learning process and associating it with the assessment process, can significantly enhance the learning of students. It was also recognized that students need to be encouraged to see beyond assignments and adopt an holistic approach to learning.

It has become necessary to appoint a person who is well versed with the latest development, and existing staff should be trained well so that users will get proper assistance to find out the relevant information from the scholarly journals. The trained users and staff of libraries add-value and can make electronic journals truly useful and user friendly.

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