
MANAGEMENT OF E-RESOURCES IN THE MODERN LIBRARY INFORMATION SYSTEM : AN OUTLOOK

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Abstract

The advent of IT has made a clear and pervasive impact in almost every area of library services. As such, the library environment has undergone a rapid changes leading to new generation of libraries with an emphasis on e- resources. Moreover, as the popularity of e-resources increases, the librarians and staff are also concerned about e-resources, their methods accessing, evaluation, selection, organization etc. The present paper is an aim to know how to manage e-resources in the modern LIS for better digital information services and challenges facing with e-resources.

Keywords : E-resources, Electronic libraries, Consortia, Information Technology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, libraries and information centers have been greatly affected changes in IT, and the rate of changes still is still accelerating in this era. IT is now able to create:(i) new products, processes and machines that can be used independently, customized information packages, video cassettes, home information products, personal computers and reprographic equipments (ii) external dependents, database online information system (iii) cooperative library information networks and (iv) electronic information processing system such as the electronic book. IT has been able to abridge time and space dimension in communication .In order to cope with the present development in IT, modern libraries are now adopting various electronic resources for its collection developments to fulfill the requirements of different users in a better way. However to achieve the goals of an ideal information system there is a need to select, evaluate and organize the e-resources in the best possible way as to provide maximum ease, both to the users and the staff for its access and retrieve at all times.

2. E-RESOURCES

E-resources are those electronic products that delivers a collection of data, be it text referring to full text basis, e-journals, image collection, other multimedia products and numerical, graphical or time based, as a commercially available till that has been published with an aim to being marketed. These may be delivered on CD-ROM, on tap via the Internet and so on. According to Barker, there are three types of documents used in digital resources.

- (a) Static- Static are the most basic, they contain fixed information and never change their form (such as traditional online data)
- (b) Dynamic-Dynamic documents also contain fixed information but also able to change their outward form, the way embedded material is presented to users (such as multimedia CD-ROMs).
- (c) Living -Living documents are able to change both their form (outward appearance) and these embedded information (such as information contain on the web.)

3. WHY TO ADOPT E-RESOURCES

Electronic publishing has led to new era of communications and information sharing .It creates opportunities for users as well as authors and publishers. Many of the electronic books or electronic publishers ' web site freely permit and encourage readers to provide feedback on works, often directly to the author rather than to the publisher. Nevertheless users may establish their own accounts, charge services to credit cards or pay by prearranged method, and have requested material delivered directly to them by fax, e-mail, etc. Today, libraries of all kinds have been spending larger and larger shares of their budgets to adopt or gain access to electronic resources from publishers and vendors. This is due the fact that e-resources have enabled libraries to improve services in a variety of ways. First, most e-resources come equipped with powerful search-and-retrieval tools that allow users to perform literature searches more effectively and efficiently. Moreover, since most relevant e-resources are now available through the web, users can have desktop access to them 24 hours a day. And also the users can navigate directly from indexing databases to the full text of an article and can even follow further links from there. Nevertheless, the emergence of e-books and e-journals followed the widespread adoption and use of electronic mail, list servers and discussion groups to disseminate information quickly to large audiences.

4. SELECTION OF E-RESOURCES

Selection is not a new term to librarian and staff as they have been doing it since long back the libraries started acquiring printed material. However libraries are now focusing to adopt e-resources information technology approaching towards the e-resources rather than printed materials as technology developed. In fact, the emergence of Internet, particularly, the www (World Wide Web) has a triggered proliferation of web based full text online resources as a new media of information delivery. As the web has grown, not just in popularity and use, but also in content, librarians are trying to meet the needs of the user and identify new resources, such as online databases, web based resources, collections in digital library, e-books, e-journals etc.

The selection process should be done in relevant with the demands of the users, committee, focus group, users recommendation etc. Apart from this, it should taken into consideration the following steps:

- to identify library needs;
- to identify content and scope of the e-resources;
- to evaluate quality of that particular resource and search capabilities;
- to estimate the cost;
- to check either subscription based or web based when acquiring;
- to evaluate the systems and technical support;
- to review licensing agreements;
- to evaluate application software and installation, updated sporadically or in regular schedule; and
- to check the facilities for educational support and training.

5. EVALUATION OF E-RESOURCES

Evaluation of resources assumes a greater importance due to the large e-resources such as e-journals, database, e-text, etc available on the net. Authority, currency, intended audience, ease of use accuracy etc are some responsible criteria for evaluation of e-resources. Moreover, extensiveness of the content,

accessibility, quality of technical support, cost, conditions of licensing agreement are also other responsible factors which should be taken into account.

With the evaluation of e-resources the followings should be considered:

- to identify the electronic version have the retrospective data (as mostly electronic resources do not include data prior to some year);
- to determine particular source of information of e-resources offer any special features which are not available in other print version;
- to check the content of the e-resources with relevant to the users as well as to the collection as a whole;
- to check whether the information is often updated or not;
- to determine the e-resources have affordable price or not though offered diverse pricing system by the publishers;
- to identify the method of accessing of e-resources available;
- to identify the e-resources needed to maintain and redesign the library website identified;
- to check the staffing needs for training of recruiting with the existing technology.

6. ORGANIZATION OF E-RESOURCES

In any Library Information System (either traditional or modern library system), organization of resources is also one of the important and crucial works to function smoothly the library services. As such, the system manager should have good professional skills to organize the available resources effectively. In a modern digital library information system, the professional should have skills like computing, database management, networking, and other management skills relating to IT environment. Therefore, the system manager should keep in mind the following points while organizing the e-resources:

- to include those resources either in OPAC or to make different list for browsing;
- to organized accessing under a separate authority;
- to provide access either by alphabetical or under specific subject headings;
- to organize the e-resources within the context of other resources and websites;
- to check the method of access to e-resources, abstracting or full .

Since most of the users search the resources under subject heading predominantly, organization of e-resources should be in such a way that the users could be able to retrieve different sets of information or records.

7. CHALLENGES FACED WITH E-RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The adoption of e-resources has made great advantage over the library services. In fact, most of the users are satisfied with such facilities since they can easily retrieve their required information within a short period of time. However, libraries face a number of challenges as they seek to continue offering the high level of services that users have come to expect. Some of the challenges facing with e-resource management are discussed below.

- Preservation- Though the e-resources are enabling information to be created, manipulated, disseminated and located with increasing ease, preserving access to this information poses a great challenge. Unless, preservation of digital information is actively taken, the information will become inaccessible due to changing technology platform and media instability.
- Lack of professional skills- Due to lack of management and technical skills, the library professionals is not able to handle the e-resources. The professional staffs are required to constantly update their own knowledge and skill base so as to work in today's rapidly changing digital environment.
- Inadequate library fund- Most of the libraries have inadequate fund for acquiring e-resources and so the users do not get their needy information at the right time. Libraries are at a disadvantage when acting alone in this environment and there is need for cooperative purchasing through library consortia.
- Technical infrastructure- In a digital information service system, infrastructure such as software, hardware, internet facilities and other physical equipments are required to provide easier, faster and comprehensive access to information. Therefore, libraries in the digital age need to enhance and upgrade current technical architecture to accommodate e-resources.
- Lack of cooperation of staff members- The support and cooperation of staff members, programmers and technical staff are very essential to provide effective service in a digital environment. As such, the library staff should not only be technically competent but should also user-friendly-approach.

8. CONSORTIA SUBSCRIPTION TO E-RESOURCES

It is known that libraries and information centers are not able to procure, organize and disseminate vast amount of information due to lack of adequate fund and budget. Nowadays, consortia subscription to e-resources through consortia of libraries is a viable solution to increase the access to e-resources at a lower cost. Library consortia refer to cooperation, co-ordination and collaboration among the libraries or institution for the purpose of resource sharing. The libraries all over the world are forming consortia of all types and at all levels with an objective to take advantage of global network to promote better, faster and most cost effective ways of providing e-resources to the information seekers. The collective strength of consortia members facilitates to get the benefit of wider access to electronic resources at affordable cost and at the bests terms and conditions.

9. CONCLUSION

With the rapid advancement in computer technology along with information technology, libraries and information centers have been blessed with electronic materials and therefore libraries are gradually shifting towards the electronic libraries with electronic resources. As such, libraries therefore are now increasingly involved in creating and acquiring e-resources. The availability of IT based electronic resources has exerted ever-increasing pressures on libraries and there is no doubt that e-resources are expanding rapidly. However, in order to meet the ever increasing demand of the user community in a digital environment, libraries have to develop ways to manage access to materials available in electronic format and to effectively share them much as they have shared print resources for over a century through inter library lending.

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