

INTERNET: AN OMNIPOTENT TOOL FOR EXCELLENT AND PROMPT LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the importance of the Internet in Library functions and services provided by L & I Centres. Web offers significant advantages by integrating different library and information services with a common user interface offered by Web browsers. With the demand of adopting this new age Technology, Metropolitan Networks have to become more efficient to train the L & I Professionals and Students.

Keywords: Internet use, Library and Information Services Improvement, Internet Application

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0. Introduction

There is an oft-quoted saying on technology, 'what is new at dawn is obsolete by dusk.' Information technology has radically changed the perspective of the whole information system, particularly with the emergence of computer applications, telecommunication networks, Fax, CD-ROM, email, optical scanning, hypertext and hyper-media, video text and Tele-text, multimedia technology, online databases, electronic publishing, voice mail service, teleconferencing, radio paging, mobile phone system, etc.

The Internet is one of the most important and complex innovations of mankind. It is the most modern worldwide system of information transfer. It is referred to as Inter-network system and is described as a network of networks. This conjures up an image of something mysterious that magically connects people, information and computers, from the point of generation to the point of use by anyone and anywhere in the world.

1. What is Internet ?

The first networks linking computers began to emerge as early as 1940s. Not until 1970's, however, did it become cost effective and reliable for ordinary computer users to transmit the data between computers over long distances. Today there are thousands of networks worldwide. There are five basic types of networks according to their purpose and administration:

- (1) **Academic:** established, normally with government support, for use by members of the academic and research community. These networks generally serve a region or a country. e.g BITNET in the USA and JANET in the UK.
- (2) **Corporate:** in-house proprietary systems, linking staff and machines at a single site and or between branches and divisions of a company or organisation; these are normally private with right security to restrict access to the authorised members of the organisation.

- (3) **Cooperative:** where the costs are shared by a group of separate institutions or individuals. Many cooperative cataloguing systems, whereby member libraries could exchange catalogue records, were originally established on this basis.
- (4) **Commercial (for profit networks):** available to the public at large, or to closed user groups, on a fee paying basis. A prime example is AOL, an American network with a global user-base, which has added a range of UK specific information to its services in order to attract more British users.
- (5) **Metanetworks:** these are network of networks encompassing any or all of the above types; the Internet is a Metanetwork – a vast conglomerate of inter-connected computer networks that brings together people, information and computer resources across the globe.

So we can say that Internet is a worldwide network of networks, Large storage house of information, Medium of effective communication, Information super highway, Information retrieval mechanism, virtual tool, A virtual library or library without walls, Indispensable international communication tool.

2. Internet can be used to

- ✍ Exchange personal messages with colleagues, friends or relatives at other networked sites.
- ✍ Engage in group discussions, exchange information and ideas with people who share a common interest, and seek information from them.
- ✍ Automatically receive information on world events, leisure interests, and technical, business, and professional matters by subscribing to electronic journals, conferences, newsletters and alerting services
- ✍ Look up information in reference works, databases and libraries worldwide.
- ✍ Retrieve journal articles, books, computer programs, and graphic images, and transfer them to personal computer.
- ✍ Make use of computer facilities that are not available locally.
- ✍ Download new software or updates for existing applications.
- ✍ Browse catalogues of goods and services and make credit-card purchases.
- ✍ Participate in distance learning and academic conferencing.
- ✍ Engage in real-time 'chat' and multi-player interactive games.
- ✍ Communicate with individuals or groups by means of voice only or voice and image.
- ✍ Publish information for access by other Internet users.

3. Resources available on the Internet E-journals

- o Library Catalogue
- o Old Books
- o Magazines
- o Directories
- o Audio
- o Standards
- o Bibliographical tools
- o New papers
- o Encyclopaedias
- o Films
- o Patents
- o Preprints
- o Share wares
- o Dictionaries
- o Databases
- o Technical Reports

Companies, Institutions, Organisations, Associations etc.

Many more.....

These resources help in making Library and Information Services more effective and efficient.

4. Application of Internet to Library functions and services

Perhaps no other recent innovation has impacted the library profession to such a great extent as Internet. It has created profound impact on Library and Information science by offering new modes of information delivery and a vast information source.

Not only is our world of Librarianship becoming an interconnected global community, but the early use of Internet has changed fundamental roles, paradigms and organisational culture of libraries and librarians as well.

4.1 Acquisition

Email is a one of the most effective service offered by Internet.

- ✍ We can send a suggestion form to the users of Library by Email and get prompt response of their requirements.
- ✍ Through Email, correspondence with Booksellers and Publishers become very easy and speedy.
- ✍ Reminders can also sent by Email to the users and booksellers etc.
- ✍ Bibliographical details can be downloaded from the Internet.
- ✍ Online catalogue searching saves our time and repetition of the work.
- ✍ Online Book sellers are also available on the Internet. E.g. amazon.com

- ✍ AcqWeb <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/law/acqs/acqs.html>

4.2 Classification

There are many classification systems available on the Internet.

- o e.g. BUBL- User DDC
- o Cyber Dewy

4.3 Cataloguing

There are many cataloguing systems available on the Internet.

- o e.g. InterCat
- o CORC
- o NETfirst (OCLC)
- o OPAC (Website)

4.4 Circulation

- ✍ ✍ Interlibrary Loan
- ✍ ✍ Reminders can be sent to users by email or they can be informed online
- ✍ ✍ User requests
- ✍ ✍ Direct Borrowing

4.5 Preservation and storage

JSTOR Project

4.6 Serial Collection

- ✍ Acquisition process
- ✍ E-journals
- ✍ Link to the Free E-journals

4.7 Resource Sharing

- ✍ Union Catalogues can be accessed, added, downloaded
- ✍ Access to databases over networks e.g. Ohionet, WLN, OCLC, BD (UK)
- ✍ Full text journals access

4.8 Reference Services

- ✍ Linking to useful sites
- ✍ Subject guides
- ✍ How to search
- ✍ Answering short range and long range questions

4.9 Services

- ✍ ✍ ILL
- ✍ Document Delivery Service
- ✍ Reference/Inf. Service
- ✍ CAS
 - Recent additions
 - Content pages
- ✍ SDI
 - From Library collection
 - Databases
 - Internet Sources
- ✍ OPAC
- ✍ Database access
 - Bibliographical
 - Free full text of certain journals
 - Free databases e.g. MEDLINE
 - Silverplatter

5. Marketing of Library Services

- Website is a best tool of marketing Institute's services.
- Attracts many users.
- New events, conferences, meetings can be announced on the Web
- Information can be promptly retrieved in any discipline for the information need of users.
- Without going anywhere it becomes possible to search from own desk.

URL of the organisation can work:

(1) As a Public Relations Tool

The Internet and Web have an increasingly pervasive presence on University and Library Campus. As more and more users expect to find the information they need via the W W W, the library has responsibility to utilize the web in informative and instructive roles.

(2) As an Instruction Tool

As expected, the web lends itself admirably in supporting instructional programmes in the library. Depending on the individual instruction programme and institutional details, the web can be incorporated in several ways.

(3) As a search platform

The web serves as an invaluable tool for the users in organising access to remotely accessible databases.

(4) As a communication Tool

The web can be used to establish interactive services between library users and the library staff and to provide for customer feedback on library services.

(5) As a Museum/Virtual Library

Its multimedia-capability features make the web an ideal environment for displaying manuscripts, photos and data in other special formats

6. Conclusion

Innovative use of INTERNET technologies enable Library and Information professionals to reach both local and distant users much more easily and effectively. Technologies such as email and web provide tremendous opportunities for L & I scientists to deliver information to the desktops of our users. With the emergence of world wide web, internet has become an inseparable part of the modern library and librarian can only exist in the coming century if he/she becomes a net librarian or a web librarian.

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