

USER ORIENTATION IN ENGINEERING COLLEGE LIBRARIES

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Abstract:

The main focus of the article is to familiarize the library resources, library services and facilities to the library users. Library professionals should instruct the library users to utilize the resources effectively and efficiently. Only accumulation of information will not fulfill the aim of the library, it should be achieved by using resources. Librarian's role is very important in user orientation and also minimize the time to search the needed information.

Keywords: User Orientation, resources, services, facilities

Introduction:

Academic libraries are hub of knowledge for students, research scholars and faculty. The main aim of the libraries is to serve the required information to the library users within a short span of time. Tremendous improvements in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its applications in libraries, has changed the way of looking towards the libraries, by library users. Abundant availability of information confused the library users to choose the relevant information. Librarians should educate library users to retrieve right relevant information.

Overview:

Library is compared to the heart of an educational institution. It supports the needs and thirst of the users of the institution. The goal of an education institution is to support the teaching and research needs. The responsibility of the Library staff is to provide good services to the users and also ensure that the resources are used to maximum to benefit the readers of the institute. To make the best utilization of library, user orientation or user education is the need of the hour.

With the developments in the field of Science and Technology and industrial revolution, knowledge has grown tremendously and Library professionals are finding it difficult to provide the needed information to the user at right time. So it is necessary to do user orientation to the users of the library and acquaint them how best they can make use of the library by using latest ICT skills adopted in the library.

Objectives

The main objective of the user orientation is to introduce the library facilities, resources, services and library techniques to the users. The orientation programme makes the users to familiarize to the resources and increases the use of library.

Spending lakhs of rupees on purchasing books, print and online journals will not fulfill the aim of an educational institution, unless it should be utilized properly.

Definition:

User orientation means educating the library users – newly joined student, faculty, research scholar etc.

Fleming, (1990) defined User orientation as various program of instruction, education and exploration provided by libraries to users to enable them to make more effective, efficient and independent use of information sources and services to which these libraries provide access.

Mellon, (1988) mentioned that, "Students enter college with little or no any knowledge of basic library tools, procedures or terminology". Basic to this statement Clarke, 1999 emphasize the justification for mounting programs for user education in university libraries. (Clarke 1999) writes, "Third World countries, in the majority of cases, lack adequate public libraries that could meaningfully serve as a necessary addition to the teaching and learning process in secondary schools. Even where they live such public libraries do not appear to have user instruction for new users, at least, not a large scale."

According to *Jacques Tacatlian* “User orientation is to include any effort or programme which will guide and instruct existing and potential users in the recognition and formulation of their needs, in the effective and efficient use of information services and their assessment.

Mews has defined user orientation as “instruction given to readers to help them to make best use of the library.”

The definition/meaning of user orientation, user education, library orientation programme, library instruction, user instruction, and information literacy are all one and the same. Orientation is a process of familiarizing the library to library users. Library users should have very good knowledge about the library to retrieve the information and making use of the library services and facilities effectively. Students from the schools / PU colleges may not have the knowledge of library or they may not have seen libraries earlier. Such students should be given training to use the library.

Another survey explains that library education/orientation increases the student familiarity with the resources and various services offered.

Orientation in general means adjustment or getting familiar.

NEED:

Due to the explosion of information and tremendous improvement in the field of information and communication technology (ICT), resulted the abundant availability of information. This abundant information discourages the users to retrieve their required information. It is considered as one of the main obstacle in information retrieval. Library professionals’ role is very important in help the library users to pick their required information from the tons of tons information available. Library professionals should teach the users to basic literature searching skills and reduce their burden.

Orientation methods:

Academic libraries spending lakhs together to improve their collection development, print journals subscription and online electronic journals subscription. These facilities should be utilized in better way to enhance library usage effectively.

User orientation method is depend on the collections in the library, documents arrangements, facilities and services available in the library, number of library users, their requirements, users are under graduates or post graduate students etc.

Different methods are followed for the user orientation. Some of them are described below:

Lecture method

Presentation method

Documentary on library

Demonstration, tutorials

Guided tour

Attending individuals at the Help desk

Virtual Tour

Brouchers/Flyers

a. **LECTURE METHOD:**

Lecture method is the common and familiar method and very effective way for communication. In this method librarian should address the students or faculty about library collections, type of classification, arrangement of documents, general and special services offered, library rules and regulations, etc.

b. **LIBRARY TOUR:**

Library tour is one of the best method for user orientation. In lecture method they only assume the library, but here they feel physically. It is very useful for library users, if it is conducted immediately after the lecture.

c. **DOCUMENTARY ON LIBRARY:**

If the library professionals want to present orientation programme for large number of students in a single sit, they can arrange the programme in an auditorium and screen the video about library, services, resources etc.

d. **POWER POINT PRESENTATION:**

PPT presentation is also one of the best method for user orientation. Here screen shots of the library sections, arrangements, library rules and regulations etc. can be shown. If possible we can make voice over behind.

e. **EMAIL:**

Email is one of the common and powerful communication media. For user orientation, email can be used for familiarising the library users regarding library, resources, etc.

f. **BROCHURES / FLYERS:**

Brochures or flyers can be used in user orientation programme. They can be distributed to library users. They can go through the same at their ease and when in need.

g. **VIRTUAL TOUR:**

It needs some technical knowledge to create the virtual tour. It can be used in orientation programme to familiarise the library to the users.

Levels of Orientation:

At the beginning of the academic year orientation can be given to the newly joined students to the institution. This is the best method which is usually followed everywhere since if the users are trained at the entry level then the library user can make himself comfortable with the method.

Once he/she is well through the orientation, the user can be given subject orientation with respect to the stream the student has taken admission.

Literature search and article search for the research scholars.

Orientation may include the various services offered, different sections of library, library collection, memberships to the professional bodies etc.

Planning

Well planned user education brings drastic changes in the user perception of knowledge from library. Introduction of Information technology or ICT in the library by means of automation, library databases, open sources the user will be more interested in gaining the information needed by them. To begin with the user needs to be trained or guided how to use the browser, resources etc.

If the OPAC of the library is hosted on the server, the users can access the library from the remote parts of the campus where the student feels comfortable. It can be hostel, lobby area etc.

Organizing

On the first day of the college for the newly joined students, an orientation will be organized by the institution. Here all the Heads of the Departments, faculties would be

introduced to the students. After the orientation the students and parents would be taken round the department to have a look at the classrooms, laboratories etc.

Hence, orientation may also be done in the library taking the students and parents round the library introducing various sections of the library.

Effectiveness of Orientation

Effectiveness of the library orientation can be conducted by evaluating a survey for the students, research scholars and faculties at the end of every academic year.

Librarians should be proactive and teach the information skills, use of e resources and various search engines.

User interaction need to be conducted frequently, to the students & faculties and update them with the new additions and new innovative practices implemented in the library.

Library orientation should be an integral part of the fresher's day/ college orientation or can be done separately but should be included in the timetable at the commencement of the academic year.

Library services to be in pace with the needs of students, skillful librarians to be trained who can provide user orientation programs.

The Head of the institution should make user orientation training compulsory for all faculties, and provide them with handouts/flyers to present to library users.

There is no doubt that the user orientation program brought a positive change to the respondents' behavior towards library use, considering their previous experiences and feedback from the past users.

The effectiveness is only perfect once the orientation /user education reaches the audience and the users make the maximum use of the resources based on the levels of the user categories.

Conclusion:

Libraries in engineering college libraries have very good collections of books, print journals and online journals for the benefit of students, research scholars and faculty. It should be utilized in better way. For better utilization of resources library professionals should train or instruct the library users how to retrieve the information easily by using simple retrieving techniques.

Learning is a lifelong process, once we train the users, they will continue these practices throughout their career.

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