

# LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE KNOWLEDGE WEB

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Dr. Stanley Madan Kumar)

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# Chapter - 29

## **E-Learning and Web Based Library and Information Services: An Overview**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The phenomenal growth and reach of World Wide Web (www) has been one of the most significant developments in the last few years. It has rapidly gained popularity and has become most widely used application of the Internet. Today, the World Wide Web has emerged as the most powerful medium for information publishing and access. A plethora of information sources.

The user friendly interface and hypertext features of Web have been attracting a significant number of users as well as information providers. The web-based e-services are increasingly being used by research communities as a viable means to access to a plethora of digital resources in networked information environment. Concomitantly, utilization of such electronic methods and means is expanding substantially throughout the chain of e-research and scientific knowledge production.

### **RELATED LITERATURE**

One aspect of higher education that got influenced by internet and its applications has been the emergence of electronic resources. Because of its utility in increasing the learning support, lot of literature is available on the

aspect of e-resources, web based services of libraries, etc. Whilst information dissemination within networked library environment has been the subject of much scrutiny, there is a paucity of scholarly works considering research use of the web for support virtual researchers. The definition of Internet-base current awareness extended to cover a selection of one or more w-ICT systems to provide current notification of the existence of relevant new research information entities added to the databases e.g. alert of e-journal's table of contents (e-TOCs), and forthcoming meetings. The context of scholarly uses of the web-based communicating tools such as email among the faculty, scientists, researchers, and students within the so-called *invisible* or *virtual college* has been focused by many researchers.

## **CURRENT LIBRARY USER INFORMATION SERVICES**

It's a practice to divide library user services into two categories: library public user services and library technical user services. Library public user services refer to circulation, bibliographic instruction, distance learning, government documentation, reference, special collections, and so on. Library technical user services focus on procedures and operations of maintaining, developing, and supporting library collections and services behind the scene, such as acquisition, cataloging and classification, interlibrary loan and document delivery, serials, systems, and so on.

Over the years, libraries have come to accept and use internet as the primary platform to build and deliver information resources, services, and instructions. Current library user information services, also called library user public services, have been evolving into two sections: traditional library user information services; and electronic library user information services. In the digital age, the most common library user information services still start from the personal oral or written communications between librarians and library users.

Traditional library user information services have the following two major features:

- Face-to-face: traditional library user information services usually are being processed by face-to-face personal communication, including eye contact, facial expression, oral communication, and written communication.
- On-site: traditional library user information services include, but are not limited to, on-site bibliographic instruction, campus outreach coordination and collaboration, classroom instruction, consultation, library tour, ready reference, user technical support, virtual reference, and so on.

On the platform of the internet and the world wide web (WWW), electronic library user information services range from bibliographic instructions computerized library catalogs, digital libraries, distance learning services

e-databases, instant messaging services, interlibrary loan and document services, ready references, virtual classrooms, virtual references, and so on.

## **E-LEARNING**

With the emergence of World Wide Web (WWW) in 1970s, the world of teaching and learning has adopted it as one of its main innovations. However, in spite of extensive use of web in education, varieties of terminologies are used to depict this new field of knowledge. Some of the terms mostly used interchangeably are as follows:

- a) **Web-based Instruction:** It is a "hypermedia based instructional programme which utilizes the attributes and resources of the World Wide Web to create a meaningful learning environment where learning is fostered and supported". (Khan, 1997).
- b) **Virtual Learning:** "The educational process of learning over the Internet without having face-to-face contact is known as virtual learning" (French, Hale, Johnson and Farr, 1999). However, some virtual learning may also include tele-learning.
- c) **Online Learning:** It is synonymous to web-based learning where learning is fostered via the WWW only, in an Intranet or Internet. Mishra (2001) calls it as the new generation in the evolutionary growth of open, flexible and distance learning.
- d) **E-Learning:** "The term e-learning covers a wide set of applications and processes including computer-based learning, web-based learning, virtual classroom, and digital collaboration" (WR Hambrecht + Co, 2000, p8). However, the term e-learning is becoming widely accepted as a substitute for online learning and web-based learning.

The web today is used in three different ways by educational institutions:

- Web integrated in the classroom teaching, that works as supplement to the face-to-face teaching;
- Web used as a 'mixed mode' approach to complement face-to-face teaching, normally called 'blended e-learning'; and
- Web used independently for teaching and learning as replacement for face-to-face teaching (Mitra, 1999; Berge, Collins and Dougherty, 2000; Bates, 2001).

The rapid spread of Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) during the 1980's and 1990's has opened up new opportunities to make databases accessible via the web. Several advantages are seen for web-enabled databases:-

1. Global access to data that is in public domain, e.g.:-bibliographic, statistical, full text, image and multimedia databases;

2. Platform-independent access to data and information.
3. Dynamic updating of data ensuring that live data is available globally for use by decision makers, customers, vendors, etc. This is becoming particularly important in the rapidly growing e-commerce sectors.
4. The fact that a single interface, viz., Internet Browser is all that is needed on the client machine to access databases across the Internet,
5. The possibility for developing and delivering interactive solutions and for the collection of valuable feedback, reactions, analyses, and user preferences for use in business and other decisions.

### **EXPANDING ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN THE PRESENT WEB BASED - LEARNING AGE**

Learning resources and the information services provided by a library are indispensable to any academic institution as a primary knowledge resource for study, teaching and research. Library adopts new information systems and services with the emergence of new and better information technologies. In the changing scenario, the faculty and instructors have begun to adopt e-learning strategies as a part of their teaching programmes and the library has a positive role to play to collect, organize, and disseminate learning web resources to complement the teaching and learning process. Following are some of the prominent factors that have given rise to a need for the web based library and information services.

- a) Globalization of education demands that teachers and students be brought together at the same time, irrespective of the geographical location. This is possible through e-learning.
- b) To enhance the competitiveness among the students by training them.
- c) To provide access to greater level of resources and information services to students and teachers to enhance their learning opportunities.
- d) Library and information services are expected to be like internet banking. A 24X7 information service, convenience of access at their desk top.

### **LIBRARY HOMEPAGE FOR INFORMATION DISSEMINATION**

A good number of faculty and researchers regularly use this service and make effective use of their academic and research interests. Timely and wider dissemination made effective use and recognition of Library & Information Services and number of logs to library website increased. To allow the users remote access to the library and feel acquainted with the services of the library and to get satisfactory answers to their queries from the remote access. This will enable the user to familiarize with the library activities and access the

library catalogues through the remote access. User can also renew/reserve books, access the content pages of his formal journals and ask for a copy of the article to be delivered to him at his work place.

Powerful tool that links all the electronic resources for easy access. Has the usual features of OPAC, Facilitates the operations such as downloading records and sending results and messages electronically reinforces the usefulness of the catalogue. It becomes another search engine. Referred as 'Web Cats' and as well a type of 'Information Gateways'. Some include information on the screens such as login id, username or password in boxes and users can see when they access the catalogue.

An Institutional Repository (IR) is an online locus for collecting, preserving and disseminating in digital form, the intellectual output of an institution, particularly a research institution. For a university, this would include materials such as research journal articles, before (preprints) and after (post prints) undergoing peer review, and digital versions of these and dissertations, but it might also include other digital assets generated by normal academic life, such as administrative documents, course notes or learning objects.

## **LIBRARY TRANSACTIONS AND THE WEB**

Users were asked for an explanation as to what are the library transactions they wish to carry out at their convenience through the web.

- to search the books database
- to know the availability of a particular document
- to search books using all approaches
- to reserve a book
- to access current awareness bulletins
- to pay library dues
- to pay for fee based library services
- to know more about services rendered by library

## **CONCLUSION**

Present day learning process is internet driven to a large extent. However, to utilize the resources of Internet to its maximum, it is necessary to make the users (faculty and research scholars) well-versed in the surfing and browsing on the Net. Access to resources on the Net cannot be achieved unless and until short-term courses or workshops and training programmes are conducted. This will help users to know various developments and searching techniques for accessing the desired information.

Information and Communication Technology based promotional services

supplemented by the traditional practices will enhance the activities of promoting web resources and services in the libraries. The library web pages are playing good role in promoting the web resources. If few more web interfaces are added in the library websites for enhanced functionalities, it will be encouraging to the end-users and also the ultimate goal of investment on web resources could be achieved.

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