

Research Support Services: From Understanding to Engagement

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Abstract

Academic libraries world over and, the University Libraries in particular, are undergoing evolutionary changes. Emerging technologies are making it imperative for the libraries to design new services or realign the older services to meet the user expectations and to boost the productivity of researchers. with application of Information Technology for access and delivery of e-content in the changing information landscape. This paper reviews the library web pages of world's top 30 Universities, to determine the type of research support that is extended to researchers. It attempts to study the services which facilitate the research productivity of the scholars. The study also offers pointers for a research toolkit for an indicative design of a research portal for academic libraries .

Introduction

The quest for improvement in research performance and success in research is significantly important to all universities.

Libraries no longer enjoy the monopoly of holding the resources. Rapid proliferation of digital technologies coupled with increasing user expectations is forcing the libraries to change in a large way. The transformed research lifecycle and the corresponding changes in copyright applications, publishing models, and open access policies have generated unprecedented opportunities for innovative library engagement with the academy and its researchers .

New players, new forms of publications, new tools new policies and mandates laid down funding agencies all lead to tremendous pressure for the researcher. Research process and publications, impact and ways of collaboration both have changed so services have to be design keeping in mind this change.

In this changing scenario, the libraries are required to expand the services which they extend understanding these changes .The primary role of the library now is to facilitate the process of research, enhance the productivity and visibility of the researchers.

Libraries need to provide support and enable the research community, for their current needs, and have an insight into areas for future support. Understanding and addressing these issues and building our services around them is a priority if we are to ensure the relevance of our libraries and our profession in a changing world. Libraries today need to go a step beyond understanding and engaging with the user community in this changing scholarly landscspe

Methods

A list of top 30 Universities was drawn from the 2016 QS World Ranking of Universities .A content analysis of the library web pages of all 30 (Actual Count 31 as two universities have same rank) universities was carried out to gather data for this study within 15 days . Quantitative and qualitative data was gathered from the web pages to identify services extended to support the researcher pursuits of the university faculty and scholars. A marking sheet for data collection was developed and tested on five university library web for pilot study. Services were classified as Basic Services and Specialized services depending on their nature of the services. Based on this data a model for library services and a research portal was designed

Finding

Following is the list of services that are extended by the top ranking University libraries of the world to faculty and researchers .

Basic Services

- Ask Librarian services
- Federated Search
- Information Commons
- Information Literacy Tutorials
- Institutional Repositories
- Personalized help for research
- Research Guides
- Reference Management
- Social Media Presence

Specialized Services

- Advocacy on Open Access
- Assistance in Publication
- Copyright and IPR Licensing issues
- ETD repositories
- Printing on demand
- Research Data Management
- Research Impact and Metrics

These services were extremely important for augmentation of the scholarly communication process of the researchers. These services help researchers navigate the shifting patterns of the research process with ease. Specialized services required training of library staff.

Results

Figure 1 represents the research lifecycle and the list of library services appropriate for each component in the lifecycle are listed below



Idea Discovery

- Federated Search
- Research Guides
- Ask a Librarian
- Personalized research assistance
- Information Literacy
- Information Commons

Funding /Approval

- Open Access and OA Mandates laid down by Funding agencies or Institutions
- Research Data Management

Experimentation Analysis

- Statistical Software
- Manage Citations

Results Dissemination

- Assisting in Publishing
- Printing thesis
- Reference Management
- Copyright and IPR
- Improving Visibility (IR/Web 2.0)
- Research Metrics

Conclusions

Libraries can no longer remain as mere institutions in the technological era, but should have a more active role as an efficient information provider. There are several challenges to the like digital technology and also changes in the research system. The library should be as catalyst in knowledge production cycle . There library continues to be an integral part research by responding to this challenge by developing a unique role in consultation with their Institutes and research community needs. Libraries must support and reinforce roles with renovated and repurposed spaces, staff with specialized expertise, and a strong institutional capacity for technological support. University libraries, which are engaged in a process of reinventing themselves and rethinking their services are an increasingly important source for the development of the institution. It is challenging to transform libraries and to remain relevant requires a deeper understanding what services will be valued in the future, how they can change and adapt and engage to maintain relevancy in a continuously changing environment.

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