

## Implementation of Qualitative Information Services in Libraries: Problems and Perspectives

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### Abstract:

This research paper describes the terms like 'Quality', 'Information Service', 'Information Systems' and 'Quality Information Services', and further focuses on the problems in the successful implementation of the qualitative information services by the libraries. The problem areas and perspectives for implementation of the quality information services in the present digital environment have been explained.

**Keywords:** Quality, Information Service, Qualitative Information Service, ICT Infrastructure, IPR.

### 1. Introduction:

In the present competitive age surrounded Information and Communication Technology environment, there is no excuse to quality and an attempt to compromise with the quality information services may pose a challenge to the existence of the non-profit making service organization like libraries.

In simple terms, quality means conformance to requirement or needs or wants of the users. Successful and user oriented information services by libraries and information system is not possible without 'quality'. Information service is the core part and parcel of any library activity. Hence, it is clear that, 'an **Information Service** is this part of an Information System that serves data / knowledge / information to customers and collects it from its contributors, to manage and store it by optionally using administrators'

### 2. Operational Definitions:

#### 2.1. Quality?

In case of the non-profit-making service organizations like libraries, 'quality' of service means conformance to requirement or wants or needs of the users i.e. simply conformance to requirement.

According to Oxford English Dictionary 'Quality' means "the degree or grade of excellence etc possessed by a thing".<sup>1</sup>

#### 2.2. Quality Information Services:

**Qualitative information** helps us to identify the factors or reasons affecting behaviour - how and why. 'Qualitative' is also used to describe information relating to 'soft' outcomes such as confidence or engagement. These outcomes can be measured, but not by counting things! So, reporting on impact can be more difficult.

#### 2.3. Information Service:

"An **Information Service** is a service, which provides (serves) data / knowledge / information somehow".<sup>2</sup>

Wikipedia delivers, or better saying serves, a good definition of this context, which is called *Information System*.

#### 2.4 An Information System:

It is in Wikipedia, "An **Information System** is any combination of information technology and people's activities using that technology to support operations, management, and decision-making".<sup>3</sup>

**2.41 The definition continues with explaining the term from a bit more technical view and the outcome of this, is the following definition:**



“An **Information Service** is this part of an Information System that serves data/knowledge/information to customers and collects it from its contributors, to manage and store it by optionally using administrators”.<sup>4</sup>

Thus qualitative information services means, the services which provide maximum satisfaction to the user wants, needs and requirements, at the least costs, within the shortest possible time and in the stipulated environment.

### **3. Problems and perspectives in the Implementation of Qualitative Information Service:**

#### **3.1. Lack of Proper ICT Infrastructure:**

In order to provide any innovative quality information service, the libraries must have appropriate ICT infrastructure with latest hardware, softwares or the like, which forms the backbone of successful implementation of the quality information services.

The libraries with very poor ICT infrastructure experiences setback in the implementation of the innovative quality information services. The situation is very grievous, especially in the academic libraries comprising school and college libraries, in the developing and under-developed countries.

#### **3.2. Intellectual Property Right (IPR) Issues: Infringement, misappropriation, and enforcement**

Unauthorized use of intellectual property rights, called 'infringement' with respect to patents, copyright, and trademarks, and 'misappropriation' with respect to trade secrets, may be a breach of civil law or criminal law, depending on the type of intellectual property, jurisdiction, and the nature of the action.

Patent infringement typically is caused by using or selling a patented invention without permission from the patent holder. It is safe to use a patented invention for research, only when it is carried out for purely philosophical purposes, or in order to gather data to prepare an application for regulatory approval of a drug.

Copyright infringement is reproducing, distributing, displaying or performing a work or to make duplication of work, without permission from the copyright holder, which is typically a publisher or other business representing or assigned by the work's creator. Enforcement of copyright is generally the responsibility of the copyright holder.<sup>5</sup>

Trademark infringement occurs when one party uses a trademark that is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark owned by another party, in relation to products or services which are identical or similar to the products or services of the other party.

Trade secret misappropriation is different from violations of other intellectual property laws, since by definition trade secrets are secret, while patents and registered copyrights and trademarks are publicly available.

These IPR issues make a great impact on library services, for many times creating a problem for library readers and for delivering library services.

#### **3.3. Resistance to Change:**

“Resistance to change is the act of opposing or struggling with modifications or transformations that alter the status quo in the workplace or quality of the services rendered”.<sup>6</sup>

Managing resistance to change is challenging task. Resistance to change can be covert or overt, organized or individual. Employees can realize that they don't like or want a change and resist publicly and verbally. Or, they can just feel uncomfortable and resist, sometimes unknowingly, through the actions they take, the words they use to describe the change, and the stories and conversations they share in the workplace.

Change is generally resisted because of the following factors:

- a) Resistance by employees;
- b) Resistance by employer or management;
- c) Changes on experimental basis:

Resistance to change by library staff and readers threatens the quality of information services. It affects the speed of implementation of the innovative library services to be planned for. It also affects the feelings and opinions of employees at all stages of the adoption process. It affects willingness, motivation and work performance of the employees, which in turn hampers the quality of the library services and disturbs the sound human relationships.



### **3.4 Scarcity of Trained Staff:**

In spite of good ICT infrastructure, sound management perspectives, strong financial position, all the efforts made to implement quality information services are in vein without trained staff.

In the process of execution of any innovative library services, trained staff is a key factor. The scarcity of experts and trained man power is a major obstacle in the implementation of the quality information services in libraries.

### **3.5 Lack of Human Relations and Team Approach:**

There should be favourable human relation among the staff as well as among the various sections of the library. It helps to foster the success of the quality information services rendered to the needy users. But, unfortunately, many libraries face the acute problem of conflict management due to lack of proper understanding and maintenance of human relations in the scalar chain. In a system like library where Inter-sectional dependence is more, lack of human relations is a major obstacle in rendering qualitative information services.

All the employees working at any level (from top to bottom) in the organizational structure should face the joint venture of providing quality information service as a team effort, but many times they forget team spirit. Library as a system, all the sections are inter-related with each other therefore all the sections should work together as a system, to accept the challenge hidden in the implementation of the quality information services, but many times it is not feasible due to lack of proper co-ordination among different sections.

### **3.6 Motivation: Willingness to adopt Theory X and rejection of Theory Y: "Motivation is the inner drive that moves and directs an individual's behaviour towards satisfying his needs and attainment of goals"**<sup>7</sup>

Douglas McGregor's theory of motivation has two aspects viz. 'Theory X' and 'Theory Y'. Theory X is a negative approach while theory Y is based on a positive approach of the employees towards their work.

According to theory X of motivation, an average human being has inherent dislike for work and a tendency to avoid it. They are un-ambitious, shirk responsibilities, and give first priority to security. Therefore, such workers need to be coerced, controlled and threatened with punishment to make them work.

Theory Y States that an average human being approaches the work as a natural activity, which could be a source of satisfaction or repulsion. According to this theory, the individual generates self control and self direction, seeks responsibility, and derives personal satisfaction from efforts directed towards organizational objectives of rendering quality information services to users.

The theory X is not suitable in modern times. This theory supports authoritarian view, which is not applicable in the present economy, then also this theory is mostly accepted and theory Y is rejected, even though it has positive approach and more suitable for providing quality information services.

### **3.7. Reluctance for the Implementation of Cloud Computing Services:**

Many employees are reluctant to implement cloud technology and provide cloud based services. They are not willing to accept the risks and challenges posed in the implementation of such IT enabled services useful for our daily and basic needs of computing.

There are risks in the implementation of cloud computing such as: to rely on third party for information accessibility may increase the risk of data security and loss of data, licensing issues with the third party is a major concern, accessibility depends on bandwidth, violates Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), policy of agreement with the service provider, provision for substitute arrangement if the service fails.

### **3.8) Traditional Publishers Vs Information Aggregators:**

The best aggregators can do all searches possible for you in a single attempt. The great advantage of aggregators is the ability to search dozens of airline Web sites, all at the same time. Aggregator sites run searches on numerous Web sites simultaneously, then link directly to the search results so you can purchase the fares within a click or two. The technique is commonly called 'deep linking' -- the practice of linking well down into another site's pages. These helps to provide qualitative information services to readers whereas traditional publishers only can provide you bibliographic details online. This discrimination has an effect on library services for content delivery.



## 5. Conclusion:

The service organizations like libraries are evaluated and assessed on the basis of the quality of the services rendered to fulfill the wants, needs and requirements of the users, so, successful implementation of qualitative information services is inevitable, even though they have to tackle problems like Lack of Proper ICT Infrastructure, Intellectual Property Right (IPR) Issues, Resistance to Change, Scarcity of Trained Staff, Lack of Human Relations and Team Approach, Willingness to adopt Theory X and rejection of Theory Y of motivation, Traditional Publishers Vs Information Aggregators, Reluctance for the Implementation of Cloud Computing services etc.

In the present ICT based Digital era, the libraries must respond positively to the changing environment by implementing continuous management of changes for quality information services effectively and efficiently, otherwise, 'negligence of change' factor may pose a threat to their existence.

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