

USE OF E-RESOURCES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN PRESENT DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

Library is a knowledge centre which has rich information resources stored in different formats including print and electronic form. E-resources play a prominent role in facilitating access to accurate information with in shot time to the users.

This paper presents the use of E-Resources in Academic Libraries in present Digital era. Libraries of all types are embracing electronic/digital collections, although most libraries will continue to offer both print and electronic collections for many years to come. In present days, most of the users have the knowledge to use computers and the Internet. The majority of the users is using Google search engine. This paper identifies the different types of users of academic libraries and the availability of electronic/digital resources, which should be known to every user in the academic libraries. The study also highlights the methods of using e-resources by the staff and students and also the problems faced by them in doing so. This study provides suggestions for the better access to the facilities with most advanced infrastructure and subscriptions to more e-resources.

KEYWORDS: Information Resources, E-Resources, Academic Libraries, Electronic/Digital Collection & Google Search Engine

INTRODUCTION

The format of library resources has also changed with the demand of time and the advantages in technology through the ages. The use of paper as an information holding document brought a great leverage to the users of the ancient writing materials. Thus books became the dominant information material of notable value. Till now, books still remain relevant. However, because of the flexibility of use of electronic-based information, materials, books are gradually being replaced by the electronic resources. Nowadays, many libraries have transformed and are in the process of transforming their resources to electronic through digitization process. 21st century libraries have been transformed from the traditional store house of information materials into information centers where Information and Communication Technologies (ICTS) are used to acquire, process, store, retrieve and disseminate information. Libraries prefer electronic/digital resources for many reasons, including the flexibility of digital journals with links to indexing and abstracting databases, access from the user's home, office, or dormitory where or not the library is open; getting usage statistics that are not available for print collections; and savings by electronic/digital collections in space and their relative easy maintenance.

According to AACR2, Electronic Resources are "materials consisting of data and computer programs encoded for reading and manipulation by a the use of peripheral device directly connected to the computer or remotely via a network such as the Internet". They are electronic resources that are made available electronically and can also be accessed as such facilities like online computer catalogs, the Internet and World Wide Web, digital libraries and Archives, government portals and websites, CD-ROM databases, online academic databases such as Medline, or commercial databases such as

LEXIS and NEXIS all of which are computer networked facilities.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Academic libraries play a vital role in the entire global library system. The academic libraries are meant for education, research and development. The goal of an academic library is to be the best in the world at serving the unique teaching, learning and research needs of its institution. Technological developments and availability of online electronic resources have changed the research activity. New challenges and new expectations come with new technological developments and innovations.

Role of Academic Libraries in Information Seeking

Academic libraries to adequately address the changing information needs of its faculty and scholars, they need to know more about the information that faculty and scholars use. Academic libraries developed as a result of the need to preserve valuable records of events. These records must be in the form of Written scrolls, papyrus kept in jars, clay tablets, manuscripts and printed materials. Modern academic libraries have taken on additional new roles because of changing demands and new technology. They are currently regarded as agents for educational, social, economic and political change, and their doors are open to all. Information seeking is embedded in the day-to-day activities and relationships of the participants. A large number of needs are satisfied by sources provided by the academic libraries at present days. The revolution in ICTs is threatening the very existence of a number of highly regarded institutions such as publishing, Scientific societies and academic libraries. The online services such as the Internet, MP3 players, cell phones, and online versions of newspapers have led news consumers to rely increasingly on information from online and digital sources.

Types of Information Needs

Tague(1991) has presented the following types of information needs:

- Social or pragmatic information needs: required to cope with day to day life;
- Recreational information needs;
- Professional information needs;
- Educational information needs.

E-Resources Provided by Academic Libraries

The following are the different types of electronic resources:

Primary Sources of Information: These include electronic conferences, electronic journals, e-prints, e-theses and dissertations, patents, standards, technical reports, project reports including status reports of current ongoing projects, news, software courseware, tutorials etc.,.

Databases, Data Sets and other Collections: These include abstracting and indexing databases, digital collections comprising images, audio, video structural databases library catalogues; virtual libraries; museums and archives, etc.,.

Electronic Books: Such as net library; E-brary etc. Generally online book selling and print-on demand features also facilitated. Net library has entered into print-on-demand market place.

Reference Sources: Such as Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, bibliographies handbooks, thesauri etc.,.

Meta Sources: Resources that facilitate easier access to network based resources in a defined subject area and subject gateways, virtual libraries, cleaning house, pathfinders etc.,.

Users of Academic Libraries: The Academic libraries are showing greater interest and reliance upon e-resources. The trend to procure and maintain e-resources has grown exponentially among the academic libraries. The users are highly dependent on e-resources which is expected to grow in future too. The library users can be categorized into four groups viz. general readers, creative readers, adult students, and readers with special interests.

CATEGORY OF USERS AND INFORMATION NEEDS

Academic librarians dedicate much time and energy to anticipating and meeting the information needs of students who come to the library for support with their research assignments. It collects and provides the materials they need; The category of users are divided based on their information requirement for solving their purposes. The following academic libraries are having various categories of users and their respective information needs.

College Libraries: The college library is for the junior and degree students and teachers. The information required by the users cover the syllabus. Any user desiring to know more about library resources and services or to learn how to use OPAC, e-journals, databases etc. should contact librarian.

University Libraries: The University library is for the post graduate students, research scholars, faculty of various departments and staff. The information needs by the users for research and development, competitive etc. information is an important factor in any library because it is needed by users.

Engineering College Libraries: The information needs of the users of engineering colleges have become complex and problematic due to the tremendous publications and interdisciplinary researches that are being promoted at the level of higher education. The librarians should have a clear understanding of their user's needs and their information seeking behavior so that the libraries could satisfy the user needs as well as improve the existing services accordingly.

Medical Libraries: Medical college is an educational institution that provides medical education. Deficiency of right information to the right physicians at the right time may, therefore, lead to serve loss to the quality of treatment to patients. The well-organized medical library undoubtedly plays a crucial role in the production of health science information.

CONCLUSIONS

The e-resources are very useful at the present scenario, and provides a platform for new services. E-resources give many advantages and disadvantages. Some advantages like flexibility, low cost, time saving, faster response, greater effectiveness and also some disadvantages like many users find it discouraging, especially at first; user needs basic technology and skill required for users. Finally E-resources are very important in 21st century and it gives a big platform for library and information centre.

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