



Library Web Portal And Changing Role Of Librarian

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ABSTRACT

Information technology is changing rapidly, which creates new challenges as well as opportunities. Librarians are also a part of this change, shifting from information gatekeeper to the new challenging role in the knowledge society which combines information management with the information, communication and technology to deal with the adoption of internet, world wide web, online access, online resources, global networking, internet-based information services etc. It is now required that library professionals enrich their knowledge with the new and latest technologies to access, browse and retrieve the information from the global networks and manage & organize that information to their users.

Librarians must have the ability to deal with the library portal technology as it is the need of the hour. Librarians are now required to select, organize, and instruct their patrons on how to use and locate the resources available online and preserve that information. With the information revolution and extensive thinking everything is available on the internet, world wide web which creates the challenges to the traditional professional librarians. Librarians are now required to learn and apply new skills of negotiating license agreements, managing e-library, library portals, electronic resources etc. to acquire and provide dependable access to the online resources. In the research article librarian changing role in library web portal environment is discussed in detail along with the skills required by them to face the challenges.

KEYWORDS: Librarian, Web Library Portal, Library Portal, Library Professional, E-resources

INTRODUCTION

Librarian is a working professional who is well qualified and trained in the library processes of acquisition, retrieval, preservation of printed documents, help in searching the information to users, etc. As we know that information technology usage has increased in every field, and libraries are also using it for the betterment of providing the library services and its collection. In the present information age, the information is treated as the wealth, resource and marketable commodity, the librarian role is changing from the traditional caretaker to information provider by the application of ICT in the library environment. Librarians are also facing new challenges to cope up with the changing situations and need to be more acquainted with the skill of handling the new technologies for the library processes of collection, processing and the dissemination of information. Apart from the knowledge of the library and information science field they should also have the knowledge of information technology and its application in the library services and function. As we are changing roles, which means a set of new updated skills with the latest technologies in the electronic information environment. Libraries advancement and smooth functioning depends upon the skills, qualities and competence of the human resources in terms of library professionals. They must have the work performance needs, vision for the service excellence and have vision for the future of the library. They should be capable of continuous learning and adapt to the changes and must be comfortable in any transition for embracing new roles.

DEFINITION & CONCEPT OF LIBRARY PORTAL

Library portals are the extension of portal technology, as a portal is a web service or website which provides the information content to serve a specific group of users, the word is taken from the Medieval Latin word 'portale'

which means city gate. The American Heritage Dictionary gives the definition of portal as “a doorway or entrance, or a gate, especially one that is large and imposing”. Library portals can be specified as the subset of web portals and it serves the specific academic community of users, researchers. Library portals are the gateway of an institution’s resources. Portals commonly speak the list of institutions’ resources for the users, and it creates the direct link to the interface of every resource under the list. According to Barman (2014), library portals in the digital era enhance the function and value of e-resources with the provision of searching for multiple resources. Library portals offer the access to a wide range of resources and services to libraries like e-resources, online databases, web OPAC, new addition.

Library web portal, or commonly we say library portal is a single point of access which has the library catalogues, subject gateways, subscription databases, electronic resources etc. Library portals meet the individual needs of the users, either by the system itself with the tailor-made delivery and presentation of information contents or by the users themselves can customize the format and type of information displayed. Library portals are the standard interface to get the library services and resources through a single management and access point for users.

The library portal has the most comprehensive content possible in various areas of the library field for all types of libraries.

SIGNIFICANCE OF LIBRARY WEB PORTAL

Advancement in information technology in the field of library and information sciences, librarians now rapidly know that the use of electronic resources is the solution for the users. As the user is not able to locate the appropriate database or resource for the searching of required information, and if they locate the appropriate resource, they may struggle to search the information in an effective way as the source may have its own unique interface. Library portals are the transformation that solve the problem by customizing information content according to the needs of the user. In the heap of knowledge resources and websites library web portals are the solution from the chaos. Portals of libraries remove the barrier of users having to remember the multiple long-ones. Library portal is a tool which channels the users to the preferred resources. It increases the use of the library by ensuring that the electronic resources are used, by offering a simple path to browse from the available resources. Library portals support searching by going through the bibliographic searches to the full text through the proper path.

ELEMENTS OF LIBRARY WEB PORTAL

With the improvement in the technology day by day, the library web portals are also changing rapidly, but some of the basic elements which are considered while designing the library portal is as follows, Intuitive and Customizable Web Interface, Search Interface, Resource Linking, User Authentication, Security, Personalized Content Presentation, Interactive Services and Contents of Library Web Portal.

NEED OF LIBRARY PORTALS

- ☐ Search for the resources is easier for the user as the library portal presents resources in an organized and consistent manner.
- ☐ It provides the one fully functional library-maintained search interface, which is available for any database user wants to use.
- ☐ It provides the facility of one search box to search multiple databases. Which means that it has the ability, in a single search, to interrogate databases which use different metadata standards.
- ☐ Reduces the barrier of the multiple logins
- ☐ It provides customization for the different user groups.
- ☐ The user can save searches, including for reuse on databases.

QUALITY OF LIBRARIAN

Some of the common quality which a librarian now has in the digital era as:

- ☐ **Leadership**- One of the common qualities is required as librarian to lead in the activities, resources and functions of the library. He/ she can give leadership and expertise in the library knowledge-based information system to meet the requirements of the users. He can use that skill in organizing, managing and dissemination of electronic information.
- ☐ **Resource person**- Librarian has to collect the relevant information from the numerous resources on the different aspects which are of user’s interest or in the favour of the institution. He must consider the aspects for the collection of the online resource as: requirement, ease to use, having intelligent search engines, alluring user interfaces, reasonable cost, access to users.
- ☐ **Master of web**- Librarians are now also becoming the master of the web to solve the challenges of the digital/ electronic learning environment in academic institutions. They are creating the websites; they collect the electronic information and create electronic ways and search tools to help their users to access the required information. They are creating online tutorials, manuals to search and instruction web pages to access the best results.

□ **Future Visionary Professional-** The role of librarian has been changed over the years, from a passive intermediary to the guiding reference professional to the information technology expert. The librarians are now more in the proactive professional roles, which contain the content information management, analysing and repackaging of information and institutional digital repository management.

CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARIAN

Librarian role has changed much from the custodian of books. They now are much updated with the skills required for facing the challenges in latest technologies and digital & electronic learning resources. The focus has shifted more from technical skills to communication, technology expert, marketing, and managerial skills for the librarian. It is now required that a librarian must have the knowledge of the web technologies related to the e-learning environment. With the changing environment librarians are now also playing the role of information managers. Their responsibility has increased in terms of identifying the relevant electronic resources, advising and training the users about the identification of relevant e-resources and strategy to search the relevant information.

1. Content Creators: Librarian is a content creator as in the designing of the portal to library, he/ she provides the contents of documents for the digitized form, like the theses, newspapers etc which can be uploaded and linked to the library portal and from that the client can easily be used for reference.

2. Information Architect: Basically, the librarian is responsible for the organization of content in their library, so in the planning and implementation of the library portal they bring their expertise with the contents, copyright issues, and customer service. Their experience can be utilized in creating the customized web-based information delivery system i.e. portal.

3. Portal Specifier: According to the Boss (2002), in the phase of purchasing the portal products, librarian should see the requirements of their library and provide them to the vendor, and should keep in mind that portal is web based, portal is able to accommodate multiple formats and protocols, should support the TCP/ IP protocol, provide access to online databases subscribed by the library, should have access to the material available on the portals and should have ability to link with the other portals.

4. Portal Educator: Librarian should have the knowledge and ability to navigate the portal and provide the guidelines, path and orientation to users about its uses and searches.

5. Metadata Creator: Data about data is metadata. Standard bibliographic information, indexing terms & abstracts, summaries etc together known as metadata, and librarians create this metadata.

6. Copyright Expert: Librarian has the knowledge of the copyright issues and policies, which are very much helpful in the setting of the online information and electronic resources for the learning portals.

7. Information Scientist: Librarians participate in e-learning experiments and are involved in universities e-learning centres. They are actively involved in the procuring of e-resources, and software for libraries and develop their e-learning and ICT skills.

They develop the digital libraries to support educators with respect to the selection of essential resources. They manage and index the digital student portfolios and integrate them with other information resources, teaching information literacy to educate future knowledge seekers via internet-based instruction modules.

8. Digital Space Manager: One of the important roles of librarians is making the digital space accessible to members of the academic institution. Some research libraries have expanded the concept of providing access to scholarly work by taking the role of academic publishers of the faculty projects and by providing the institutional repositories.

9. E-Resource Manager: Users of the library are not aware about the copyright issues and have little idea about the material which are electronically available and licensed by the library, so librarians play a major role in ensuring information to their users.

SKILLS REQUIRED FOR LIBRARIAN

The role of librarian has changed in the era of information technology. They needed the updated skills to face the challenges generated by web technology and e-learning. The focus has been shifted from the technical skills to the technology embedded skills in the libraries to do all library related tasks and services. Along with their basic roles of information gathering, storage, retrieval and dissemination, librarians also carry the role of computer specialists, who support the library professionals. Now it is required that a library professional must be an information technology known person; he/ she must have the skills to handle the information technology and its related fields such as computer operations, designing of websites, searching information on the internet, and telecommunication media etc. To perform their tasks successfully, librarians must have the skills, explained below:

□ **Use of Technological tools:** Librarians must have the knowledge of technology and technological tools so that he can implement it in their work environment. He must be familiar with the skills to handle information technology products, like the operating systems, software, physical handling of the gadgets, telecommunication products, word processing, generation of reports, etc.

□ **Use of Computer Communication Networks:** Librarians must have the proper computer networking skills, to handle the speedy resource sharing and dissemination of information. They also possess the knowledge of network protocols like HTTP, TCP/ IP.

□ **Use of Internet:** It's the basic skill needed nowadays for the librarian that they have the sound knowledge of the internet to handle the different computer communication networking architectures and systems like the LAN, WAN apart from the use of internet. In the information technology phase to tackle the challenges and problems which are raised in the maintaining and building web technology-based libraries, the librarian should have the skill to solve the problems arising from online handling of services and resources.

□ **Information Retrieval:** Librarians should have the skills to handle information technology for the services, which means collection and organization of the data in the electronic form, selection and evaluation of sources, indexing techniques, searching techniques and updating techniques.

□ **Communication:** Librarians should have good communication skills so that he can be a good mediator between the information seekers and the information providers. That is a good link between the users and the information resources. Good communication helps in negotiation with the publishers, vendors, management and users. He can communicate the value of library services to the management, decision makers, staff and users.

□ **Managerial Skill:** Managerial skill is also one of the basic skills required for librarianship as now handling a library infrastructure, resources, staff and other day to day activities required a good leadership skill. Librarians can use the managerial skill in planning of resources, decision making process etc. Time management is also required to be a successful manager and also a much-needed skill for librarians.

□ **Preservation Skill:** In traditional libraries preservation of resources is done by binding process, chemical treatments, etc. In the information technology world digital and electronic resources also need preservation. Librarians should have the information and knowledge of antivirus software for e-resource preservation, knowledge of firewall and cryptography etc.

□ **Basic Skills:** Basic skills are like the knowledge of classification & cataloguing, indexing & abstracting of the documents. Traditional skills of librarianship are required to run the general library operations.

CHALLENGES

Some of the major challenges faced by librarian in the library web portal environment as:

Lack of training: To handle any new technology the training is required, so in library portal use and implication, proper IT related training is required. Though librarians are performing their routine work on the computers but to handle the proper software or advanced technology, proper training is required in Information Technology related matters.

Lack of Interest: Some library professionals are least interested in the adaptation of new technology in their workplaces. So, the lack of interest of those professionals causes hindrance in their way to become information architects and then handle library portals.

Preservation: Preservation of electronic information is the most challenging task; them archiving is a big problem.

Classification troubles: The library professional who has mastered in the classification and cataloging, is capable to handle the portal technology as it needs the metadata creation.

Copyright: Due to lack of control over the content access and reproduction of multiple copies of the electronic resources, the copyright law has been violated.

Dependence on Technologies: Electronic contents are available by the suitable computer system and telecommunication links for the proper utilization and information transfer, so librarians are dependent on the suitable technology and training of the end users in handling the search strategy, retrieval software etc.

Expensive: The major challenge to some library professionals is to implement the portal technology to their libraries as the costs are high and the parental institution shows least interest in the adoption of the web portal technology.

CONCLUSION

The users of the academic libraries want information regardless of where they find it, as they don't want to limit themselves to their institutional academic library's collection. Library portals provide them with one-point shopping. Portals provide them from their basic need of information to the delivery of that without using the different tools. Library portals provide effective navigation to the multiple and complex collection. Librarians are the evaluators, selectors and organizers of the information available on the web portals. Their experience and expertise make them valuable in the approach for the planning and implementation of the library portals. The need to upgrade with the new technologies to provide the flow of information to their users and patrons. Librarians must adjust the new positions to meet the evolving needs and improve performance to face the challenges of information technology. They must struggle and improve the new skills and take the role of leader in integrating the new technologies and services in the libraries.

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