KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AT 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES IN LIBRARY

Dr. Vijay A. Dakhole
Librarian
Shivaji Science College, Nagpur

Dr. Dinkar B. Taywade Librarian
Nutan Adrsh Art,s Comm. & Shrimati Maniben Harilal Wegade Science College Umred . Dist. Nagpur.

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Abstract :

Libraries have indeed changed radically from their custodian role and emerged as dynamic partners in knowledge management. The 21st century should serve as a catalyst for reviewing the library's relevance to its organization. This paper attempts to discuss that unless new measures are adopted and implemented the effectiveness of the library and its services will remain ineffective. Hence, librarians should work together with ICT professionals and adopt the new measures to fulfill the task of providing the best environment and services to users.

Introduction :

In the present world, knowledge dominates the society in all spheres of activity as well as in everyday living. Thus, a knowledge-driven society has been defined as the rapid development and convergence of communications, computing and digital content to enable the globalization of production and stimulating enterprise and creativity. In the context of Libraries as repositories of knowledge libraries of all sizes and types are embracing digital collections, although most libraries will continue to offer both print and digital collection for many years to come. In the 21st Century, the library management and services have increasingly applied and utilized the electronic information resources to complement the conventional materials. Librarians have played key roles in the collecting, storing, organizing and disseminating of knowledge to society. Although the advent of Internet has brought predictions of the demise of the traditional role of libraries, it has proven that libraries are, not only crucial but the librarians' role as knowledge providers has become even more significant. Libraries have indeed changed radically from their custodian role and emerged as dynamic partners in knowledge management programs.

Transformational Change in the Information Landscape :

While predictions of radical change in library and information services are by no means new, a confluence of shifts in technology, changing user demands, and increasing budget pressures are now forcing libraries to either adapt or risk obsolescence. The library's traditional role as a repository for physical books and periodicals is quickly fading, with important implications for space utilization, resource acquisition, and staffing. Thus library

and information science professionals are facing the following challenges in the 21st century.

1. Collection Size Rapidly Losing Importance
2. Traditional Library Metrics Fail to Capture Value to Academic Mission
3. Rising Journal Costs Inspiring Calls for Alternative Publishing Models
4. Viable Alternatives to the Library Now Boast Fastest Growth and Easiest Access
5. Demand Declining for Traditional Library Services
6. New Patron Demands Stretch Budget and Organizational Culture

Measures to overcome the challenges :

To meet the evolving needs of users in the rapidly changing research and learning environments, and to achieve greater efficiency in a time of economic and financial pressure, libraries are increasingly looking for new paradigms to deliver improved and completely new services to users. Recognizing libraries present and future needs, and in collaboration with diverse global partners, Librarians have to develop its next generation library management services and come up with a true unified solution that supports the entire suite of library operations—selection, acquisition, metadata management, digitization, and fulfillment—for the full spectrum of library materials, regardless of format or location. As an increasing portion of the library's collection shifts to electronic and digital resources, a unified management environment becomes essential. Today, libraries are managing multiple systems to accommodate resources in different formats. This leads to a duplication of effort and data. Librarians should develop a single context in which to manage resources of all types. This will allows the staff to work more effectively within one environment, and the consolidated data will allow for advanced analytics through an integrated view of the entire collection. By managing digital resources in the same system as the rest of the collection, Librarians need to highlight and improve the visibility of a library's unique resources. Today, collections are fragmented across multiple digital asset management systems. Archival and heritage resources that make an institution unique are easily overlooked. Librarians need to integrate digital collections to highlight resources that differentiate a collection.

Upgrading capabilities of libraries :

Today with the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) have created the knowledge society, which will impact upon developing economies like India and other countries around the world as well. As such, Librarians around the world have an important role to play in overcoming the digital divide, and making reference and sharing global knowledge. Information and knowledge are expanding in quantity and accessibility. In many fields future decision-makers will be presented with unprecedented new tools for development. In such fields as agriculture, health, education, human resources and environmental management, or transport and business development, the consequences could be revolutionary. Communication and information technology has enormous potential, especially for developing countries such as India and in furthering sustainable development. In terms of collection development, libraries have begun to reduce the traditional materials

and have instead increased the purchase of network services and digital resources.

Network-based services and resources :

Network-based services and resources offered by libraries today, including digital references, digital collections, online databases, e-journals, and e-books, enable libraries to operate anywhere, allowing patrons with internet access to access content, services, and resources any time. Librarians and information personnel (IPs) need to realign their service in line with the knowledge demand of the users in the workplace. Users require repackaged or analyzed information that is needed for productive use. Librarians and IPs are trained to be experts in information searching, selecting, acquiring, organizing, preserving, repackaging, disseminating, and serving. However, professionals in information technology and systems have also regarded information management as their domain because of the recent advances in ICT and systems. The freely accessible information on the web, in conjunction with the escalating costs of library materials, threatens the traditional mission of libraries to create and sustain large, self-sufficient collections for their patrons Libraries need to reposition or enhance themselves to act as Knowledge Management centers for small businesses, providing both Knowledge Management and competitive intelligence services. An increasing number of corporate and University libraries in the world are managing their knowledge by archiving information in document form, maintaining databases and data warehouses of corporate knowledge, and mapping human knowledge within the organization. Recording the tacit knowledge and converting it into explicit knowledge becomes a new challenge for librarians involved with Knowledge Management . While in the west, the advancement of library management practices have kept pace with the explosion of knowledge with advent of the internet, this has not happened to a similar extent in the India. Some of the privileged Universities / Institutions of Higher learning who function directly under the University Grants Commission or the Department of Science and Technology have benefited, whereas the rest have sadly languished. It is not that internet access has not reached these Universities, it is just that they have not upgraded their Library Management Systems to keep pace with the times.

Digital access :

As more books are either scanned and made available digitally or published as e books, libraries will need to adapt by diverting funds toward licensed digital access, rather than physical ownership and storage. Librarians should plan to substantially increase spending on e books within the next five years. While the move among students and faculty to e books has been slower than many anticipated, the advent of tablet PCs are building substantial momentum toward adoption. Google Books, Hathi Trust, Internet Archive, and other efforts have digitized millions of volumes and have made them fully searchable and browse able online. While legal barriers and publisher resistance currently prevent full access to these collections, a growing corpus of material is being made available to the public at little to no cost. The breakneck pace of technological innovation will ensure that most usability limitations involved in the consumption of digital information and text will be addressed

before patrons are aware of them. Format incompatibility, missing functionalities, and hard-to-read displays are likely to give way to better, less expensive reading technologies as publishing continues its digital migration.

Ironically, it is now easier to share physical books than electronic copies. Until licensed or "fair use" access to the mass-digitized corpus is resolved, colleges and universities will be unable to begin replacing physical collections with digital access to scanned material.

Library Consortia :

Most academic libraries are involved in consortia partnerships in which resource, service, and infrastructure costs may be shared. Contacts from libraries, publishers, and vendors alike reported that truly substantial savings require a greater degree of both financial and organizational centralization, as well as a larger membership (e.g., a large university system or an entire state) than is typical with most consortia. Many Libraries around the world are planning to share an increasing number of resources and back-end systems among institutional partners in the near future.

Developing strategies to achieve maximum output and outreach :

As a learning organization, libraries should provide a strong leadership in Knowledge Management which involves both managing tacit and explicit knowledge. The library's challenge in managing and digitizing the knowledge can be undertaken by providing a repository of all of those knowledge resources, both internal and external. The Libraries' new role as a learning and knowledge centre as well as the knowledge commons for their specific users is a reality. It is a centre for learning and intellectual discourse and facilitates knowledge creation. Most public, academic, and institutions of higher learning have a different agenda: to disseminate knowledge and make it available for the end users. To achieve this, the strategy should be to effectively reach out to the clientele and use all manner of technologies to achieve this goal. A library cannot be treated as a centre that is open 9 to 5,it should be accessible at all hours Another important method which has been adopted by Universities in the west is to have mobile compliant library access. Thus, for the tech-savvy students, this is an easy manner of accessing the library.

Reform library management education :

Librarians need to move forward in line with the new shifts toward knowledge management, if they do not want to become obsolete. Knowledge management helps libraries to survive in their competitions. Librarians can contribute in their traditional ways, such as by providing access, working in partnership, structuring knowledge, imparting skills, preserving heritage, and inspiring trust. With changing times, the library management education too should change and only this would empower libraries to serve as nodal centers of information and knowledge. The trend of involving library management personnel in the University education system is catching on and should be made prevalent. A librarian or a library personnel is no longer separate from the educational system, rather they are now an

integral part of the system. A good library manager, via people-centered management, leads the direction of the organization, identifies new projects and creates new teams, task-forces, and committees to work on these projects, introduces new technologies, programs, and services, and directs applications for grants. Thus, librarians and library personnel are part of the educational system of the Universities rather than being isolated and functioning on their own.

Going green as a marketing tool for libraries: environmentally sustainable management practices :

Enthusiastic library users are calling on libraries not just to provide popular services but to Communicate a clear green identity. Libraries as gateways for knowledge are particularly responsible not only for disseminating the idea of sustainability but also for leading by example and thus serving as exemplars. Ecological sustainability could be part of the marketing strategy of the library as a socially responsible body. Small steps in going green can have a big impact for the library's image. A small financial input can produce an important marketing outcome. Bringing environmental awareness to libraries does not necessarily require huge financial effort or a big budget. Activities in this field can be developed in cooperation with unpaid partners like NGOs, Friends of the Library groups, school projects, library suppliers and, last but not least, the library users. There is a wide range of ways to promote the idea of the GREEN library: use of environmentally friendly or recycled materials, virtual user services and resource-saving copy services, waste separation, elimination of plastic bags, no more paper cups and instead recycled/private crockery, fair trade coffee in the library's coffee shop, green events and choosing library suppliers with green certificates – or are working to get one of those are the infinite possibilities to overcome the challenges of the libraries of present century.

Conclusion :

The demands and challenges of the 21st century should serve as a catalyst for reviewing the library's relevance to its organization but unless new measures are adopted and implemented the effectiveness of the library and its services will remain ineffective. For any library to succeed and provide effective services to its user community, it will require a strong leadership and vision from the top administration, which can influence knowledge sharing efforts in a positive way, adapt to the positive changes taking place in the field of science and technology and create an awareness to sustain the environment as well. Hence, librarians should work together with ICT professionals and adopt the new measures to fulfill the task of providing the best environment and services to users.

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