

Digital Library Services and Practices: an online survey

Sangeeta N Dhamdhare

Librarian, Modern College of Arts, Science and Commerce,
Ganeshkhind, Pune-411053, Maharashtra, India
Email : modernlibrary.sangeeta@gmail.com

Abstract:

Digital libraries are boon to all academic and research organizations. With the increasing use of ICT, web technology, cloud computing in education sector, the scholars prefer to access and publish their work online and retrieve information online. Digital libraries are need of present libraries to support teaching and learning process. The paper aimed to study the use of digital library and its services and practices in a traditional college. It gives information about small initiative taken by the library. The methodology used for this research study is survey method. Online survey is conducted and collected data and analyzed.

Keywords: Digital library, Use of Information and Communication Technology in education, Electronic resources, User centered services, Internet Access.

Library of Congress Classification: Z692.C65, A76 2000

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Library

The present case study is of Digital library of an academic institute in Pune, Maharashtra, India. Modern College of Arts, Science and Commerce (MCASC), Ganesh-Khind, Pune and its Central was established in the year 1992. Since then library has made consistent progress in terms of our collection of books and the services provided. It is well equipped with growing number of books, journals, magazines along with Electronic resources like Ebooks, EJournals, Databases, CDs, Library website, Institutional Repository, etc. The entire collection is organized according to DDC (Dewey decimal classification) scheme. Library gives Open Access to all the students and Wi-Fi connectivity. It is automated with bar code technology and. It offers various services along with some innovative practices.

1.2. Purpose

The very purpose of a library is to freely disseminate knowledge. Library is therefore operated on a need-based approach rather than the usual rules-based treatment given to students everywhere.

1.3. What we hope to achieve

- Optimum utilization of our existing resources.
- Adding to the readership numbers every year.
- Enhancing the reading habit in the students and teachers
- Promote use of ICT and web technology.
- Support the aims and objectives of the Institute
- Support teaching and learning activities

1.4. Moto

“To give maximum information
for
maximum number of times
by
maximum number of ways
in
minimum time”

2. DIGITAL LIBRARY

Digital library is an electronic or virtual library where information (online or offline) is selected, acquired, processed and organized in digital form. One can access the digital library resources online or offline. Digital Library is a collection of information which is both digitized and organized and can be searched for keywords, accessed anywhere in the world, copied without error, is service-orientated meeting the time and location needs of users and takes up very little physical space (hardware only). With increasing population and industrialization in city area there is always space problem to all educational institutions and libraries. As digital libraries are minimizing the storage space and also decreasing maintenance and resource distribution cost and manpower. The association for Research Libraries pointed out that digital library can serve as a network of links to other digital libraries.

2.1 Digital Library Initiative of MCASC

- ICT Application: Use of ICT in library initiated since 2006.
- Library automation: In three years the library is automated with commercial local software.
- Digital library: attempt has been initiated since 2009

- Creating library web pages which give library information and portal of online free databases and scholarly information/ resources.
- Library took membership of INFONET and DELNET consortia which provides more than 51000 e-books and 21000 e-journals and other scholarly reading material.
- Initially for a year the access to these resources was limited to few teachers and students who communicated their email ids for accessing these consortia.
- Information literacy programs conducted by the librarian to spread awareness of importance of these consortia and how to use it amongst staff and students
- Teachers are encouraged to share information about these resources and facility to their students.



Internet is considered as Information hub and everyone is depending on that for searching information at initial stage including student and staff as one gets information at their desk top. Digital library costs have gone down and cultural changes has demanded more user-friendly ways to access information (i.e. from home and on mobile devices). So by considering the demand of students and staff

- New Digital Information Centre has started for the students and staff in the Central Library to provide access to online resources and in housed Electronic resources in the month from January 2011.
- Total 12 PCs are kept at the initial stage for the students.
- Digitization of rare books, old question papers, old syllabi, staff publications, project reports has initiated and made available to students
- The student of Earn while Learn are getting involved in these activities
- Book Review Club has formed to inculcate reading habits amongst the students.
- Using Virtual Server techniques the scanned material and other electronic resources available in the library like CDs, audio books, E-Books, made available from that server within the campus.
- Library campus is connected with Wi-Fi internet.
- Library Blog for digital library created and updated regularly
- Few important open access resources are made available to all through this blog for reference to all.

International Journal of Library Science

- Efforts will be made to make this blog more informative and interactive
- The Google group of Staff members has been created and through this daily they are updated with latest happening in the education field, their own field and college related news and in the library
- Through digital library library E-Newsletter 'Granthvedh' has started and published on library website twice in the year through which students and staffs are encouraged to write and contribute their articles and reviews on books, articles, movies, blog etc, articles along with their feedback about library services

2.2 Funding

College received funding for this Digital Information Centre/ Network Resource Centre from University Grants Commission, New Delhi.

2.3 Collection:

- NLIST of UGC Inffibnet Consortia - through this user can access 51000 E-books, E-Journals. (Password protected)
- DELNET Consortia - Through this users can access about 35 lacs record of E-books, E-journals, Theses and Dissertations, E-text archives, researchers information and more (Password protected)
- Scanned copies of previous years question papers(Within College premises)
- Scanned copies of Syllabi (Within College premises)
- Institutional Repository (Within College premises)
- Open Public Access Catalogue
- Content Pages of Reference Books(Within Library Premises)
- Journal's Articles Index (Within Library Premises)
- Open Access E-Journals to all
- Open Access E-books to all
- Open Access Encyclopedias to all
- Open Access E-text Archives to all
- Open Access Digital libraries to all
- Open Access Theses and Dissertations to all
- Open Access Library Consortia to all
- Open Access Biographies to all
- And other useful resources related to competitive exams, education, etc

This new centre is strictly made available for only educational purpose. Print out facility is made available but use of pen drive or any electronic material, chat and emails are strictly prohibited.

2.4 Digital Information Centre Practices

- Use of Open source Digital Library and CMS
- Use of Electronic communication like email, website
- Online library newsletter "Granth-Vedh"
- Organization of Video lectures
- Book Review Club to inculcate reading habits in the students.
- Scanning of content pages, Question papers, syllabi, project reports, etc
- Earn While Learn Scheme
- In service program or training to library staff
- Personal guidance and attention towards readers for searching information
- Notices and circulars, and other information circulated via email
- Informative digital library blog
- Use of web 2.0 technology for interaction
- Google group for current awareness service
- Online surveys

3. OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS OF SURVEY

Library has conducted one online survey of 100 staff and students using digital library in the year 11-12 to collect their feedback. This survey conducted amongst the regular users of the digital library.

The following are few observations.

- Participation of Students in online surveys is more than staff. It is because in each department there is computer with internet and LAN facility too so many of them uses this facility in their department only.

TABLE1. RESPONSE PERCENTAGE FOR THE SURVEY CONDUCTED

User category	Response Percent
Staff	5.6%
Student	94.4%

- Digital library regular users are using the library at least once in a week. There is 33.3% user's access library more than one time a day. 38.9% users access library daily.

TABLE 2 - HOW FREQUENTLY USERS USE DIGITAL LIBRARY?

Q. How Frequently you use digital library?	Response Percent
Daily many times	33.3%
Daily once	38.9%
twice in a week	22.2%
once in a week	5.6%
Once in a month	0.0%

- It is observed that users are using this library for various purposes listed below. Mainly Masters (Science and Computer Science) and Third year students are using DELNET and INFONET consortia and their scholarly books and journals. 55.5% student's uses email facility also. So when email facility is blocked from the firewall setting for two three months the 30% users strength decreased in that period.

TABLE 3 – PURPOSE TO USE DIGITAL LIBRARY

Q. For what purpose you use the digital library?	Response Percent
For searching Information	88.9%
for searching current news	55.6%
For accessing Delnet and Infonet resources	27.8%
For accessing EBooks and EJournals	61.1%
For checking Emails	55.6%
For collecting information for project work	72.2%
For watching Educational videos	38.9%
For listening Educational Programs	38.9%
For Filling up online applications	66.7%
For searching opportunities in the field	50.0%
Other	55.6%

- Personal Assistance in searching information: 25% students need personal assistance in using internet facility and digital library. 25% students search on their own reading instructions. 50% students need assistance sometimes.

TABLE 4 – LIBRARY STAFF ASSISTANCE WHILE USING DIGITAL LIBRARY

Q. Do you need assistance from the library while searching information	Response Percent
Yes	23.5%
No	23.5%
Sometimes	52.9%

- Amongst all other library services and facilities 44.4% students gave 75% points to digital library service. Only 5.6% students give 25% points to digital library as they prefer print material. But overall the need of digital library is high from student's point of view.

TABLE 5 – IMPORTANCE TO DIGITAL LIBRARY AMONGST OTHER LIBRARY FACILITY

Q. How many points you will give for this facility in the library than other facilities in the library	Response Percent
25%	5.6%
50%	38.9%
75%	44.4%
100%	11.1%

- Print facility: In the digital library print out facility is used to save the data, articles in hard form. Users are not allowed to bring pen drives in digital library so they takes print outs of the information they are looking for. Sometimes they need this facility to take print outs for their project reports, assignments, articles from online journals, chapters of ebooks and other information. Total 38.9% students availed this facility.

TABLE 6 – PRINT OUT FACILITY OF DIGITAL LIBRARY

Q. Have you used Print out facility in the library so far	Response Percent
Yes	38.9%
No	61.1%

- Information Literacy/ Orientation Program: Library conducts information literacy program and orientation program time to time. About 38.9% students attend these programs and learn.
-

TABLE 7 – INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAM

Q. Have you attended the orientation program conducted by the library for accessing E_Resources	Response Percent
YES	38.9%
NO	61.1%

- Digital library is free of cost. But as the demand and use of this library is more they are allow using the library not more than one hour. So when asked is they will be charged for this are they ready to pay. 33.3% students said Yes and 66.7% students said No.

TABLE 8 – WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SERVICE/FACILITY

Q. If nominal charges will charged then do you like to use this facility	Response Percent
YES	33.3%
NO	66.7%

4. DIGITAL INFORMATION AND REFERENCE SERVICES

According to Bertot, McClure and Ryan (2000) digital reference services refer to a network of expertise, intermediation and resources put at the disposal of a user seeking answers in an online/networked environment. When queries are received and responded in electronic form digital reference service occurs. Berube (2003) a digital reference service generally comprises the user of the service, the interface (e-mail, web form, chat, videoconference, etc.), the information professional, and electronic resources (including electronic or CD-based resources, web resources, local digitized material etc.), as well as print resources.

The emergence of the information superhighway has challenged academic libraries to provide web-based reference services to their university populations. Nowadays, more and more academic libraries are developing their own websites. Library Web pages usually provide access to the digital services.

Few Digital Information Services offered by this library are

- Remote Enquiry Services: The library website and blog allows users to place queries electronically via email or web form.
- Active Dissemination of Information: Library has started active dissemination of information for scholars. Scholars have to inform their subject interest and keywords of their interest areas. Librarian informs them new arrivals and updates in that subjects like new articles published in that area times to time to that specific user

- Alert Service: Alerts of specific subject interest of the scholar is set by the librarian using Google Alert service so that he or she will receive the alerts
- Catalogue on Web: Though the software not provides web opac. The list of books and other reading material has made available on the website alphabetically for easy search
- Dedicated Web Sites: links to Internet resources, Web sites, electronic books and journals which are reserved for specific use and subjects are made available.
- FAQs Page: Frequently asked questions are answered by the librarian at any time.
- Resources remotely available : Provided the portal of useful scholarly material like digital libraries, Ebooks, Journal, databases, consortia, etc
- Links to Other OPACs: All the academic libraries provide links to other library OPACs within and outside the country.

Digital Reference Services are time saver for users, and using the Internet is generally cheaper than using telephone. Digital reference services provide an extra choice for users and take some of the load of a busy reference desk, but the satisfaction which library staff gets out of that is much more.

5. CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PLAN

As digital libraries serves a defined community or set of communities, provides fast and efficient access to the library collection both print (catalogue) and non print objects. The creation of digital libraries is a big endeavor concerning both financial resources and the skills of staff. In future attempt this digital library has some challenges and future plans like

- Addition of new e-resources like e-books, e-journals, videos, CDs, DVDs.
- More Information literacy and training programs for staff and student for increasing awareness about this
- Use of Mobile technology in digital library
- Cloud technology for storage and access of e-resources from remote location
- Subscription to digital library for outsiders in minimum cost.
- Increasing workstations and
- Make digital library as a vibrant learning centre
- It require more than hardware, require people and machines,
- A culture to be produced that can help people to find the information they're looking for.
- Interactive Services like online notification of dues, fine, renewal, interlibrary loan request is now limited because of library automation software but with the introduction of new software it is possible in coming year

- Information transportation (from person to person) is very important.
- Preservation of information over time is also important.
- Access to information should be widespread.

6. CONCLUSION

Digital libraries change culture because of the way it collects, stores, and shares information. With the introduction of digital library the students trend towards using technology increasing. Students are coming with their laptops in the library for study purpose. Trend of searching information on their own is developing amongst the students. They are using digital library for completing their projects and updating their notes for exam. To provide user centered web based services through library websites and digital libraries is need of time to fulfill the demand of users 2.0 in this web era. This article discussed a small attempt made by the library staff and the results, observation found in the survey conducted, future plans to improve the services and to cope up with the technological advances and users need.

7. REFERENCES

Ann Blandford, et.al. Use of multiple digital libraries: a case study. Available at <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/13252/1/13252.pdf> accessed on May 2, 2012

Dempsey, Lorcan. The (Digital) Library Environment: Ten Years After. Available at <http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue46/dempsey/>, accessed on May 2, 2012

Preece, Emily and Zepeda, Christine (2009). The Perseus Digital Library: a case study. Available at http://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/6836/perseus_case_study.pdf?sequence=5 accessed on May 2, 2012

Sanchati,Rupesh and Kulkarni, Gaurav. Cloud Computing in Digital and University Libraries. Available at http://globaljournals.org/GJCST_Volume11/6-Cloud-Computing-in-Digital-and-University.pdf accessed on May 2, 2012

Sood, Aditya Dev. Digital libraries in India: a baseline study. Available at http://www.cks.in/html/cks_pdfs/digital_library_cks-edc.pdf accessed on May 2, 2012

International Journal of Library Science

Wan Dollah, Wan Ab. Kadir. DIGITAL REFERENCE SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES. Available at <http://www.lib.usm.my/elmu-equip/conference/Documents/ICOL%202005%20Paper%207%20Wan%20Abdul%20Kadir%20&%20Diljit%20Singh.pdf> accessed on May 2, 2012

Where Do We Go From Here? The Next Decade for Digital Libraries. Available at http://www.godaisies.com/notes/LIS_688_DigiLib_Notes_2010-09-01.pdf and accessed on May 3, 2012