ICT based Best Practices in Library

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- Abstract -

Best practices are not one time solution but a continuous process; by adopting these practices in libraries they can provide information service more effectively and efficiently. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have made a tremendous impact on the functions of the academic libraries and knowledge resource centre. The developments and changes in the ICT have changed the user's expectations from the academic libraries and special libraries in different ways. This paper is mainly focused on various traditional best practices, information technology based best practices like web page, institutional repositories, e-mail alerting services, extension services and general best practices also.

- Keywords -

ICT, Information technology, Internet, E-resources, Library.

Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are a diverse set of technological tools and resources - used for creating, storing, managing and communicating information. For educational purposes, ICTs can be used to support teaching and learning as well as research activities including collaborative learning and inquiring. The development of ICT has changed the traditional concepts of libraries, changed the nature of collections and the needs of users. The composition of ICT includes computers (Hardware and Software), Internet, Wireless technology, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and use of various library resources in ICT e.g. E-books, E-journal, Library network, Web OPACs. Today's period of information and communication new technologies and this technology most of library professional/users/teachers used internet based education curriculum. The role of librarians and information professionals in this new environment has been strongly influenced by these changes. Now the traditional library and librarianship is undergoing significant changes due to the digital revolution through ICT application and it affected all aspect of role of librarians in providing information provision in a library.

Changes in the role of library

ICTs have brought about changes in different aspects of human life in the 21st century. ICTs have brought about socio-cultural, political, educational and economic changes. The library is one of the main areas deeply impacted by ICTs, a pillar of the information age. This is because the library is the main place of information and knowledge; it has become virtual, so that library and information services extend beyond walls and physical buildings.

From	To
Information resource in one medium	Information resource in multi media
Library has its own collection	Library without wall
Procurement of information sources by individual library	Procurement of information resources through consortia
Service in good time	Service just in time
In-sourcing of all activities	out sourcing of all activities
Local reach of resources	Global reach of resources through networks
User's want print resources	Users want print, non-print, online resources
Users go to library	Library come to users
Local users	Users from any place

Library Resources in ICT era

1. E-books
2. E-journals
3. E-theses
4. Electronic Databases
5. E-papers
6. E-groups
7. Digital archives
8. Library networks and websites
9. Web OPACs
10. Virtual conferences
11. Virtual helpdesks
12. Bulletin boards
13. FAQs

ICT in libraries

ICT on LIS means as the application of computers and communication technologies to the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information process. Convergence of computer and communication technologies and their subsequent application to library and information activities has changed the philosophy of information from unitary to universal access. To introduce and provide new services faster, to provide need based services to user and utilize the user for providing better information services, to support all type of library functions.

Best practices of library

Best practice is an activity that leads to a superior performance. Successfully identifying & applying best practices can reduce cost and improve quality. Best practices are developed in the library to execute the five laws of library science, to magnetize & meet the user demand, to maximize the utilization of library and to market library services and products.

According to National Board of Accreditation and Assessment (NAAC) "Best practice may be innovative and be a philosophy, policy, strategy, program, process or practice that solve a problem or create new opportunities and positively impact on organizations. Institutional excellence is the aggregate of the best practices followed in different areas of institutional activities."

For college and university libraries NAAC has developed below a list of best practices that can improve the academic information environment and its usability.

1. Automation of library with standard software.
2. Inclusion of sufficient information about the library in the college/ university prospectus.
3. Compiling student/teacher attendance statistics and locating the same on the notice board.
4. Displaying newspaper clippings on the notice board periodically.
5. Career/Employment Information/ Services.
6. Internet Facilities to different user groups.
7. Information literacy programs.
8. Suggestion box and timely response.
9. Displaying new arrivals and circulating a list of those to academic departments.
10. Conducting book exhibitions on different occasions.
11. Organizing book talks.
12. Instituting Annual Best User award for students.
13. Organizing competitions annually.
14. Conducting user surveys periodically.

The best practice are mainly classified are the following

Traditional best practice

1. Orientation programme
2. Book exhibition
3. Library hours (Before and After)
4. New arrivals
5. Library Brochure
6. Readers (users) Meet
7. Training programme to use library resources
8. Indexing and abstracting services
9. Carrier guidance cell
10. Best library user award
11. Binding and photocopy services.

Library extension services

1. External membership facility
2. Inter library loan (ILL)
3. Document delivery service (DDS)
4. Reprography
5. Newspaper clipping service
6. Career notification
7. Suggestion and feedback box
8. Library security (CCTV, RFID ...)
9. Library Help desk.

General best practices

1. Regular meeting of the Library Advisory Committee.
2. Binding of books and periodical Volumes.
3. Library Information included in prospects and College Websites.
4. Intercom facility for easy communication among various departments.
5. Pasting of barcode, spine label and stamping in a definite place on the books.
6. Question Paper sets of previous examinations.
7. Library calendar of activity and events.
8. Use of pesticides to keep the book worm away and damage of books.
9. Display of various library charts.
10. Keeping the library premises silent, neat and clean.

ICT based best practices

1. **Library automation with library software** : Libraries utilize software's designed to manage different library routines and processes. Most of the software are integrated and have modules for the different activities or tasks carried out in the library like cataloguing, statistics, acquisition processes and serial control etc. Many software packages for various applications in the field of library and information management services i.e. SOUL, LIBSYS, KOHA, LIBRARIAN.

CDS/ISIS, Dspace, Greenstone and Library manager used for automation purposes.

2. **Library websites/web page:** A medium of communication for libraries to their users. In most of the library website is included all library details like catalogue, list of subscribe journal with access link, back volumes, curriculum, scanned exam papers, photographs-video of function and daily updated news related to users. A library Web page or a Universal Resource Locator (URL) makes it easy to access a single window for various Web-enabled library services.

3. **Online public access catalogue (OPAC) :** This is the computerized form of the library catalogue or a database of library holding. It is an online database of documents held by a library or group of libraries. It provides access to the catalogues of a library on the local intranet, extranet or even the internet.

4. **Electronic document delivery services:** Libraries may not rely any more on postal services to send documents to users or carry out inter library lending. Libraries send documents through electronic networks that can deliver documents in various format e.g. PDF straight to user's desktops.

5. **CAS and SDI services :** A selection of current awareness services in the form of table of contents alerts, lists of newcomers to journals and books, press clippings, research compendiums, including the abstract and indexing (dissertation) service have library. Selective dissemination of information refers to the tools and resources used to inform a user of new resources on specific topics.

6. **E-mail :** E-mail means communication between the library and the users. Email is very useful for sending messages to and from remote areas with an enhanced network. In addition, it is also useful in various aspects of the library environment. Thus, it can be argued that e-mail can play an important role in information dissemination services.

7. **Electronic resources :** The currently available electronic resources are electronically accessible through traditional media such as CDROMs or via the Internet in the form of electronic journals, online databases, e-books or OPACs, blogs, wikis, podcasts, etc. Today many journals and databases are available in electronic form - some are full text and others contain only bibliographic references information with summary.

8. **Institutional repository (IR) :** An institutional repository is an online archive for collecting, preserving and distributing digital copies of intellectual product created by faculty, staff and research scholar of an institution. Such as these, dissertation, reports, conference and seminars papers, notes, career guidance question papers, syllabus etc. can be made available to the user community.

9. **Full-text online service :** A full-text database is a compilation of documents or other information in the form of a database in which the full text of each referenced document is available for viewing, printing or downloads online.

10. **E-Library/Virtual library :** Digital libraries depends on information recorded on digital formats like CDROM. Virtual libraries are do not exists physical space or structure but can be accessed via networks.

11. **Social media networks:** Social media networks like twitter, face book, LinkedIn can be deployed for educational user discussion groups, list serves and communities also assist library services.

12. **Online reader consulting services :** Libraries implement web versions of reader consulting and reference services. It helps to find the right information /reading material for the right person at the right time and to provide the best information that matches their needs, interests and reading level.

13. **Competitive exam tutorial:** The entrance and competitive exam like, NEET, GPSC, UPSC, NET, SET, CAT, GATE etc kept in a special section for the students concerned and the teachers preparing for the exams tutorial is provide in digital form.

14. **Portal:** There are three types of portals. Consumer (YAHOO, MSN, AOL), vertical (specified audience) and business (links to subjects or interest-oriented resources located on the WWW.

Conclusion

Best practices adopted in academic institutes should bridge the gap between the library collection and the user community for maximum resource utilization. Library has adopted various best practices in administration, management, collection and services, extent of service use and technology. Best practices help to improve the quality of library services. The above best practices of each university/college library create their own image in the minds of students, faculty and society.

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