Academic Libraries Reengineering Methodology

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Abstract:

Emerging technological revolution is a wheel of library's transformation from traditional to virtual libraries. Tremendous changes have taken place in the libraries due to the advancement of Information Communication Technologies. In this transformational phase, the concept of reengineering has applied to the academic libraries to change its face drastically to cope up with the modern expectations of the library users. Hence the concept and its detailed applications have been discussed in the present article. In the article, author have revealed the various challenges and the scope for reengineering in academic libraries in detail.

Keywords: Reengineering Libraries, Libraries Transformation, ICT tools, Library services, etc.

Introduction

Everyone is witnessed to the development in all the sectors and the way of doing things. Just two decades ago, teachers were using usual tools and methods to teach but now a days the tools for the same are advanced and more convenient than earlier. We are using online resources for research where earlier it was depending upon printed resources available in nearby libraries. Library and information professionals have to keep futuristic approach to avoid such problems due to the lack of knowledge and adoption of recent technologies. Higher Education System more focussed on adoption of new technology in teaching learning and related processes. Library is an integrated part of the Higher Education System. Hence, it is compulsory to adopt new technology to change the old way to increase the quality of library and information service. In such a fast changing environment, drastic changes are required.

Chris D. Ferguson, (1997) calls for reengineering libraries "in ways that bring librarians and technologists together within a common service environment" to meet users' needs in a more effective manner. Reengineering is the term which used for such drastic change and dramatic improvement in cost, quality, service and speed. Reengineering has its own theory and practice. Undeveloped academic libraries have needed such techniques like reengineering to be a good library and resource centre. Now the current era is depended upon the web therefore they expect and prefer most of the services on web. Hence this is the prominent time to use web platform for library and information services. Shastri (2013) have stated about the web platform as "Bridge the digital divide and access to digital resources will definitely help to provide effective and valuable information services to library patrons in order to satisfy their information needs and for that librarians should perform the role of webmaster".

Hence, considering the significance of reengineering of academic libraries, it needs to rethink on present problems perspective which may unable to fulfil multidimensional needs of the user.

A. Challenges in reengineering of academic libraries

Reengineering of library is not an easy job for librarians. It requires systematic planned efforts to apply new tools and techniques to the library. In challenges perspective, LIS professionals may face following major challenges while going for reengineering process:

1. Prove the need and approval from higher authorities

While librarian think on the reengineering their library, they need to prepare its need and benefits to present in front of higher authorities. If they approve and support for the further process, librarians may do better.

2. IT infrastructure

Basically Reengineering of library is a transformation of library services, its collection, and other housekeeping tasks. If, traditional ways of doing things are not beneficial for today, it needs to replace with new ways and means which definitely application of newer technological tools. Hence it is necessity of libraries that develop IT infrastructure for delivering library and information services with preferable and efficient way.

3. Digital information management

In the changing scenario, digital information management became important role of librarian. He / she have to handle Issues of information ownership, rights management, data curation, preservation, communication, dissemination of digital information, etc.

4. Budget

Most of the libraries are always facing financial crunch if they try to acquire all the information in all the forms and formats. Hence, budget is the crucial aspect for any library. Though, the library has financial issue, its need to go through open education resources to cater users need such as DOAJ , DOAB, Nation Digital Library (NDL), Shodhganga, Vidyanidhi, E-Prints, NPTEL, e-PG Pathshala and so many. Likewise there are many good open source software also available for the low budget libraries to automate and digitise the library.

5. Training to library staff

Frances C. Wilkinson and Linda K. Lewis (2006) have discussed in their article about the importance of training to the library staff. According to them 'Education is a core mission of all libraries. Libraries should make the same commitment to educating their personnel that they have made to educating their users. Training is pivotal in the development of library employees. It enables them to provide better service, to become more skilled employees, and to enhance their personal development' If staff is trained, they would serve better. In large libraries, without skilled professionals the libraries will remain warehouses.

6. Detailed plan of action

While implementing reengineering techniques to library, it needs to follow steps of reengineering. Librarians have to think from the basic to advance in order to transform the library into new process which are helpful to save the cost, and increase the quality and speed in the library and information services. Hence, the flow chart should be made for changes step by step.

7. Support system

To reengineering the library, LIS professionals required support in terms of finance, trained manpower, instrument, forming new policies, etc. without support it is difficult to maintain all the tasks in the reengineering process. This support required from the higher authorities and also the team of library staff.

8. Policy and procedure for new form of library

New policy and procedure is required for the new form of library housekeeping tasks and information services. For smooth functioning of new system, need to describe its policies, rules, regulations for the staff and users also. These are the scholarly tasks which need to perform to LIS professionals.

B. Scope for reengineering of academic libraries

Mornati, (2000) Says that 'Seeking quality in every aspect of library organisation has to become a permanent goal in order to keep a main role as information providers for our users. One the other hand, pressure for new services is forcing us to keep the rapid pace of change in the information world. Libraries have to join resources and to cooperate to be able to face the challenge of digital information and globalisation'. The main approach is to find the scope where libraries have opportunities to change or adopt innovative services and facilities in the libraries.

1. Library web page

Web page is a new way of providing library and information services. Most of the library and information services may be provided through library web page such as new book display, web OPAC facility, Online book reservation, checking borrowing books online, recommendations, list of e-journal with archives, list of subscribed databases / e- journals / e-books with link, link to institutional repository, Ask librarian, etc. beside this, a library website hosts various types of useful information to the user such as library timing, various policies, rules and regulations, library resources details and many more regarding library.

2. Database searching tools

Today, database subscription is not enough for library; it should have web scale discovery services, federated search tools for quick retrieving required information. Search and retrieval mechanism is more important than subscription of information resources.

3. Self-service system

A self-service system is required for big libraries where user can self-check in and check out items, renewals and payment of over dues. RFID technology is able to provide such platform for the user. This system needs one time investment but after all, it is beneficial for the library as well as user.

4. User instructions / notifications

Most of the Integrated Library Management Software (ILMS) provides notifications to the user through email / message. Such ILMS can be used to provide alert service, check-in , check-out notification, overdue instructions to the user time to time.

5. Reference service

Reference service is the personal assistance to the library user for finding their required information. The reference librarian also called the navigator of information superhighway. Earlier, the reference librarian was offering reference service at the desk of library. ICT has had a big effect on reference service. Recently the

service has been reengineered and offering online platform, quick service, online search service, FAQs, and many more. Likewise, the nature of reference service has been totally changed in comparison to traditional reference service. Few examples of reference services in today's era are Librarians' Internet Index, Digital Librarian, Infomine, CyberStacks, Refdesk.com, Virtual Refence Desk, etc. these are providing modern reference services to the user on through online platform.

6. Collection development

As we know about 5th law of library science that 'library is growing organism'. If the balance would be maintained in the collection development i.e. print and non-print resources, the space will be managed and the remote access also possible. Hence, such policies need to develop in order to maintain quality collection in the both forms which needed.

7. IT infrastructure

To provide information services in e-form, library needs to have proper IT infrastructure. Unless and until required ICT infrastructure establish, library can't offer information services and facilities such as Web OPAC, CAS, SDI, Photocopy, Indexing, Internet, CD/DVDs access, access to e-resources, federated search, self-issue, return, renewal service, etc. These are the expected services and facilities of today's user.

8. Collaboration

The libraries also have an opportunity to collaborate with other institutions, university libraries, publishing industry, etc. the collaboration will help librarians to share their expertise and resources to achieve good results.

9. Consultancy for IPR

In this regard, Handa and Bhatt (2015) have written that "The librarians in the digital environment have the same responsibility to collect information and help the readers by giving it even electronic format. The role of librarian is to be protected and enhanced. The copyright protection should be encouraging the use of information for creativity and not for creating hurdles in the use of information. The Librarians should continue to work as catalyst for the free flow of information between the owners of copyright and the users of the information". Now days, users are using and sharing information without any knowledge of IPR, sometimes in those situation librarians have to guide them when user asks. Hence, consultancy is one of the roles of librarian under the fare use term.

Conclusion

The transformation of libraries is the need of today's digital era. In this technological advanced society, libraries have to keep such reliable, authentic, qualitative and expected information and the recent tools of ICT. Hence, reengineering of libraries is a right approach towards the development of libraries. LIS professionals need to consider the scope which discussed above for the development of libraries. Obviously there are many challenges in the path of reengineering but librarians have to keep such positive approach in this area. May be there is more scope for reengineering of libraries, it depends on available finance, support from higher authority, their users needs, etc. The essence of reengineering of library is to provide better access of information resources to the user by applying five laws of library science given by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan.

Academic libraries will always precious for the teachers, researchers and students if libraries accept the dynamic progress.

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