

E-resources & Services and Its Importance for Users of Academic Library

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Abstract: Due to the advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has forced the libraries to change from traditional into the digital library and its functioning, storing, organizing, and processing of information in electronic format. The libraries have witnessed a paradigm shift to automation, digital library, open source management, and institutional repositories. etc. due to the technology revolution. This paper also discusses the meaning and definition of E-resources, services, need and importance of e-resources for users of the academic library.

Keywords: E-resources, E-resources & Services, Importance of e-resources, Academic library.

1. Introduction

The Advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought drastically changes in the way of information resources are gathered, store, organized, accessed, retrieved and consumed during the past few decades. The application of ICT in information processing has brought several products and services to the scene. E-resources are the source of information (Thanuskodi, 2012). They can be simply defined as resources that include documents in electronic or e-format that can be accessed via Internet. They are available in various forms like e-books, digital libraries, e-journal, magazine, e-learning tutorials, e-discussions, e-news, data archives, and e-mail, online chatting and deliver a collection of data, image collection, other multimedia products like numerical, graphical mode. Online dictionary of library and information science (Rehman, & Ramzy, 2004) defines electronic information as a material consisting of data and/or computer program(s) encoded for reading and manipulation by a computer, by use of a peripheral device directly connected to the computer such as a CD-ROM drive or remotely via network such as the internet. The category includes software applications, electronic texts, bibliographic databases, institutional repositories, websites, e-books, collections of e-journals, etc. Electronic resources are easily accessible in the remote areas and solve storage problems and control the flood of information. Electronic resources are easily accessible in the remote areas and solve storage problems and control the flood of information (Munira Nasreen Ansari and Bushra, 2010).

The library and Information Centres have witnessed a great transformation in recent years both in an enormous collection development and in their providing information services. Over the last several years, a significant transformation has been noticed in collection development policies and practices. The print medium is increasingly giving way to the electronic form of materials.

2. Academic Library

Generally, academic libraries are considered as the heart of the institution. Academic libraries are situated within the academic institutions. It serves mainly for students, research scholars, teaching and non-teaching staff of the institutions. The resources of the academic library belong to the courses offer by the institutions. Generally, all the academic libraries consist of textbooks, reference books, journals, theses and dissertations, project reports, maps, atlases, drawings, and magazines in both print and electronic formats. Also, academic libraries are subscribing the online journals, e-books, online databases for the benefit of students and scholars.

The main objective of the academic library is to serve the academic community particularly their exams, preparation of seminar, conference, symposium, projects, and research works. So offering orientation programmes are essential to the users and it will improve the strength of the knowledge. Academic libraries are directing the users for searching the information from print or e-resources.

The Academic library provides the best information to its reader. University libraries are playing an important role in the academic community. It gives pleasure to the user and it also creates a learning environment in the university. The Library is an important part of any academic institutions through information distribution.

The important feature of the academic library is based on some academic activities;

- Academic library is a part and partial of any educational system.
- Academic library has to involve the academic study activities such as workshop and conference.
- The users of the academic library are students, researchers, teachers and administration staff.
- The study programme of the institution depends on the academic library.
- To create the learning environment is depends on the use of library resources.
- Nowadays the academic library environment is changed with the development of online and e-resources. The online resources are help to save the time of users and also to libraries.

The academic library environment gives quality and quantity of information to the users through its collection and that is identified by an individual learner according to his/her experience, competence, and personal learning goals. The traditional and e-resources of the library's learning environment belongs to the information related to the user's requirements; the ways information is being collected and distributed. Academic library resources are considered as a good measure of an institution's excellence and quality. The information resources and services available in the institutional information systems must be capable of supporting research activities among the students and faculty members.

3. Meaning of E-resources

Electronic resources are information resources which are available in an electronic format that can be accessed via network connection.

An electronic resource such as e-books, e-journals, e-databases, e-magazines, e-tutorials and so on which are gathered, stored, accessed and retrieved via internet is called e-resources.

An e-resource (electronic resource) is that "Information (usually a file) which can be stored in the form Electrical signal usually, but not necessary on a computer.

An electronic resource is defined as a resource which requires computer access or any electronic product that delivers a collection of data, be it text referring to full-text bases, electronic journals, image collections, other multimedia products and numerical, graphical or time based, as a commercially available title that has been published with an aim to being marketed. These may be delivered on CD-ROM, on tape, via internet and so on. Over the past few years, a number of techniques and related standards have been developed which allow documents to be created and distributed in electronic form. Hence to cope with the present situation, librarians are shifting towards new media, namely electronic resources for their collection developments that the documents of users are better fulfilled. The e-resources on magnetic and optical media have a vast impact on the collections of university libraries. These are more useful due to inherent capabilities for manipulation and searching, providing information access is cheaper to acquiring information resources, savings in storage and maintenance etc. and sometimes the electronic form is the only alternative.

4. Definition of E-resources

According to IFLA- International Standard Bibliographic Description (e-resources) "An electronic resource consists of materials that are computer-controlled, including materials that required the use of a peripheral (e.g. a CD-ROM player) attached to a computer, and the items may or may not be used in the interactive mode. There are two types of e-resources data (information in the form of numbers, letters, graphic, images, and sound or a combination thereof) and programs instructions or routines for performing certain tasks including the processing of data and programs (e.g. online services, interactive multimedia).

According to AACR 2 (Anglo American Cataloguing Rules) "An electronic resource is material (data and or program (s) be encoded for manipulation by a computerized device. This material may require the use of peripheral directly connected to a computerized device (e.g. CD-ROM drive) or a connection to a computer network (e.g. the internet)."

5. Types of E-resources

Electronic Resources are becoming very important these days as they are more up-to-date, and can be accessed anywhere, crossing all geographical boundaries. Such resources add value while conducting R&D activities. The types of e- resources and services that are available in libraries are:

5.1. E-book

An e-book is a book which is publication made available in digital form, comprising of text, images, audio-videos readable on the computer or other electronic devices. An e-book comes in a variety of formats as well. They can be downloaded in .pdf, .html, plain text and rich text formats for example, and they can also be purchased in CD-ROM and Floppy disc formats. Simply an e-books are books which are available in digital formats.

5.2. E-journals

The advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has drastic changed from traditional publication into an electronic publishing (e-publishing), which provides information in digital form and they are fast becoming the preferred format for information dissemination. An e-journals are full-text journals which are accessible via internet with an uncountable number of users at the same time.

5.3. E- databases

A database is a collection of data that interrelation of data or records of data that are systematically stored and organized in the computer on specific purpose, for example, google, it is a huge database which is contains verities of information, news, images and videos and much more on different field of subjects. An e-databases which is designed to meet the information needs of multiple users in an organization.

5.4. E-Thesis and Dissertations(ETDs)

The concept of electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) was first discussed in 1987 by Virginia Tech, the University of Michigan, and two small software companies—Toronto-based SoftQuad and Michigan-based ArborText. An Electronic Theses and Dissertation are popularly known as ETDs. ETDs are digitized version of conventional theses and dissertation. This resources for the graduate student who are writing theses and dissertation are jointly published online are called e-theses and dissertation. It is consulted and constructed by faculty staffs, research scholar and graduate students. It is especially for academic researcher and their members, yet anyone interested in research and e-publishing will enjoy this resource.

5.5. E-Newspaper

It is a self-contained, reusable and refreshable version of traditional newspaper, which an acquires and holds information electronically. The information will be downloaded through an internet connection. The challenge involved in creating a viable electronic newspaper is to develop a device that has the desirable characteristics of traditional paper in addition to its own inherent qualities, like traditional paper, the electronic newspaper must be lightweight, flexible, high resolution, glare-free and affordable if it is to gain consumer approval.

5.6. E-Reference Sources

The reference source is an electronic version of a traditional library reference sources held in hard copy. For example, Dictionaries, Handbooks, Encyclopaedias, Citation Analysis Guide, Maps, Atlases, Bibliographic

Sources, and Translation Services mostly and 3-D objects so that a complex topic becomes comprehensive even to common and unsophisticated readers. The e-reference source offers online access to thousands of information sources both licensed and free.

6. Library and Information Services

The following e-services are provided by the digital library to the user's community, they are;

▪ **Current Awareness Services (CAS)**

The Current Awareness Services provides knowledge to the user regarding recent developments in the field of general interest. This type of service is directed towards all users of the services. It does not deal with the exact or specific requirement or interest of the user and is thus distinguished from Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI). Current Awareness Services such as Table of Contents (TOC) or Selected Dissemination of Information (SDI) have been a mainstay in science and engineering libraries for many years. Due to great advances made in the field of knowledge, it is becoming more and more difficult for the users to keep themselves up-to-date and well informed in their field of specialization. CAS is one of the ways to bring the resources of the library/information centre to the notice of the users.

▪ **Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)**

SDI is a type of current awareness service meant to keep the user abreast with the latest developments in the field of his interest. It is a personalized service meant for the individual or a group of users having identical information needs. It is a quick service which provides the pinpointed and exhaustive information to the users. SDI involves the screening of the document and selecting the information according to the specific information needs of each user or group of users (homogeneous). The main objective is to keep the user well-informed and up-to-date in his area of interest.

▪ **E-Document Delivery Services (EDDS)**

Systems which employ electronic technology for receipt of request and supply of documents are known as Electronic Document Delivery Systems (EDDS). "British Library Direct (now BLDSS)" and "British Library Direct Plus" are some of the examples of EDDS. Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science defines Electronic Document Delivery Service as "The transfer of information traditionally recorded in a physical medium (print, videotape, sound recording, etc.) to the user electronically via e-mail or World Wide Web. The library employs digital technology to deliver the information contained in the documents and files placed on reserve and requested via inter-library loan.

EDDS provides immediate access to the needed information. In such systems, the request may be received by telephone, e-mail, Fax or online recording. The document is sent electronically via e-mail, Fax or document delivery software like Ariel. EDDS can provide instant access to the material needed. Apart from speed, it is the convenience in accessing information which makes EDDS the preferred method over traditional document delivery methods.

▪ **Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)**

An Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) simply called a library catalogue or OPAC. It is an online database of library documents or other reading materials which is developed by a library or group of libraries. An OPAC which is used to accessing an entire library resource by author, title, keywords, publisher and year of publication among users of the parent library or group of libraries. It is designed to facilitate the users to required documents are available in the library or not available in the library through OPAC Search.

▪ **Mobile Libraries (M-libraries)**

Many libraries use SMS for a variety of purposes, including notification for items available for pickup, due date reminders, information on the availability of library materials, provision of call numbers and locations and to push information out to many users at the same time. Libraries may provide the alerts on latest, events and notices via SMS and MMS to users wherever they might be go. Third-party content providers are partnering with libraries to deliver audiobooks, e-books, audio language courses, streaming music, films, images and other multimedia that can be used on mobile devices.

7. Need and Importance of E-resources for Users of Academic Library

The library as an organized collection of printed books and periodicals of any other graphic and audio-visual materials and the services of the staff to provide the facilitate the such materials as are required to meet the information, research educational or recreational needs of its user.

7.1. Need of E-resources

- To get access to an information source by the more than one user at the same time.
- An E-Resources can be searched quickly.
- These can be find easily by the user.
- Amount of time spent on the E-Resources use.
- To collect, store and organize information in digital form.
- To promote efficient delivery of information economically to all the users.

7.2. Importance of E- Resources

- To prepare/write the academic assignments.
- To prepare the seminar on different area of interest.
- For learning to prepare for competitions.
- To keep up-to-date on subjects of interest.
- For career development and growth.
- To acquaint the users with the academic power of Internet.
- To provide an indication as to what is there on the Internet related to the area of study and research.
- To show how web resources could be of immense use in their academic pursuit and research.
- To show the usefulness of various multimedia resources on the web in teaching, learning and research.
- To promote the use of subscribed databases in academics and research.

8. Conclusion

E-resources and services seem to be considered very important in the present era. The e-resources and services of libraries are playing very a significant role in the functioning of any academic organisation as well as nation buildings. These e-resources and services need to be harnessed and utilised properly. The survival of an academic organisation largely depends upon the utility of its e-resources and services in relation to the community it serves. The services of libraries based on management principle need to be renewed frequently keeping in view the changing requirements of the users. An electronic sources of information are highly useful for the research, teaching, and learning processes. In order to make it successful and best use of the available e-resources, authorities of the institution library should conduct regular orientation/training programme to maximize the use of electronic sources of information more effectively and efficiently.

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