

Libraries in Contemporary Internet Era

Abstract

The paper describes the technology and libraries. With the advent of technology the nature of libraries has been changed very rapidly. The various sections and processes of libraries are also changed due to technological up gradation. The various methods used in the library are described in the paper. The internet as a source of information is also heighted. How the cultural change plays vital role in information seeking behaviour of user is described. The new role of librarians is defined and what the libraries should do for betterment & development is also discussed in detail.

Keywords: Libraries, Internet, Web technology, Librarian.

Introduction

The Libraries are facing various challenges in today's technological environment. The user expectations are increasing, Technology is updating and employee expectation from employer is also increasing. In this complex situation the role of librarians need redefinition. The web technology and various applications are more friendly towards users, so users are demanding these things in the library. But the authenticity, reliability of the sources needs more attention in case of electronic resources.

Objectives of the Paper

The paper covers the practical problems in technology era faced by libraries. The objectives are as follows:

1. To study the impact of web and internet technology on libraries.
2. To assess the relationship between technology & Libraries.
3. To study the methods used in library using technology.
4. To study the use of technology in various sections of the library.
5. To study the nature of libraries in new age.
6. To see the effect of cultural change on information seeking.
7. To study the use of internet as source of information.
8. To define the new role of Librarians in new age.

Internet and Web Technology

The Internet and web technology has changed the way people communicate, interact, acquire, share knowledge, search, investigate and participate in the creation and re-use of content. However, when the Web was created originally, it did not have features and facilities for users to interact. Libraries have always been at the heart of the communities they serve. They are accessible and safe spaces, providing access to huge resources of information and knowledge.

The advent of new technologies has changed some of our reading habits. But our need for shared, community-centred spaces to find information and connect with others is unlikely to change any time soon.

Technology & Libraries

There is no doubt that technology has had a lasting impact on libraries. Once thought to be going the way of traditional bookstores, libraries have rebounded and are thriving in a technology fueled world. With the help of innovation, re-imagination and vision, libraries are embracing new technologies while creating dynamic community centers filled with life. They are no longer a house of dusty books and card files; they are centres of creativity, research and collaboration...and they are free.

Technology has changed the expectations of library patrons (Users); people today expect to be able to find and access information from wherever they are. This is why so many public library systems across the country have increased both computers for use inside the library as well as mobile and online access to e-books, audio books, research databases and archives.

Methods used in Library using Technology

Libraries are now hubs of technology, offering wireless internet services, and many offering state-of-the-art computers for use. But technology available to patrons does not stop there. New (even book-free)



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libraries are popping up around the country, employing technology in ways most never envisioned: GPS apps that help locate material inside the library.

1. Mobile apps that allow patrons to access library services.
2. Access to 3-D printers, binding services.
3. Book delivery robots etc.

The digital age has produced challenges for both libraries and librarians; the sheer volume of information available in e-books, databases, archives and other digital materials has spurred innovation in the organization, management and distribution of library resources. For some time, some believed that just as bookstores and libraries were becoming irrelevant, that librarians would too. However, this could not be further from the truth. Search engines do provide a plethora of information, quickly and easily, but there is no guarantee of the quality of the information.

Not only are librarians at the forefront of information management and organization, they are administrative and community leaders charging forth to enhance the public's experience inside and outside the library.

Technical Processing in Libraries & Technology

A library card today gives more than just access to books and periodicals at the local library; it gives access to the world from home or while on the road. It also gives access to the true visionaries of information organization and dissemination--librarians, who are more valuable than ever before. While many of the duties and responsibilities of librarians have changed over the years, it is still true that they hold the keys to the best and most relevant information available on the planet.

Librarians in the New Age

Libraries today house more than books, and librarians are more than good stewards of materials. Both have morphed and evolved to meet the changing needs of their patrons, by embracing technological advancements. Libraries are still a place filled with information, imagination, and community and librarians are an essential part of the system because of their knowledge, skill and passion. Are libraries and librarians a thing of the past? Absolutely not! Libraries have always been, and will continue to be harbingers for freedom, communication, creativity and advancement, and librarians will continue to bring the information to life for many children, teens and adults alike.

Many predict that the digital age will wipe public bookshelves clean, and permanently end the centuries-old era of libraries. As libraries' relevance comes into question, librarians face an existential crisis at a time when students need them the most. Despite their perceived obsolescence in the digital age, both libraries and librarians are irreplaceable for many reasons.

A fundamental understanding of what the internet is and isn't can help clearly define the role of a library, and why libraries are still extremely important. Online library collections, however, are different. They typically include materials that have been published via rigorous editorial processes and are riddled with quantitative analysis, instead of

opinion. Types of materials include books, journals, documents, newspapers, magazines and reports which are digitized, stored and indexed through a limited-access database.

Numerous academic research papers, journals, and other important materials are virtually inaccessible to someone seeking to pull them off the web for free. Rather, access is restricted to expensive subscription accounts, which are typically paid for by various libraries.

Internet as a Source of Information

The internet is clearly a great resource to finding information, but it's not a replacement for a library. There are clear advantages of libraries over the internet for research, however the benefits of the internet, includes "sampling public opinion", gathering "quick facts" and pooling a wide range of ideas. Overall, the point is this: libraries are completely different than the web.

Technology is integrating itself into the library system, not bulldozing it. Pushing this trend to its logical extreme (although it's likely not to happen), we could eventually see libraries' entire stacks relegated to databases, and have books only accessible digitally. So where does that leave librarians? Are they being overtaken by technology?

Cultural Change & Information

Cultural change predates widespread use of the internet. For decades society has been seeking a more holistic understanding of the world, and increased access to information. The search for new methods of organizing educational structures (including libraries) has long been active. And while libraries might not be on many peoples' "top ten cutting edge list", they have been adapting.

Society is not ready to abandon the library, and it probably won't ever be. Libraries can adapt to social and technological changes, but they can't be replaced. While libraries are distinct from the internet, librarians are the most suited professionals to guide scholars and citizens toward a better understanding of how to find valuable information online. Indeed, a lot of information is online. But a lot is still on paper. Instead of regarding libraries as obsolete, state and federal governments should increase funding for improved staffing and technology. Rather than lope blindly through the digital age, guided only by the corporate interests of web economics, society should foster a culture of guides and guideposts. Today, more than ever, libraries and librarians are extremely important for the preservation and improvement of our culture.

Future of Libraries

The future of libraries is in peril. Librarians and those of us who love libraries need to make an affirmative argument for investments in the services, materials, and physical spaces that libraries comprise. This argument must be grounded in the needs of library users, today and in the future. The argument needs to move toward a bright and compelling future for libraries as institutions, for librarians as professionals, and for the role that libraries play in vibrant democracies.

Many libraries are making this argument, implicitly, through their good and promising works.

We must redefine libraries for a digital-plus era. By digital-plus, I mean that materials are born digital and then rendered in a variety of formats, some print (traditional books and hard-copies of images) and some digital (e-books, interactive games, image files, audio and visual works in digital format).

The basis of this redefinition must be demand-driven, firmly grounded in what people need from libraries today and in the future.

In this process of redefinition, we must account for both the physical and the analog. Both have a place in libraries of the future.

Libraries must become networked institutions. There's much to be learned from how networked organizations function that will help libraries (and librarians as professionals) to thrive. Library schools and i-schools have a big role to play, as do funders and organizations that focus on professional development for librarians.

New Role of Librarians

Librarians should only seek to do those things that need doing and where libraries have comparative advantage in serving the public interest. Librarians should seek common cause with authors, agents, editors, and publishers, but if that fails, libraries may need to take on new functions.

Librarians should seek common cause with technologists, inside and outside of libraries, in the public and private sectors-and develop strong technical (coding, information architecture, design, etc.) skills across the board within the library profession.

Library spaces should function more like labs, where people interact with information and make new knowledge.

Librarians should work together, along with private- and public-sector technologists, to create a common digital infrastructure and build from there. We should draw upon hacker culture and the lessons of the creation of the Internet in order to do so. (I have in mind the DPLA as a big part of the way forward on this front).

Libraries should maintain physical spaces but use them for lots of things other than the storage of physical materials, as the Room for Debates.

Conclusion

Libraries are more relevant than ever. They are a place for personal growth and reinvention, a place for help in navigating the information age, a gathering place for civic and cultural engagement and a trusted place for preserving culture. While the technology for accessing library materials has changed and will continue to change, our mission – to inform, to share and to gather – will not. The various sections of libraries need reconsideration with technological perspective. The Libraries have to go a long way with technology. So use "Technology as a friend not as a Threat".

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