Cybrarian: The Librarian of Future Digital Library

Tulima Dey

INTRODUCTION

The word, 'Cybrarian', was coined by Michel Bauwens, Information Officer at BP Nutrition in Antwerp, Belgium, to describe the staff in a virtual library. In the context of digital era, a Cybrarian, nothing other than the traditional librarian working in an automated environment surrounded by digital products. Cybrarian is library information science professional who have specialization in the using the Internet as a resource tool. So, Cybrarian can be described as an information specialist who deals with more of web content in order to reach his targeted user group who directs the constant change implements technology, manages access, educate users and opens up exciting new world to their constituents.

In present context, libraries are changing their status as Cyberspace, i.e. information at desktop of the users with the help of computers. Now a day every user like students, research scholars, scientists and others have an enormous need of information, which fulfill not only from library collection but also from database created by different libraries available through Internet connection e.g. Institutional repository, digital libraries database, individual database and through web search on Internet. Therefore conventional libraries are loosing their importance with each passing day. New steps towards library automation creating Institutional repository, e-library provide new dimensions to the library system. This transition mobilized librarian in to something new, a cybrarian.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of related literature, adopted to represent critical and in depth evaluation of previous research on specific areas of study. Its aims to review the critical point of current knowledge including substantive findings, as well as theoretical and methodological contribution. The study of the review of literature on the above topic, started from the emergence of internet availability to common man as well as advances in mobile and communication technology resulted in information for all and everywhere. There is no need any more to physically visit the libraries for information as the required piece of information is available on the internet and world wide web. In this context, an article written by Rao & Babu (2001) on the role of librarian in Internet and world wide web environment, where they describes the limitless scope of internet and web, the existence of the librarian in the changing environment, parallelism between information science and information technology, librarians and intelligent agents, working of intelligent agents, strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities involved in the relationship between librarian and the web.

Murray (2000) studies on 'Librarian evolving into Cybrarians', where he stated that school librarian have a unique opportunity to adopt their professional skills to meet the challenges of the information age. There he argued that library/media centers can be transformed from static repositories of print and audiovisual materials into dynamic and evolving information technology center. Another study was done by Jennings(1998) titled 'Librarians, Cybrarians Infopreneurs and webmasters' where he emphasized on the needs for improved IT skills, the involvement of librarians in digital content. Dreilinger (1992) in his paper entitle "From Librarian to Cybrarian: evolving role of the information professional" emphasized on the information professionals enjoy a role of growing importance in society, the role of the information professional of the future will be determined by action take a challenging role of them. Apart from above discussion my paper is concentrated on the mobility of the librarian to cybrarian and providing services by a cybrarian.


ABSTRACT

Now a day Libraries are without wall, that all resources of libraries are on digital form accessible through networking communication to remote areas. Present librarian have a skill on handling and manage digital resources and creating institutional database and maintain all e-resources in helpful way to satisfy the user and providing their seeking information in least time as possible. Working in this environment traditional librarian are changing their role drastically and facing several challenges in their professional ground and adopting themselves to new situation. This paper highlighting on this phase that is mobilization of librarian to Cybrarian.

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DIGITAL LIBRARY AND INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORY

The concept ‘digital library’ is to exploit the facilities of information technologies with a mission of sharing resources accessible globally. With support from Computer and telecommunication technologies along with tools and techniques used or the digital library provide each and every piece of information, of any format, from any remote area of the world.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam stated that the digital library is something that where the past meets the present and create the future. A digital library also regarded as ‘virtual libraries’ or ‘electronic libraries’. Digital library possesses the following system to their users:

- Institutional repository
- Document management systems
- Content management systems
- Digital archives and preservation
- Scholarly publishing
- Digital library architecture

CHANGING SERVICE OF LIBRARY IN DIGITAL ERA

The impact of Information Communication Technology in library environment started since 19th century. In 1960s IT, (Information Technology) help to share cataloging responsibilities among many libraries using MARC format. While there were attempts in these early years of the 1960s and 1970s to provide support for other library functions like cataloging and searching a union catalog. In the second generation and the third generation of integrated library management systems are another output of the IT development and most innovative development, in this regard that is Internet e.g. Internet "browsers"(e.g. Mosaic, Netscape, Internet Explorer) and world wide web. The new concept on library system emerges that is re-engineering our operations. Every and each house hold operation of the libraries were changing due to automation and digitalization of the resources and ultimately fulfill the needs of the users and save the time of the users.

The re-engineering process started from every book, every catalog record, and every invoice of the library. Ultimately library service based on integrated library automation solution, allows librarians to manage their library online. All resources based on security are well indexed in reputed search engine like google, yahoo, live and more. These enable readers to locate resources of any library across the globe. A great marketing tool of information resources for the libraries started from this point.

Now a days, librarian has access to advanced features like MARC 21, Z39.50, Live web OPAC (online Public Access Catalogue), Acquisition, Cataloging, Customized Report Generation and many others on procurement of expensive hardware and software are necessitate. Cybrarian, provide peace of mind to Librarian as their database is completely secured, untouched, tampered, altered and constantly backed up time to time.

Now we belong in the phase of Library 2.0. Library 2.0 is the application of web 2.0 technologies and philosophy in enhancing available library services and introducing new generation information services. It contains various key web 2.0 technologies like Blog, Wiki, Really Simple Syndication (RSS), Social Networking, Folksonomy etc. There is an array of web2.0 tools and services with possibilities for changing library systems and services. Social networking in library and information services has a tremendous potential for promotion of library and information services.

MOBILITY OF THE LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS

So in Digital era library services are changing their dimensions. The maximum resources are web-based and services accessible at users Desktop had made the user self-sufficient. A user of recent years is highly aware of their specific information needs and continuously changes their expectations. The environment in which librarians work is changing in terms of greater access to a wide range of information, increased speed in acquiring information, greater complexity in locating, analyzing and linking updating information. The role of librarian in the new environment is also exponentially growing as the internet and www. The rise of digitized information and technology like library 2.0 are providing an opportunity to elevate the role of librarian and leads to the emergence of a new breed of librarian - the cyber librarian or cybrarian.

The new global library environment, the librarian and information professionals are still operating their traditional work with newly adopted digital techniques, the foundations of the profession and the skills and roles associated with it will help to ensure librarian survival. The core skills traditionally were associated with librarians/ information professionals who include information handling skills, training and facilitating skills and ability to evaluate the information system. The cybrarian is the outcome of ultimate usage of wisdom by a librarian. Now a day, information is prime source of development and sources of economic and political power which improves the social and economic conditions of any country, digitalization of information an important works in this regards. Where as library is now stated as information center, digitization of library resources mainly done by librarian as an information manager as cybrarian.

In this way, a cybrarian contributes towards the socio-economic development of the country. Library is the one of the most important source of whereas library science is inter-disciplinary in nature as it’s a mix of information technology, management and computer science. In this information era, it is a great challenge for the librarian to become a cybrarian but at the same time opportunities are endless, starting from automated library systems, use of e-learning, resources, new technology based library software are some of the means for the evolution of a librarian into a cybrarian.

Being a modern librarian, that is cybrarian, who have ability to manage enormous information and evaluate systems for information access that support end users, can make optimal use of the information. Rao & Babu(2001) have mentioned various roles of librarians in digital era: librarian as facilitator as web site builder, librarian as interface, designer, librarian as knowledge manager/professional and librarians as sifter of information resources. There are enormous opportunities to provide service to the user in digital environment particularly in Internet and web environment. These are as follows:

- Accessibility of material: In digital environment, where e-resources are used by several users simultaneously. Rare and
Inter-Library Services: The impact of information communication technology all library of current times play role as cyber library, that is to linked together through network communication, and all resources are available on online access. Once the appropriate material is located, users can view at their own terminal. If the desired materials is not located during the search, the user will electronically forward a request to the librarian to arrange the document on inter-library loan from other library.

Book and Reading Lists: Reader’s advisory services also available in cyber library. In web versions of book and reading lists are available for users.

Online catalogue (OPAC): The catalogues of many of leading librarians in these days are available in web based formats (inter-operatable) to platform independent easy browsing. Different library automation software like SOUL, KOHA, NewGen Lib provide online public access catalogue for users of anywhere of the world.

Local Databases: Creation and provision of access to local information by the librarians has taken new life on the internet.

E-Newsletters: updated information and news of the library to its users of both physical and virtual collections takes many forms as electronic newsletters bulletins etc.

Ready Reference Service: By the virtue of Internet, Virtual Librarians are now available via-e-mail or through a web form for providing reference services to the users any where from the world. Many find that this facility is highly useful as it replaces the rigidity of sticking to timings for person - to - person contact. Beside this FAQ, this is the frequently asked questions also provide answers in home pages of the concern libraries by the virtual librarian.

Virtual Tours: Virtual tours are also created by the Librarians to describe the physical libraries, its resources and service also.

Cooperative Cataloguing: In digital environment all the cyber libraries are mutual interested to provide co-operative cataloguing, whereas online public access catalogues are available on each libraries web pages.

The new era librarian plays another important role in ensuring that contractual, legal and ethical obligations regarding information. The electronic information age provides new opportunities for organizations to produce as well as use information products.

Therefore, Librarian of new era shift from the librarian as a custodian of information to librarian as a facilitator or navigator. Librarian as computer specialist and as an educator for information access and retrieval. This new situation provide the challenges and expectations from the LIS Professionals, those are as follows

- Manage, provide access to, organize, acquire and preserve the raw material of scholarship, i.e. materials in print and electronic.
- Keep pace with the changing technology which will continue to change and be unstable to an alarming degree.

CONCLUSION

The modern librarians as cybrarians require two main types of competencies - professional competencies and personal competencies. Professional competencies to skill and knowledge in the areas of information resources, information access, technology, management and research and the ability to use these areas of knowledge as a basis for providing library and information services. In personal competencies which represent a set of skill, attitudes and values that enable Librarians to work efficiently, be good communicators, demonstrate the value-added nature of their service and survive in the new world. Librarians of the virtual environment provide traditional library service and at the same time Integrated Library Management, library automation and management of e-resources also handle by them. Modern librarians are not computer expert but essentials known preliminary information and knowledge on computer, online access and managing e-resources. From this ground librarian of digital world renamed as ‘cybrarian’. Now libraries are without wall, known as virtual libraries and librarian treated as ‘cybrarian’ which is future status of the modern librarian.

REFERENCES


