

A study on Rising Trend of Digitization in Libraries

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Abstract: - *The tremendous developments in the field of Information Communication Technology (ICT) it acquires all fields of knowledge including libraries. The emergence of ICT role of libraries and librarians is changed from traditional to modern library services like digital or electronic libraries. Digitization is very popular term in library and information centres nowadays. In this regard this paper attempts to discuss the rising trend of digitization of libraries in the present era of ICT, its advantages and the limitations as well.*

Keywords: ICT, Digital Libraries, Electronic Libraries and Services

Introduction about the Digital Libraries:

Digital Libraries means more than just going paperless. In the advancement of Information Communication Technology (ICT) many library services are shifted from traditional to digital environment. In digital environment libraries offers new and improvised services to their users. It's very useful to the users they can access where ever they are via the electronic gadgets and computers. A digital library is the library which is having a collection of documents in the form of electronic or in CD ROM and other electronic forms. The process of converting the traditional collections to digital or electronic form is called digitization. According to Witten and bridge (2003), digitization is the method of taking traditional library services that are in the form of books and papers and converting them to the electronic or digital form where they can be stored and manipulated by a computer. It is the process of converting the contents of a document from hardcopy into digital or machine readable form.

Objectives:

The purpose of our study is:

1. To observe how the libraries gears up to adapt digitalization.
2. To overlook the user perception about this trend.
3. To provide the insight of advantages and disadvantages related to digitalization.
4. To explore the future prospects of virtual libraries.
5. To analyse the extend of digitalization in libraries.

Research Methodology:

The research methodology is a procedure where data is collected, analysed and interpreted in a systematic way for the resolution of a problem, it has distinct characters originated with a question or problem which requires expressing an idea or feeling clearly for which you need to follow a specific plan and procedure.

1. Descriptive Research method

Research usually divides the principle problem into more convenient sub problem. The descriptive research method is used to know about the services provided by the digital libraries to their clients and determining their level of satisfaction. Generally, this method is used in survey, research design and very useful in describing the characteristics of user behaviour.

2. Questionnaire method

A Questionnaire consists of a set of questions which is prepared for the respondents to answer. Closed ended and open ended questions were used in our research.

Sources of Data

The sources of data are from internet, articles, books and newspaper. The Questionnaire is also taken as reference from internet and the survey is done based on the information collected through that. Sample size is 150.

Review of literature

Digitization makes materials available electronically and improves wider access and collaborative sharing of information resources. In the Africa context, digitization refers to “conversion of non – digital materials to digital form” (Tsebe, 2005). Ndor (2007) in his own passion sees digitization as turning information into binary digits. It refers to the process of translating piece information such as a book, sound recording, picture or video in to bits. Bits are the fundamental units of information in a computer; it is therefore a crucial transitional step from traditional to electronic library. Digitization could be viewed as the process of converting non-digital born documents into digital format, this includes selection of collection/materials, imaging or scanning, transcribing, creating mark-up and index, creating metadata, processing images, uploading to the web, preserving and maintaining archival media (Gbaje 2007). It is the transformation of information from whatever forms or from whatever support to digital code using computer technology. This may “include electronic snapshots taken of a scene or photograph, films, manuscripts, printed texts and artworks scanned from documents” (Cornell University Library, 2001). It could also be seen as “the process by which analogue content are converted into a sequence of 1s (ones) and 0s (zeros) and put into a binary code to be readable by computer” (Hughes, 2004).

Advantages of Digital Libraries

1) Library use made easier

It has 24 hours accessibility. When libraries close we can still access library resources and services online. It's a very convenient alternative for those who can't get to libraries during normal hours because of their work schedule, health issues and other reasons.

2) Increasing usage rate

When library is going full online with its services, it automatically leads and push to use library resources and services.

3) Advanced websites

The libraries that have chosen to go online with their services have well-developed sturdy services with added features which includes retrieval tools, usage calculators, etc.

4) Mobility of services

Virtual libraries are now available on mobile. Libraries are developing responsive mobile websites so that it can be easily accessed via smart phone or tabs on the go.

5) Eco-friendly

This can be categorised as an environment friendly initiative. Digital Libraries saves paper discarding, the need for office space, construction and vehicular movement. Thus it is giving the users a pollution free experience.

6) Virtual location

We can access our libraries from virtually anywhere if we are on a business trip or vacationing away from home, we can still keep our watchful and use our library resources and services.

7) Faster accessibility

Conducting business online is generally faster than going to the libraries. Saves time in searching required document in library it can be time consuming. But in digital form we can access our library instantly and with our leisure.

8) Exclusive features

Many features and services are typically available online. For example, with just a few clicks we can apply for book loan, check the progress of our applications, review available information resources, other important information that maybe spread out over several different brochures in the local libraries.

Limitations of the Digital Libraries

1) There is lack of personal relationship between library staff and users in case of digital libraries.

2) There are so many problems involved with digital libraries such as security issues, lacking in services, transaction problems and internet connection failure.

- 3) Selection of document for digitisation is a challenge for the librarians what type of records to be digitized and what type of document should not to be digitise.
- 4) Issues on copyright may affect to the digitisation process.
- 5) Digital library projects are expansive it requires enormous fund for the digitisation work and its maintenance.
- 6) Due to inadequate skills of technology many librarians and library staff's are conservative and having technophobia.
- 7) Strong internet connection is needed to operate digital library services. It would be complicated if the server is down and many of the users cannot having the computers and internet connection to use digital library services.
- 8) Many of the users still they will go with the traditional library services.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

1. How frequently do you use the following services per month?

	I never use this service	Less than one time	One to three times	Three to eight times	Eight to twelve times	Over Twelve times
Visiting the Digital Library	28	17	27	30	22	26
Online Reading through digital library	33	13	24	29	32	19
Use of digital library services	22	27	21	32	24	24
Total	83	57	72	91	78	69

It is good for the libraries as 60% of the respondents use over three to eight times and 52% and 46% of the users use the digital library eight to twelve and over twelve times and 55% of the users never used the digital library.

- If not, why have you never used digital library services?
- Don't have internet at home
- Online services don't enable me to do what I want to do.
- I prefer to have personal human relation.
- Find the process too difficult
- Others please specify-----

20% of the respondents have never used online services among which 40% of them have finding difficulties in using digital library services.

2. What are the online services you would prefer from the following?

- E-books and E-journals
- Reference Service
- Inter library loan

- Electronic Document Delivery Service
- Referral service
- Reservation
- Others

It is interesting to see that our respondent would like to do all the services in which one does personally on a visit to the library. Thus, digital library has a promising future ahead.

3. Are you aware of the benefits of the digital library services which are available?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

It is amazing to see that most of the respondents are aware of the benefits of digital library services.

4. Are you aware of the violation of copyright rules stopping any kind of fraud on the same?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Most of the respondents are unaware about the copyright rules and its violation.

5. What do you feel about digital library as a new system of delivering information services?
- a. Vital
 - b. Essential
 - c. Desirable
 - d. Cannot say exactly

It has been seen that majority of the respondents considers digital library as an essential element in the system.

6. Does your library educate you about the digital library system?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Most of the respondents felt that they are not properly educated about digital library and its benefits to use them.

7. Do you consider digital library as a replacement of traditional libraries?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

60% of the respondents consider digital library as a replacement of traditional libraries.

Findings:

- Through this research we have understood that information technology has empowered users with information to make better use of information services. At the same time, technology is allowing libraries to offer new services, raise productivity, increase operating efficiency, expand and compete globally. This also increases the quality and the value of the library services.
- Digital libraries have become fundamentally changing the service sector worldwide.

- The rise of virtual services is redefining the relationship between the information professionals and users. The innovations have enabled the users to choose from a wide array of library services.
- The major driving force behind the rapid spread of digital libraries is its acceptance by the users because it is extremely cost-effective delivery channel. On the other side is also associated with risk such as reputation risk, security risk, cross border risk and strategic risk which are unique to digital libraries.
- The many of the respondents are not aware about the copyright rules and how it can be violated. The library peoples should educate the users regarding the same.

Conclusion:

Digitisation is an important task in 21st century libraries. It's getting more and more importance in this information explosion era. The new libraries have the advantage of latest technology; the goodwill of the established libraries will give them a opportunity to lead them in the online world. We would like to conclude that digitalization in the library sector is still in the developing stage. As digitalization has entered the market the libraries must take quick steps of educating and creating awareness among the users for its fruitful growth. Libraries must take initiative for proper advertisement and promotional activities let the users to know about the services. It will create new ways to use library contents for their studies and research, etc.

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