

Selection Criteria for Acquiring Electronic Resources in Libraries of Hyderabad and Secunderabad

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***Abstract** - The paper is about identifying and evaluating criteria for selection of Electronic Resources in select libraries in Hyderabad. The study includes 117 libraries that include Public libraries, Academic, Special libraries and Academic libraries for conducting research which are using electronic resources. The study focuses on selection criteria for acquiring electronic resources in these libraries. Though there are many criterions for selecting and acquiring electronic resources the present article revealed that the quality, subject coverage, currency and authority are the main deciding factors for selection of electronic resources.*

Keywords: Electronic Resources, acquisition of electronic resources, criteria for acquiring electronic resources, digital journals, ROI, information authenticity, quality & digital disruption.

Introduction:

A Library is the hub of learning and development in any organization. Any progressive organization can't exist or thrive without a full-fledged library and information system. Hence the libraries are increasingly referred as Learning Resource Centres (LRC) in this ever changing knowledge era. With the rapid changes happening with the advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), transition of knowledge society and exponential growth of information resources at global scale and ever changing user needs, Libraries have both challenges and opportunities in meeting and exceeding the expectations of the information seekers. In order to meet the ever changing and extremely dynamic user expectations, dependence on traditional resources is extremely difficult and impossible. No librarian wishes to be left behind in the race to catch up with the best of opportunities available to him/her in serving their clientele in the best and most effective manner. Also embarrassing technology is the only means of reaching the goals of serving the right user with the right information at the right time. Information and communication technology (ICT) is changing the way we think, work, serve and communicate with the world at large. ICT is hence causing rapid change and hence resulting in the new age era of digital disruption. Therefore resorting to electronic resources with set criteria is the need of the hour for providing better services to the users of these select libraries as evident from the discussions with their librarians.

However the best possible criteria to be followed for the identification and selection of electronic resources is these libraries in the focus of this paper.

Related Studies:

Kaur & Satija (2007) discussed various trends in collection development in digital environment. They revealed that the major challenges for collection building of e-resources are: complicated procurement, preservation system, technological obsolescence, financial constraints and access related problems etc. Sharon Johnson, et.al (2012). Books is exclusively on selection of e-resources for libraries. Electronic resources present a number of challenges not encountered with the selection and acquisition of traditional analog materials and it is advisable for the library to develop clear policies and processes for the selection and management of such resources. This will provide clarity to staff and ensure that electronic resources within the library are developed with due consideration of cost, technical feasibility, licensing, access and preservation requirements, and constraints. Tyagi (2015) in his study revealed the current practices of e-resources related to acquisition, selection and mode of procurement, promotion and development policy of Management Libraries in National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi. He reported that subscription of databases is very popular among e-resources and subject relevancy is the main focus area for selection of e-resources. Dhiman and Arabinda (2016) in their "Selection and Acquisition of E-resource Collection in Selected Libraries of R&D Institutions in Kolkata city: A Survey of Current Practices" study evaluates various aspects of current practices of selection and acquisition of e-resources in selected libraries of R & D institutions in Kolkata city. And also it highlights the responsible authority, method, criteria, availability and mode of subscription of e-resources in R & D libraries.

Significance:

Digital disruption and exponential growth of ICT is changing the way libraries are managed to serve their highly dynamic and informed user community. These days users prefer to browse information and find the relevant content by a click at rapid pace. Traditional mode of libraries can't compete with the modern day information technology using traditional collection of print material. To offer better services libraries need something beyond print based information resources. Thus Libraries have to resort to plan, identify, evaluate and select Electronic rather digital resources to satisfy wider audience located in virtual or remote locations with speed, authenticity and accuracy. This has led to the importance of acquiring Electronic Resources in libraries of various scale and sizes. This should not be a chance but a choice of librarians for rendering effective and efficient information services. Though selection, acquisition, dissemination and preservation of e-resources is the same, there are certain criteria to be followed to build a robust and scalable electronic resource management system in libraries. The paper is focusing on a few criteria being adopted for selection of Electronic resources in select libraries in Hyderabad.

Objective of the study:

The objective of the study is to find out the need and existing criterion used for selection of Electronic Resources and related challenges in select libraries in Hyderabad. There are about 117 samples received from various libraries in select libraries of Hyderabad.

Scope and Methodology

The methodology followed was the survey method to identify, discuss and served a structured questionnaire to the professional librarians. 117 responses received from various select

libraries of Hyderabad and Secunderabad i.e. 54 Academic Libraries, 40 Special Libraries, 9 Public Libraries and 14 Corporate Libraries. The response was statistically analysed and arrived at criteria that gives adequate understanding about the selection and acquisition of electronic resources in these libraries in the city of Hyderabad.

Criterion for selection of Electronic Resources:

As indicated survey method is followed to identify the criteria for selection of electronic resources through a structured questionnaire. The respondent professional librarians were asked to mention the different criteria used for selection of e-resources. Various options were given to them and invited their feedback. It is observed that multiple criteria was used by respondents for the selection of electronic resources in their respective libraries. From the diagram it is clear that subject relevance is the primary criteria for the selection of e-resources.

Selection criteria for electronic resources also pose challenges to the librarians. In case of print material they have to evaluate the price, content and layout etc. However in the case of electronic resources the librarian has to assess the subject relevance, authenticity of information, pricing, its usage and accessibility (vide intranet or internet), vendor reputation and many more technical factors. These select professional librarians are using various criteria for selection so that the best one can be selected and procured for their libraries. All the librarians consider the subject relevance as the main criteria for the electronic resources as the main criteria for the selection.

Let us examine various criteria options that were given by the respondent librarians.

Criteria for selection of e-resources:-

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (a) Quality | (b) Subject coverage |
| (c) Currency & authority | (d) Uniqueness of content |
| (e) Geographic parameter | (f) Relevance of material |
| (g) Cost | (h) Network capability |
| (I) User friendly | (j) Efficiency of retrieval |
| (k) Hardware compatibility | (l) Software compatibility |
| (m) Service implications | (n) Remote accessibility |

a. Quality:

Any information resource is as effective as its quality and relevance. Quality plays a vital role in the selection criteria of electronic resources to be most authentic. Quality of the electronic information resources is determines the services of the reputation and growth of the institution.

b. Subject Coverage:

The primary criteria for selection depends on subject coverage of the resource as applicable to the parent institution. The subject coverage is dependent on the overall objectives of the organization of the library and their user needs.

c. Currency and authority:

Electronic resources identified and acquired rather selected need to be up to date and current or contemporary to the needs of the industry and the user requirements. The currency of the

electronic resources also determines the authenticity of the information tools and authority of the veracity of information to be used for research purpose.

d. Uniqueness of material:

The electronic resources selected needs to be unique and one of its kind as far as originality and authenticity is concerned. This is an important criteria for the selection of e-resources in these select libraries.

e. Geographic parameter:

Another important criteria for selection of electronic resources is geographic relevance parameter. The selection criteria needs to keep in mind the applicability of the electronic resources to the geography of the location of the organization and also to its applicability to global geographic relevance.

f. Relevance of material:

The electronic resources selected needs to be relevant to the industry, organization and people working for the organization to be relevant to their user needs and requirements. Relevance of material to the local variations and the research and reference needs of the users is an important criteria.

g. Cost:

Price of the Electronic resource procured for the library is also a criteria worth considering. Cost of the E-Resources selected should fit in to the overall budget and financial capability and also the need for such expenditure to meet the objectives of the user community in the organization.

h. Network capability:

Criteria for selecting electronic resources also depends on network capability of the host organization. The organization where the library located usually will have intranet or internet (LAN and WAN) facility to connect and extend the services of electronic resources to remote users located in various buildings in the same campus or across cities through their intranet or internet facilities. Most of the present generation electronic resources are accessible via any kind of network within or outside the organisation.

i. User friendliness:

The user friendliness of selecting electronic resources is the important criteria as the resources needs to be better utilized. No matter how popular or expensive the e-resource be if it is not user friendly or user oriented it will be underutilised and it adversely impacts return on investment for the organization. If the resource is not user friendly it will be a waste of time, effort and money spent on its acquisition.

j. Efficiency of retrieval:

The criteria for selection should keep in mind the efficient retrieval capability of the tool for wider utilisation. Efficiency of retrieval also depends on the user friendliness.

k. Hardware compatibility

Hardware compatibility of the E-Resource selected with the existing hardware of the organisation in the library is vital for the selection of resources and libraries need to factor hardware capacity of the organisation before procuring the e-resources.

l. Software compatibility:

Similar to hardware compatibility, Software compatibility is very important selection criteria in procuring electronic resources.

m. Service implications:

The criteria for selecting electronic resources also depends on service implications and service level agreements with the vendor who supply these e-resources. Service level agreement and after sales services with annual maintenance contract (AMC) are important service criteria implication for selection e-resources.

n. Remote accessibility:

The Electronic Resource selected needs to be accessed from anywhere at any time mode in deciding remote accessibility. The resource procured needs to be remotely accessible thru LAN or WAN with minimal band-width and system specifications. The present generation electronic resources are all accessible from anytime anywhere modalities and accessible thru internet or intranet of the organisation within or outside the organisation and its locations.

The Hypothesis is that Selection criteria in selected libraries in Hyderabad do not vary significantly.

Table 1: Criteria for Selection of e-Resources

Sl. No.	Criteria	Rank														NR	Total	
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV			
1.	Quality	44 (38.3%)	25 (21.7%)	28 (24.3%)	4 (3.5%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	6 (5.2%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	115
2.	Subject coverage	32 (27.8%)	26 (22.6%)	26 (22.6%)	2 (1.7%)	12 (10.4%)	7 (6.1%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.7%)	6 (5.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	115
3.	Currency & authority	4 (3.5%)	6 (5.2%)	2 (1.7%)	16 (13.9%)	10 (8.7%)	20 (17.4%)	18 (15.7%)	14 (12.2%)	15 (13.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	4 (3.5%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	115
4.	Uniqueness of content	2 (1.7%)	4 (3.5%)	12 (10.4%)	16 (13.9%)	14 (12.2%)	10 (8.7%)	10 (8.7%)	22 (19.1%)	8 (7.0%)	9 (7.8%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (5.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.7%)	115
5.	Geographic parameter	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.5%)	2 (1.7%)	4 (3.5%)	18 (15.7%)	8 (7.0%)	2 (1.7%)	10 (8.7%)	6 (5.2%)	12 (10.4%)	10 (8.7%)	16 (13.9%)	11 (9.6%)	10 (8.7%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	115
6.	Relevance of material	2 (1.7%)	10 (8.7%)	8 (7.0%)	6 (5.2%)	12 (10.4%)	12 (10.4%)	4 (3.5%)	4 (3.5%)	18 (15.7%)	8 (7.0%)	21 (18.3%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (5.2%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	115
7.	Cost	8 (6.8%)	22 (18.8%)	6 (5.1%)	14 (12.0%)	7 (6.0%)	2 (1.7%)	6 (5.1%)	6 (5.1%)	10 (8.5%)	2 (1.7%)	6 (5.1%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	22 (18.8%)	2 (1.7%)	115
8.	Network capability	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (10.3%)	16 (13.7%)	9 (7.7%)	16 (13.7%)	18 (15.4%)	16 (13.7%)	6 (5.1%)	6 (5.1%)	14 (12.0%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	115
9.	User friendly	6 (5.1%)	8 (6.8%)	14 (12.0%)	12 (10.3%)	14 (12.0%)	8 (6.8%)	9 (7.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (6.8%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	10 (8.5%)	22 (18.8%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.7%)	115
10.	Efficiency of retrieval	2 (1.7%)	6 (5.1%)	12 (10.3%)	12 (10.3%)	12 (10.3%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (5.1%)	22 (18.8%)	16 (13.7%)	12 (10.3%)	11 (9.4%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	115
11.	Hardware compatibility	7 (6.0%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (5.1%)	8 (6.8%)	20 (17.1%)	4 (3.4%)	6 (5.1%)	22 (18.8%)	10 (8.5%)	6 (5.1%)	14 (12.0%)	4 (3.4%)	4 (3.4%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	115
12.	Software compatibility	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (6.0%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.4%)	18 (15.4%)	14 (12.0%)	16 (13.7%)	10 (8.5%)	10 (8.5%)	16 (13.7%)	14 (12.0%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	115
13.	Service implications	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (4.3%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (6.8%)	10 (8.5%)	24 (20.5%)	8 (6.8%)	6 (5.1%)	6 (5.1%)	10 (8.5%)	32 (27.4%)	6 (5.1%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	115
14.	Remote accessibility	6 (5.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (13.7%)	6 (5.1%)	8 (6.8%)	6 (5.1%)	4 (3.4%)	2 (1.7%)	18 (15.4%)	10 (8.5%)	15 (12.8%)	12 (10.3%)	10 (8.5%)	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.7%)	115

Source: Primary Data

According to the above table-1 main criteria for selection of e-resources is quality and it is placed in first rank and third rank with 38.8% and 24.3% respectively. The subject coverage placed in second rank with 22.6%. The currency and authority is placed in fourth, sixth and seventh ranks with 13.9%, 17.4% and 15.7% respectively. User friendly is placed in fifth rank with 12.0% and service implications placed in eighth and thirteenth place with 20.5% and 27.4% respectively. The librarians placed the relevance of material in ninth place, network capability in tenth place, efficiency of retrieval in eleventh place, software compatibility in twelfth place and cost in fourteenth place and their percentage are 15.7, 15.4, 18.8, 18.7 and 18.8, respectively. Therefore, from the above study it can be understood that main criteria is quality, currency & authority and service implications.

Recommendations:

Therefore with the advent of the study some recommendations are provided for the effective development of criteria for selection of electronic resources in these libraries.

1. The libraries should have a clearly defined set of selection criteria that can help the librarian in selection process of e-resources.
2. Librarians can choose cooperative acquisition and resource sharing to reduce the cost and thus manage the shoe string budgets of their libraries.
3. Librarians need to participate in digital online consortium for apt selection and information needs of their users.
4. To manage the limited budget, staff, time and meet the ever changing needs of user's collaborative consortia is the way forward for librarians.
5. Online training to staff and User education programs to users is very pertinent. Librarians should teach user on how to use these resources upon acquisition of these valuable costly e-resources for effective utilisation and value add.
6. Integrated catalogue of print and e-resources should be made available to users.
7. A well drafted license agreement is prerequisite before selecting and acquiring e-resource for fair and free use by the users.

Conclusion:

Developing electronic resources in various libraries is the need of the hour. It is clear from the study that the librarians consider various judicious criteria for selection of Electronic resources in these libraries. The selection criteria mainly depends on subject coverage, quality, currency and authority, cost, user friendliness, network capability, hardware and software compatibility, remote accessibility, service implications and efficiency of retrieval. Different libraries need different criteria and strategy in selection and acquisition of Electronic Resources. From the table of analysis selection criteria vary significantly. Librarians need to use different methods and criteria to acquire depending up on the type of library user needs, types of e-resources and research objectives of the organization as well. Librarians need to provide in house training to library staff to update their skills. Librarians also need to impart user education program or readers' orientation programs to create awareness about the availability of various resources for better return on investment (ROI). Librarians also need to adopt license agreement for free and fair use and preservation strategy for electronic resources.

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