# Web Based Information Services for Academic Environment: An Overview

**Hanumanth Reddy A.**
Assistant Librarian
CVR College of Engineering,
Vastunagar, Mangalpalli (V), Ibrahimpatnam (M),
Rangareddy (D), Telangana 501 510
e-mail: ramahanu07@gmail.com

*Abstract - Information is a vital component of the modern society. It is the base of the developmental activities of the society. Library and information centers are the main repositories of information and web based delivery of information resources are the main services of most of these centers. The main purpose of this study is to find out what are the web based information services for academic environment for purpose of student and teachers community. An attempt has also been made to know the useful information on the web based resources and the services.*

**Keywords:** Information Services, Library Services, Web based library services, Current awareness service, SDI service, online delivery service, documentation delivery service, CD- ROM service, internet access, indexing and abstracting databases, library portal service, federated search, alert service

## Introduction

The main purpose of academic library is to support education and research. Libraries are mainly entrusted with a host of predetermined tasks like acquiring, organizing, preserving, retrieving and disseminating information to the users. Right from ancient times to the present digital era, the primary objective of library has always been to achieve this goal. There is a need to use information accurately, precisely and systematically. Traditional methods of library and information services have changed greatly in recent years because of the development and application of new technology, especially the internet and web technologies. So libraries must strive to provide the right information to right clientele at right time. The demand and expectation of users have also changed considerably. In this changed scenario, services in libraries are more personalized, more interactive and more collaborative web-based services such as web OPAC, library blogs, e-resources, institutional repository etc.

Web is a complement to traditional library service. The inherent character of web offers many advantages and improvements for library services including the ability to hyperlink to other resources, use of a graphical interface, and access for remote users. Web based Library services mean that library users can obtain services whenever they need them and are accessible twenty four hours per day from anywhere.

**Inform:** The main aim of an information service is to inform the visitor according to his/her information demand and according to the profile and portfolio. Data are received and understood by visitors and reduces the recipient's uncertainty. They are classically a

collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn to knowledge acquired through study or experience or instruction.

**Guide and Direct**: Information services steer and direct the visitor through their service. The visitor is proactive according to the data that is provided. Guiding includes also helping the visitor whenever help is appropriate.

**Provide:** Information services supply data to the visitor depending on what the visitor desires or needs.  Therefore, the service much determine what the visitor needs and demands.

**Search:** Searching is a very complex word field which we discuss in the next chapter in detail.  Visitors look into or over carefully or thoroughly in an effort to find or discover something within their demands or interests.  They examine and check the content provided.

**Lead:** Information services take somebody somewhere.  This leadership results in a change of the information stage or level of the visitor.  This change must also be taken into consideration during later visits.  The leadership may cause to undertake a certain action.

### What are the library services?

Library services refer to facilities, which are provided by a library for the use of books and dissemination of information for the need and meet the users' requirement. The well known existing library services are cataloguing, classification, circulation services, reservation, renewal, new arrivals, current contents, current awareness service, selective dissemination of information, indexing and abstracting, reference service, document delivery, inter library loan, externally purchased database, CD-ROM databases, access to other library catalogues, access to online databases, internally published newsletter, reports and journals, bibliographic services, and so on. All these services have changed its mode to an extent with web environment.

### Web based library services

Web-based Library Services means, library services provided using Internet as medium and library website as a gateway with the help of integrate library management system. On the user perspective, web-based library services such as: online textbooks, databases, tutorials and a virtual library of links to other useful resources. It provides the unique service of linking to full-text articles, integrating library house-keeping operations, library policies, staff listings, etc. for timely help. According to White (2001), it can be defined broadly as 'an information access service in which users ask questions via electronic means e.g. email or web forms.

For this study, web based library services means, library services provided using Internet as medium and library website as a gateway with the help of integrate library management system. On the user perspective, web-based library services such as: Current awareness service, SDI service, online delivery service, documentation delivery service, CD- ROM service, internet access, indexing and abstracting databases, library portal service, federated search, alert service, digital library services, web OPAC service and a virtual library of links to other useful resources. It provides the unique service like integrating library house-keeping operations, library policies, staff listings, etc. for timely help. Madhusudhan, M. and Nagabhushan (2012) conducted a study to examine the web based library services in

universities libraries in India; an analysis on librarian's perspective. The study examined the current state and use of web by university libraries in India via their website. Questionnaire method was used to conduct the study. It was found that university libraries are yet to exploit full potential of web based services.

## Advantages of Web Based Services

- Availability of information in different places and also in different formats
- Availability of less number of library staff to carry out the library works and services
- Cut in library budget.
- Information for decision making in MIS
- Instant and elaborate information requirements for R&D activities
- Less dependence upon the library staff for getting the required information
- Location of laboratories/ departments in different places in the campus
- Multifold increase of the cost of books and journals
- To save the precious time of the scientist

## Services offered by Web

Following are the very common services offer by the web. Some of them we can apply on our library and information science field. But most of these services we can't use as a library services.

(a) List serve (b) Subject database (c) Community information (d) Government resources (e) Library catalog (f) Shopping and other commercial transactions (g) Document delivery (h) Commercial resources  (i) Bulletin board (j) E-mail facilities (k) Surfing facilities.

## Web based services

1) Access to Database
2) Access to Database
3) Bibliographic and cataloguing service
4) Bulletin Board Service
5) CAS
6) E-mail delivery
7) E-SDI : Link to remote information
8) FAQ
9) Hosting on web
10) ILL and document delivery services
11) Internet Subject Gateways
12) List of acquisition
13) Newsletter services
14) OPAC
15) Patent Information Services
16) profit based alert service
17) Push based services
18) Reference Services
19) Uncover
20) Usenet
21) Virtual Library

22)   Web OPAC
23)   Webcasting
24)   Whiteboard

**Library Portal**

At Present, many library services are provided through the library web pages. Web services are being offered using various web software and tools by integrating the technologies to provide web based services to the users. Library automation has provided integrated solution for the in-house operations and web enabled services on the campus and intranet using modern web tools and techniques.

Subject gateways are important components of library website, designed for library user so as to help them discover high quality information in quick and effective way. Subject gateways can be defined as a facility that allows easier access to web based resources in a defined area. The simplest type of subject gateways are sets of web pages containing list of links and provide a simple search facility. More advanced gateway offer a much enhanced service via a system consisting of a resource database and various indexes, which can be searched or browsed through a web based interface. The portal sites or subject gateways redirect a user to the site holding the original material. A library portal reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the libraries very effectively.

**E-Resources**

E-resources refer to that information which requires computer access and that may either be locally accessed or accessed remotely through the internet. All the university libraries are members of different consortia which provide a series of online databases and e-journal service: This covers both free internet resources and electronic resources purchased or licensed by the libraries from either commercial or from nonprofit making organization.

Swain and Panda (2009) conducted a study on use of electronic resources in business school. The purpose of the study was to look at the prolific growth of electronic resources. This survey attempts to measure the quantum of e-resources accessed in the academic ambience of business school libraries in Orissa. More over the study attempts to examine what extend electronic information service are offered to users of business school libraries in the state with an opinion pool of the librarians of the business schools. Further more the study aims to highlight problems and constraints faced by the information professionals in accessing e-resources and delivering electronic information services.

**Web OPAC**

It is an online catalogue facility that enables speedy searching of library database including books, journals, periodicals and manuscripts. In this system, the books or reading materials are arranged according to the subject content that is given a call number. The search results are helpful in getting complete detail of the document related to search query, saving the time and energy of the searching person.

**Conclusion**

Web based information services are essential for research scholars in universities. The transfer of library services to the web based environment helps the users to find, evaluate, and use information effectively. The libraries hold the hands of the users who are moving towards new communication paradigm a shift from face to face human contact to human machine interaction, from paper to electronic delivery, from text centered mode to multimedia and from physical presence to virtual presence. The study would understand the web based information services in the universities in Kerala, its benefits to users and problems while accessing it. As the outcome of the study it would propose measures for the improvement of web based information services in University libraries in Kerala.

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