

Skills and Competencies required by Library Professionals in Digital era

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ABSTRACT - The rapid growth of information technology is bringing about changes in the field of library and information management. The jump from conventional library management system to electronic library management has paved way for huge changes in the very structure and manner of library profession. The paper discusses the essential skills and competencies required by library professionals in this digital era.

Keywords: Information technology skill, Library professionals, Digital Library

I. INTRODUCTION

Libraries undergo great changes in their arrangement, mode and service in the present world due to the fast development of information technology. This evolution is mainly caused by the arrival of electronic resources and computer aided library administration. The challenges faced by the library professionals due to the growth of information technology in the field of information management and library management are very great. The leap from conventional library management system to electronic library management has covered great changes in manner of library profession. Until the last decades of 20th century IT skill was not considered as essential skill for library professionals. But today we can't think of a library professional who have no knowledge in IT. In the present scenario, the academic library management is not possible without adequate IT skill and knowledge. In addition to the conservative print resources, electronic resources also have become part of academic library. Digital libraries also are very ordinary nowadays in which documents and information are kept only in electronic format. The statutory organizations and institutions like UGC, AICTE, IMC etc., which are established to ensure the quality and standard of higher education in India, provide proper guidelines for service, format and superiority of resources in academic libraries.

It has been suggested that academic library should set up electronic resource facility connected to the library in order to make the nationally and internationally published articles. The rapid growth of information and communication technology has brought revolutionary changes in information management and knowledge transactions. Almost all establishments like shops, banks, government offices, accounting firms etc. utilize their own software and gain rapid growth with the help of technology. The office workers in these organizations may be expert only in the software they use daily but they may not be computer experts. Organizations usually employ or outsource a system expert to solve the errors in software/hardware/ networks etc. During the early years of computerization academic libraries also worked with the help of outsourced or institutional level appointed computer experts to solve the computer related problems. If the libraries had limited to the only responsibility of doing day today works i.e. completing the routine works easily with the help of computers like banks, shops etc. do even today, the same system would have been continued even today. But, when the idea of digital library is realized, libraries are being swallowed by computers; the implication of the word resources has become electronic resources and the library working with the help of computers has shifted to electronic library working within the computers. At this end, there were only two options before the library professionals; either to obtain knowledge and skill to manage electronic resources too in the computer or get ready to leave the field. Like the theory of survival of the fittest, only those who can work independently on computer and electronic resource management by using information technology tools and techniques can survive in the ground hereafter. Patron satisfaction is very important for the success and survival of any kind of service or business firm. Even the minor changes in the attention of customer will

cause big changes in the market. As information seekers, the library users tastes and attitudes have been greatly influenced by the arrival of Information Technology. With the appearance of smart phone equipment the technology barrier in connecting the information seekers to the e-resources have been reduced much, and the internet connectivity and online search services are in peoples pocket itself. As the use of smart phone has become worldwide, the number of internet users also has significantly increased and people's prejudice against technology has been decreased. In the new age group, the new born children acquire skills of using mobile phone and tablet before they acquire their own mother tongue. Academic libraries have to serve new generation in which people get involved in technology to the extent that they can't live a moment without Information and Communication Technology. To meet the changing needs of library users in ICT environment librarians are expected to continuously enhance their competencies and skill in the age of technological era in order to improve productivity and efficiency. If they don't change with the time, they always lag behind. Librarian required skills for doing a job effectively and to achieve set objective. So every library professional should have the following skills to perform their duties effectively.

User- orientation skills

Librarian should provide enough support to users for effective use of library resources. They should provide information of new arrivals to the group effectively. They should engage staff in selecting the new books of respective subjects.

Collection development skills

Wealthy collection of library is foundation of library service. Librarian need to find out new ways of getting information's through latest books and E-services available in the market from various institutes.

Time management skills

The fourth law of library science by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan indicates the importance of time management for the library professionals as well as for the users. The library professionals should make proper planning of all services provided by the library so that time of both can be saved and used effectively.

Leadership Skills

Leadership is style of working and motivating the users. Leadership considered from personal qualities, behavior styles and decision

making ability of leaders. It is about getting people to move in right direction and motivating them to achieve desired results. It is most important skill required for librarian to achieve the objectives of library usages. As a leader, librarian should have good relationship with management, staff and user.

Interpersonal Skills

A librarian should have interpersonal or interactive skill to build and maintain the relationship with required stakeholders in order to achieve the objectives of library. He must encourage and engage their staff to give their best to achieve the target. As a librarian he/she manages and organizes different types of activities like for user he arrange library orientation course for user to motivate them.

ICT Skills

Information and communication technology is developing day by day in all type libraries. A librarian should have knowledge to handle the technology which is being used in libraries to perform various operation of library. New information sources are available, as a librarian we accept technological changes and learn new things. Librarian should have a knowledge how technology is implemented in library service.

Competencies needed to fill the roles in the digital age

Competencies are a combination of skills, knowledge, and behavior patterns vital to organizational success, personal achievement, and career development. There are Professional competencies and Personal competencies.

Professional competencies

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The librarian in the 21 century should possess the competencies as opined by Ghoricha, (2013).

1. Expert knowledge and familiarity with information resources plus the ability to critically
2. evaluate, filter, and access them.
3. Specialized subject knowledge appropriate to the needs of the organization or client.
4. Administrative expertise to create and manage convenient, accessible and cost-effective
5. information services that are aligned with the strategic directions of the organization.
6. Assess information needs of clients
7. Design and market value-added information services and products to meet identified needs.
8. Apply appropriate information technology to acquire, organize and disseminate information.

9. Use appropriate business and management approaches to communicate the importance of information services to senior management.
10. Develop specialized information products for use inside or outside the organization
11. Evaluate the outcomes of information use and conduct research to help the solution of
12. information management problems.
13. Continually improve information services in response to the changing needs.
14. •Be an effective member of the senior management team and a consultant to the organization
15. on information issues.

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The 21 century librarian must adopt to the following personal skills in order to survive in the new information world (Parkes, 2013). Commitment to split knowledge and to service

excellence, Ability to face challenges and to see new opportunities both inside and outside the library. Ability to create an environment of joint respect and trust, Effective communication skills, Good team work, Dynamic leadership, Systematic planning and prioritizing skills, with focus on what is serious. , solid interest in lifelong learning and personal career planning, Active personal business skills, Recognition of the value of professional networking and solidarity , Flexibility and positive attitude in a time of continuing change, Manage projects well, formally convene the emerging technology group.

Librarians are more in Demand than Ever in the Digital Age

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1. In the 21 century, we are witnessing an information revolution
2. Information needs to be delivered in a timely and preferred manner
3. Technology for generating and sharing information is useless, if there's no way to locate,
4. filter, organize and access it.
5. Traditionally librarians are in the forefront of information dissemination and they will continue to be there , but via altered and IT-driven means

II. CONCLUSION

The extraordinary growth of Internet has made significant revolution in all the areas of science and technology. Rather than using it as a tool for searching and obtaining information, Internet has become the king of all media, by

which we can access virtual information and can build a virtual library to provide timely, quality service to the users. Librarians of this digital era, are in the place to change their role as random information scientists/gatekeepers and to meet the challenges of the Internet, World Wide Web, and online access in the knowledge society. So they must improve their knowledge with special skills of the latest IT developments, to browse, access and retrieve a particular information across the global networks and to organize and manage the information by building digital libraries and by which they can provide quality e-information service to the knowledge society. Library staff must be competent of working effectively in corporation with ability members to improve the strength of teaching and research in institution of higher learning. The new librarian as portrayed in the digital era must be prepared to face new challenges and find solutions of how to conquer. The librarian must keep on learning when new opportunities avail themselves. Digital librarian must switch the new generation of learners, who are digital native as well as not forgetting those who are digital fugitives.

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