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Research Article

CUTTING EDGE LIBRARIES: DIGITAL VS VIRTUAL LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to types of modern libraries and their differences and usage of e-library around the world as well as its beneficial sides. Additionally in this article describes the competence between digital and virtual libraries.

KEYWORDS

Digital, virtual, automation library, traditional library

INTRODUCTION

You are already familiar with different types of libraries and their functions and services. Application of computers, in particular, to library operations has got various implications. At present, users need pinpointed, speedy and in-depth information on a specific field and that too as quickly as possible. Multifold increase in the information output and its usage has made it a challenge for the librarians to organize and disseminate required information quickly. Organizing this enormous information,

manually and by conventional methods is time consuming. Therefore, there is urgent need to computerize libraries to provide efficient and timely services to the users. Moreover, in this busy world every minute of the user is valuable. It has thus, become a necessity for any service oriented organization to save the time of the user and fulfill the fourth Law of Library Science, i.e., Save the time of the user. The speed of processing, the conservation of space by avoiding catalogue cabinets, the accuracy and

incorruptibility of the data and reliability of the systems are some of the important considerations in advocating computerized management of libraries.

AREAS OF APPLICATION OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION. Traditional library work consisting of acquisitions, technical processing, serials control, circulation and reference services entail time consuming manual work. Though, these activities are essential for proper functioning of a library, they consume considerable professional staff time that might otherwise go towards user services and library development. Moreover, this work consists of a number of inter-related activities, the data generated being useful in different sections. Manual work involves repetition of work in different activities. The aim of automation thus, is to integrate these activities and minimize repetition of work. Integrated library management software (ILMS) packages are available, which are used to automate libraries. ILMS package integrates all the activities and routines of a library. The basic activities of library automation irrespective of the type or size of a library are:

Virtual Library. The virtual library is a collection of full text e-books, journals and databases from various publishers and sources which can be accessed by library members at any time from any Internet connected computer, laptop or other portable device. In simple words, a virtual library is the library without walls. It is virtual in the sense that it does not have any physical collection of resources. It aggregates distributed resources and provides links from its website. The key characteristics of a true virtual library are given below:

(i)Acquisition

(ii) Cataloguing

(iii) Circulation

(iv) Serials Control, and

(v) Reporting.

The above mentioned activities are closely connected and are to be performed in a sequence that leads to better library services.

Acquisition. The acquisition division in a library acquires reading material (books, electronic material, maps, charts, etc). Other reading material including journals, newspapers, databases, e-books, etc. are acquired by the serials/periodicals division. Manual acquisition system requires the maintenance of vast amount of data, innumerable files, records, etc., which involve tedious routine and repetitive tasks. The computers can perform these tasks faster and more accurately. The following are the main tasks in the acquisition section.

• Selection of documents

• Ordering of documents

• Create purchase orders

• Claiming/cancellation of documents

• Receiving/invoice processing

Cataloguing. Once a book is received in the library, it is processed, beginning with accessioning followed by classification and cataloguing. Catalogues are the windows to the library collection and their automation has far reaching effect on the quality of services. In a manual environment, much valuable time of professional staff is invested in the preparation of cards for each book, sorting and filing of the cards. Checking for duplicate entries is another tedious and

time-consuming process. In an automated system, once the relevant data is processed and is made available on the computer, the catalogue can be generated in a standard format. Then exchange records with other libraries as part of a library network and generation of various approaches is very fast and efficient. Checking for duplication can be done quite efficiently through computers as it facilitates search from any approach to any library material. The computerized catalogue can generate list of recent arrivals, print catalogue cards and prepare bibliographies.

- There is no corresponding physical collection
- Documents are available in electronic format.
- Documents are not stored in any location of the library.
- Library only categorizes and provides links to these resources.
- Documents can be accessed from any workstation.
- Documents are retrieved and delivered as and when required, and effective search and browse facilities are available on the website of the virtual library.

Virtual libraries often contain more up-to-date information than physical collections. Their sources can be searched more efficiently than those in physical libraries, and the information they contain can be updated more frequently.

Digital Library Vs. Virtual Library. The terms digital library and virtual library are used interchangeably but it is not correct. They both have different characteristics which makes them different. A digital library is a library consisting of digital materials and services. Digital materials are items that are stored, processed and transferred via digital devices and networks and are accessible using computers. A digital library has place based collection of e-resources and may have even print resources. It provides access to e-resources held in-house as well as provide links to e-resources held somewhere else. For example, Digital Library of India provides link to online edition of various newspapers. On the other hand, a virtual library is the library which exists only virtually, that is, the library does not exist in real life. It consists of materials that are organized in a virtual space using computers and computer networks. The emphasis in virtual libraries is on organization and access, not on developing physical collections.

For example, The WWW Virtual Library is a catalogue of web pages compiled by a confederation of volunteers, who compile pages of key links for particular area in which they have the expertise. Individual Web pages of these links reside on hundreds of different servers around the world.

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