



Knowledge Management in Academic Library

Mangesh R. Ubale

Librarian

Shri R.L.T College of Science, Akola

Abstract

Today knowledge has become the driving force for social development and people's demand for more information and knowledge are increasing day by day. Therefore in knowledge based society library has become a treasure house of human knowledge, participate in knowledge innovation and become an important link in the knowledge innovation chain. This paper highlights the concept, practice and application of Knowledge Management in the libraries. Also focuses the librarian's role as a knowledge manager

Introduction

Academic libraries are information centers established in support of the mission of their parent institutions to generate knowledge, and people equipped with knowledge in order to serve the society and advance the well-being of mankind. In the digital age, academic libraries face challenges from both within (academia) and without. Academic departments, or even faculty and students, may purchase or build their own portals to meet their academic and/or research needs. Will that marginalize the services provided by academic libraries? Commercial companies have entered the field of information services. Will that encroach upon or erode into the territory of academic libraries?

The concept and name "Knowledge Management" was started and popularized in the business world during the last decade of the 20th century. It was the business world that first recognizes the importance of knowledge in the "Global economy" of the "Knowledge age". In the new knowledge economy the possession of relevant and strategic knowledge and its unceasing renewal enables business to gain competitive advantage. The applications of knowledge management have now spread to other organizations including government agencies, research and development departments, Universities and others. To prove their relevance and value, academic libraries must strive to provide the right amount of information to the right clientele at the right time with a right expense of financial and human resources. With a stagnant or dwindling library budget, academic libraries have to increase their operational efficiency in order to meet the challenge. One management tool that can help in this regard is Knowledge Management (KM).

Academic Libraries

Academic libraries are information centers established in support of the mission of their parent institutions to generate knowledge, equip people with knowledge in order to serve the society and advance the well being of mankind. The primary objective of academic institutions of higher education is advancement of learning and acquisition of knowledge. Academic libraries are part of the university and its organizational culture. Whatever affects universities also has an impact on their libraries too. As a result the role of university libraries is changing to provide the competitive advantage for the university. And today librarians are connected to a vast ocean of network based services. Academic libraries are the nerve centers of academic institutions and are mandated to support teaching, research and other academic programs.

- Changing environment and issues facing academic libraries
- Multiple formats of information

The rapid growth of information and communication technologies (ICTs) are said to be changing the way academic libraries operate today. Academic library collections are no longer collections comprised almost entirely of printed materials but collections comprised almost of materials in multiple formats and media. Information technologies such as computers,



multimedia and CD-ROMs are bringing unprecedented abilities to academic libraries in providing services and resources to the university community. Over the past few years, the Web has had a tremendous effect on the growth of information and the speed of transmission. The problem with the Web is that, there is no real organization of information like in the case of libraries. New means to deliver information over the Web places a challenge to academic librarians in terms of helping students make sense of information found on websites. Another challenge facing academic libraries in the networked online environment is to exploit all forms of digital and telecommunication technologies and find new ways and means to provide feasible forms of collections, services and access to library materials. These technologies however, require greater responsibility to academic librarians. The challenge for academic librarians is to manage services, which offer users a carefully selected mix of multiple formats and media. Academic libraries should rethink their role in the whole university community.

Changing user needs

As universities' market demands are changing in terms of improving students learning outcomes, this has a direct impact on academic libraries and their delivery of services. Due to societal and technological developments, traditional teaching changes increasingly in creating learning environments. Students participate in flexible learning processes via more 'indirect' contacts with teachers and facilities, including scientific information. In addition, the teaching and learning patterns have developed towards greater modularization and place an emphasis on self-directed, independent study and student-centered learning. This places greater demands on the library, which is increasingly being used for group work, and librarians face increased pressure on the enquiry service and a greater need for user support and education. Academic libraries have to provide information services for users acting in the changing academic environment. Academic librarians need to liaise with library users, faculties and schools to support the effective teaching, learning and research.

Knowledge management in Libraries

As a learning organization, libraries should provide a strong leadership in knowledge management. Unlike those business organizations whose goal for knowledge management is for competitive advantage, most public, academic, and research libraries, with the exception of company libraries (which may be known or called corporate libraries, special libraries, or knowledge centers), have a different orientation and value. Instead of competition, internal use only, and little sharing of knowledge with others outside, the most important mission of public, academic, and research libraries is to expand the access of knowledge for their users. Charged by this mission, libraries should aim their knowledge management goal high. Below are examples of what libraries can do to improve their knowledge management in all of the key areas of library services.

Application of Knowledge Management in Libraries

1. With the help of the Knowledge Management processes, libraries convert data and
 2. Information stored in various sources into knowledge and deliver only relevant
 3. Knowledge to users. Knowledge Management within libraries involves organizing and
 4. Providing access to intangible resources that help librarians and administrators carry
 5. Out their tasks more effectively and efficiently. Knowledge Management in libraries is
 6. The combination of different processes such as acquisition of knowledge from different
 7. Sources (print, electronic and human) and classification, storing, indexing and
 8. Dissemination of that knowledge using people, process and technology in such a way by
 9. Which library could fulfill the mission of the parent organization in term of users'
 10. Satisfaction. It is to promote relationship in and between libraries, between library and
 11. user, to strengthen knowledge internetworking and to quicken knowledge flow. The
- Libraries are moving from collection management to knowledge management and digital



12. Technologies offering new information services and products. The application of
13. Information Technology (IT) enlarges the scope of knowledge acquisition, rises
14. Knowledge acquisition speed and reduces knowledge acquisition cost. IT is indispensable in the application and exchange of knowledge and other fields. It functions as a source and tool for knowledge innovation.

Knowledge resources management

Because of the exponential growth in human knowledge in a variety of formats, libraries need to develop their resources access and sharing strategies from printed to electronic and digital resources in concert with their mission and charges. Restricted by limited funding, technology, staff, and space, libraries must carefully analyze the needs of their users and seek to develop cooperative acquisition plans to meet these needs. The changing concept from "ownership" to "access" and from "just in case" to "just in time" should be the goal of a sound resources development strategy.

An integrated online public access catalog (OPAC) with both internal and external resources as well as printed and other formats of knowledge should be developed and maintained. Useful websites and knowledge sources should be regularly searched and selected from the Internet and included in OPACs by hard links. A system for the reviewing and updating of these resources should be performed.

Changing role of academic librarians

In an age of great change in information formats, delivery models and technologies, an important new role emerges for the academic librarian. Argued that knowledge workers will be the most important profession in this century. There is no doubt that they are librarians. One of the major roles of academic librarians in the knowledge economy is that of knowledge managers. It is evident that academic librarians can no longer meet the information needs of the university community through the traditional avenue of simply adding to their library collections. Academic librarians need to go an extra mile. They need to understand the information and knowledge needs of users. They should be in a position to map internal and external knowledge that would assist them in increasing their efficiency. In other words, academic librarians should extend their information management roles and enhance their knowledge management competencies. Pointed out that academic librarian as knowledge workers, need to play active roles in searching for innovative solutions to the issues involved in adapting to new environments.

Applying knowledge management practices in academic libraries

The basic goal of knowledge management within libraries is to leverage the available knowledge that may help academic librarians to carry out their tasks more efficiently and effectively. Knowledge management is also aimed at extending the role of librarians to manage all types of information and tacit knowledge for the benefit of the library. Knowledge management can help transform the library into a more efficient, knowledge sharing organization. Knowledge management practices aim to draw out the tacit knowledge people have, what they carry around with them, what they observe and learn from experience, rather than what is usually explicitly stated. It is important for academic libraries to determine and manage their knowledge assets to avoid duplication of efforts. Knowledge management process involves the creation, capturing, sharing and utilization of knowledge.

User services

The utmost goal of knowledge management is to provide users with a variety of quality services in order to improve the communication, use and creation of knowledge. As much as possible these services should be tailored to the interest and needs of each user. Information about each user can be obtained by analyzing the records of user registration, surveys, circulation and interlibrary loans, frequently asked reference questions, and the use of e-journals and digital



resources, etc. User satisfaction and needs should be collected through periodic users' surveys. The findings should be used for the planning and redesign of library services. It is very important, however, that user's privacy should always be protected.

Conclusion

Academic libraries are thus playing a vital role in crossing the borders, the key to opening all gateways to knowledge. Librarians should train themselves and their staff to develop the appropriate knowledge management systems and use information technologies to equipped libraries to

Librarians should train themselves and their staff to develop the appropriate knowledge management systems and use information technologies to equipped libraries to provide better, faster and pinpointed services to its clients/ users. Knowledge Management helps library and information professionals in improving the services being rendered to their users. Information professionals have to recast their roles as knowledge professional. The librarian's roles should not be limited to being the custodians of information but they have to acquire skills to keep themselves updated so as to cope intelligently and objectively with the effective and efficient knowledge management in Academic libraries.

References

1. Reid, I.C (2000): The Web and the Universities. <http://ausweb.scu.edu/aw2k/papers/reid/> accessed on 6/4/2008.
2. Nasdeo, V. (2002): Organizational culture and subculture influences on the implementation and outcomes of aspects on internal quality assurance initiatives. <http://www.edu.on/conferences/herdsw/main/papers>
3. DiMattia, S and Oder, N (1997): Knowledge Management: Hope, Hype or Harbinger? Library Journal, 122(15).
4. Khode, Subash and Singh, Umesh Kumar. Knowledge Management and Academic Libraries. ILA Bulletin, 2006, 42(1), 27-31
5. Kumar, PSG. Information and Communication. B.R. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi.
6. Gandhi, S. (2004). Knowledge management and reference services. The journal of academic librarianship, 30(5), 368-381.
7. Singh G.K. and Singh B.K. 2004. "Knowledge Management And Librarianship", IASLIC Bulletin, Vol-49(2), pp75-79.
8. Sharma, S., Arya, S. and Krishan Gopal. 2006. " Knowledge Management in Digital Era: A Challenge to Library Professionals", ILA Bulletin, Vol. 49(1-2) pp10-13.
9. Sharma, C.K. and Gupta, S. 2007. "Knowledge Management: Its Application in Research in Social Science" Journal of Library and Information Technology, Vol. 3(2), pp1-5.