

Use of Information and Communication Technology (Ict) in The Library

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Abstract

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has transformed library services globally. Most current information are recorded in electronic format, ICT has also contributed immensely to the performance of librarians in the discharge of their duties such as in cataloguing, reference services, circulation management, serials control etc. ICT has contributed to the library in the following specific ways.

Introduction

Modern Internet is rapidly progressing beyond the creation, delivery, management and preservation of its resources to provide quality services for the humanities. The explosion of information through the WWW and human interaction through wireless devices and mobile telephony is increasing day by day ICT tools have become backbone of the human community. Computing technology, communication technology, and mass storage technology are some of the areas of continuous development that reshape the way libraries access, retrieve, store, manipulate, and disseminate information to users. ICT has impacted on every sphere of academic library activity especially in the form of the library collection development strategies, library building and consortia. ICT presents an opportunity to provide value-added information services and access to a wide variety of digital based information resources to their clients. Furthermore, academic libraries are also using modern ICTs to automate their core functions, implement efficient and effective library cooperation and resource sharing networks, implement management information systems, develop institutional repositories of digital local contents, and digital libraries: and initiate ICT based capacity building programmes for library users. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought unprecedented changes and transformation to academic library and information services.

Library management software

Libraries utilizes software's designed to manage different library routines and processes. Most of these software's are integrated and have modules for the different activities or tasks carried out in the library like cataloguing, statistics, acquisition processes, serials control etc. Some examples of such software's are CDS/ISIS, GLAS, ALICE for Windows, X-Lib and SLAM. SLAM is used in the University Library FUTA and stands for (Strategic Library Automation Management).

OPAC: This means Online Public Access Catalogue and is the computerized version of the library catalogue or a database of the library holdings. The advantage of the OPAC over manual methods is ease of use and the fact that it saves space. It provides access to the catalogues of a library on the local intranet, extranet or even the internet.

Office Operations: Word processing, accounting,, database management and communication through e-mail are all enabled in the library through ICT.

Networking: Library users can access information of various types such as online databases, e-journals, e- books, government publications digitally through networked systems. Access may be allowed online remotely through the internet or intranets.

Electronic Document Delivery: Libraries may not rely anymore on postal services to send documents to users or carry out interlibrary lending. Libraries send documents through electronic networks that can deliver documents in various formats.

Online user education or tutorials: Libraries can use the internet or CD –ROMS to educate their users or carry out information literacy programmes. Virtual tours can be offered online making user education more convenient for all.

E-reference services: Some services such as SDI (Selective dissemination of information) or Current Awareness Services (CAS) and virtual reference desks, announcements of new acquisitions and other reader advisory services can be made easier through the internet. Users can have online interaction with the reference staff.

Library cooperation and resource sharing: A central union catalogue can be better managed through ICT, thus libraries can create and share bibliographic records and other information resources in digital format.

Institutional Repositories: Institutional repositories are publications that originate locally from within the university community such as theses, dissertations, reports, conference papers and seminar papers. ICT has made it possible not only to provide better access to these resources but also to ensure the preservation of the resources.

E- libraries: Digital libraries depend on information recorded on digital formats like CD-ROMS. Virtual libraries are libraries that do not exist in physical space or structure but can be accessed via networks.

Social Media Networks: Social media networks like twitter, face book and linked In, are some interactive internet services that are presently serving as communication forum for librarians and their uses. These networks can be deployed for educational uses. Discussion groups, list serves and communities also assist library services.

E- mails: This is a means of communication between the library and the users.

Library websites: A medium of communication for libraries to their users. It is also used to promote the library and publicise it.

Online searching: searching of of online databases like AGORA, ERIC. Browsing and surfing the internet through search engines, meta search engines and subject directories to supplement library sources.

Advantages of Using ICT in the library

- ICT makes library work easier, faster, cheaper and more effective.
- Helps to manage information overload as information retrieval is made easier in computerized systems.
- Remote access is enabled through networked systems
- Computerization saves space and reduces paper.

Challenges of using ICT in libraries

- Poor funding of ICT infrastructures
- Constant change of software and hardware
- Erratic power supply
- Insufficient bandwidth

- Lack of technical IT knowledge by library staff
- Copyright and intellectual property rights management

Key Benefits

- Target candidates and organisations
- Public library staff who've completed the PN training
- New to the work-place
- Staff from other sectors
- Staff seeking to improve their promotion prospects
- Staff using the qualification as evidence for part of the framework for professional qualifications

Benefits to employer's

- Workforce Development
- Sector-specific award
- Content supported by strategic agencies
- Supports IIP and Charter Mark
- Links to CILIP Framework for Qualifications
- UK-wide relevance

Benefits to individual's

- Increases employability
- Supports staff development
- Accredits People's Network training
- Validates experiential learning
- Gives qualification/s
- Provides academic credits
- Links to CILIP Framework for Qualifications Diploma in Applications of ICT

ICT – Based User Services

Some library users are adopting electronic habits, making increasing use of the new ICT including computers, the Internet, the Web, Intranet, Extranet and other technologies. As a result, library users are placing new demands on their libraries. They require access to the latest information, updated information resources and access to ICT facilities that they could use in their work.

Use of ICT in libraries enhances user's satisfaction. It provides numerous benefits to library users. Some of the benefits are:

- Provide speedy and easy access to information
- Provides remote access to users
- Provides round the clock access to users
- Provides access to unlimited information from different sources
- Provides information flexibility to be used by any individual according to his/her requirements
- Provides increased flexibility
- facilitates the reformatting and combining of data from different sources
- Libraries are also providing various ICT-based services to their user, including the following
- Provision of Web access to OPACs

- Electronic document delivery
- Networked information resources
- Delivery of information to user desktops
- Online instructions
- online readers advisory services

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