

IT & Communication Technology: A Boon to Academic Libraries

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Abstract – The present paper aims at IT application to libraries and its impact on libraries in acquisition and dissemination of the information. Computer and telecommunication technologies have dazzled the information age. On-line services were introduced by Telecommunication which leads to change the entire environment of the traditional library services in the world. Communication is the supreme activity to pass the information from one to another. The paper discusses the advancement of communication technology and its uses to libraries in providing electronic services through web.

Key Words: Communications-Libraries, Communications-Technology, Computer and Communications.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication exists to play its role in transferring information through some mnemonics from one person to other person. Knowledge shared through communication is called information. Unless, knowledge is transferred, it cannot become information. To transfer knowledge, the process of communication is necessary. It means information activated by communication. The emergence of information and communication technologies (ICT) has made dynamic changes in the structure and functioning of the libraries and information centres in the present day information environment. Traditional library system has been transformed into e-learning and virtual learning system. Information Communication Technologies (ICT) has thrown forth new challenges before the library professionals. The Internet has brought about a new academic culture of understanding and cooperation that stand-alone PCs could not have facilitated before networking. Libraries now have conventional and printed document as well as electronic information resources in their collection. The electronic documents can be stored, accessed and delivered as and when required; therefore the services of the libraries are not confined within the walls but are integrated into local, regional, national, and international networks. Academic libraries too are now becoming hybrid libraries.

Singh (1993) opined communication and information are closely related. Information being communicated must have a meaning for action or reaction. As such information has no value until it is communicated. In present scenario of ICT,

information is for acquiring, sharing and disseminating. Communication Technology is indeed playing a vital role in accelerating the process of disseminating information to end users.

The fabulous rate of new development in computing and telecommunications technology has forced a transition to new mode of operation of libraries. According to Bounoux (1995) the concepts of information and communication are inversely related. The tremendous advances in IT, especially in computer and telecommunication technologies have dazzled the information age. Telecommunication and the computer were the introduction of on-line services which changed the entire environment of the traditional library services in the world to be corrected.

Emergence of Information and communication Technology and its off-shoot technologies include Internet, World Wide Web (WWW) Web-portals and GroupWare have made a significant impact on the work culture and potentiality of libraries and information centers worldwide.

Technology some time become curse on society when one cannot use them for proper utilization. The main objective of the present paper is to discuss the communication technology and its offshoot technologies and how these are useful to libraries in providing information through communication technology.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Communication is the supreme activity to pass the information from one to another. It is more in the case of Libraries by means of ICT. Impact of IT environment in the communication sector, the dissemination of information became very easy. But it is very difficult to maintain such intangible information for future generations. For that, new methods are to be designed to protect such information from threats. Hence, the present study.

METHODOLOGY

The data for the present study is collected by surfing on the Internet with key words 'communication technology' and it is also collected from secondary sources include theses, articles.

Computer and Communications Combination

In the year 1990, computers and communications started to fuse together, beginning a new era within the Digital Age. The result was further developments, which have not ended yet. With these two combinations, the information explored abundantly all over the world and accelerated the process of disseminating the information.

Process of Communication

According to Singh (1993) communication is the process of transferring meaningful information; say a message, signal, expression or gesture through the medium of oral, documentary or audio-visual from one person to another. A human communication system like electronic communication system has five basic elements namely source, transmitter, signal, receiver and destination which are shown in Figure 1.

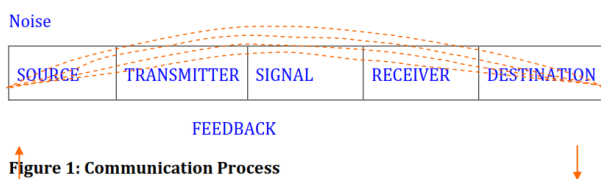


Figure 1: Communication Process

Source is speaker who has some thought, need, idea, or information to transmit; mouth or bodily movement is the transmitter; signal is the speech message or gesture; receiver is the ear or eye; and destination is the listener, who understands the meaning of the message. Noise acts as a barrier and reduces the accuracy of the communication. Noise should be reduced at all stages to make the message a meaningful. Feedback enables the source to know whether or not, the message has been received and interpreted correctly.

COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Communication technology plays a key role in information passing. The fabulous rate of new development in computing and telecommunications technology has forced a transition to new mode of operation for libraries. According to **Bougnoux (1995)** the concepts of information and communication are inversely related.

Increasingly, information is being created and offered in a digital format without ever migrating to a paper format. Technology is making the difference and transforming the process of knowledge creation, acquisition and distribution. Significant development in information and communication infrastructure is facilitating the creation, distribution and use of knowledge by others.

The advent of electronic communication has extended the potential role for libraries in the information society. The tremendous advances in IT, especially in computer and telecommunication technologies have dazzled the information age. Telecommunication and the computer led the introduction of on-line information services in the late 1960s. The USA plays a significant role in pioneering these on-line services in different disciplines at the international level.

Information is not only transmitted through formal channels, but the informal methods of communication are also used. Thus, the computer and communications are burgeoning in the developed nations. They are electronic publishing, electronic mail, teleconferencing, tele-text and videotext" (**Amudhavali, 1996**)

ELECTRONIC INFORMATION

Emergence of Information and Communication Technology [ICT] and its offshoot technologies includes Internet, World Wide Web [WWW], Web-portals and GroupWare have made a significant impact on the work culture and potentially of libraries and information centers worldwide. Internet offers a platform to present the information. The relatively stable information is being vigorously shaken today by two significant changes related to information provision and access. Firstly, a major portion of current information is produced in electronic form and secondly, the information production, publication, distribution and access are made over global computer networks which are exemplified today by the Internet. Moreover, proliferation of network enabled electronic information products exerts ever increasing pressure on traditional libraries. Traditional libraries, in turn are committing larger portions of their budget to either procuring or accessing web-based full-text search services like CD-ROM

products online databases, multimedia products, and so forth. (Arora, 2004)

The development of online information system and optical storage technology, particularly CD-ROM made the greatest impact on knowledge where the information has been emerged as a key resource. The bibliographical and full text databases are now available on the international networks. These global information highways became a viable option for health of science information users.

The last two decades witnessed significant changes in libraries due to the emergence of IT in communication system. The changes occurred in two important functional areas of libraries which include information services and information sources. Hence, the communication in the present environment is a boon for libraries in general and university libraries in particular

CONCLUSION

Significant development in information and communication infrastructure is facilitating the creation, distribution and use of knowledge by the others. The advent of electronic communication has extended the potential role for libraries in the information society. Information is not only transmitted through formal channels, but the informal methods of communication are also used. Thus the computer and communication are burgeoning in the developed nations. ICT and its offshoot technologies are boon to libraries in acquiring and disseminating information to end users. Though the communication technology uses are increased day by day, proper utilization is yet to be improved by providing infrastructure to libraries in order to accelerate the process of information through communication networks.

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