

Information Resources for Academic Development in Modern Scenario

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Abstract: The progress in Information Technology and the emergence of Internet and its WWW has given a new face-lift to the information systems. The library collections with the tradition of its holdings are now added with the electronic information resources in various formats. The popularity and ease in use of WWW has lured most of the reputed publishers to host their products on Web. In this changing information environment, the role of information professionals is becoming crucial and challenging. It is becoming important to introduce users to maximum and optimum utilization of electronic information resources. In this paper, the authors have highlighted the need and importance of user instruction services and suggested user instruction programmes for better utilization of electronic information resources.

Keywords: Information Sources, Internet, E-Sources, Database, Library.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advances in Information Technology have brought about many changes in libraries. Informational professionals have to switch over to new methods and techniques for handling information. In this context the role of information professionals is becoming very challenging. Library collections are growing multifold and electronic information resources are becoming vague. Almost entire gamut of primary, secondary and tertiary information resources hitherto embodied in print format are now available in the form of electronic databases.

The Internet and its World Wide Web (WWW) have provided a platform to access information from remote databases. As a result, information resources available on web are increasing. In this changing scenario of handling information, the role of information professional is very crucial, as he has to act as a bridge between information and its end users. Information professionals have to coordinate and manage the task of introducing the users to electronic information resources.

- For the centuries the societies in their various stages of developments have prospered on the bases of information and knowledge,
- Though, the growth of new knowledge has been slow, incidental and sporadic in the beginning but in later years, information has reckoned as a driving force for all human developments,
- It is increasingly realized and recognized that information and knowledge and their application for transformation of non-resources into value added economic resources are the real driving power for human material progress,
- Information is an essential ingredient in decision making and useful in our daily lives,

- The assessment has resulted in the creation of institutions exclusively for Research and Development (R & D) activities,
- The output of these R & D activities has been the generation of new information and knowledge,
- Timely up-to-date, relevant and quality information is vital for academic purposes and for academic development too.

2. INFORMATION FOR ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

- For Teaching
- For Research
- For Publication

WHAT ARE INFORMATION SOURCES?

Information sources are the various means by which information is recorded for use by individual or organization, These are means by which a person is informed about something or knowledge is provided or share with someone, a group of people or an organization, Information sources could be observations, people, organizations, speeches, documents, pictures, artwork, etc.,

- ◆ Information sources could be in print or non-print formats.

3. TYPES OF INFORMATION SOURCES

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. Documentary

- a) Primary Sources
- b) Secondary Sources
- c) Tertiary Sources

2. Non-Documentary

- a) Formal Sources
- b) Informal Source

1. Documentary Sources,

They are referred to the published and unpublished sources of the print media in all fields of knowledge. They may be textual, numeric or graphic, in any physical form in any language, produced within the country or outside. They are further divided in to:

- a) Primary Sources

- b) Secondary Sources
- c) Tertiary Sources

a) **PRIMARY SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

A primary source is a document or physical object which was written or created during the time under study. These sources were present during an experience or time period and offer an inside view of a particular event. Some types of primary sources include: Periodicals, Research Reports, and Reports on Scientific expedition, Conference Proceedings, Standards and Patents. Diaries, interviews, minutes of meetings, photographs, videos, artworks, artifacts, Theses and Dissertations and also unpublished sources of information like company files, laboratory Notebooks etc.

b) **SECONDARY SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

A secondary source interprets and analyzes primary sources. These sources are one or more steps removed from the event. Secondary sources may have pictures, quotes or graphics of primary sources in them. Some types of secondary sources include: Reference books, Reviews, Indexing and abstracting periodicals, Yearbooks, journal/magazine Almanacs, Handbooks etc.

c) **TERTIARY SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

Tertiary sources provide overviews of topics by synthesizing information gathered from other resources. Tertiary resources often provide data in a convenient form or provide information with context by which to interpret it. The distinctions between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources can be ambiguous. An individual document may be a primary source in one context and a secondary source in another. Encyclopedias are typically considered tertiary sources, but a study of how encyclopedias have changed on the Internet would use them as primary sources. Time is a defining element. Examples almanacs, directories, population registers/statistics, fact books, abstracts, indexes, bibliography of bibliographies, chronologies, classifications, handbooks, guide books and manuals, Guide to literature etc.

2. **NON DOCUMENTARY SOURCES**

- a) Formal Sources
- b) Informal sources

a) **FORMAL SOURCES INCLUDE**

- Research organizations
- Societies
- Industries
- Government developments

- Universities
- Consultants etc.

b) INFORMAL DOCUMENTS ARE LIVE SOURCES INCLUDES

- Conversation with colleagues,
- Conversation with visitors,
- Attendance at professional meetings etc.

FORMATS OF INFORMATION SOURCES

Information is of great diversity and in various formats.

The two main formats are:

Print

Books, periodicals, bibliographies, maps, indexes and abstracts, photographs, government documents, technical reports, etc are the print resources apart from these there are many other print resources.

Non –print

Audio visual, Multimedia, microform and electronic books and journals, images, texts/records from the internet, Web documents, etc are the important non-print materials.

“SOME PUPULAR REFERENCE SOURCES”

Louis Shores categorizes these questions and sources of information as follows

Sl. No.	Class of Question	Sample Types	Representative Sources
1	Language	Definition, spelling, abbreviation, symbols, foreign terms, usage	Dictionary
2	Background	“Something about,” general information, self-education	Encyclopedia
3	Trend	Current events, past year’s developments, recent happenings	Yearbook, Serial
4	People	Notables, specialists, socialities, others	Biographical Dictionary
5	Places	Locations, descriptions, distances	Gazetteer, Atlas
6	Organisations	Addresses, purposes	Directory

7	Facts	Curiosities, statistics, events, formulas, allusions	Handbook
8	Bibliography	Reviews, best books, subject literature	National Trade Subject Bibliography
9	Activities	“How to do”, “How to make”	Manual
10	Illustrations pictures	Cartoons, slides, films, recordings	Audio-Visual Materials

WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION SOURCES

1. **Electronic Information Resources.**
2. **Instruction Services for the use of Electronic Information Resources.**
3. **Planning of a User Instruction Programme.**
4. **HUMAN SOURCES**

1.1 CD-ROM databases

CD-ROM databases are increasing day by day in almost all fields due to their many advantages in information storage and retrieval. Majority of publishers of books and journals, on-line vendors and various learned societies are bringing out new titles in CD format with powerful, user- friendly retrieval software. Electronic information resources in CD format include abstracting and indexing services, encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, yearbooks, back volumes, patents, standards and many other reference works. The CD-ROM technology has given ample opportunities for information professionals to introduce more information services to end-users.

1.2 DVD-ROM databases

The advent of DVD- Digital Video Disc or Digital Versatile Disc, with its 17 GB of high data storage capacity, has made it possible to include more multimedia elements like video and sound and to integrate many reference sources on a single disc. “The other features like higher quality of sound and video, higher rate of data transfer, data security etc., are making DVD more viable option than CD-ROM. Some DVD reference sources include Britannica DVD 99, Webster’s International DVD Encyclopedia-2000, Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia, Eyewitness World Atlas DVD-ROM Deluxe Edition, and The Complete National Geographic on DVDROM etc.

1.3 Online Databases

The recent growth of Internet and the popularity and ease in use of Web are making libraries to subscribe to online information services. The online database services like Dialog (KR Information) and STN are now moving towards being web centric. The usage of online databases against their CD-ROM counterparts has to be evaluated and decided on the basis of cost

effectiveness and timeliness. Few Online information services are KR Science Base and STN. The KRScienceBase, which includes information sources like BIOSIS, CA Search, Elsevier Science Publishers, Reuters, NTIS etc. Chemical Abstract Service, producer of the world's largest and most comprehensive database of chemical information, offers several databases on STN like

CAplus, INSPEC, MEDLINE, SCISEARCH, TOXLIT etc are some online databases.

1.4 E-journals

E-journals or Electronic Journals are gaining more importance with the emergence of Internet. "Most of the publishers are choosing WEB as a an access medium using HTML to mark up the journal content so that it can be read using a web browser. These are also called as networked E-journals. Other publishers have chosen to use additional access software in conjunction with the WEB, the most popular being Adobe Acrobat and its associated Portable Document Format (PDF) file type".

1.5 INTERNET as an Electronic Information Resource

The INTERNET and its World Wide Web (WWW) have given a paradigm shift to information management. The information available on net is increasing rapidly and the task of providing relevant information to patrons is gaining paramount importance in all types of libraries. Most of the reputed publishers, learned and commercial societies are hosting their products on net and also all libraries are sharing their internal and external information resources by means of web pages and Web-OPACs. The powerful search engines over net are aiding the information location quite efficiently. The Internet services like E-mail, Bulletin Boards, Newsgroups, Discussion Lists, etc are gaining importance in libraries and are becoming indispensable resources for the users. Due to impact of Internet, there is a swift migration from offline to online, as Web is becoming a popular user interface for providing access to remote and frequently updated resources.

2. Instruction Services for the use of Electronic Information Resources.

The money and efforts involved in the procurement of electronic information resources are going in vain due to their under utilisation. The reasons may be attributed to lack of awareness among users and intermediaries, training and orientation and less interest on part of information facilitators. "Despite tremendous publicity and excited curiosity about Information Technology in general and electronic information in particular, substantial under utilization of imported IT products, services, tools and means can be seen everywhere. One of the important reasons for under utilisation of electronic information is lack of requisite level of working knowledge and consumption skills among users and information intermediaries"³. User education or instruction in most of the libraries has lost its credibility, as there are no definite user orientation programmes except providing a copy of rules and regulations of the library. There is a pressing need for methodological approach towards instructing the users for maximum and optimum utilisation of electronic information resources.

3. Planning of a User Instruction Programme

There should be proper planning and definite programmes for the introduction of electronic information resources to users. The programmes must be intended to assist information professionals who provide and publicise new electronic information resources to users. With increasing influx of electronic information to libraries, the user orientation programmes must be implemented specifically to electronic information resources. There must be proper set guidelines for information service providers, who coordinate and manage the introduction of new electronic information resources and these guidelines must offer practical guidance to library staff who are concerned with strategies for implementation, policy, procedure, education and or direct provision of electronic information services.

4. HUMAN SOURCES

Human sources are the most valid form of tacit knowledge. Communication with peers/colleagues are a good way of obtaining that vital knowledge/information,

For example, doctors have been found to rely on their colleagues for information in order to solve a patient's problems. Informal sources of information are valuable and are readily available. If the right person is contacted, quality and up-to-date information will be obtained. There may be some elements of bias in the information provided by human sources. Individuals may provide information from their own point of view or exaggerate it.

ARCHIVES

- Archives are places where records of all types and formats are kept and made accessible for research and other purposes,
- Archives store, preserve and make accessible records of enduring value, unique and usually one of its kind items,
- They are good place to find both published and unpublished primary sources,
- Personal and institutional records of all types can be found in archives, as well as media, ephemera, oral histories, and even artifacts,
- Archival materials are rare and irreplaceable as a result they are not on loan.

LIBRARIES

- Libraries collect quality information in a wide variety of formats,
- Librarians select books, journals, magazines, databases, CDs, DVDs, government reports for use by their patrons,
- This selection process enables libraries to collect resources considered to be reliable, relevant and valuable,
- Library materials unlike those found on the internet go through a review process,

- Libraries provide access to reference resources, books, periodicals and other materials in both print and electronic formats for use by the patrons,
- Some libraries specialize in information materials like rare books, maps, unpublished manuscripts and other special collections,
- Some library materials can be loaned to users.

INTERNET

The Internet is a network of computer networks around the world that enable people to access information and to communicate with each other, The World Wide Web (www) provides the technology needed to navigate the resources on the Internet, No innovation in history has so profoundly changed our lives as the Internet (Blonde, Cook and Dye, 1999). The important internet information resource includes: E Resources, E-Documents, E-Books, E-Journals, E-Journals

CONCLUSION

The dramatic and swift changes in information management have given a new face- lift to most of the libraries. The users, who form the integral part of information system, have to be given due importance in achieving the pinnacle of success. New strategies and vistas have to be explored from time to time for user education and instruction programmes. A methodological approach for better and optimum use of electronic information resources must be adopted.

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