

E-Learning in Library and Information Science Education: An Overview



Library Science

KEYWORDS : E-learning, E-learning technologies, ICT (Information and Communication Technologies). Information science, reference services, online education.

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ABSTRACT

E-learning is a concept derived from the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to transform traditional methods of teaching and learning. Teaching-learning facilitated through the modern media like web, satellite, cable networks, etc. E-learning refers to the creation, delivery and management of training in electronic environment. This paper discusses e-learning, its meaning and concept, need and role of librarians in e-learning, technologies, components, Impact on library and information science professionals.

1. Introduction:

E-Learning can be defined as the learning strategy where learning process is conducted, delivered and managed using electronic media. The different types of medium which are used in E-learning are internet, CD-Rom, Online, Video, conferencing, emails and different websites.

E-learning is basically the computer and network-enabled transfer of skills and knowledge. It includes the electronic applications and processes applied to teaching and learning. E-learning applications may include web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration

2. Definition:

The letter "E" in E-learning stand for the word "electronics", E-learning would incorporate all educational activities that are carried out by individuals, or groups working online or offline and synchronously asynchronously via networked or standard alone computers and other electronic devices. Learning facilitated by internet and www technologies, delivered via end user computing that creates connectivity between people and information provides opportunities for social learning process. The term E-learning comprised a lot more than online learning, virtual learning, distributed learning, networked or web-based learning. The aim of E-learning is to replace the old fashioned "time-place content bounded learning with a "just-in-time", at-work-place", "Customized on demand" process of learning.

3. Need for e-learning:

- Effective usage of the information resources, particularly those in electronic media such as e-journals and databases, require continuous training to user.
- The need was to develop e-learning modules to provide for both self-education and trainer assisted education.

4. E-Learning Technologies:

E-learning includes the use of web-based teaching materials (hypermedia in general), multimedia CD-ROMs, websites, discussion boards, collaborative software, e-mail, blogs, wikis, text chat, computer-aided assessment, educational animation, simulations, games, learning management software, electronic voting systems, etc. with possibly a combination of different methods being used (Wikipedia, 2008). Today, most of the e-learning activities are delivered using Internet. Some of the present applications of e-learning are online training, distance learning, learning with threaded discussions or interactive bulletin boards, website-based curriculum, courses that post assignments online, correspondence course-style read-and-test programs, etc. There are several technologies are used in E-learning. These technologies besides other include audio and video tapes, Internet, Internet/extranet (LAN/WAN), satellite broadcast, interactive TV and CD-Rom.

5. Role of Librarians in E-Learning:

The following are the role of the Librarians in e-learning-

- The librarians need to be made aware of the internet and the resources available there in and how to make efficient

use of them.

- E-learning nowadays becomes the order of the day and it is being used to impart distance education.
- Librarians are the information intermediaries who can help the users in making use of e-resources.
- The idea behind e-learning module is to train both the librarians as well as the users regarding the efficient use of e-resources.
- Librarians have to play a various role as "E-librarian", "Cybrarian", "Web Librarian", "E-learning Information service officer", "learning object librarians", "E-learning content manager", "Information manager" and so on.

6. Impact of e-learning on library and information science professionals:

E-learning offers opportunities and Challenges for information workers in the following areas:

- Provide new learning opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in a wide range of areas.
- Growth in employment opportunities associated with e-learning.
- Developed new roles and responsibilities within the libraries and information units.
- Virtual communication tools helped in information exchange, sharing of ideas and support within the library and Information community.
- E-learning offers the opportunity for information workers across different countries to work together and construct their own professional knowledge

7. Advantages of E-learning:

- Electronic learning where the student can access the study modules through web, irrespective of the location, time etc.
- Lower costs, Flexibility and Faster response
- E-learning complements the process and can help reach out the masses.
- Learning resources can be pace easily developed using a variety of standard packages.
- It is easy to track learner activity and progress.
- E-Learning is interactive and can serve as a substitute for a classroom teaching environment.

8. Disadvantages of E-Learning:

- The use of the large virtual learning environments is expensive and may demand additional equipment and qualified staff.
- The student and tutor need reliable access to a computer and internet.
- The student and tutor need basic information technology skills.
- The development of high-quality learning materials is time-consuming and expensive.
- Some learning environments require state of the art computers and the most up to date browser.

Conclusion

Information technology is developing at a rapid pace and forcing a change in the structure and dynamics of the information society. In the present age of information highway, e-learning opens a new hope and aspiration in LIS education, services and

professions. Library services are essential components of the quality online learning environment. The development of these new services and activities is often associated with changes in the organizational structure of the library, ICT and expansion of the information service to include educational development and training. Library professionals have to accept the challenge they face in the new millennium.

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