Changing Role of Librarians Because of E-Revolution

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ABSTRACT

The information atmosphere around the world is changing every minute and growing at a tremendous speed due to the emergence of the web based Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), globalization of networks and Internet. Hence ensuring and organizing access to educational materials in the electronic environment is an important factor in determining realistic requests for development and advancement of education. The information revolution and the pervasive thinking that everything is available on the Web have created new challenges to the traditional library professional ethics. Acquiring and providing access to electronic knowledge resources require library professional to change their role from traditional librarian to information scientist by learning and applying new skills to understand the evolving technologies to manage and provide quality on-line information service to the patrons of the knowledge.

1. TRADITIONAL LIBRARIANSHIP IN THE DIGITAL OR E-REVOLUTION :-

Traditional librarianship is all about sitting down in the midst of books and expecting people to come and read. If they do not come, then, the librarian closes at the end of the day. This is the daily ritual. But a modern-day librarian in the Digital Age must be sound in the storage, retrieval and dissemination of information with the aid of information communication technology (ICT). This may be through computer, internet, E-mail, CD-ROM, slides, teaching aids, telephones, including the global system of mobile telecommunications (GSM), fax machines, etc. Archival materials could be stored on CD-ROMs for easy retrieval and dissemination to prospective users. Librarians can now conveniently store archival materials on CD-ROMs. CD-ROMs are highly compatible with most computers; this means vital information can be preserved and retrieved easily when needed.

2. The Changing Role of Librarians :-

The modern trend is for the role of the librarian to move from that of a passive Intermediary responsible for guiding patrons to appropriate information resources to-ward that of a much more proactive professional whose role includes analyzing and repackaging information. Librarians have faced this challenge head on by becoming masters of the Web.

· Changing Role of Librarians in the Internet Environment :-

The Internet has forced librarians to take on the role of arbitrary gatekeeper. Applying filters and abiding by policies may conflict with our duty to provide equal access to all of our users. We are often forced into the unpleasant role of the "Internet police" for the organization. Monitoring and reporting the use of the Internet violates the librarians' duty to protect the confidentiality of our users.

2.1 Challenges in Collecting Virtual Information :-

Making materials we collect available to all current and future users is another of the core values of librarianship. The challenge is for the librarian to contribute to establish realistic collection-development policies covering acquisition of and provision of access to electronic resources for users now and in the future. With the increase in electronic resources, librarians and libraries are no longer just collecting and caring for print materials. Unlike a print book or a journal, electronic resources cannot be considered a permanent addition to a collection. Payment for a product covered by a license is a payment to use the information product for a period of time that is usually specified in a contract. This payment is not for the outright purchase of the product or for ownership of all the rights to that product. A digitized collection means that libraries share the use of the collections with other institutions, not only locally, but also globally. It is the publisher who dictates how much access will be provided, which issues will be available, and how much ac-

cess will cost. According to Keys, "access to these materials will be neither free nor certain as control of them passes out of the hands of the library".

2.2 Archiving or Preserving the Virtual Information :-

The question of archiving the virtual collections is very nebulous. Libraries, vendors, and publishers are all relying on someone else to archive and preserve information for the future. Some publishers may provide the archived information on a CD-ROM, usually at an additional cost, but many do not. Instead, they provide rolling-year access, so that each year the oldest content will not be available. Older articles can be found by a visit to a medical or university library. Although they may be on microfiche or microfilm rather than in paper form, they will be catalogued and accessible. "It is not likely that commercial publishers and database aggregators will archive and provide perpetual access to electronic resources as libraries now archive print materials" every library should continue to do its part to preserve information in all formats. Failure to do so will result in gaps in information for future research.

2.3 Challenges in Accessing Virtual Information :-

"The preeminent value in librarianship is, of course, service". Librarians define themselves as service professionals. They create collections and provide resources to meet the needs of their patrons and their communities. The ease of retrieving information from the Internet leads to the thinking that the librarian, who is trained to search for information and to create front-end searching of databases, is now redundant and unnecessary.

3. SPECIAL SKILLS NEEDED TO LIBRARIAN IN ENVIRONMENT OF E- REVOLUTION :-

Although technology presents the librarian with ethical challenges, the librarian is ready for the role of information professional in the connected world. Information professionals have, out of necessity, acquired skills that can contribute to success in their new roles. Duberman describes four skills that information professionals already possess: they "know about changes, the problems, and the opportunities the new technologies and new content can provide; [they are] used to learning new things; [they have] negotiation skills.

4. CONCLUSION :-

The remarkable growth of Internet has made significant revolution in all the areas of science and technology. Rather than using it as a tool for searching and retrieving information, Internet has become the king of all media, by which we can access virtual information and can build a virtual library to provide timely, quality service to the users. Librarians of this digital era, are in the position to change their role as arbitrary information scientists/gatekeepers and to meet the challenges of the Internet.

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