Volume : 2 | Issue : 11 | November 2013 • ISSN No 2277 - 8179

Research Paper

Information Need and Information Seeking Behavior of Users in a Library and Information System

Library Science

KEYWORDS : Information, Information Seeking Behavior, Library, Users Studies, Users, Library and Information System

A. Kalisdha

Ph.D., Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli – 620 024

ABSTRACT

Information is the most important thing for human being and it takes a vital role in the human life. The Information takes a variety of role in the contemporary period. Moreover without Information nothing will be there in the world. And all the people who is having a seeking behavior to get the Informations from the world. Library is doing an important role to give the Information to the society. It gives the Information to the Users of the Society. So,this paper explore the Information Needs and the Information Seeking Behavior of the Human Socity based on the Library Information System with fine points.

1. INTRODUCTION

The essential components in a library and information system are documents, users and librarians. It has often been complained that the Information scientists had neglected the user and his information needs. One of the main goals of any information system is to provide pinpointed, exhaustive and expeditious information service to users. In order to achieve this goal, various pieces of recorded information are gathered in information centers and qualified personnel are recruited to establish purposive contact between the users and the information embodied in variety of documents.

The problems of satisfying the information needs of users is becoming complicated because of various factors such as

- Increasing amount and complexity of literature, which makes it uneconomical to *acquire* everything.
- Scattering of languages.
- Language barriers.
- Access to information

The efficient way of supplying the information tailored to the user needs is to establish link between the information materials and users. The appropriate concepts involved describing the link between the use of the materials and the user is:

- Accuracy
- Availability

The concept of accuracy is dependent on both the originators of information and the processor. The user can only judge the relevance and making the relevant information available to the users is the responsibility of the information scientists. That is two opposing requirements are imposed upon any information service system, selecting and acquiring material from among the increasingly large and growing output and providing easy and timely access to them. In formulating result-oriented for planning and operating the information scientists need to know the users of their information system, their reading habits and their requirement. Therefore, to ensure that the relevant and accurate information is made available to the users, the information workers need to conduct users studies from time to time

2. CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE

Librarians often use statistics as performance measures: how many volumes are housed in the library; how many journals are subscribed to; how many people come into the library; how many times books and journals have been checked out; how many reference questions are asked. Most of the librarians cite statistics as they submit the budget proposals each year. Important decisions about the nature of the individual libraries are made based on performance factors that often support what librarian's intuitively believe to be true. Nevertheless, accurate and informed performance measurements have not always been possible, and more often, standard statistical observation does not always reflect or define what is "good" or "of value."

Understanding what is "of value" becomes even more difficult and complex as an increasing number of our resources become digitized. Different digital formats, interfaces, pricing structures, and access restrictions complicate our ability to evaluate journal resources using consistent measures. The very nature of information is changing; by virtue of desktop access, ability to manipulate information, and value-added features, there is a need to ask if the same content is as valuable today as it was five years ago. Considering the changing nature of our library collections, it is probably time to redefine the role of performance as well as the nature of what and how the librarians measure it.

In a discussion at the Bernard Becker Medical Library at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis a group of librarians gather to review a report listing journal usage statistics, the cost per use, and the subscription rate for all print journals housed in the library. A line was drawn at a certain use level based upon the available funding. Once the total is hit, all titles below that line were considered for cancellation. A title falling beneath that line was found to also have an electronic counterpart. However, there were no electronic statistics available for that particular title from the publisher. Thus, it was impossible to determine accurately the actual overall use of the journal.

The librarians wonder what the level of electronic use was and whether that use would move that particular title above the cancellation line. The librarians also wonder about the title just above the cancellation line that does not have an electronic counterpart. Does the library retain it over the slightly lesser used title that possibly has electronic uses? For example, when evaluating Current Opinions in Psychiatry, librarians found that the journal was used only 16 times in print format. However, the corresponding statistics for Current Opinions in Psychiatry in Journals@Ovid revealed that it was accessed nearly 300 times. Based on this additional information the title was retained.

Additionally, another title with low use is provided as part of a bundled set of journals. Cancellation of this title, no matter how poorly used in any format, nullifies the library's contract resulting in increased prices for the other titles. Nevertheless, knowing the amount of electronic usage could help the librarians decide when it might be time to renegotiate or attempt to modify the contract.

Thus it is high time for the librarians at various levels to study how far the collection is utilized by the clientele of the library. Further such studies will clearly indicate the users approach and hence their reading habits. The reading habits are developed at the child level in high schools and higher secondary schools. Also when a student reaches the college level it is presumed that he/she has already developed certain reading skills and habits. That is the reason why many of the studies on reading habits are done at the school level.

Knowledge generated by user studies can help to develop information systems and information services. *Information need and information seeking behavior*, two of the most important research areas of the user studies, are two complementary con-

Volume : 2 | Issue : 11 | November 2013 • ISSN No 2277 - 8179

cepts which are affected by many factors. Research results in these areas of user studies indicate that information need and information seeking behavior of scholars vary from one discipline to another. Such different needs and behaviors necessitate offering different services in academic libraries depending on the academic disciplines scholars come from.

3. INFORMATION NEED AND INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR:

These topics are approached from such a variety of perspectives that there are no generally accepted definitions. A review of related literature proves that not only different words used to describe the same concept but also identical terms used to mean different things.

The terms *information, information need and information seeking behavior* are all used in different ways. Within the context of user studies, *information* has been used ''to denote factual data or advice or opinion, a physical object, such as a book or journal, or the channel through which a message is conveyed, for example, oral or written communication'' (Rohde, 1986, p. 50-51). Within library and information science, *information* has been defined as ''any stimulus that reduces uncertainty'' (Krikelas, 1983, p.6).

The term *information need* has also been used in a variety of ways. *Information need* is a subjective, relative concept only in the mind of the experiencing individual (Wilson and Streatfield, 1981). It has been defined as the ''recognition of the existence of uncertainty'' (Krikelas, 1983, p.6).

Information seeking behavior which results from the recognition of some need (Wilson, 1981) is defined by Krikelas (1983, p. 6-7) ''as any activity of an individual that is undertaken to identify a message that satisfies a perceived need. In other words, information seeking begins when someone perceives that the current state of possessed knowledge is less than that needed to deal with some issue (or problem)''.

During the next decade users will expect the University Libraries to provide the fundamental resources and services it now provides: access to diverse, superior collections, expert reference advice and instruction, and efficient ancillary services, such as retrieval from remote locations, inter-library borrowing, photocopying and printing, and study space. Users will generally accept, and increasingly expect, that the majority of library functions will be provided "on-line," and will be accessible from on-site and remote computers. Users will access not only on-line finding tools, such as catalogues, indices and reference services, but also full-text digitalized primary sources in contemporary collections, databases, and course materials.

Many users, particularly in the arts and humanities, will continue to need efficient access to primary sources in print collections that for technical or financial reasons will not be available in digital format. While some users, particularly in high technology fields and the health sciences, may function in an exclusively digital research environment, many users will require a dual research environment where some resources are digitalized and some remain in print.

Trends indicated that the number of users is likely to increase in all categories, both affiliated (faculty, student and staff) and non-affiliated regional users, businesses and the general public). Their needs and sophistication are, and will continue to be, incredibly diverse. The greatest percentage increase in affiliated users will occur at branch campuses and in distance-learning programs.

While projections for the coming decade point to relatively high rates of growth in technology-based and health science disciplines, there will be smaller, but marked increases in student interest in classics and fine arts. The implications for Libraries' collections are similarly disparate, requiring up to-the-minute databases of cutting-edge research and maintenance of historical print collections.

Regardless of discipline, the proliferation of "information" in searchable databases will likely increase most users' need for the particular skills of librarians in organizing information and making it accessible. Interestingly, although users' ability to access the Libraries from remote locations has improved dramatically in the 1990s, the Libraries have reported not a decrease, but an increase, of on-site visits.

Users not only use collections but also, in varying degrees dependent on discipline, drive collection growth. Increased numbers of diverse users, again particularly affiliated users, will exert continuing pressure for collection growth, both in "mainstream" topics and in specialized or emerging disciplines, the latter being important attributes of a thriving research university. Where collection growth is driven by funded research, it may be appropriate for Libraries' funding to be an explicit component of the funding request.

The Libraries' survey data amply support the common-sense view that users place paramount value on the quality of the Libraries' collections, followed closely by the value placed on skilled reference services. It seems clear that users' best interests are served by dedication to those two values. To the extent that constraints on capital expenditures for construction preclude on-campus storage of tangible collections, users Libraries Facilities -- User Report would be better served by construction of remote storage, if less costly both to build and operate, than by diminution of collections.

Technology that would permit a version of "browsing" among related titles is being developed and will help to mitigate the loss of open stacks. To the extent that constraints on operating budgets preclude desirable acquisitions, users would also be better served by collective regional, and perhaps national or global, institutional commitments to develop, maintain and share collections than by diminution or loss of particular collections.1 While current users accustomed to on-campus open stacks will perceive a diminution in service, the inconvenience of waiting for a book to be delivered is minor in comparison to the public good in maintaining high quality collections.

Users, particularly students, will continue to need substantial amounts of on-campus space for access to reference services, instruction in research skills and information literacy, and access to state-of-the-art work stations. Students, both graduate and undergraduate, also need substantial space for solo and, increasingly, group study. Those spaces need to be configured so as to permit students' ready access to the latest information technologies. To the extent that part of the University's mission is to provide equal access to information for those unable to afford the latest technologies, these "wired" spaces are essential.

CONCLUSION

Finally, as the Libraries' collections and services become increasingly "virtual" and thus accessible from remote locations, remote users, perhaps particularly distance learners and the unaffiliated public, may be less aware that they are, in fact, using the college Libraries and may be unaware of the Libraries' costs of licensing on-line databases. The college libraries will need to engage with the public and with the Legislature to educate the public about the collections and services the Libraries provides and to ensure appropriate levels of funding for those services.

REFERENCE

[1] Adams, G. V., Jr. (1972). A study: Library attitudes, usage, skill and knowledge of junior high school age students enrolled at Lincoln Junior High School and Burns Union High School, Burns Harney County, Oregon 1971-72 (Report No. LI004365). East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 077 538). | [2] Collins, M., & Chandler, K. (1997). Use of public library services by households in the UnitedStates: 1996. (NCES Publication No. 97-446). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. | [3] Hodowanec, G. V. (1979). Library user behavior. Collection Management, 3, 315-231. | [4] Jenkins, C. A. (2000). The history of youth services librarianship: A review of the research literature. Libraries & Culture, 35, 103-140. | [5] Kalisdha A.(2010), "Use and Users of Library in PSGR Krishnammal College for Women, Coimbatore ," M.Phil., Dissertation (Unpublished) | [6] Kalisdha A (2013),"Reference and User Services of Digital Library", National Conference on Innovative Librarianship, Sarada Library,Sri Sarada College for Women, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. Pp.515-526. | [7] Kalisdha A (2013), "Information Systems and its Services", National Conference on Recent Trends in Library & Information Science (RTLIS – 2013), Department of Library & Information Science, Hindustan University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. pp.235-244 | [8] Krikelas, James. (1983), "Information-Seeking Behavior: Patterns and Concepts." Drexel Library Quarterly 19, no. 2: 5-20. | [9] Rohde, N.F. (1986) 'Information Needs' W. Simonton ed. Advance in Librarianship. Orlando: Academic Press. 14: 49-70 | [10] Wilson, T.D (2000). Human Information Behaviour. Informing Science, 3(2)49-55 | [11] Wilson, T. D. and Streatfield, D. R. (1981), "Structured Observation in the Investigation of Information Needs." Social Science Information Studies 1: 173-84.