

Application of Information Technology to Library Services (With Special Reference to Gulbarga University Colleges)



LIBRARY SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Information is an indispensable for human development as air is essential for the survival of all living organisms on earth, including human beings. The pace of change brought about by new information technologies has a key effect on the way people live, work, and play worldwide. The increasing role played by information technology in the development of library services for an active reaction to the challenges of the information service providing. The paper attempts to discuss the fast development of Information Technology and its application in the library services. Today libraries are equipped to accomplish the newly Information Technology based services. Information Technology enabled services fulfill the information needs of the users at the right time in the right place to the right person

Introduction:

Information is the key factor of any kind of research and development. Information is a fundamental resource which is essential for survival in today's competitive and wired world. The information itself and way it is accessed have undergone changes owing to the developments in information and communication technology. It is a vital ingredient for socio economic and cultural development of any nation or individual. According to Kemp "Information is considered as the fifth need of man ranking after air, water, food and shelter" The value of information in every human endeavor cannot be overstressed. Quick and easy access to every required information is a supreme importance especially for libraries Information technology application and the techniques are being used by the libraries for information processing, storage, communication, dissemination of information, automation etc. Further, origin of internet and the development of World Wide Web revolutionized the information communication technology. Recognizing the advantages application of information technology the libraries are essential to provide the facilities to their user community

IT in libraries comprises all the electronic infrastructure and facilities employed by libraries to improve and provide efficient services. Such facilities, in broad term, consist of hardware, software and communication links between the service outlets of different libraries to facilitate the sharing of common resources; especially the library networks. Osundina (1973) pointed out that the library of today should not merely store documents and preserve them; it must also devise means by which the contents of such documents can be rapidly and effectively transmitted for use. Trostinikor (1970) opined that rapid expansion of a mass of diversified information is occurring, which has received the name "information explosion". Thus, the need arose for a scientific approach to information and for elucidation of its characteristic properties, leading to two principal changes in interpretation of the concept of information. One, it was broadened to include information exchange not only between man and man; but also between machine and machine. Ogunsola (2004) explained that the pace of change brought by new technologies has had a significant effect on the way people live, work and play worldwide.

The Modernization of Library Systems

Libraries and librarians have had to adapt to the growth of information and communications technology in recent years. Today people use the internet as a primary source of information, often relying on books as a last resort due to the issues of time and money. In terms of infrastructure, libraries now devote space to public computer facilities and librarians undergo additional training in order to be well-equipped to deal with queries related to modern research techniques and online resources as well as the traditional questions related to finding and borrowing books. Library archives and records are also now comput-

erised meaning a more efficient and effective borrowing and returns system and a faster method of locating resources and assessing availability of items. In terms of administration, running a library is now much simpler than before, thanks to the aid of computerised systems. Modern systems are also beneficial to customers who are able to reserve and renew items online as well as being able to explore the extensive library catalogue. In terms of ecological impact, the new system of computerised records saves using a considerable amount of paper, which, on a national scale could contribute significantly to helping the environment.

New Resources

The evolution of technology has undoubtedly increased the variety of resources available in libraries today; it is no longer a case of going to the library to borrow a particular book for your research but rather an opportunity to explore books, journals, DVDs and websites related to the matter under examination, ranging from information concerning dental health matters like toothpaste and mouthwash to the human anatomy.

Computer Skills and the Internet

The dawn of the internet has challenged the concept of going to a library as people are often able to access books and journals online; for those who do not have access to a computer at home, however, the library is an increasingly valuable resource. Furthermore, with library services now offering classes in basic computer skills and online research master classes, even those who do have internet access at home can benefit from the local library.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that the application of modern information technologies to academic libraries' activities and services in the Gulbarga University Colleges libraries seems inadequate probably due to a variety of factors, including human factors, fear, and the state of infrastructural development of the country. Not a few library practitioners also believe that there is hardly much benefits that can be derived from the use of IT applications thereby giving preferences for the manual library operations. Those who are aware of its benefits are afraid of being eliminated from their jobs; though knowing that its application to library routines such as administration, acquisitions, cataloguing and classification, circulation, information retrieval and serials control would facilitate effective and efficient job performance. This study therefore investigates the availability of IT facilities at the Gulbarga University Colleges the study is focused essentially on the Gulbarga University Colleges. their exclusion being a result of the fact that the availability and use of IT devices in their libraries fall short of the requirements of this study

Research Methodology

This is a survey research design. Its population comprised all the

active users of the Gulbarga University Library, registered undergraduates and postgraduates, amounting to 100 as at the time of data collection. From this number, a total of two hundred The Convenient sampling technique was adopted for administering the questionnaire on the two hundred students present in the library at the time of data collection. These student-users come from different departments in the University.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1 – Use of Information Technology Facilities

Facilities	Frequency	Percentage
Internet	75	75
Compute	15	15
Audio-Visual	08	08
Fax	02	02

Table 1 shows the respondents' use of available IT facilities in the Gulbarga Universities Colleges' library; in which Internet use had the majority response (75. %) followed by Computer use (15.) while Facsimile use had the least and those who do not make use of any of the facilities at all due to some reasons (%). These reasons include, essentially, ignorance of the students on the availability of the facilities (92. %) and their inability to make use of the facilities (5. %). As for access to the Internet facilities, most respondents (80. %) claimed unfettered access.

Table 2 – Experience in the Use of Internet

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Whenever I use the Internet, I find what I want	59	59
I can usually find what I want, but with frustrations	16	16
The Internet is frustrating, I find it difficult to find the information	9	09
Others	16	16

Table 2 above shows what the users experience when using the Internet facilities to where a considerable response (59.%) claimed satisfactory use; 16.% having difficulties, alongside the 9.% that generally avoid its use.

Table 3–Problems Encountered when Using Information Technology Facilities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
I don't know how to use them	09	09
Nobody to attend to me	10	10
Frequent power failure	42	42
Network failure	13	13
None	08	08
Others	18	18

The above indicate several problems encountered by users when using Information Technology facilities in their institutions' libraries; the most significant of which is the frequent power failure (42) aside from constant network failure for the Inter-

net use (13%). There are several other problems (18%) ranging from "inadequate computer systems", "inadequate space to accommodate users conveniently", "not being allowed to use any external storage device like flash drives or diskette", "inability to sometimes locate needed information on the Internet" as well as "the slow response of the server or the systems". All these are in spite of the claim by the majority (84.%) that they previously had orientation o the use of the IT facilities

Table 4 Use of material

E-materials	Frequency	Percentage
Index	18	
Abstract	23	
Database	22	
Others	13	
None	24	

From the table above, 18 % respondents use Index; Abstract (23%); Database (22%); other e-materials than those listed (13.%) and those who do not use any at all (24 %). However, 74.% do not use the CD-ROM; due to such reasons as its non-availability in the libraries, ignorance about its availability and being able get needed information in books available in the library

Suggestions;

1. Provision of funds on a regular basis. The mandatory 10% of the budgetary allocation of the University set aside for the Colleges Library should be so disbursed and monitored for judicious utilization. If this is realized, the Library Management should make automation top on its priority list and pursued conscientiously and to a logical and beneficial end.
2. There should be provision for alternative power supply by having a dedicated generating plant for the library use to offset the adverse effects of constant power outage that has come to stay in the study area. This is especially important because of the total dependence of the IT use on electric power supply.
3. Students also need to be trained on how to use these facilities towards achieving academic excellence. This may be through continuous orientation and the inclusion of such courses like: Use of computer for Information retrieval, Use of Internet/world wide web and IT applications.

Conclusion

The application of IT to services delivery of the Gulbarga University Colleges Library still has room for improvement, thereby making its impact limited. Several problems were identified for this condition–inadequate funding; insufficient facilities and constant power failure; among others; hindering the maximization of its expected benefits. Study found that "the major constraints hindering the use of audiovisual and electronic resources include poor power supply, poor infrastructure, lack of adequate skill, high cost, and unavailability.

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