



Changing Role of Librarians in E-Environment

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ABSTRACT

Information Technology is rapidly changing the whole world creating new challenges and opportunities. Library and Information Service (LIS) profession is one of the most challenging professions in the knowledge society, combining expertise in information management with the Information and Communication Technology. In this age of Information Technology, there have been so many opportunities for the Librarians for involvement in an information-based society including electronic and multimedia publishing, Internet based-information services, global networking, web based digital resources etc. Librarians are charged with selecting, organizing, and instructing patrons on how to locate and use the resources, and preserving information regardless of format or technology. The information revolution and the pervasive thinking that everything is available on the Web have created new challenges to these traditional professional ethics. Acquiring and providing dependable access to electronic resources require librarians to learn and apply new skills such as negotiating license agreements and understanding evolving technologies and building a virtual library to provide quality on-line information service to the users in time.

KEYWORDS

Academic Achievement, General Well-being

INTRODUCTION

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. Librarians create powerful Web sites such as the National Library of medicine's Pub Med database. Librarians see the Web as an easier way to share what they know with others. They gather electronic information and create electronic pathfinders and front-end search tools to help users. Librarians create online tutorials and instructional Web pages to help patron's perform the best searches. They gather links to web-sites on specific topics and lead patrons to these evaluated sites as a starting point. According to Mary Ellen Bates, another role change technology brings is that the "library and information center managers are often asked to negotiate these electronic subscriptions. This requires a new set of skills and even an entirely new relationship with publishers". The increasing cost of both print and electronic journals causes many libraries to cut subscriptions and to purchase data for a particular audience. It is the job of the librarian to choose what is to be cancelled and to decide who will suffer least from the lack of access to particular information. In the decision to cancel subscriptions, the librarian considers, among other things, the needs of the community the library serves and whether the information is also available within the organization. Price and timeliness in retrieving the information are also considered. When negotiating access with a publisher, the librarian must agree to certain restrictions on photocopying or distribution of electronic materials. Despite copyright notices and efforts to educate employees about intellectual property rights, electronic publications can be easily forwarded to people outside the licensed user group. The library is responsible for maintaining the awareness of all employees about copyright issues.

CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARIANS IN E-ENVIRONMENT:

The changing role of library professional implies a set of updated skills needed for facing the challenges created by the latest web technologies in the e-learning environment. The emphasis will shift from technical skills in the library to communication, facilitation, training and management skills. Although technology presents the librarian with ethical challenges, the librarian is to be ready for the role of information

professional in the connected networked world and they have to acquire skills that can be contributed to success in their new roles.

1. Leadership Role

One primary role of librarians is to provide leadership and expertise in the design, development, and ethical management of knowledge-based information systems in order to meet the information needs and obligations of the patron or academic institution. In the future, as now, we can expect the virtual library to be the organization that identifies, selects, negotiates for, and provides access to an incredible range of information resources on our behalf. At present, lot of virtual libraries have been created and managed by various institutions and organizations for e-learning and teaching professional. Hence library professional should enrich their management skills to play leadership role in the digital future, for organizing, managing and disseminating e-literacy to users.

2. Proactive Information Professional Role

The modern trend is for the role of the librarian to move from that of a passive intermediary role responsible for guiding patrons to appropriate information resources, towards that of a much more proactive professional role which includes analyzing and repackaging information, content information management systems and institute digital repository management systems.

3. Role of Librarians as Masters of Web

To face the challenges of the virtual learning environment in educational institutions, librarians are becoming masters of the Web. Librarians create powerful web sites such as the National Library of Medicine's Pub Med database. They create their own website as an easier way to share with others what they know. They gather electronic information and create electronic pathfinders and front-end search tools to help users for accessing the required information. Academic Library professionals create online tutorials and instructional web pages to help patrons for performing the best searches. They provide links to websites on specific topics and lead patrons to these evaluated sites as a starting point for retrieving related and relevant information.

4. Role of Information Scientists in Digital Libraries and E-Literacy

Librarians have to change their role in the e-learning environment by participating in e-learning experiments and becoming involved in universities' e-learning centers. They should invest in procuring e-learning tools and software and should develop their e-learning and ICT skills. Hans Roes addressed changes in education in general, and then focused on strategic opportunities in education for libraries. The opportunities for libraries, he mentioned, included:

- Developing digital libraries as natural complements to digital learning environments to support educators with respect to the selection of adequate resources for a given course;
- Managing and indexing digital student portfolios and integrating them with other information resources offered by the library;
- Teaching information literacy to educate future knowledge workers, in traditional ways or via Internet-based instruction modules;
- Collaborating as part of multidisciplinary teams of experts to design courses;
- Providing a learning center to serve as a physical learning environment suitable for more active learning styles.

5. Role of Digital Space Manager of Academic Institutions

The librarian has an important role in making digital space accessible to members of an academic community on campus and beyond, in addition to providing physical space for assembling communities of interest. A number of faculty members have data sets that they may wish to post for review and comment by colleagues on or off campus. Some academic and research libraries have expanded the concept of providing access to scholarly work by becoming electronic publishers of faculty projects and by providing institutional repositories, where faculty can store their scholarly work under the stewardship of the library. Librarians also can participate in the institution's e-portfolio program, in particular, by providing advice and expertise on information policy issues and preservation strategies.

6. Role of E-Resource Managers

Academic and research libraries have a major role in ensuring that they and their home institutions remain vital players in the changing terrain of information and education. Faculty may not be aware of copyright issues and do not know what material is electronically available or licensed by the library.

CONCLUSION

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, World Wide Web, and online access in the knowledge society. So they must enrich their knowledge with special skills of the latest IT developments, to browse, access and retrieve a particular information across the global networks and to organize and manage the information by building digital libraries and by which they can provide quality e-information service to the knowledge society. Library staff must be capable of working effectively in partnership with faculty members to enhance the strength of teaching and research. To be certain, there are many staff members of this kind in academic libraries today. In this as in other respects, part of the skills, library staff must develop is the ability to educate faculty members, helping them to understand the power and applicability of e-resources.

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