

New Trends and Design of User Centric Services in the Mahatma Gandhi University Library: A Study

Maghesh Rajan M

Assistant Librarian (Selection Grade)

Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala

Article History: Received: 25 March 2019; Accepted: 18 September 2019; Published online: 31 December 2019

Abstract

University Libraries play vital role in education, learning, teaching and research, and acting as centre of learning in the higher education sector. University libraries have been acting as per the directions of the University Grants Commission and the parent university authorities subject to the basic norms of the concerned universities. User centric systems and services are basically meant for providing quality of services to its users and to empowerment of their leaning capacity. The services offered by the libraries differ from one another and based on the nature of the university and its discipline they depend. This paper attempts to bring out the new trends and changes introduced in the M G University by adopting new techniques and technologies in delivering user centric library services in changing digital era. This paper also attempts to study and evaluate the procedure of design of user centric services .

Keywords: *User Centric Services, User Based-Services, Design, New technologies in Libraries, Professional skills*

Introduction

Taking into account of the concept of Library and Librarians, the effectiveness of library services in particular, the centric services can be extended to satisfy the needs of the users. No any user should be left without getting any service from the library and the user should not be desperate at any cost. The library authorities must give more importance in collection development on one side and the attitude to introduce the new technological up gradation as and when new technologies emerging in the library service sector. The attitude, perception, technological know-how and skill of the library staff should also be developed in a positive manner so that it will be easy to accommodate the new technologies for user centric services. The Professional and Social Responsibility, and the Professional Accountability and Ethics of librarians will be evaluated based on the user centric services and satisfactory feeling of the users. Libraries have been extending the user based services since the inception of the concept library services. The Ready Reference Services, Current Information Dissemination, Accurate information service on the topic of interest, prompt Access to Universal Information Resources,

Database Search Facility, Critical Review etc Selective Dissemination of Information services etc..were still in practice even though new technologies entered into the field of Library Service.

The new technologically upgraded library user centric services are OPAC, WebOPAC, KOHA- Integrated Library Management System, RFID Technologies, ARCHIVING technologies, Websites services, AskLibrarian Services, Seamless information resource access, Remote Access to Information Resources and services, Shooter cum locator service to identify particular document, Online digital services to Differently Abled Students and Scholars, International Database Access etc are more modern user centric services extended by the university library to its user community.

Why User Centric Services are promoted in University Libraries

Information explosion, increasing cost of books and information resources, increasing the presence of technological use in libraries, increasing user expectations from the libraries, increasing use of digital resources, increasing user's perception on research and development areas, Content creation and writing attitudes, need for very pin-pointed information, and General reading habits etc., have been placed a space for rethinking about effective services to users. Since the cost of digital resources is highly increasing, the effective and economic aspects in the services to the users are not always tallying together. The cost of the service is higher than the fee income and establishment charges which will weaken the service points. Hence the user centric services will promote maximum use of digital resources and reuse of the same through Institutional Repositories. Hence the user centric design of library system has to be done to fulfill the requirements of user needs, use and user attitude, and their timely needs. If you are designed a product in the light user's demand, it creates its own customer. Hence the service product is good in nature; the user satisfaction will be high.

User Centric Information System (UCIS)

Library 2.0 encompasses new contemporary technological tools for user centric services to accommodate the collaborative environment. The following information system tools and techniques are useful to glorify the user centric systems as stated by Arora.

1. Instant Messaging
2. Content delivery
3. RSS Feeds
4. HTML Feeds
5. Streaming Media
6. Podcasting
7. Vodcasting
8. SMS, WhatsApp,
9. Blogs and Wikis
10. Social Networks and Taggings
11. Social Bookmarking services
12. Hybrid Applications
13. Programs and programme tools- AJAX, API etc

These are the tools can be introduced in Libraries to augment the library services without sidelining the existing service which will treat equal together the old customer and the new ones.

This mode of implementation of information system will promise and attract the all user so that the existence and reputation of library will be materialized.

Information Technology (IT) based Centric Information Services

The very pin-pointed services to the specific users by using the technology ensure the best access to the information resources online. The following technological services are grouped into 9 categories.

1. Internet Based services
2. Intranet Based Services
3. Electronic Resource Based Services
4. Online Database Search Services
5. Digital Library Based Services
6. Web Based Services
7. Consortium Based Services,
8. RFID Based Services
9. Remote Access Based Services

General and Common User-Centric Services

1. Document Delivery Services
2. Virtual Delivery Services
3. Sharing of Consortia based Resources Services
4. Online Database Search and Retrieval Services
5. Blogs and Wikis
6. Email services
7. Social Network Services
8. Current Awareness Services
9. Bulletin Board Services
10. OPAC and WebOPAC Services
11. Teleconference Services
12. Webinars Services
13. Video Conferencing Services
14. Collaborative Discussion Forum Services
15. Virtual Reference Services
16. Interlibrary Loan on online and offline resources Services
17. RFID Services
18. CCTV services (issue based)

The above mentioned categories of services are commonly developed based on User needs. Having these services in your library, the centric, the library resources are then having best use and the users will be very satisfied.

User Centered Design

How to design your library into user centered? International Standard Organization(ISO) proposes a standard “Ergonomics of human system , interaction Part 210; Human-centered design for interactive systems” issued as ISO 9241-210;2010, describes the following six principles that will ensure a design of user-centric.

1. The design is based upon an explicit understanding of users, tasks and environment
2. Users are involved throughout design and development
3. The design is driven and refined by user-centered evaluation
4. The process is iterative
5. The design addresses the whole user experience
6. The design team includes multidisciplinary skills and perspectives

The User Centric approach is based on above six elements since it addresses the whole experiences.

Mahatma Gandhi University library

Mahatma Gandhi University started in 1983 and the University Library started in next year on the temporary basis. After 1993 onwards the collection building of books and journal on various disciplines as recommended by the authorities. After 1998, library started internet services. Foreseeing the future developments and internet resources, the library started a common Union Cataloguing projects which later helped to accommodate all departmental collection into a single platform. Many of the services started in the middle of 2005 including the digital information services. The Digital Archive of the PhD theses is one of the best institutional archive in India with multi-lingual features. The one and only university in Kerala, the Mahatma Gandhi University was awarded a state level IT award for best Institutional Archives in the year 2012

The library extends its own digital content access facility to all students, faculty members and research scholars in the campus and all affiliated colleges under the university. The 18 items of user centric services as mentioned above paragraph, are implemented in the library along with electronic file system for all official correspondence.

User Satisfaction is the prime motto

Even though the library system has been operating in a modern service platform, the conservative library operation and service are also maintained so as to satisfy the users those who are not friendly with computer. As a part of orientation programme to all the scholars and students who were admitted afresh in campus, would undergo training in using these computer based resource access and services. Since the digital environmental is so vibrant, the teaching and training to these areas are too less than earlier years.

Need for active role of Library Professionals and their skill

The library profession by nature, is changing very day as and when the technology is developing or changing. What the skill acquired through their academic learning and achievements will not serve them in a positive manner. So the library professional s have to change their attitude whenever new adaptation of technologies in libraries. The dedication and sincerity to serve the users and their satisfaction is very much needed to the current situation otherwise the users will go off from the library, and hence the subscribed online resources will be futile in use. Librarians have to acquire knowledge on networking of library system to

provide better resources to the users. Not just the theses are to be archived, librarians think about archiving of various documents like teacher's lecture notes, assignments, question papers, projects and academic writings of the faculty etc may be taken into account for archiving for the future generation and use. The resources available in the library professional should be thoroughly understood and evaluated about their nature, quality, subject coverage etc. This will help to develop knowledge building. Above all, the user interaction is very important to know the user needs and based on the needs, the review of collection development both online and offline can be possible.

So the role of librarian is to extend the user based or user centered library services and they have to acquire variety of skills like technological skills, communication skills, personality development, positive and pleasant attitude, gaining learning and knowledge, refreshing knowledge, adapting new skills, undergo training, workshops, and refresher course periodically etc to upgrade and update the knowledge and skills.

Conclusion

The library system should look after regularly on the services extended to the users whether it is very effective and efficient. If any negative results seen, it should be corrected at the very first instance itself. The new areas of IT will help the professional to perform well in various research activities of the users. He has to very aware that the service he extends is meeting tally with the resources the library possess. So the collection development should be regularly updated both online and offline. There will be some sorts of situation of challenges may be posed against librarians while user centric services are extended. This situation can be overcome by achieving deep knowledge in providing user centric services.

References

- [1]. Arora, Jagdish. Library 2.0: Innovative Technologies for Building Libraries of Tomorrow. Open
- [2]. Access to Textual and Multimedia Content: Bring the Digital divide, January 29-30, 2009, INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad and CEC, New Delhi
- [3]. BalaKrishna, M. (2019). *User-Centric and Information-Centric Networking and Services Access Networks, Storage and Cloud Perspective* (1st ed.). CRC, AZ: Rourledge
- [4]. Cahill, K. (2009). A dialogue, not a lecture: Libraries as online communities. *User-Generated Content and its Impact on Web-Based Library Services*, 45-59. doi:10.1016/b978-1-84334-534-3.50002-0
- [5]. Conclusion: User needs and library technology. (2012). *Library Technology and User Services*, 131-134. doi:10.1016/b978-1-84334-638-8.50014-x
- [6]. Hossian, Muhammad Jaber. (2020). Redefining Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory using LIS SERVQUAL+: An Integrated Framework for evaluating Library Service Quality and User Satisfaction. *International Information & Library Review*, 51(3), 203-216.
- [7]. Junior Tidal. (2012). Creating a user-centered library homepage: a case study. *OCLC Systems & Services: International digital library perspectives*, 28(2), 90-100.
- [8]. Morris, Ruth C T. (1994). Towards a user-Centered Information Services. *Journal of the American Society for Information Sciene*, 45 (1) 20-30
- [9]. Reynolds, E. (2008), Developing a Standard list of questions for the usability testing of an academic Library Website, *Journal of Web Librarianship*, 2 (2-3). 381-415
- [10]. Riermaier, P. (2015). Browsing versus user-centric spaces in academic law libraries. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2632681
- [11]. Rockman, I. F. (1999). End-user services in academic libraries: A 1999 perspective. *Reference Services Review*, 27(3), 254-258. doi:10.1108/00907329910283386