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<p>Dr. Sanjay Shenmare</p> <p>Librarian Shivshakti Arts, Commerce and Science College, Babhulgaon, Yavatmal, Maharashtra</p>	<p>E-learning and Information Literacy in Academic Libraries</p> <p>Abstract Libraries are at a turning point. As technology rapidly transforms the way we access information, and resources are increasingly available online and in digital formats, the established role of the library as a physical space housing racks of books is looking increasingly out of step with the needs of students and researchers. Allied with technology, library users' needs and preferences are helping to drive the change in libraries. Students, researchers and teachers now expect to be able to access information around the clock, from almost anywhere in the world and via a growing number of devices, from laptops to phones. As the information technologies are changing day-today and growing at a tremendous speed, the knowledge society is becoming more complex, competitive and dependent on technological changes and information explosion. The need for e-information services to the users are also growing and becoming very essential. The impact of web based e-learning and teaching environment has influenced every facet of library and knowledge resource centre services in academic libraries and providing new opportunities and challenges to the library professional for involvement in the knowledge based society.</p>

Introduction

Different terminologies have been used for e-learning, a fact that makes it difficult to develop a generic definition. Terms that are commonly used include online learning, Internet learning, distributed learning, networked learning, tele-learning, virtual learning, computer-assisted learning, Web-based learning, and distance learning. Digital Libraries provide technology based information resources and services to enable learners to access relevant information anywhere anytime, as well as provide empowerment for innovative and life-long learning

E-learning Terminology

E-learning is the term used to describe teaching and learning resources that are, delivered electronically. E-learning is meant to be more than just educational websites. It includes all aspects of electronic delivery so watching an educational video, using a digital camera, using a computer to edit pictures, text or sounds for a presentation or project, or using an interactive whiteboard in a lesson can all be considered implementations of e-learning. There are many definitions of e-learning in the literature,

definitions that reflect the diversity of practice and associated technologies.

E-learning is an educational material that is presented on a computer. Khan defines online instruction as an innovative approach for delivering instruction to a remote audience, using the Web as the medium. E-learning involves more than just the presentation and delivery of the materials using the Web: the learner and the learning process should be the focus of e-learning. e-learning is defined as the use of the Internet to access learning materials; to interact with the content, instructor, and other learners; and to obtain support during the learning process, in order to acquire knowledge, to construct personal meaning, and to grow from the learning experience.

Need for E-Learning

Author has listed following reasons explaining why e-learning is necessary in present environment:

- E-learning is self-paced and gives students a chance to speed up to slow down necessary,

- E-learning is self-directed, allowing students to choose content and appropriate to their differing interests, need and skills levels,
- It accommodates multiple learning styles using a variety of delivery methods geared to different learners, more effective for entrain learners,
- It is designed around the learner, and eliminates geographical barriers and opens up broader education options,
- Its accessibility makes scheduling easy and allows a greater number of people to attend classes on demand access means learning can happen precisely when needed travel-time is reduced or eliminated,
- Overall students' costs are frequently less in e-learning rather than tuition, residence, food etc.,
- Its potentially lower costs for companies needing training and for the providers,
- It fasters greeters students interaction and collaboration, and also fasters greater student/instructor contact,
- E-learning enhances computer and internet skills.

Role of Librarian in E-learning

Academic Institution seeks an energetic and creative student-centered librarian to provide leadership in the development and implementation of online learning tools, resources, and services for the Libraries. The E-Learning Librarian collaborates with library staff, college staff, and students on the development of innovative web-based services and their integration into instruction through the campus learning management system and other instructional platforms.

E-Learning Librarian collaborates with staff and is a member of the Instruction & User Services department which supports undergraduate education by providing course-integrated and course-related instruction, drop-in sessions, courseware-based instruction, online tutorials and guides, and individual consultations. The instruction encourages all students to be self-sufficient, lifelong, and technology-proficient learners, who understand how to retrieve, critically evaluate, manage, and use information.

E-Learning Librarian supports student learning across disciplines by working with

faculty/staff to facilitate the use of curriculum-specific information resources, provide access to course-specific online materials, develop and deliver learning objects, and promote use of curriculum-based information resources. Librarian will also participate in reference, information literacy instruction, and library committees as well as campus and professional activities.

E-Learning Librarian will routinely monitor trends in emerging technologies and identify possible uses in library services. The incumbent will be engaged in a wide range of initiatives related to online and distance learning UC- and campus-wide and as such, must remain informed about new trends and practices in these areas. E-Learning Librarian will provide training to library staff and the campus community on new technologies or resource-related issues, such as fair use and copyright compliance. As the liaison to campus's Educational Technology Services, the incumbent will be an active participant in campus discussions related to educational technologies and will work actively to integrate Library services into the campus learning management system.

E-Learning Librarian must be proactive in selectively and strategically implementing and marketing emerging technologies that best match our users' needs and preferences. This position will lead the development, promotion and assessment of digital learning objects and tutorials developed for an array of disciplines. This position will also contribute to the training and support of library colleagues on tutorial software and instructional design and will serve as the project manager for the subject guides.

E-Learning Librarian will participate in the department's instruction program by presenting course-related instruction and drop-in workshops and will provide reference services in the Library.

Librarians must have something extra in this regard:

- Understanding of web accessibility issues
- Experience creating interactive and online learning environments
- Experience in providing reference service
- Experience consulting with instructors
- Experience using web development applications
- Experience with learning management systems

E-learners' Expectations from Librarians

Librarians “must assert themselves as key players in the learning process thereby changing their roles from information providers to educators”; they have become providers of technical support; and they have been transformed from “information gatekeepers” to “information gateways”. Librarian can shift the focus from explaining library resources to meeting the ongoing information needs of the students in the broad information environment.

Librarians have worked at translating what they do in a traditional library into virtual or digital environments, while customizing their services and resources for e-learners. Traditionally, libraries offer circulation services, interlibrary loans, course reserves, an information desk, a reference desk, and library instruction. To serve learners connected to their institutional library primarily through a computer network, librarians are providing remote access to, and electronic delivery of, library resources, and are using communication technologies to deliver electronic reference services and instructional support.

Digital Library Services

E-learners require more than access to e-resources. Traditionally, Librarian acts as an additional type of resource, one who can be counted upon to provide expertise in making sense of library systems and research tools, and to offer a helping hand along that often slippery path known as the research process. Digital library users face additional challenges in mining relevant information out of a computer system that “obstinately” returns zero hits in response to a query that does not match the character strings in its database files.

The most common means of providing electronic reference services to remote users has been e-mail. The around-the-clock and around-the-world accessibility of e-mail allows users to connect with librarians beyond the walls of library buildings and outside the usual hours of operation. E-mail provides a written record of requests and responses, permits the electronic transmission of search results, and allows librarians time to reflect on requests. One of the most serious concerns about e-mail reference services is their impact on the traditional face-to-face reference interview, particularly the absence of the verbal and non-verbal cues that typically assist a librarian in effectively responding to a question.

Three issues related to the use of electronic communication in serving virtual patrons (e-learners): immediacy, intricacy, and interaction. Because it is so easy for a learner to send a request electronically and have it arrive at the library instantly, there is a perception that the librarian's response will be as immediate. The learner may become frustrated, not realizing that the process of locating information and developing a response takes the librarian just as long when the request is made electronically as when it is made in person or in any other way. The more complex the request, the longer it will take for the librarian to clarify it and respond appropriately: a series of e-mail messages may be required, which will further reduce the immediacy of the e-mail request.

Digital Library User Instruction

E-learners are frequently silent and invisible as they search and explore a digital library's resources, and they do not have the same access that on-campus learners have to formal library instruction sessions. With the array of digital resources available to them, the multiplicity of interfaces and search tools, and the need for evaluation and critical thinking when using the Internet for research, “information literacy” skills are a must-have for e-learners. Information literacy refers to competencies with information sources in a variety of formats.

According to the Association of College and Research Libraries, an information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.

The role information literacy has to play in participative citizenship, personal empowerment and social inclusion. A recent definition proposed by the ‘Prague Declaration’ goes yet further by proposing that information literacy constitutes a human right:

“Information Literacy encompasses knowledge of one’s information concerns and needs, and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create, use and communicate information to address issues or problems at hand; it is a prerequisite for participating effectively in the Information Society, and is part of the basic human right of life-long learning”.

Information literacy is a crucial skill in the pursuit of knowledge. It involves recognizing when information is needed and being able to efficiently locate, accurately evaluate, effectively use, and clearly communicate information in various formats.

Supporting the integration of information literacy skills training into the core curriculum has become an important issue for libraries. As an extension of their traditional role of providing library instruction sessions and developing instructional materials, librarians are designing online tutorials and courses that promote information literacy and encourage active learning.

Many libraries provide instruction to e-learners by making information available on their Web pages, including frequently asked questions, library glossaries, research guides, and “how-to” pages. Online tutorials usually operate on a model in which the e-learner interacts in isolation with a computer. Their effectiveness can be enhanced by the addition of more interactive forms of instruction. The librarians at the Florida Distance Learning Reference and Referral Centre, for example, have experimented with chat software to simulate a virtual classroom and open up “live” group instruction to e-learners. Librarians can also work with faculty to develop a library thread in a course discussion area, or to open a discussion forum on the library Web pages.

Role of Academic Librarians in e-Teaching and Learning

The Academic Librarians should play a dedicated role in supporting instructors and administrators to realize the potential of e-learning through the provision of service models unique to libraries. Librarians somewhere have found to develop web based modules to support course integrated instruction session, encourage students to actively follow the librarians’ presentation using their own topics for selected searches. Students receive

immediate feedbacks on search strategies during the session and can return at any time to refresh their skills for subsequent assignments. Reference staff uses the material to guide students in using information resources specific to their assignments at the reference desk. This blended approach to information literacy offers students and instructors with an ability to address diverse learning styles and encourage active participation along the presentation to a 24/ 7 access that may foster increased student contact with the librarians.

Many librarians especially university librarians are working with online course developers as well as instructors in traditional courses to provide online guides and help for library research; these include modules that introduce students not only to specific resources but to critical evaluation of resources, specific about thesis preparation and the like. As with face to face library connection, these modules are very effective when integrated into course and research material provided by the instructor.

Conclusion

Society is not ready to abandon the library, and it probably won’t ever be. Libraries can adapt to social and technological changes, but they can’t be replaced. While libraries are distinct from the Internet, librarians are the most suited professionals to guide scholars and citizens toward a better understanding of how to find valuable information online. Indeed, a lot of information is online. But a lot is still on paper. Instead of regarding libraries as obsolete, state and federal governments should increase funding for improved staffing and technology. The virtual library environment provides both an opportunity and a requirement for librarians to develop greater familiarity with IT-type skills. Today, more than ever, libraries and librarians are extremely important for the preservation and improvement of our culture. Para-professional staff required practical ‘hands on’ experience and training. Librarians are moving into database development, courseware, open learning and academic staff development and need a combination of knowledge, skills, aptitudes, and personal qualities in order to fill their multi-faceted roles.

Finally, it may be state that human component is basically an indispensable part of the Library as ‘Librarian’ and Cybrary as ‘Cybrarian’.

Academic Library has made some proactive initiatives in support of e-learning using emerging cutting-edge technologies to provide access to print and electronic resources and services. However more remains to be done as emerging technologies provide great opportunities for Library to integrate its resources and services into learning, teaching and research. Library should move fast to exploit available cutting edge technologies to implement electronic reference service and digitize multimedia resources. Digital Scholarship is generally seen as application of emerging communication technologies in a collaborative environment in support of learning, teaching, and research. Collaboration brings all partners such as faculty, IT, instructional designers, administration, and library to support student-centred and active learning. Digitalization is not only the process of digitalizing resources in the library; it includes the process of making aware about technology up gradation to the ultimate users

E-learning is only the tool and its effectiveness will depend on the quality of the content including the learning resources and the use made of the communication tools. All aspects of developing an online environment need to be

carefully monitored and evaluated to ensure that the student learning experience and the change in current education practice is enhanced and that the libraries and its staff be remain sustainable in the 21st century.

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