



CHANGING PARADIGMS IN LIBRARIES DUE TO COVID-19

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Abstract:

Library and Information Service profession is one of the most challenging professions in the knowledge society. Librarians face complex challenges posed by recent trends in Information and Communication Technology. Libraries around the world are facing hard choices around which services to offer and how, ranging from minimal restrictions to full closure. We are aware that governments themselves are taking different approaches, sometimes ordering the closure of all institutions. The role of the Library professional has become more dynamic and challenging in the modern world & due to COVID-19 Pandemic. This paper covers the role of library and library information service professionals that have undergone a large degree of change in recent year.

Keywords: Challenges of Library Profession, Changing Role of Libraries & Librarians, Professional Development, Information Technology, COVID-19, safety & services.

➤ **Introduction:**

COVID-19 has made significant impact on all spheres of human life. The impact has been rather prominent in case of service activities such as banking, health, transportation, education and libraries. Now days the traditional way of library is changing into the modern context. The role of the Library professional has become more dynamic and challenging in the modern world & there is a requirement of professional skills and technological competencies necessary for library professionals and the considerations how these are acquired and developed to survive in an ever changing technological environment and to meet the future challenges of the 21st century as well as Covid pandemic.

➤ **Managing Different approaches to library services & restrictions due to Covid-19:**

Different approaches to library services:

Libraries need to change quite dramatically to modernize almost every aspect of their operations, information resources and services in order to meet the rising user's expectations of the modern world. As the world advances, the library must also evolve and redesign their activities in order to deliver highly quality, need based, and value added services according to the expectations of today's library users. The concept of library has been described by several different terms such as automated library, computerized library, electronic library, digital library, virtual library, library without walls, paper less society, transformed library, complex library, hybrid library, internet library, and future library and so on.

➤ **New Challenges for Library and Information Service Professionals:**

The major challenges are:

- Covid-19 pandemic (Safety & services)
- Dwindling Library budgets
- Web Based Information System
- Changing Technology Landscape
- Changing Information Environment
- Technology Skills
- Professional search skills
- Communication skills
- Presentation Skills
- Escalating cost of printed documents Intensive use of digital resources
- Heightened level of users' expectations
- Interactive virtual learning environment
- Information Explosion

- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution
- Explosive growth and usage of web resources
- Changing nature and number of information resources
- Development of digital, Virtual and Hybrid Libraries
- Online Bookshops & Information Services

These challenges have called for reorientation, reengineering, transformation and great changes in the information environment, library functions and the roles of library and information service professionals.

➤ **Library services restrictions & Normal recommendations around good hygiene apply due to Covid-19:**

Libraries in different parts of the world are facing very different situations, from broadly maintaining a full service to complete closure. Drawing on experience around the world, libraries and librarians are finding themselves in one of a number of situations:

- Ensuring access to soap and warm water
- Ensuring they have a supply of hand sanitiser
- Keeping surfaces clean and library computers
- Ensuring that staff and users are encouraged to take time to recover if they are feeling ill, rather than coming in to work
- Providing pages with useful links to reliable information for users on their websites and promoting media literacy faced with potential misinformation online.
- Actively encouraging people to take extra measures to protect hygiene.
- Preparing for potential further restrictions, for example by ensuring that all staff has the skills and tools to work remotely (if this is possible) and that services, as far as possible, can still be provided digitally.

- Fully closing spaces and only offering the possibility to borrow or return books at a counter, or via a book drop. Some countries are experimenting with drive-through pick-up and return of books.
- Implementing plans to offer remote services for example eLending, eLearning, or support to remote teaching
- Finalizing and testing measures for all staff to work remotely and allowing those who can to do so already.
- If the user student has to study sitting in the library, then after getting vaccination, he should present his certificate.
- Promoting use of digital libraries and other tools – including potentially investing in more content/licenses
- Offering an amnesty on borrowed physical books, and increasing the number of eBooks users can borrow
- Continuing to promote online services and resources in order to limit numbers looking to visit the library
- Communicate clearly about all any new rules to library users, both online and onsite, and provide regular updates
- Ensuring that plans are in place for a potential return to lock-down in case of new peaks in infection rates
- For staff, basic hygiene measures, such as washing hands thoroughly with soap and water, avoiding touching the face, with a number of countries also recommending masks and gloves, at least where these do not harm materials.
- **Social Distancing** – keeping a safe distance between individuals in order to reduce the risks of the virus passing from one person to another the recommended distance varies from country to country but appears not to be below **1m (3-4ft)**, and is often more.
- Libraries around the world of all sorts have been working hard to provide access to collections and services remotely, often investing time and effort in updating websites and computer systems in order to deal with demand
- Building on library it's Simply E/ mobile apps.

- There are many great freely available resources available with educational materials – notably **NDLI (National Digital Library of India)**, which provides access of millions of e-material (Such as e-books, e-journals, Proceedings etc.) Clearly the possibility to use resources online depends a lot on the terms under which they are accessed. Fortunately, a lot of publishers and vendors have taken helpful initiatives. In the academic field, many have provided open access to materials related to COVID-19. Others have facilitated access by making it easier to log-in and access materials from outside of official networks.
- **Managing remote working:** With libraries and library associations closing offices – where they have them – many in the library field are facing challenges around how to manage remote working effectively.

Most examples so far focus on a phased approach, with new services, activities and parts of the library only resumed when this can happen safely, with some associating the shift from one phase to the next to wider progress in tackling the pandemic, while others are more cautious in setting dates. A useful approach is to start by assessing risk, then developing plans, and only then setting timings for resuming different services. It may also be the case, of course, that some of the libraries are not yet open, which will also have an impact.

➤ **Conclusion:**

Through paper, I also explored how to library values are being affected and potentially put at risk, and how libraries can support to its users community. Now the time has come for reshaping the traditional libraries into next generation libraries with the help of new emerging trends & techniques of technology. LIS professionals face complex challenges posed by rapid revolutionary advances in ICT. Libraries have to redesign their positions to meet evolving needs. Librarians need to implement new practices and new technologies, manage change, and

improve performance and competencies to face future challenges of knowledge society. They need to develop professional competencies to adapt changing technologies in order to deliver timely, value added quality content and world-class services to the users from their laptops and also most important keep in mind the safety of library staff & users.

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