



KNOWLEDGE AND ITS DIMENSIONS

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Abstract— Knowledge can be multi dimensional. It changes according to the people and their habits. From papyrus to clay tablets and then from print resources to electronic resources it has many dimensions. This paper aims to give a brief picture on how knowledge changes its dimensions and how the libraries can manage this crisis.

Index Terms - Knowledge, print to online transition, e-books, e-journals, journal acquisition

I. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is a familiarity, awareness, or understanding of someone or something, such as facts, information, descriptions, or skills which is acquired through experience or education by perceiving, discovering or learning. (Wikipedia). Knowledge is a theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. It can be systematic or formal.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

People were writing long before paper was invented. From clay tablets to papyrus, linen, animal skins, metals, tree bark and other materials, mankind used a variety of materials to keep track of time, goods, and other information worth remembering. By about 2500 BC, the Egyptians had discovered papyrus, a very satisfactory and relatively cheap material, made from the sedges which grew along the banks of the Nile river. Some proofs of libraries are observed around 3 BC in ancient Alexandria. There are also proofs of libraries during 668-626 BC, where books were systematically kept in libraries. A temple in the Babylonian town of Nippur, in the first half of the 3rd millennium BC, was found to have a number of rooms filled with clay tablets. The first libraries consisted of archives of the clay tablets in cuneiform script discovered in temple rooms in Sumer, in 2600 BC. About an inch thick tablets were seen in various shapes and sizes.

About 105 AD paper similar to that in present use was produced by the Chinese but how they created it did not reach Western Europe till 1150 AD. It reached Central Asia by 751 and Baghdad by 793, and by the 14th century there were paper mills in several parts of Europe.

The Gutenberg printing press was invented in the 1440s by Johannes Gutenberg, a goldsmith from Mainz in Germany. It is widely considered to be one of humanity's defining inventions. The invention of the printing press greatly increased the demand for paper, and at the beginning of the 19th century wood and other vegetable pulps began to replace rags as the principal source of fibre for papermaking. The Abbey of Montecassino was developed in Italy in the early middle age as monastery library. Books were kept chained to the shelves, as the manuscripts, made by heavy work of hand copying, were very valuable.

III. E-Books

E-Books are gaining popularity and significance among libraries. The first internet e-book was created in 1971. The Project, aptly named "Project Gutenberg" was started by Michael S. Hart "One thing about eBooks that most people haven't thought much is that eBooks are the very first thing that we're all able to have as much as we want other than air. Think about that for a moment and you realize we are in the right job."

Early internet e-book creators faced substantial technical challenges. E-books had to be typed and progress was slow. The English scientist Tim Berners Lee invented the World Wide Web in 1989. He wrote the first web browser in 1990. Many of the technical issues faced by e-books creators were resolved with the advent of the web platform for e-books that was far more good than BITNET and TCP/IP platforms. The academic libraries jumped into digitization projects and the number of e-libraries began to shoot up. It took over 25 years for Project Gutenberg to complete its 1000th book –Dante's Inferno (1997). Today Project Gutenberg contains 57000 free e-books.

Digitization often has been a solution to the library crisis. E- Books are highly credible, accurate reasonable and more supportive to the readers. E- Books have changed the way in which people are reading, as it is easy to use and are rapidly becoming a viable alternative.

IV. TRANSITION FROM PRINT TO ONLINE JOURNALS

To save space and money, there should be flexibility and adaptability from the part of the librarians to meet users' requirements. The proliferation of knowledge in a variety of forms forced the libraries into a transition from print to online journals. It has been reported that researchers are relying more upon electronic journals than print journals. (Knowlton, 2007). Tenopir and King pointed out that publishing in electronic form would be less expensive and that journal prices would actually decrease after migrating from print to online (Tenopir and King, 2000). Now the users are confused in selecting the appropriate resources for their study and research. Here librarians can act as decision makers and help them by providing the exact piece of information from the exact source, thus satisfying users' needs.

V. PRINT JOURNALS

The procurement of information in the form of print journals is the traditional method followed by libraries. Even today, print journals are important to a certain extent. Its advantages include ease of access, familiarity in use, and preservation etc. Their convenience, portability and flexibility are attracted by many readers. It is also argued that no technological skills are required to access these print journals.

But, print journal acquisition creates many hardships to librarians. These are related to the procurement of invoices, arrival of issues, missing issues, delayed publishing and also problems related to the processing, maintenance, preservation etc. Since the cost of binding also increases from time to time, binding cost may not be controlled every year with the limited budget. The organising and storing of bound volumes are another set of issues of concern. As journal archival collection are the much asked item in academic libraries, sufficient storage space should be allocated for this.

VI. ELECTRONIC JOURNALS

The scholarly journals or intellectual magazines that can be accessed via electronic transmission are called electronic journals (Wikipedia). The different types of electronic journals include online-only journals and online equivalent of print journals. The advantages of e-journals include, user-friendliness, direct access, not time and location specified access, currency, downloading and saving for later use etc. It is also regarded as a cost saving platform for information access.

There are problems related to electronic journals also. The subscription for a limited period of time makes it difficult to have a continuous collection of journals. To ensure better utilisation of e-journals, certain technological skills are required. It is also essential to have good technological infrastructure with sufficient number of computer systems, accessories, proper networking etc. Electronic journals are available under subscription basis like print journals. There are also other forms of access like consortium based, bulk packages or 'big deal' etc. The new trend in electronic journals is the availability under open access platform. It gives access to a larger number of journals with full text articles with free of cost. It has come out as a primary solution to 'Serials Crisis'. There are no restrictions in access, control and cost under open access platform.

In view of the issues related with 'Serials Crisis' and the transition from 'print to online', the changing scenario in academic libraries can be described as a paradigm shift from traditional role of building and managing print collection to providing access to remote electronic resources. So the decision regarding what to subscribe, in which format and for what period has to be taken very carefully to handle with the financial pressure on academic libraries.

In this regard, there are a number of options available to practice in academic libraries. These options are described as under:

- a) To keep all the print journals and store them in the library itself.
- b) To store the print back volumes at a different storage location if there is a limitation in storage space; and make it available whenever need arises.
- c) To discard all the print back volumes if access to online archives of those journals are available under reliable scheme.
- d) To continue with the existing print journal subscription along with electronic journal subscription and cancel the print subscription for which electronic equivalent is available.
- e) Give access to maximum number of electronic journals available under open access method by providing links through library website.

Depending upon the mission and objectives of the library and its parent organisation, any of the above methods can be practiced in academic libraries.

VII. JOURNAL SELECTION PROCESS

In selecting new titles for subscription, the records of inter library loan, citation studies, faculty recommendations and user's requests should be considered. More importance should be given to the journals in the subjects in which the library lacks journals and if there is a demand in that area. If a print journal has found to be much used than expected, it should definitely be continued. While cancelling existing subscription of both print and e-journals, the cost and also usage should be taken into account. Journal voting by users can be conducted to know the most preferred journal.

As more and more commercial publishers are entering into scholarly journal publishing scene, various journal pricing models are available and can be selected depending upon the library's policies. The pricing styles include:

- a) Print journals only
- b) Online journals only
- c) Print with free online –combination
- d) Aggregator services providing bundles of e-journals

VIII. SOME SUGGESTIONS

As the transition from ‘print to online’ continues in academic libraries and the role of librarians is changing accordingly, the objectives of the libraries are remaining the same. Libraries are to stand for their users and to provide them with maximum output, there should be orientation and awareness programmes to familiarise users with the resources. Periodical evaluation of the resources and services should be conducted and feedback should be collected. All library professional should acquire skills to compete with the challenges. The library websites should be better utilized for marketing and publicizing the numerous electronic resources available.

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