Indian Journal of Library Science Research & Information Technology
VOL 1 NO.1 (JAN-JUN 2024)
ISSN - APPLIED

A Brief Introduction to ICT Applications in Libraries

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Abstract

In the present information environment, the ICT applications in libraries have become inevitable. Therefore, basically the library professionals should be abreast of a brief introduction to ICT applications in libraries. From this point of view, the present paper /article throws light upon the basic considerations such as, need for ICT applications, components involved in it, tools required for it, and library networking. The paper also discusses in brief how library automation is a brief introduction to ICT applications in libraries.

Key Words: ICT: Applications, components and tools, Library Automation and Networking

1. Introduction

The ICT application in libraries play an important role in handling of information in respect with collecting, organizing, retrieving and communicating information to the users, Due to the use of ICT, the modern information society has been identified as either 'information rich society' or the information poor society'. In information rich society, the information is being handled with the application of ICT and in information poor society, the ICT is not being used for the purpose of handling of information. Therefore, it is stated that the information rich society can archive the socio-economic development of the nation and the information poor society may not archive such type of development.

The libraries exist for the benefit of their users and the main purpose of libraries is to provide a service access to information. There is an 'information explosion' which refers to the phenomenon of the exponential growth rate of published information. In such situation, it is realized that the traditional library & information system can no longer continue in terms of satisfaction of the users. Such tremendous growth/ increase in information emphasizes to have the co-operation of other libraries through networks and also through consortia approach. To achieve this, the ICT applications in libraries have become the need of the day.

2. Need of ICT Applications in Libraries

The necessity of ICT in the libraries is because of the following reasons.

- To achieve speed, accuracy and reliability in the process of access and retrieval of information.
- It is assumed that there will be a danger of non-availability of hard copies of documents and the documents will be available only in e-forms. For this reason, the implementation of ICT in libraries is essential.
- Due to the increasing prices of print materials, no library can afford to acquire all the publications and hence there should be resource sharing through networks and for participating in the network, ICT applications in the library are essential.
- The international data basis like DIALOG, MEDLARS, INLS, and AGRIS etc. are available in e-forms. Therefore, if the library has no application of ICT, there is no possibility for getting access to these global level data basis.
- The information generated in all fields is multidimensional and with increasing speed. So there cannot be manual bibliographic control on this and it is only feasible through ICT application.
- The information seeking behavior of the users is also changing according to their changing Information needs and so to meet these needs, it is essential for the libraries to implement ICT to improve the retrieval techniques.
- Through ICT, it is possible to improve quality, user friendliness, effectiveness, reliability and regularity of library services.
- The application of1CT facilitates to utilize the ever widening sphere of electronic information.
- Through application of ICT, the libraries can prepare themselves, for their survival may be on local, regional, national and international levels.
- The use of 1CT can provide round the clock access, (24 hours) and services to the users even outside the premises of the library.

3. The Factors Involved in ICT Applications

ICT application involves the use of computers and communication technologies to carry out the functions of the library in an accurate, efficient, effective, and result oriented way to satisfy user's information requirements. The emerging, advanced technological developments and application of ICT have changed the manual operations in the library and the services to the users. 1CT facilitates fast retrieval of information, updating the information and the better management of information. The library information and networking encompass many types of library operations like information retrieval services and network based library services, the application of c needs to have the following, factors.

- Availability of hardware and software
- Large storage capacity

- Faster in data processing
- Quick and readily dissemination of data
- Easy access to information
- User friendliness
- Less involvement of manpower
- Faster communication
- Provision of effective service.

4. The Tools Required for ICT Application

To implement ICT in the libraries, the tools required are: computer, internet connectivity, digital and web camera, smart card, scanner, one printer, web-OPAC, e-mail facility, CD-ROM and DVD and RFID technologies. By using these tools, the application of ICT in different sections of the library can be implemented; the sections
such as acquisition, processing, circulation and information services. Besides these, ICT can be also used for budget control, official correspondence and management of staff.

5. Automation of Library

The library automation is fundamental process which brings the profound changes in the library housekeeping activities. The term automation was first introduced by D.S. Harder in the year 1963 and now it is commonly used to describe any operation carried out by the computer with the help of human efforts and intelligence. The
automation involves an automatic system to handle the operations with minimal human interaction. It is the automatic system which facilitates and promotes networking and resource sharing in libraries.

The automation in libraries is essential for the following factors.

1. As the volume of information has been increasing with a tremendous speed,
2. To achieve improved information accuracy and increased flexibility.
3. To reduce the time taken in delivery of information to the users.
4. To achieve efficiency and effectiveness in human efforts and the better user satisfaction.
5. To improve the performance of the information providers, so as to enhance the effective use of library services.

6. Library Network

The library network refers to the group of libraries with the agreement and understanding with a view to satisfy the information needs of their users. There are different types of network systems like, PAN, LAN, MAN and WAN. In India, there are several established library networks which are Local, Metropolitan, Regional and National. During the late 1980s and early 1990, the number of library and information networks. Have been INFLIBNET, DELNET, DINET, CALIBNET, MALIBANET, MYLIBNET, BOMNET, PUNENET, CSIRNET, etc.

These networks play a vital role in collecting, organizing, retrieving and disseminating the information. On the basis of networks, the libraries can acquire reading materials collectively and they can avoid duplication of materials The Library consortia, approach can be adopted by the libraries for costly foreign journals and data basis. Through consortia, it is possible to achieve maximum utilization of reading materials available in the participating libraries may be local, regional, national and international. The library consortium is an important contribution of ICT for library management. It is the part of library co-operation in which several libraries come together for their mutual benefits of their users. The computerized networks came in to existence for sharing of resources through which the users of the participating libraries get their required information. through document delivery services. The latest approach in the consortia is mainly concerned with he acquisition of e-journals. This approach helps the users for getting an access to information and for downloading the required materials.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, the emergence of ICT in libraries has its great impact on handling of information. Due to ICT applications in libraries, the libraries function with their enhanced effectiveness and efficiency and as a result users are benefitted to satisfy themselves. In the modern information society, the libraries must be automated and they should adopt and adapt with ICT applications in their internal and external environments for providing in house services as well as network-based services to the users.

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