LIBRARY REENGINEERING: ISSUES AND TRENDS

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ABSTRACT

We are in the electronic information age, where improvements in technology are re-engineering the global information industry. Technology is driving the information access and delivery seamlessly crossing all the borders. As information changes, its production and storage methods, access formats, compilation techniques, retrieval steps etc. are changing in the library environment. The factors like user population, technology enhancement, digital libraries and new approaches to planning and methods of management are re-engineering the libraries. In this article an attempt is made to list out the various trends in re-engineering the libraries which includes libraries relationship with publishers, Word of Mouth (WOM) and e-marketing medium, development of institutional repositories, links to entertainment media, open education sources, commercial document delivery service, remote access, e-books etc. Success of library is increasingly dependent on its reengineering with most effective and strategic management of new technologies.

KEYWORDS: Reengineering, Marketing, Wi-Fi, Open Source Libraries, Remote Access, Audible e-books

INTRODUCTION

Information technology has brought significant changes in the library. E-resources have changed not only the way to access and store information but also the routine work of library resource procurement. Change in the way people use the libraries now demand library to be innovative. Thereengineering of library will be an aid in creating a new learning environment in libraries. This will enhance resources, facilities and services of the library. The adoption of the technological services and functioning style has changed the attire of the libraries. The retrieval of information from the libraries is now faster and possibly accurate. The users of today’s libraries are tech-savvy. The use of OPAC (Open access public catalogue), library sites for latest addition in the libraries, downloading and submitting of library forms has taken a new shape. Reengineered libraries are more over working as hybrid libraries, balancing both hard copies and electronic resources. They are focused in adopting and providing new technological services along with the traditional with a technology touch.

REENGINEERING OF LIBRARY: MEANING

Reengineering means reorganization for the purpose of providing updated and improved services. The library reengineering means use of computer technology and information and communication technology to provide better services to the users and better working environment for the staff.

TRENDS IN LIBRARY REENGINEERING

The main objective of library reengineering is to cope up with the modern time and provide its users right information at the right time by making best use of technology. The technological advances have given the libraries
electronic catalogue, websites to display their services and work, 24/7/365 access to libraries, computerized housekeeping work etc. The list may be lengthy but following are some of the trends that can be seen in reengineered libraries.

**Libraries Relationship with Publishers**

The relationship between the libraries and the publishers are changing. In case of print resources once the library purchase the product the ownership of the product will get transferred to library. But as the e-resources are procured by the libraries, the maintenance of this relationship has become more crucial. The librarian should always be in contact with them in order to ensure continuous access to the subscribed resources.

The relationship between publishers and librarians are same as of pharmacist and doctor. Publishers supply the required material to libraries to fulfill the need of their users. The e-publishing has changed the entire concept of publishing and now the academicians are playing the role of publishers. High profiled academicians are playing a major role in publishing online journals and database. Subscription of electronic resources is the need of the hour and hence a healthy relationship between libraries and publishers is very essential.

**Word of Mouth (WOM) Marketing**

Being social institutions, libraries never focused on their marketing. But being a reservoir of information, library has to adopt some methods in order to make its users aware about its collection. The WOM (Word of mouth) is one of the best tools of marketing. Library and library staff should involve in marketing their library through this method. They can do so by interacting with their institutional fellows, students and staff. This interaction can happen during break time, when users approach with queries etc. They have to make them aware about what they are doing.

**Marketing with E-tools**

Today libraries are treated as unique entities playing a specific role as providers of information. A huge budget is invested into the procurement and subscription of the resources. They might not be used to the fullest extent until libraries will not market them. The popularity of social media sites like Facebook or WhatsApp can be used to promote library activities and making users curious about library happenings.

Today, n-number of e-marketing tools are available like blogs, websites, library forums, social media sites etc. for the libraries to project them. But care should be taken that it should not hurt personal feelings of users and should not violate copyrights of the resources. Creating a library website has become a common trend and free software are available to create such websites. The control of the website will always remain with the librarian than the IT personnel. Librarian can add/remove any information without help of IT.

The use of social sites always remains crucial because of their security issues. Libraries can make use of these sources to promote their conferences, seminars, list of members coming for the conference/workshop, any changes in the dates of events, addition of new resource etc. Blog services for the libraries too can be created using free sources (E.g. Google Blogger). Using these social sites the activities like library day celebration, book day, and best reader awards etc. can be projected in front of the users to make them aware that libraries are not only the reservoir of information but also the center for educational recreational activity.
Development of Institutional Repositories

The concept of open access to the information has brought in a great impact on the storage of information, and institutional repository has become one of the major sources of information storage. The information created by the faculty, staffs and students of an institution can be collected and preserved through development of institutional repositories. This information can be made accessible either on internet or intranet as per the institution policy. Information available in public domain can be made available in open access, but access to the copyrighted or for the material whose rights are with publishers will be restricted till abstract level for the outside users. The commercial (VTLS etc.) and free (DSpace etc.) software are available which can be used for the creation of the institutional repository.

Development of Libraries with Open Access Content

The importance of speed at which the information is getting generated and uploaded on the web has been realized by the libraries. They have started the concept of developing the open source libraries. A library similar to the digital section of any library, where links to all important sites (subject to which library caters) will be provided. This collection can include open access journals, open e-books, downloadable open information etc. This kind of libraries save the users time and even increase the number of resources available to search information.

Links to Entertainment Media

The creation of Facebook/twitter account or on any other social media page for a library has become a need of the day. The best part a library can do is the linking of users library account with their social media accounts (if they have). This will help them to know the latest happening of the libraries and similarly if library wants to deliver some public message it can be delivered directly to their social media account. As these sources are not so user-friendly in terms of security issues, care has to be taken that any personal information of the users should not be made available publicly. These links are very good tools to inform users about arrival of his/her requested book, due date for the borrowed book etc.

Wi-Fi Libraries

The Wi-Fi facility is a technology that allows an electronic device to exchange data or connect to the internet in a wireless mode. Now a days most of the users are carrying laptop, notebook, tablet (iPad, Galaxy), eReader, smartphone or other wireless enabled portable devices. Providing those with Wi-Fi help them in accessing the information from open and subscribed sources any time with in the campus of the institution. They even need not carry any data modem. This will also help libraries to save on increasing the number of desktops. Reengineered libraries only need to provide sufficient ports in order to use the devices.

Remote Access to the Library Resources

The trend in e-publishing has shown a tremendous growth. Majority of publishers are publishing the scientific/educational information in e-form. This trend has moved the libraries towards the collection of e-resources. Today libraries are spending a good amount on purchasing of its e-collection. The facility to provide these subscribed resources remotely will aid the libraries to increase usage of the resources and also help the users to remain connected with their library services. Ezproxy is an example of this kind of software, which can be used to provide the remote access.
Commercial Document Delivery Service

The document delivery service helps users to get the information from the sources which are not available with their parent library. The commercialization of this service will help the user to get their required information with much more speed. Even every library cannot subscribe/collaborate all the information. There the concept of document delivery is very useful. The Developing Library Network (DELNET), New Delhi is one such example of providing this service. Either the institution may bear the charges of getting the required information (here the chances of requesting unwanted information from the users may be more) or the user may be asked to pay for it, as the amount will be marginal.

Staff Training

The reengineering of libraries means change not only in delivery and maintenance of the libraries but also change in staff’s ability in giving modern services. The modern libraries are even focused on the improvement and training of their library staff in order to make them remain updated. Lifelong learning is not only the concept to study; it is a practice to follow throughout the life to update oneself in his/her field. Organizations/institutions are now sending their staff to attend various conferences/workshops/refreshers courses etc. to keep their learning process active. When library staffs get updated with the technological changes then only they can offer better services to their users.

Scanning

Every library holds something that no one else has. The rare materials, fragile manuscripts now are scanned and are preserved for future. This will help the library to maintain and preserve those resources, which may get destroyed along with the time as they will become fragile or during their circulation process. Keeping the collection of scanned question papers, important classroom notes, and important notices etc. has become very common activity of modern libraries.

Use of Portable Devices for OPAC (Open Access Public Catalogue)

The OPAC/EPAC is a web portal to search the holding of a library. There is a good number of free and commercial software available to provide this service. As library catalogues are usually accessible over the internet/intranet and institutions are providing Wi-Fi in the campus libraries can provide every book rack with a tablet/iPod. Using which user can search his/her book just standing next to the book itself. With this libraries also need not to keep separate computers for OPAC access. This will also save the space in the library, as they will be attached with the book shelves.

E-Books

E-book or electronic books are the electronic version of printed books that can be read by using an electronic device. They are more than just an alternative to the paper books. Links from the e-book to the dictionaries, thesauri, related images, photographs, electronic text, and audio-video segments are the best features of e-books. In reengineering process libraries should incorporate the table of content and book index in the bibliographic records; as they are already digitized in e-format. The full text search capabilities of e-book should be integrated into the OPAC.

Audible e-books

These forms of resources are more convenient for the users. There are numerous systems, software programs and hardware devices that have been designed specifically for the use of these audible e-books. Users can listen to the spoken word content on the move. They can be listened using computers, portable devices. Even the publishers are coming up with audible format of printed book. Usually publisher themselves will restrict its copy format to get copied if book is a
copyrighted; otherwise users can move the file to a portable device of their own and can enjoy the convenience of access.

**Libraries contacts**

Apart from the personal visit and use of telephone in clearing queries, users have got new ways of contacting libraries and getting their questions solved without visiting libraries in the form of e-mail services. The library websites are providing means for site visitors to send e-mail queries to library staff. There are two basic options prevailingone offering a mail to link, consist of clickable e-mail address that is automatically pasted into the mail of user. Other approach uses web form that allows users to send a message to the library directly from the website.

**DISCUSSIONS**

The best phase through which today’s libraries are moving is their transformation into the digital form. Their adoption of digital functions and providing digital services into the library learning environment shows a positive sign of reengineering of libraries. When information need is felt, a person always first seekshelp from a person, may be his friend, teacher or guide from whom he/she can get the required information and then approach library for the detailed information. Librarian has to be pro-active and should create the environment so that when a need for information comes, librarian should be the first person to come into the mind of the information seeker. Reengineering of the libraries with the use of modern technology and providing of fast technological services can help the librarians to achieve this task. Modern users are carrying smartphone/iPods/Laptops etc. using which access to the information and approach to the librarian is very easy. This will not only increase the usage of the library but also make people realize the importance of libraries.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Libraries hold very unique position both on academic campus and in society. Change is indispensable and libraries have realized this. They are reengineering not only their services and approach to provide the service but also its functioning activities and back office work. For reengineering its space must be flexible to accommodate evolving information technological changes and their usage. The libraries have to become the laboratories for new ways of information access and learning in a wired or wireless environment. The Google and other search engines have clearly learned valuable lessons from librarianship. The early search engines developers did their homework in reading the research literature on information retrieval. Now it’s our turn to learn and make modern library. The questions like Can we make our services and tools more flexible, more personable, more fun, more accessible, and of high quality? Answers to these are the reengineering of libraries with updated and advance technologies. Modernization is the library’s future and future remains irreplaceable.

**REFERENCES**


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