

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN E-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT : ROLE AND PROSPECT



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ICSSR SPONSORED

TWO DAY

National Conference

on

**"ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN E-LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT : ROLE AND PROSPECT"**

Vol. 68, No. 23 (2020)

Our Heritage Journal ISSN : 0474/9030

Impact Factor 6.6

Date : 29th and 30th January 2020

Editor

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Conference Link

<https://archives.ourheritagejournal.com/index.php/oh/issue/view/33>

Our Heritage

UGC Care Listed Multidisciplinary

Journal for Research Publication

Delhi, India



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Vol. 68 No. 23 (2020): National Conference on "Academic Libraries in E-learning Environment: Role and Prospect"

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National Conference on "Academic Libraries in E-learning Environment: Role and Prospect"

Organized by the Learning Resource Centre, Jeevan Vikas Mahavidyalaya, Devgram, Narkhed, Nagpur, Maharashtra

Held on 29-30 January 2020.

Sponsored by: ICSSR

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Published: 2020-01-28

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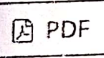
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Function of Reference Service

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Abstract

Reference service is considered as the heart of the library services. It is a service, facilitated by a reference librarian, which meets the information needs of users with desired information. Like many other library services, library reference service also has changed with the impact of emerging technologies and in par with changing social needs. The aim of this paper is to discuss some of these new trends of library reference services. These new trends are divided into four main areas named as: new trends of reference sources, new trends of reference interview, collaborative efforts on reference services, and non-library based information services.

Keyword: Reference, Library Service, Information.

Introduction

In this first decade of the twenty-first century reference and information services are changing part of the function and mission of the library institution. While the continually expanding availability of electronic resources and digitized materials has changed the nature of reference, the essential service remains central. Indeed, far from minimizing the need for reference services, the rise of the Internet, and with it the availability of a tremendous number of subscription and free online resources, makes this aspect of library service all the more crucial. Librarians and their users are constantly bombarded with a wide range of information choices that must be evaluated for authenticity and accuracy. Whether at home on their computers or wandering through the stacks, many people feel as though they are drowning in a sea of information. New media and technologies are like tributaries leading to this great new body of knowledge, and each stream makes the waters deeper and more perilous. Reference services are at once a life raft, map, and compass to those who feel adrift. In providing them with a combination of personalized service in a timely manner, libraries reaffirm their centrality as twenty-first century public institutions par excellence.



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Dr. S. R. Ranganathan's Classification: Dr. S. R. Ranganathan identified two aspects of reference work - Ready reference service and Long range reference service.

i) Ready Reference Service:

Most of the ready reference services are of the nature of fact finding types that can be finished in a very short time – in a moment if possible. The librarian generally uses reference book for providing such kind of services. The need of ready reference services arises from the fact of the complex nature of a reference book, its artificiality, and arrangement of information.

ii) Long Range Reference Service:

The long range Reference Service is based on consulting every possible source of information to arrive at the required information; as such, it is not possible to render this type of service immediately. The time needed may range from half an hour to weeks. The search in the long range reference service starts at the reference books and then goes to the ordinary books, pamphlets, reports, articles in periodicals, etc. If the information is not available in the library then the search can even go to other local libraries and occasionally to the other libraries in the country. The long range reference service provided today can become the ready reference service tomorrow, as by this time the reference librarian will be able to locate the material quickly from his past experience. Slowly, the scope of long range reference service started expanding. Now bibliographical service, referral service, translation service, etc are considered long range reference services.

Functions of Reference Service

American Library Association's Categorization: In 1942, the American Library Association undertook a series of library job analysis. This association has stated the following six functions of Reference Service

i) Supervision Function: This function consists of the proper organization of facilities, reference section, selection of reference materials, direction of personnel, and study of the library clientele.

ii) Information Function: There should be an Information Desk where enquiries are received and routed to proper section. The Reference Librarians should be prepared to answer all types of questions and should be able to produce the sources that would answer the questions.

iii) Guidance Function: The Reference librarian should be able to recommend a good book for respective fields. He should be able to give guidance to the readers regarding higher education, career related information or profession or vocation. He can also give guidance to



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the readers in the location of the document, in the choice of books and other reading materials.

iv) Instruction Function: The Reference librarian should instruct the readers about the working of the library, the location of the material, the use of the catalogue card, the reference book, etc. An initiation or orientation programme should be arranged to familiarize the readers with the library practices and procedures.

v) Bibliographic Function: There should be a preparation of bibliographies of interest to the readers so that they are able to know about the books and other reading materials required for their respective subjects.

vi) Appraisal Function: The libraries should possess the right kind of materials and reference collections and the staff should be able to get the most out of it.

Ranganathan defines Reference Service as: "Personal Service to each reader in helping him to find the documents answering his interest at the moment pin pointedly, exhaustively and expeditiously".

Major types of references

This is the most common type of reference source. Fact tools contain bits of useful data, such as descriptions, definitions, statistics, lists, quotes or rules. They include dictionaries, encyclopaedia's, handbooks, atlases, almanacs, quotation books and style manuals.

Types of Reference Materials

What is a Reference Source? Reference sources are used to obtain a specific answer to a question or to indicate other sources to use during the research process. Although there are several types of reference sources, they all are categorized as either general or specific in scope.

Almanacs	Dictionaries
Atlas & Maps	Directories
Bibliographies	Encyclopaedias
Biographical Resources	Handbooks

Meaning of reference name



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Reference is a relation between objects in which one object designates, or acts as a means by which to connect to or link to, another object. ... It is called a **name** for the second object. The second object, the one to which the first object refers, is called the referent of the first object.

Meaning of Reference in Research

A **references** page is the last page of an essay or **research** paper that's been written in APA style. It lists all the sources you've used in your project, so readers can easily find what you've cited

Referencing Important

Citations are not used simply to avoid plagiarism; they have other **important** roles too. **Referencing** allows you to acknowledge the contribution of other writers and researcher in your work. Any university assignments that draw on the ideas, words or research of other writers must contain citations.

New trends of Reference Sources as discussed under section:

Reference librarians must be able to respond to a variety of questions ranging from ready-reference to research type, depending on the needs expressed by library users. Information resources most frequently used by reference librarians, in answering for these reference questions, are called "reference sources". Dictionaries, directories, encyclopaedias, handbooks, manuals, yearbooks are few to name as examples for reference sources. Thus reference sources are key players of library reference services.

Digital Reference Service

Three-levelled information and reference support system in the digital library.

Information needs can be roughly divided into three levels, depending on their specificity:

First level : general, almost all the library users' needs and expectations;

Second level : some users' needs, groups with common interest such as undergraduate students, research staff, engineering master's students;

Third level : individual needs, relevant only to specific questions.



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While librarians fight to optimize service they provide to their respective communities, they are also intensely aware that large segments of their population never come through the library's doors. Digital reference service includes service that can be delivered at the user's point of need. This involves instant messaging (IM) reference services and SMS reference service as well as proprietary online chat platforms, known simply as chat. Twenty-first-century digital culture is such that most people now work and communicate primarily in front of a computer screen and spend a majority of their day connected to the online world. Digital reference service occurs online as a means to meet the needs of users where they are. Variously referred to as electronic, digital, or virtual reference service, the salient feature is that communication between user and librarian takes place online. Virtual reference services developed in response to a number of interrelated factors: the ubiquitous popularity of the Internet as an avenue of communication, increasing availability of networked digital resources and the corresponding need for service, reports of decreasing numbers of in-person reference transactions, and librarians' continuing efforts to respond to user preferences. As illustrated by the number of articles and programs it has generated, virtual reference has sparked a lively discussion within the profession.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to discuss some changes and trends in library reference services. As per the discussion, it is clear that library reference services have dramatically changed and new trends have emerged along with changing social needs. Reference services have become one of the key areas in libraries where modern ICTs are fully utilized. However, none of these changes or trends have been able to challenge the basis of library reference services. Reference librarians have fundamental skills and knowledge that are applicable to all current and future reference models. Reference librarians have a major role to play in the planning and implementation of the learning commons and in the day-to-day patron interaction within the learning commons. By facilitating high levels of communication and collaboration between stakeholders, reference librarians help ensure the learning commons will meet the high expectations and demands of the modern user. The reference librarian will continue to play a vital role in the synthesis of information into knowledge and knowledge into wisdom, which supports the goal of the learning commons and the overall mission of higher education. It will be interesting to see how the new concept of the blended librarian affects the learning commons model.

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