

Digital Library: Boon for Modern Libraries

V.R. Rajan

Assistant Librarian (Selection Grade), Pondicherry University, Pondicherry-605011

Introduction

As the name indicates, a digital library is one where all the reading library are in the digital format. The basic concept behind a digital library is to exploit the facilities of information technology with a mission of sharing resources available globally for providing right and nascent information to the user community at right time. Computer and Telecommunication technologies along with tools and techniques used for digitalization are essential for the digital library. Digital technologies and their applications have also come into every part of our life.

Digital Library

According to Arms 'A digital library is a managed collection of information with associated services by which the information is stored in digital formats and accessible over a network'. The digital content may be stored locally or accessed remotely via computer network. The Digital Library is a new form of managing the knowledge record and culture heritage. Thousand of digital collections have been and will continue, created around the world.

Objectives of Digital Library

The main objectives of the digital library are"

- * To capture, store, manipulate and distribute information.
- * To introduce and produce new services.
- * To have large number of databases to CDs.
- * To avoid routine and redundant activities.

Reprint requests: V.R. Rajan

Assistant Librarian (Selection Grade),
27, Paradise Apartment, Post Office Complex
Venkata Nagar, Pondicherry-605011
Phone: 0413-2213597

- * To provide facility for networking and resource sharing.

- * To access national and international journals which are being published only in machine-readable form.

- * To improve the cost effectiveness of library operations.

- * To support library functions such as circulations, Serial control, acquisition control, stock maintenance and other routine office works and developing in house databases.

Characteristics of Digital Library

Though digital libraries are still a concept they have certain special characteristics Such as

- * Global infrastructure.
- * Network accessibility.
- * User friendly interface.
- * Advanced search and retrieval.
- * Supporting multimedia content.
- * Accessibility from anywhere, home, school, libraries etc. 24/7 accessibility.
- * Greater opportunity for publishing.
- * Equal opportunity of access.
- * Reduce physical space.
- * Break the time, space and language barriers.
- * Searching and retrieval facilities.
- * Usage of electronic information will steadily increase, and usage of printed.
- * Material will decrease.
- * Access to the digital library is not bounded in space or time. It can be accessed from anywhere in any time.
- * Preservation and conservation.

Functions of Digital Library

The basic functions of digital libraries are :-

- * To capture, store, manipulate information and provide access to a large collection.
- * Improve the cost effectiveness of library operations.
- * Digitize documents for networking and resource sharing.
- * Provide facilities for networking and resource sharing.
- * Access national and international journal which are being published only in machine readable form.
- * Make information available for longer time.
- * Support advanced search and retrieved to enable greater access for information.
- * Maintain other routine office works and developing in house database.
- * Support all sorts of Library operations or functions.
- * Digitize documents for preservation and for space saving.

Pondicherry University Library

The University Library is the heart of any University. The Pondicherry University was established on 11th September 1986. The entire Library House-keeping system including the Journal Subscriptions work of the Library has been computerized. Viz The Bibliographic details of Journals approved/ordered/invoiced/issues received from the Publishers and Suppliers are entered in the computer and are available for Online Access and hence, the students, Research Scholars and Faculty can know the availability of and the gaps in supply of any of the journals at any time. Similarly, 8220 Back Volume of Journals, 3550 thesis and 1450 U.N. Documents have been computerized with proper classified and catalogued respectively.

CD- Rom Data Bases

On the modernization of the University Library, UGC has sanctioned one crore of rupees. under UGC Library Special Grant out

of which an expenditure of Rs.31,33,759/- incurred towards the purchase of the Back volume of Journals We have purchased Eight CD-Rom Databases and two Current Contents Diskette Medium Data bases at the total cost of Rs 41,0000/-during the period of 1994-95and 1997. .In addition to this, For Modernizing and Automating Library operations and services 2 CD-ROM Network server with 7 CD-ROM drives which is used for browsing the abstracts and bibliographical information about the articles. To view the full text, 4 Nos of stand-alone PCs with 24 X CD-CD-ROM drives are used. Laser print-out facilities for retrieved full text articles and dot matrix print facility for print out of abstracts from CD-ROM data bases are available for users. All the computer peripherals have been acquired under UGC Library Special Grant.

Binding

Loose Journal issues pertaining to 8220 Nos of(Back) Volumes of Journals subscribed by the University Library during the past years were bound into volumes so far and entered into the computer for quick retrieval purpose for the use of Students, Research Scholars and Faculty.

Online Journals

The Print Medium Journals subscribed by the University Library are found to be inadequate to meet the information needs of the Researchers, Students and Faculty members of the University, Online Journals are subscribed to supplement the print journals to help the academic development of the university to a large extent. We have been subscribing "Science Direct" - database of journals published by ELSEVIER is available online from 2004 onwards Science Direct covers current seven Disciplines namely Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology (220), Chemistry (85), Computer Science(112), Earth and Planetary Sciences (88), Materials Science(95), Mathematics (75) and Physics and Astronomy (88) at the total cost of Rs.45,39,519/- for the year 2007. Similarly, E Journals 1995-2006 also available for online access. The Eight Subject Back files of Science Direct of Science direct namely Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology (108), Earth and Planetary Sciences(93), Economics,

Econometrics and Finance(59) Environmental Science(77), Inorganic Chemistry(9),Material Science(101), Organic Chemistry (8) and Physics General (70) subscribed at a one time cost Rs.63,96,140/- from January 2004 to perpetual. Annual Reviews (Electronic Back Volumes) Archives covering a comprehensive collection of Annual Reviews Back Volumes with content spanning from Biomedical Sciences, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences dating back to the very first volume of Annual Reviews in 1932 and upto 2002 on perpetual access subscribed on one time payment Rs.1.61 lakhs.

EBSCO Publishing Ltd., -online publishing company of U.S.A. provides access to the electronic journals databases. Viz. "Business Source Elite" and "Academic Search Elite".

The Academic Search Elite covers 1432 Abstracts and 2,063 Full Text Journals. The Business source Elite covers 687 Abstracts and 1128 Full Text Journals.

UGC Infonet consortiium- Journals

Pondicherry University Library has been provided online access with IP based access you E-Journals subscribed under UGC INFONET PROGRAMME by the INFLIBNET Centre of UGC and covers the total number of Journals 4053.

The Journal Reading Hall, Computer Browsing Area and U.N. Depository in the first floor of the Library Building have been fully Air-conditioned with a stand by Generator facility thanks to the UGC Specific Grant of Rs.50 Lakhs for the purpose. New Furniture, Windows Screen, Potted Plants, Painting for Furniture, Wall, and Flooring respectively in the Library have aesthetically made in the Journal Section.

The UGC 10th plan Library Grant of Rs.176.50 Lakhs for Books and Journals has been fully spent and has been exceeded by 57.64 Lakhs. The excess expenditure has been sanctioned by the Vice-chancellors out of the overall 10th plan Grant.

Library Orientation Training Programmes are being conducted by the University Librarian every year for orienting the newly admitted Students, Research Scholars and newly

appointed members of the Faculty of the University to the Resources of Library, methods of searching Information both online and offline different services available in the Library etc.

The Assistant Librarian of the University is giving Orientation training in latest Library Techniques and accessing of Library Resources especially electronic Resources, for the participants of all the UGC-Academic Staff College Orientation Programmes and Refresher Courses e.g. Pondicherry University Library.

In view of the excellent infrastructure facilities and peaceful and congenial atmosphere prevails in the Library. The NAAC Peer Team visited the University in 2006 for reassessment and reaccreditation of the University has appreciated the Library development and performance including Distinguished Visitors.

Conclusion

Library development can be studied in four stages. The ancient and medieval belong to traditional library concepts. The modern libraries belong to traditional libraries in an automated environment. The present libraries are drifting towards a digital environment. Though digital library is on the nascent stage, most of the libraries are trying their level best to convert most of their holdings into digital. The digital libraries help the readers to get the information quickly though the national and international level without delay and with limited cost. Nowadays without digital libraries, traditional libraries cannot satisfy all kinds of reader

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