

# Study on the Role of E-Learning in Academic Library

Hashim Mohamed

Librarian

T K M Institute of Management. Kollam. Kerala.

Library resources and services are integral to academic as a primary knowledge resource for both research and teaching. As new and the most advanced better information technologies have emerged, libraries have been early adopters of new information systems and services and have become institutional access points for digital knowledge resources such as online journals and special digital collections. Faculties and instructors have begun to adopt e-learning strategies as a part of their teaching repertoire, libraries have played a key role, helping them to find and organize resources to complement programs and courses. making use of e-learning, and to provide support as students work their way through their assignments. This article describes the e-learning habit of college students and their use of the academic library. The paper includes covers a brief introduction to what is e-learning, different technological tools used for e-learning and the necessity of e-learning in academic. The purpose of this study is to describe the role of the academic library in the e-learning environment.

## Key words

Library and Information Science, E-learning, Online education, Digital library, World Wide Web, Open Access.

## Introduction

To be effective, learning must be fast and integrated into day- to day work patterns. The need to reduce the cycle time for learning is fueling the growth of e-learning in many major industrial firms and academic and research institutions. Today e-learning has become an essential for higher education because traditional learning occurred time consuming and unresponsive to learner's immediate needs. By contrast e-learning promises lower cost of distribution, any time, anywhere access and just-

in-time learning that responds to learner's immediate needs. The results of this study reveal significant opportunities for academic librarians to improve services to students, and ultimately connect users with the resources the library offers. This study related to powerful recommendations for librarians on how they can influence students' web based information choices and to support librarians in their efforts to meet student's information needs

E-learning that covers adult-centered and work-related training is designed to increase user's knowledge and skills so they can become more productive, find and keep high-quality jobs, advance in their careers, and have a positive impact on their employers, families, and communities. This advent of technology combined with the educational needs of the people brought about significant changes in the delivery systems of teaching and learning. In this environment, the academic library is still searching for a permanent, comfortable and serviceable position that is nimble enough to be flexible, accessible and continually up-to-date with the wider university structure.

## E-Learning Syste

Several complementary and competing terms, concepts and definitions are described e-learning. E-learning is defined as 'technology-enable learning', which covers various concepts, including digital collaboration, virtual class rooms, web-based learning and computer-based learning. Contents in e-learning can be delivered in different ways, such as through internet, intranets, extranets, satellite broadcasts, Web-TV, e-books, e-journals and CD-ROMs (Watkins; 2005).

A number of other terms are also used to describe this mode of teaching and learning. They include online learning, virtual learning, distributed learning, network and web-based learning and distance learning. Fundamentally, they all refer to educational processes that utilize information and communications technology to

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## Reprint requests: Hashim Mohamed

Librarian

T K M Institute of Management. Kollam. Kerala

E-mail: hashimmds@gmail.com

mediate asynchronous as well as synchronous learning and teaching activities. In synchronous e-learning, classes are real-time, that is instructors and students are connected through a chat room or streaming audio or video. Such a set up simulates a traditional classroom. In asynchronous e-learning, a student can access pre-packaged training, based on his requirements and convenience.

The term e-learning comprises a lot more than online learning, virtual learning, distributed learning, networked or web-based learning. As the letter 'e' in e-learning stands for the word 'electronic', e-learning would incorporate all educational activities that are carried out by individuals or groups working online or offline, and synchronously or asynchronously via networked or standalone computers and other electronic devices (Naidu; 2006).

E-learning program includes the text and graphics of the course, exercises, testing and record keeping such as test scores and bookmarks. A sophisticated online learning program includes animations, stimulations, audio and video sequences, peer and expert discussion groups, online mentoring and communication with other education records.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objective of this paper is to :

- Study how e-learning is applied to education and research training.
- Examine how it acts as catalyst for changing the way of learning and teaching.
- Analyze the opportunities and affordances of e-learning in academic library.

### **Necessity of e-learning in Academic Institutions**

Education and training institutions are greatly interested in e-learning because of its perceived advantages. E-learning enables effective and quick delivery of learning content and experience, affording truly flexible learning anytime, anywhere. E-learning adds to the different modes by which conventional educational materials can be delivered to the learner consumer. E-learning course content and materials can be easily and instantly updated,

and they are not tied to individual instructors. Classes can be freed from the conventional physical constraints associated with location, buildings, parking and access. Most importantly, there is little extra cost involved in serving additional learners, once the initial infrastructure and developmental costs have been met. All this means that e-learners can be taught in very large numbers, but also in very small in classes or even as individuals. As a result, e-learning is a highly cost-effective and adaptable medium for small education and training institutions and small businesses with limited resources for large overhead.

An e-learning system can provide virtual classrooms. A large number of students dispersed at several distant centers can attend the classes conducted by an expert teacher at one station. Student's doubts can be cleared by the teacher since there is a facility for two-way interaction. This system has certain merits such as the availability of an expert teacher for thousand of student stationed in far-flung areas, uniformity of teaching-learning and testing styles and setting benchmarks in education.

E-learning is interactive and dynamic, through the setting is different from that in a colleges and schools. The capabilities and talent of the best teacher are made to benefit thousands of students stationed in various locations. Periodic assessment and evaluation of student and remedial steps are easily arranged.

### **Online Education**

Online education allows the study of higher education course through the electronic medium of the internet, using personal computer or other device of communication. Access to study materials reference papers, journal article and contact with tutor/fellow students are through the use of personal computer and telecommunication devices. In distance education, the teacher and the student are separated by geographical distance. Various gifts of technology are used to bridge the gap. Online colleges have emerged through at a slow pace in the west. They mostly focus on area such as management, accounts and law.

E-learning offers potentially universal access to "best-in-class" content, regardless of location, and it can transform education and training

from a passive consumption experience to a more flexible and learner-centric experience. In an e-learning environment, the traditional institution's previous role as full-service gatekeeper evolves into a gateway to content and an aggregator of services in support of the e-learner's largely self-guided progress.

### **E-learning in Academic libraries**

Academic libraries today are complex institutions with multiple roles and a host of related operations and services developed over the years. Yet their fundamental purpose has remained the same: to provide access to trustworthy, authoritative knowledge. Consequently, academic libraries have long stood unchallenged throughout the world as the primary providers of recorded knowledge and historical records. Within the context of higher education especially, when users wanted dependable information, they turned to academic libraries. Today, the library is relinquishing its place as the top source of inquiry. The reason that the library is losing its supremacy in carrying out of this fundamental role is due to the impact of digital technology. As digital technology has pervaded every aspect of our civilization, it has set forth a revolution not only in how we store and transmit recorded knowledge, historical records, and a host of other kinds of communication but also in how we seek and gain access to these materials.

Library resources and services are integral to academic as a primary knowledge resource for both research and teaching. As new and better information technologies have emerged, libraries have been early adopters of new information systems and services and have become institutional access points for electronic knowledge resources. Faculty and instructors have begun to adopt e-learning strategies as a part of their teaching repertoire, libraries have played a key role, helping to find and organize resources to complement programs and courses making use of e-learning, and to provide support as students work their way through their assignments.

### **Digital Library System**

Even before the Web was introduced, academic libraries had started to create digital libraries of trustworthy information. After the

appearance of the Web, many of these digital collections were made accessible through the Web, and their growth accelerated. As the volume of this digital information grew and the Web matured, respected voices began to articulate the emerging possibility of a wholly digital library. These visionaries foresaw a time in the near future when high-quality, accumulated knowledge of all formats would be available in digital form on the Web. This grand vision was becoming a reality, with the major formats that constitute the body of scholarly knowledge well on their way into digital form except monographic literature. Because of monographic publishers' reluctance to embrace digital technology and because of copyright restrictions, monographs appeared to be a roadblock to this vision. The cultural revolution in our information seeking habits simply drove through the monographic roadblock. This circumstance drove academic libraries to exploit every means available in the classroom or on the Web to teach students how to assess critically the Web-based information they were determined to use.

### **Internet (World Wide Web)**

In recent years our information-seeking behaviors and habits have been changing. Utilizing the Internet and powered by ever-improving search engines, the World Wide Web rapidly became the largest and easiest-to-use storehouse of information in the world. Almost one billion people currently use the Internet. Suspicion of the quality of information found on the Web did not discourage its attraction.

In December 2004, an astounding announcement was made by Google, as part of its effort to make offline information searchable online, that it is working with the libraries of Harvard, Stanford, the University of Michigan, and the University of Oxford as well as The New York Public Library to digitally scan books from their collections so that users worldwide can search them in Google. With as many as fifteen million volumes potentially included in the project, Google's announcement promised that a critical mass of trustworthy monographic literature, in less than a decade, to be added the burgeoning resources on the Web. In addition, the rival search engine Yahoo announced a new

multi-agency project, called the Open Content Alliance (<http://www.opencontentalliance.org/>) that would include scanning large numbers of monographs. Although these projects may not solve the problem of unreliable information on the Web, they will provide the Web with a substantial authoritative record (Campbell; 2006).

### **Open Access system**

“Open access” has recently become a topic of immense interest and debate among the library, publishing and scholarly communities. Open access means online access to scholarly publications on the internet, particularly peer-reviewed journal articles, without access charges to individual researchers or libraries. Open access dispensing with the financial, technical and legal barriers that are designed to limit access to valuable research article to paying customer. In open access, the researcher retains the copy right to his/ her research article, but consent in advance to its unrestricted reading, downloading, copying and sharing by any other user. Such a model is stark contrast to existing models of scholarly communication in that many of them most widely-used peer-reviewed journals are accessible to libraries primarily through expensive bulk package plans, forcing libraries to pay huge amount for the resources their faculties require. Open access includes many publication and distribution schemes. E-journals that are published, distributed electronically, and subsidized by universities, government agencies, and volunteer organizations are the most common.

Academic libraries might go about the task of publishing scholarly material in a number of ways, among which are cultivating and managing their own electronic journals, and supporting an institutional repository. One of the key goals of the institutional repository is to capture the intellectual output of an institution and make it available via a single interface, so that one no longer needs to search different websites in order to find their research. A single point of access, search, and organization of scholarly materials within the institution would be value to the communities served by academic libraries, and there are certainly other values of institutional repositories. The implementation of

institutional repositories may be the easiest step; academic librarians must be able to persuade faculty, many of whom are for a variety of reasons quite reluctant, to contribute their prime research output.

### **E-journal**

E-journal is a new paradigm, distinct and different from print. Today, most of all educational and research journals are published in the electronic form. It is vital recourse for academic library. Its real benefits are convenience of access and searching that was unimaginable with print. Access from citation to full-text is seamless. User can move from article to article through cited reference links. For example, while browsing a current article in the latest issue of the journal, if reference to an old article of relevance is mentioned, user can click and view that article instantly. User can search within and across the texts of the articles of several journals. And, user can search from any where, home or office or while traveling as long as enjoy the right of access.

E-journaling provides an opportunity for learners to express opinion, ideas and concerns about the course materials that would not shared. The intellectual exchange allows faculty members to encourage, guide and engage students in an academic venue. E-journaling builds a rapport between faculty and students that contributes to positive learning experiences and successful outcomes. Although effective in a number of educational settings, e-journaling proves essential for successful interaction in web-based courses where materials are delivered completely online (Phipps 2005).

### **CD-ROMs/ DVDs**

A CD-ROM database can provide access to more than 500 MB of data on a single 3.5 inch optical disk. A growing number of databases are becoming available in CD-ROM format. The power of CD-ROM technology has made it possible for libraries to provide affordable and fixed-cost database services for its users. The widespread use of CD-ROM in libraries has not only significantly improved the way in which library user access information but has also created new challenges for library professionals.

The advantage for students in using CD-ROM is that they can control the pace of learning and even the direction of learning. Searching CD-ROM at no cost is another advantage for students because these groups of user normally cannot afford mediated searching. CD-ROM searching also significantly improves productivity. Importantly, the power of microcomputers and CD-ROM technologies can now provide the global community. Further, faculty and researchers in the underdeveloped countries can easily access the updated world information through CD-ROM and be a part of the global academic community.

### **Limitations of E-learning**

The forgoing study emphasis that anyone attempting e-learning should necessarily develop skills in handling digital material. Computer proficiency and efficiency in internet are the prime requirements. Often students imagine that whatever available on the net can be easily found through search engines. This is a misconception. The plight of a student who looks for specific information on a particular topic may be to that of a stranger pushed into a dense forest and asked to locate a particular tree. Once students in the wrong path, they may wander endlessly without ever reaching their target. A popular search engine offers 112 million sites for oxygen and 4460 million sites for management. The art of narrowing down the number of sites to suit our specific need calls for considerable knowledge and skill in browsing

E-learning could become boring text-based course if it not designed properly and e-learners experienced loneliness as they could not interact with other students. As it isolated students, e-

learning had negative effect on team building and sociability.

### **Conclusion**

E-learning is more efficient because learners gained knowledge, skills and attitudes faster than traditional learning methods. This efficiency is likely to translate into improved motivation and performance. A number of creative and useful services have evolved within academic libraries in digital age: providing quality learning spaces, creating metadata, offering virtual reference services, choosing and managing resources, collecting and digitalizing archival materials and maintaining digital repositories. E-learners have demonstrated increased retention rates and better utilization of content, resulting in better achievements of knowledge. Digital learning offers learners the flexibility to select from a large menu of media options to accommodate their diverse learning style.

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