Impact of E-resources and Services in Academic Law Libraries in India

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Abstract

This paper discuss the need for an incorporated electronic resources and services for academic law library users; e- resources availability from the web and advantage of e- resources and also discussed with types of e-journals e-databases and examines the interface requirements in legal education. It concludes by looking to the future in research and development of useful system.

Introduction

Simple literacy suggests that 'Education' is nothing but formative experience or development of mental characteristics. Elite literacy enunciates that education is the "formative experience in the development of character or mental power" (by human being) but the celestial truth is that education is not the unique province of human race only.

However education is the primordial move in the acquisition of knowledge. Which may subsequently be solidified in to enlightenment, such is the eternity of the education in human life and it is a pious potion for a noble and robed intellectual. It is axiomatic that education is the best friend of oneself. If you befriend knowledge with the help of education you are said to have been equipped for ultimate realization in the words of Joseph Addison what sculpture is to a block of marble education is to a human soul' Thomas Kemps once said "nowhere in the world could one find peace, expect in a corner with a small book" True books are the soul of education no doubt.

Sanctimonious is law and legal education and more sanctimonious are law colleges one cannot dream of a peaceful society dehorns the law. The education in law is the summit of the multi based pyramid of education after all law does nothing more than giving the relation between the authority and power (Madhavi, Ravulapati. 2007)

Prof Meyers S. Mc Douglas an inspiring law teachers emphasises on this aspects holding that in any country, it is the function of legal educations to shape and transmit more fundamentals, community perspective about the relation of authority and naked power to train specialties in all the particular skills, necessary to the effective management of processes, of authorities, decisions and to assist both in the clarifications. Of basic community policies about the shaping and sharing of all values and in the inventions of institutions and procedures appropriate to the recurring of such clarifying policies.

Significance of Law College Libraries

The primary mission of the law college library is to meet the information needs of the faculty and students of the institution it supports. In addition to their role in educating future lawyers, law colleges are the major producers of scholarly literature in law and rely on academic law libraries for both the primary and secondary materials needed for research and publication. Beyond support for the core functions of legal education and

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research, the specific missions of law college libraries vary depending on the size and missions of law colleges of different types. Differences among law colleges result in differences among their libraries in collection size and composition, staffing and services offered, and additional clienteles served.

In the back drop of relevance of law and legal education in contemporary society in post Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation era, one should understand the Institutions imparting legal education. Library in a legal education imparting institution plays an important role. The strength of legal education depends upon the strength of library which is metamorphosed in cyber age.

Provision of information in electronic formats is becoming even more important than the traditional information services in today's context. People want to get identify information in the speediest way possible. To meet the rapidly changing needs of users, libraries have started providing electronic access to wide variety of resources including full text article of journals (Rekha, T.P. 2000)

Meaning of E-Source

Any electronic product that delivers a collection of data, it may be text referring to full text databases, Electronic journals, image collection, and other multimedia collections. These may be delivered on CD-ROM, on tape, via the internet and so on.

Definition

The University of Glasgow defines the term E-Resource as any resources that is available over the internet can be called an E-Resources.

"A digital version of a print journal like electronic publication with no print counterpart made available via the web, e-mail or other means of internet access. Some web-based e-journals are graphically modeled on the print version. The raising cost of print journal subscription has led many academic libraries to explore e- alternatives. Dictionaries

of e-journals are available online (Sarasvathy, P and Giddaiah, D. 2007).

Objectives

➢ To find out the frequency of using library for E-Resources

➢ To find out the purpose for which E-Resources is used

➢ To find our whether library staff give orientation and extend their help to use E-Resource facility

➢ To find out the impact of E-Resources

Advantages of E-Sources

➢ The data occupies less space and can be replicated easily and made secure electronically,

➢ The data can be made available immediately through communication networks like internet to anyone, anywhere and,

➢ Provides enormous search speed and facility.

Selection and Evaluation of E-Sources

During the last few years, documents have begun to appear on the Internet. As a result, information specialists from all over the world have started to evaluate electronic sources of data, applying standards both different and the same as those used for print data. The main concern is to achieve the highest quality of access and information throughout the www virtual library. Unfortunately, ultimate standards have yet to be agreed, even though some criteria do already exist. It has not been possible to adapt traditional evaluation criteria because the very newness itself of electronic sources demands new standards. The Internet carries both non-professional and professional information. There is a distinct difference between a "site" and a "database". An Internet "site" can be any URL in the Internet, which contains a document, a collection of

data, or just an index to some sources gathered by some good-hearted persons.

The process of monitoring and evaluating databases is a question of content expertise and access and requires certain skills. They range from weighing and authenticating documents found, identifying value-added features and engaging in establishing database policies, understanding copyright issues, maintaining links or implementing mirror sites and dealing with different languages and various formats. Some consider that "source evaluation is an art," which can only be achieved by first acquiring an extraordinary level of understanding (Natarajan, M. 2007).

Impact of Electronic Technologies on Libraries

It is obvious that electronic technologies have already had considerable impact. Virtually all libraries, at least in the most-developed countries, are now members of networks that greatly facilitate the location of sources of information and the gaining of access to them. Card catalogues have largely been replaced by online catalogues and these are being expanded through the addition of materials not previously included. The whole idea of what a catalogue should be is changing; it is no longer seen as a tool bounded by the collections of a single library but one that reveals the availability of resources in a network of libraries or even one that is essentially a gateway to universe of information resources in printed, electronic or other forms. Use of terminals or work stations to access databases of various kinds is now routine for many libraries, and most now add electronic resources to their collections in CD-ROM or other forms.

Theses developments have occurred with surprising speed, suggesting that the changes of the next decade will be more dramatic and rapid than those of the past decade. That this electronic revolution in libraries has occurred, of course, is due to developments over which the library profession has had little direct control, most obviously the growth of electronic publishing and of networks that facilitate scholarly communication

Electronic Books (E-Books)

E-books are nothing but the electronic version of printed books. In addition to textual matters the e-books consist of hyperlinks, search facilities and multimedia capabilities. E-books compilers compile also the source files into an easy to distribute life format like HTML, PDF and RTF files. In other words, an e-books has electronic text and that text is showed to the readers visually. The electronic text is saved into a floppy disk, transferred into a CD-ROM, downloaded from the Internet or built into a palm – sized digital reader project.

A number of electronic publishers have emerged: plus well-known publishers of print materials, including Oxford University Press and Princeton University Press, have started to experiment with electronic publishing Electronic publishers. Many of the electronic books or electronic publishers' Web sites freely permit and encourage readers to provide feedback on works, often directly to the author rather than to the publisher.

There is a growing trend for vendors to work directly with patrons, without any involving the library. Users may establish their own accounts, charge services to credit cards or pay by a prearranged method, and have requested materials delivered directly to them by fax, e-mail, etc.

Electronic Journals (E-Journals)

Type of E- Journals

1. Online Journals

2. Offline Journal

3. Network Journal

As per report published in 'Nature' (No. 397, p. 194-95, 1999) "a journal without a web version is now rare and probably endangered". A journal contains intellectual works of the researchers relating to current information on a particular subject field. An e-journal is processed, published and

distributed all over the world by electronic network. E-journal started with the full text databases offered by Dialog in 1980s. Dialog provided with only ASCII files of the journals which exposed off the diagrams, photo, graphs, etc.

Electronic publishing has led to a new era of communications and information sharing. Electronic journals have helped publishers and scholars to disseminate information much more quickly than was previously possible. Initially, electronic journals were seen by many as a passing fad. Many in the library profession considered them problematic and inappropriate for library collections since they presented problems in terms of acquisitions, subscriptions, cataloguing, and archiving.

Franks (1993a) offers several reasons why electronic publishing was adopted by scholarly research journals long before it was used for other kinds of publications.

➢ The intended audience uses the Internet more than the general population and is familiar with using documents in an electronic form;

➢ Libraries are experiencing extreme financial hardship and cutbacks in funding;

➢ There is a strong move for scholars to find less costly ways to promote their work.

Although Franks' reasoning is valid and continues to hold true, electronic journals have not become as central to scholarly publishing and libraries as some forward thinking individuals might have anticipated. (Chandra Biswas, Bidhan. Bhandani K.Ghush 2004).

Characteristics of Electronic Journals

The term 'electronic journal' is ambiguous, and it is not always clear whether the producers of a given title are referring to a distribution format for a print journal, an electronic archive of a print journal, or a journal published exclusively in an electronic format. Electronic journals come in a variety of styles and formats, much like their print counterparts. Some journals attempted to solve this problem by including line numbers at various points throughout the journal. Surprisingly, a number of electronic journals continue to use this practice. Users of early electronic journals often printed hard copies, and many Libraries preferred to provide paper printouts of the electronic journals rather than access to the actual online version. Each generation shares a set of common characteristics.

First-Generation Electronic Journals often are

➢ Simple file structure (one file equals one article, or one file equals one issue);

➢ Published by individual or groups of scholars;

➢ Disseminated by e-mail and the implied audience is the individual subscriber;

➢ Copyright restrictions are usually waived to the extent that proper attribution is made.

Second-Generation Electronic Journals are often

➢ HTML-based or use the Web to disseminate specially formatted issues;

➢ Issues or articles include graphics, multimedia, or links to other Internet resources;

➢ File structures are less hierarchical, and there is less uniformity in structure from one title to another.

➢ Users are notified by e-mail when new issues are available, and may retrieve issues from the server.

Electronic journals have undergone a dramatic transformation in style and format since their initial appearance in the early 1990s. Many now have full-colour Web pages with an attractive and easy to use layout. Despite the fact that layout and presentation of electronic journals have greatly improved, and access has been facilitated by the Web and online archives, users still may prefer to print hard copies of selected issues and articles to reading from a computer screen.

Legal Data Bases

Electronic fee-based databases

❖ Lexis Nexis is one of the leading providers of comprehensive information and business solutions to professionals in a variety of areas—legal, risk management, corporate, government, law enforcement, accounting and academic. The database provides access to 5 billion searchable documents from more than 32,000 legal, news and business sources.

❖ Westlaw is Thompson West's online legal research service. It provides quick, easy access to a collection of statutes, case law materials, public records, and other legal resources, journals and law reviews published from all around the world. The primary legal materials are available on jurisdictions of UK, USA and Commonwealth countries.

❖ Manupatra is an Indian legal information database comprising legal and business module. It includes case updates from the Supreme Court and all High courts, orders of tribunals, 1100 Central Acts with all amendments incorporated, notification circulars of 36 Government of India ministries including SEBI and RBI updated daily, full-text of Bills in Parliament and ordinances, agreements and drafts, committee reports, stamp duty, court fees, court rules, etc.

❖ INDLAW is an Internet provider of research modules relating to Indian legal, tax, business and regulatory issues. Indlaw is part of the Indian law online project which was launched in April 1997 as a collaborative exercise between professionals and academicians based in U.K, and in India to build an electronic legal library to enable solicitors, advocates, students and clients to have access to information on various primary and secondary legal documents like the constitutional texts, parliamentary debates, case law, parliamentary and state enactments and delegated legislation in both India and the U.K.

❖ EJurix is a collection of law information in India covering more than 2, 5,000 full-text judgments. It covers all Supreme Court, High Court and Tribunal decisions reported till now for the modules covered.

❖ Hein Online is an image-based collection of legal periodicals. Each volume starts from volume one. Most of the titles are from USA and UK. Legal Pundits is an Internet-based legal and regulatory information services

❖ World Bank Resource Online-World Bank e-Library is an electronic portal of the World Bank's full-text collection of books, reports and other documents on social and economic development.

Technology Management

Law librarians have been working with electronic legal research resources for over 30 years, most notably since Lexis emerged in the 1970s as the pioneering full-text research database. Thus, technology has been integral to legal bibliography for so long that law libraries have naturally been at the forefront of the introduction of computer systems into American law colleges. In most law colleges, the library was the first department to designate specific technology responsibilities to one of its staff members. Although many different models now exist, some where law college information systems and the law library are combined and some where they are separate, it is still generally recognized that library staff are among the most technologically capable in the entire college. Consequently, these highly skilled and specialized professionals have a well developed perspective on when it is appropriate to rely on online or CD-ROM legal research resources and when it is best to turn to resources in print or microform formats. Law librarians, therefore, are the best equipped to guide students, faculty, and support staff in making choices about which formats to use in which research situations. Because of their expertise in both legal doctrine and legal bibliography, law librarians can distinguish between the factual and conceptual aspects

of research problems and can assess the impact of format and resource selections in addressing these different types of issues. Law students, faculty, and staff also frequently seek law librarians' assistance on hardware and software issues and their advice about electronic research, computer purchases, and Internet connectivity (Ruth Levor)

The law college's computer labs are usually located in the law library and maintained by Librarians and staff members. Research classes, often taught by librarians, are regularly scheduled in these labs. This training goes beyond expanding the students' Westlaw and Lexis skills. Students are introduced to many specialized databases, some licensed through special subscriptions, some available to the public but not widely known. They are trained in tax research, foreign law research, location of treaties and international documents, and creation of legislative histories using online sources. They are also trained to assess the credibility and authority of these sources and to weigh the efficiency and costs of online research against the other information formats available to them in the Library.

Conclusion

The law college library, like other institutions faces a variety of challenges from the impacts of technology and globalization, as well as from the rapid rate of continuous change on all fronts. In many ways, the law library's ancient mission remains similar to what it has been, while the means to accomplishing that mission have changed. The responses of academic law libraries to a changing environment can be seen both in the increased awareness given to building stronger collections in foreign and international law and in non-law materials, and in efforts to improve access to digital information through electronic publication projects and development of domestic mirror sites for legal

information held outside the India. In addition, many academic law librarians have taken leadership roles for general technology development and implementation within their law colleges.

Usually, highly skilled and specialized law library professionals provide law faculty with the utmost in customized research support for their teaching and scholarship, a level of research support that is unavailable in general academic libraries.

In the present rapidly evolving technological environment, the law librarians are expected to play a proactive role in providing guidance and reaching out the Users. They must evaluate the quality of print and electronic information, teach legal research methodology and be seen as core participants in the mission of their institutions. To perform a new role effectively, Law librarians must keep pace with the breakneck speed of emerging technologies and adjust to the new research needs and information use behaviors of users of legal education and profession.

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