REVIEW ARTICLE

Effect of Electronic Media on Libraries

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Abstract

Electronic media/Resources are being increasingly used for various purposes in our day to day life activities. Right know almost libraries are using variety of electronic media in their libraries to reach out to users need. If libraries do not change with time by harnessing new technologies to offer services in innovative ways to meet the changing needs of their patrons, they will become obsolete. This article studies the effect of electronic media on libraries.

Keywords: Electronic Library; Electronic Media; Information & communication; Technology; Internet.

Introduction

Today people are living in the age of information Explosion. A lager amount of information is being generated every movement. The ability to collect, store and disseminate this large amount of Information needs application of new technologies. Thanks to the advance Electronic media which could even rearrange select, marshal, and transform enormous qualities of information at phenomenal speed are at the human disposal.

Electronic media is applied widely in all human activities these days. Libraries are not an exception to this. Hence the effect of electronic media is immensely felt on the Library and information centers. As a matter of fact libraries and information centers being part and parcel of communication system, are more impacted by the electronic media. Ever since the information sources are accessible online through the Internet, the behavior of the library users in terms of their information seeking,

and use has drastically changed. In fact this could be perceived as the very first and foremost, conspicuous impact of electronic media on the libraries.

Libraries are now introducing new services by converting existing services innovatively using latest Information and communication technology. Using of electronic media to deliver services in libraries innovatively is explored to reach a larger audience anytime, and geographically located anywhere.

Reading habits of library users is declining due to various electronic media. People are more interested to check out games in computer or chat on mobile devices, or watch various programs on television. Internet is now a panacea to all problems. Visits to the library are on the decline. Librarians since time immemorial have adapted changed with times and have always catered to changing needs of user. From being mere custodians they have now evolved into providers, disseminators and moderators in the electronic era. Librarians are using their prowess to innovatively use their skills combined with latest technologies to attract and sustain library use base.

Electronic media has a tremendous impact on the society at large and has brought about information

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revolution. Electronic media are used for storage, processing, access and dissemination resulting in a paradigm shift in library administration and management. Electronic media is assisting libraries by increasing their efficiency and effectiveness by providing information in all its dimensions. With developments like electronic publishing, Internet, Web publishing, online journals and books have brought the benefits of implementing electronic media in libraries, as well as problems and prospects of concern to librarian.

Definitions

According to Wikipedia, Electronic media are media that use electronics or electromechanical energy for the end-user (audience) to access the content. This is in contrast to static media (mainly print media), which today are most often created electronically, but don't require electronics to be accessed by the end-user in the printed form. The primary electronic media sources familiar to the general public are better known as video recordings, audio recordings, multimedia presentations, slide presentations, CD-ROM and online content. Most new media are in the form of digital media. However, electronic media may be in either analog or digital format. Although the term is usually associated with content recorded on a storage medium, recordings are not required for live broadcasting and online networking. Any equipment used in the electronic communication process (e.g. television, radio, telephone, desktop computer, game console, handheld device) may also be considered electronic media.

Various Electronic Media
- Computers/Laptops
- E-readers
- Handheld devices including but not limited to PDA, ipods etc
- Internet access via computes, mobiles etc
- Mobiles
- Others including Television, Radio, Fax, Telephone

The first few mentioned electronic media are used mostly by users so having most impact on libraries. Radio, Television, Fax and landlines or telephones may not have direct impact, so they are only mentioned. Use of electronic media requires certain hardware and software, with minimum infrastructure requirements.

Computers/Laptops

Electronic systems include desktop computers and laptops. These are useful for librarians to process resources procured for the library in the library management software. OPACs can also be installed for users to access. These systems when on network, provide access to OPAC in campus and if OPAC hosted online can be accessed through Internet. Majority of libraries are automated.

E-readers

E-readers are portable, low-power, high-resolution devices specifically designed to display digital versions of written material from books, magazines, newspapers, and other printed sources. Some e-readers also provide access to electronic documents like blogs, websites, news feeds, and the like [2].

Fairleigh Dickinson University Library has a E-reader loan program, and acquired several Amazon Kindles, Sony eReaders and iPod Touches for use by FDU students, faculty and staff [3].

The University of Birmingham now provides access to many eBooks [4].

Heights Libraries Cleveland Heighs - University Heights has NOOK Title List - These titles are already preloaded on the NOOK when it is checked out [5].

Handheld devices

PDA & Mobile Devices Reference Library. Librarian gives list of resources related to various platforms of handheld computers currently available (includes Palm, and similar devices; Smart phones with data management features, tablet PCs, other) [6].

National University of Singapore (NUS) provides Medical Library Electronic Resources Accessible on Mobile / Handheld Devices / Smartphones [7].

Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library at the Columbia University Medical Center and pdaMD.com offers PDA-product reviews, news and lists of useful general and medical sites. A comprehensive site for shopping for handheld devices, software and accessories. http://www.pdamd.com/[8].

Internet

The impact of Internet on libraries is that it's easy to make electronic payments for procuring E-books and journals either from publisher, author or consortium. Library resource sharing, document delivery etc are also easily done. Information is accessed speedily via internet irrespective of time or place. Librarians can connect with user using twitter or facebook or any number of applications online.

Impact of Internet on users is that he/she can access the library or any other globally available information resource either free or at a price through the gateway. So user need not only depend on library resources. A user can access the most current information.

Mobiles

Most of students own a cell phone now-a-days. These cell phones come with range of specifications which users buy depending on the usage and price. Normal phones can be used to call and update a users reference query. Or the librarian can use the SMS facility to update reservations or overdue books to users. With smart phones or web enabled phones the librarians can connect with user using twitter or face book or any number of social networking applications online.

Catalogue UBL: A beta version for the Leiden University Libraries mobile version is available in Dutch. Via this site you can easily search the Catalogue on your mobile device, you can log in and request books or extend loans. You will find the locations and opening hours of our libraries. By clicking one of the telephone numbers you call us directly. Furthermore, you can follow the homepage news of our normal website, and our tweets. Not all pages of our normal website are suitable for mobile applications [9].

Ebscohost Mobile gives access to several databases, such as Psyc INFO, ERIC and Academic Search Premier. Ebscohost Mobile is a web app [10].

Google Books is Google's project to make every book findable, searchable and, where possible, accessible online through digitisation. The Google Books Mobile site is a web app [11].

JSTOR: Ejournal portal which contains the full text of over a thousand academic journals. The JSTOR app is a web app. Students and staff of Leiden University can access the full text versions of the articles found in this database outside the university network as well, through their ULCN account [12].

Electronic Apps for Libraries

Apps, or native applications, are small programmers for smart phones. They allow you to check your email, Twitter, and Face book, surf the web, listen to music etc. There are various apps or applications developed for libraries.

Library books can be easily shelved with ShelvAR. ShelvAR is a augmented reality program that can read all the call numbers, and can determine if they are in the proper order. It is being developed by a team of researchers at Miami University's Augmented Reality Research Group [13].

Sony's Library Finder - powered by Over Drive, you can find public libraries and check out books [14].

TRACpac - For libraries using Polaris ILS [15].

Local books App that can locate closest bookstores and libraries that have an entry on Library Thing [16].

Your Library By Yellowhead Regional Library: Where "Your Library for iPad is the coolest and easiest way to search the combined catalogue of over 150 libraries with holdings of nearly 3 million books, DVDs and other material. Access to your favorite books, CDs and DVDs just got a whole lot faster!".

Prowl - Use this for roving librarians who are equipped with Iphones/Itouches, users can summon librarians for help.

More apps are listed at "Top 30 Library iPhone Apps".

The only problem is that the Librarian should ensure that apps for each platform iPhone, Android, Symbian, Blackberry etc are created.

Effect of electronic Media on Libraries

Use of electronic media in libraries is a paradox situation where there is no need for maintenance by librarians but the same reason also gives librarian time to extend human assistance to users.

Electronic libraries expand the horizon of information gathering, increase perception, processing, comprehension and understanding of information by users through the compactly, concisely, less ambiguously and directly stored information and provide for interaction with media as well as manipulation of information.

Positive Effect of Electronic Media on Libraries

1. Library will be everywhere
2. Library will be user centric
3. Technosavvy environment
4. Economical
5. Save time of librarian and user
6. Covers vast geographical area
7. Outreach services to patrons
8. No limit on physical proximity to use resources
9. Content for more than one device
10. Constant change: more updated information. Latest technology
11. Invites participation from user. Content consumer to content creator. OPAC is created by librarian but metadata creation can also be input by user.
12. Library has no barriers: Mobile devices will be used more.
13. User need to have understanding of subject knowledge, access to media and with little guidance or training from librarian.
14. By and large, electronic media/libraries aid all types of education - formal, nonformal, adult, vocational, distance and higher education.
15. Special groups like blind benefit
16. Value adding
17. Keyword search
18. Off campus access possible
19. Economically poor people can access electronic media at public libraries

Most important of all is that people generally perceive the utility of electronic libraries as quite high and there is no need for strong motivation to use them.

Negative Effects of Electronic Media on Libraries

1. Reading habit coming down: Electronic media is encroaching and systematically eroding the readership of already under-utilised printed resource in libraries.
2. Costs
3. Compatibility
4. Copyright
5. Lack of standardisation
6. Ill effects on users
7. Susceptible to damage
8. Target for theft
9. Loss is significant when all data is stored in one device
10. Content compatibility
11. File formats
12. Most economically poor people cannot afford most of these expensive gadgets
13. No human connection between librarian and user

Changing role of librarian with introduction of electronic media in to libraries

Development of electronics from unveiling of ENIAC to the present day notebook has come a long way. The role of librarian also has changed and evolved over a period of time with introduction of new media. Entertainment media has always overshadowed library use. New methods were adopted by innovative librarians. When Radio was introduced, librarians adopted it by giving information about reading habits on radio talks. With majority of people accepted television and entertainment value of this media had overshadowed the informational, educational values.

Librarians should be aware of various concerns that are associated with electronic media including but not limited to copyright and licensing. They should evaluate and asses before implementing by phase wise planning so that resources are utilised using the new technologies. Proper training and orientation should be provided to the library staff to handle the users.

Conclusions

Libraries use Modern Electronic technology to reach out to users who are busier with other informational and entertainment avenues. Electronic devices and electronic media assist librarians to extend innovative services to library users. The role of librarian has undergone a huge change from custodian to being a 21st century librarian who is not bound by any local, regional, national or international boundaries and navigates

the global resources and acts as a facilitator, promoter, instructor, trainer, consultant, researcher, supporter, moderator etc using the latest Web technologies and electronic applications to reach out to those users who have various limitations on their time and movement. Librarians have always strived to overcome all those limitations expressed by the users to visit the library or use the resources. Most economically poor people cannot afford these electronic devices as they are expensive. Librarians should strive to include the latest electronic devices and electronic media to extend services to users. Financial support from the Management is most required to acquire these electronic media if librarian wants to make a difference. Librarian also benefits immensely as he/she connected personally and professionally with librarians all over the world.

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