

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND SPECIAL LIBRARY

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Abstract

Libraries play a significant role in the extension and modification of knowledge which is increasing day by day. The growing desires for knowledge management have convinced all aspect and purpose of a library. Knowledge management requires complementary well-organized methods of handling, rapid transfer of information(s) with personnel(s) and their behavior. It requires library users' centered growth of information services & systems which is made especially at the individual level. As expert person in the libraries have an idea of collecting and systematize available information. Due to expansion of information technology (IT) and its application in the field of Library and Information Science, the perception of document management has been modified to information management and yet again changes towards knowledge management (KM). This paper deals with the concept of knowledge, knowledge management, objectives, needs and the role of library and information professionals in organizing the knowledge and information in the digital environment and special library.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Information Management, Information Technology, Library and information professionals, Special library.

1.0 Introduction

In this current digital atmosphere, knowledge has turn out to be a key resource. Faced with competition and increasingly dynamic environment, organizations are beginning to realize that there is a vast and largely untapped asset diffused around in the organization – knowledge (Gupta, Iyer & Aronson, 2000) [7]. To provide efficient services to the user(s), the traditional functions of the special libraries are collection, storage, processing, disseminating and utilization of information(s). These Libraries should improve their services, functions and become learning organizations to effectively meet the needs of the user(s). The changing role of the librarians as knowledge managers emphasizes the need to acquire new skills and knowledge. In the present era of information technology (IT), information and knowledge have become important component in the society. Knowledge Management (KM) is an emerging field and is a complex process, which deals with creation, acquisition, packaging and function(s) of knowledge.

2.0 Knowledge

According to Collins English Dictionary, 2004, knowledge is defined as, “The facts, feelings or experiences known by a person or group of people” [10].

Knowledge is an invention of a person's experience and defined as the management of creating, supporting, and applying and modernizes knowledge resources of an organization as well as its relationship with user and provider. This can be broadly divided into two types:

1. Explicit knowledge (documented), and

2. Tacit knowledge (subjective)

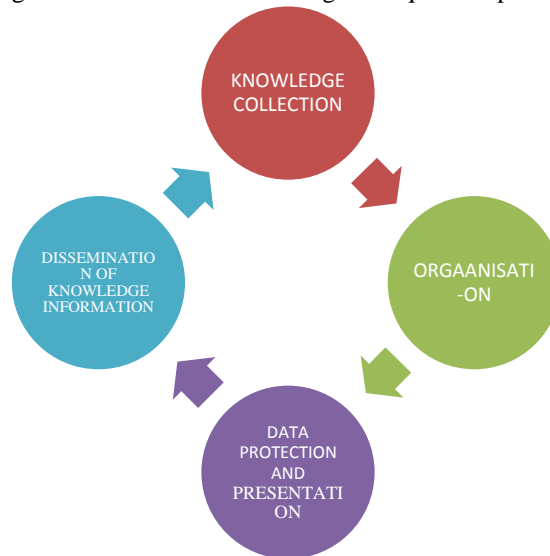
3.0 Definitions of Knowledge Management

Knowledge management (KM) is the process of capturing, developing, sharing, and effectively using organizational [knowledge](#). It refers to a multi-disciplined approach to achieve organizational objectives by making the best use of knowledge [5].

According to Grey (1996) “Knowledge management is a collaborative and integrated approach to create, capture, organize, access and use of an enterprise’s intellectual assets [6].

A knowledge management system is a virtual repository for relevant information(s) which is critical to tasks performed daily by organizational knowledge workers [11].

Knowledge Management is also a process, which deals with knowledge creation, acquisition, packaging and application or recycling of knowledge. It consists of the following subsequent steps:



Knowledge Management cycle

- Knowledge Collection
- Organization
- Data protection and presentation
- Dissemination of Knowledge Information [10].

4.0 Components of Knowledge Management

The knowledge management environment is centered on three components, which are:

1. People - Technology experts
Knowledge professionals
Knowledge managers
2. Process - Creation, capturing, storing, sharing, application, and
3. Technology - Hardware and software packages (Robertson and Brun, 2005) [1].

5.0 Principles of Knowledge Management

According to Thomas H. Davenport principles of knowledge management are:

- Means improving knowledge process
- Access in only the beginning but never ends however is expensive
- Is highly political and requires a knowledge contract, knowledge managers

- Also requires hybrid solution of people and technology
- Benefits more from maps than model and also from market than from hierarchies
- Sharing and using knowledge are often unnatural act [10].

6.0 Objectives of Knowledge Management in Libraries

In order to take the most suitable decisions, the accurate information(s) should be delivered to the desired person(s) quickly and at an earliest possible.

- Broadly the objectives are as follows:
- Encourage to compile, store, process, and disseminate knowledge and scientific research
- Associate affiliation between library and users
- Intellectual property rights in information technology era shall be properly protected
- Knowledge repositories shall be built and handled as an asset

Systematize the importance of knowledge and work for the betterment of effective research [10].

Knowledge management involves a planned agreement to improve the organization's effectiveness, as well as its enrichment. The aim of knowledge management as a procedure is to advance the organization's ability to implement its core process more efficiently. According to Davenport et al. (1998) the four objectives of knowledge management systems in practice are defined as:

1. Create knowledge repository
2. Improve knowledge access
3. Enhance knowledge environment
4. Manage knowledge as an asset [3].

Knowledge management is to always improve an organization's performance through the improvement and sharing the same throughout the organization. Knowledge management is also a set of practical activities to help an organization to create, assimilate, disseminate, and apply its knowledge.

7.0 Special Libraries

Special library has been defined variously. According to C. Lal & K Kumar's book *understands basic of library and information science, first and second paper*. "The special library is distinctly deferent from a national or academic library. But it is very nearest to public library. Other types of libraries serve multiple objectives and perhaps only objective of a special library is to prove information in support of the objectives of its parent organization, most of them being units of larger organization. Specials libraries mostly are established in research and development establishment, government department, directorate, bureaus, industrial and business organization learned societies, professional association, etc. thus we can say that special libraries are established to serve a particular group of users or an activities".(C. Lal & K Kumar 2005). A special library is a library that providing specialized information resources on a particular area of subject. Example:-

- Libraries of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)
- Library of national physical laboratory (New Delhi)
- Library of Indian Institute of science, Bangalore
- Indian council of Forestry Research and Education in India (ICFRE)
- ICMR and others libraries

8.0 Need for Knowledge Management in Special Libraries

Due to appearance of knowledge management has made remarkable prospects available to libraries, which can facilitate to meet the challenges. The information explosion technology in the digital era has caused remarkable changes in the intellectual communication system wherein the libraries are treasure house of human knowledge. The two types of knowledge as explained above are Explicit Knowledge (documented), which is stationary and expressed in words, and Tacit Knowledge (subjective), which is dynamic and difficult to share and both should be managed by realizing its need and significance in libraries [12]. The budgets of the libraries are being reduced on

(day by day) each coming day resulting to limited access of required sources of information, shortage of staff and required space. The solutions to overcome these deficiencies for successful libraries have to be carefully evaluated considering the needs of its user(s) and demand co-operative acquisition plans.

The competent use of employees and development of capabilities and effectiveness of the technical services are the factual focus of knowledge management in educational libraries [1].

9.0 Role of Librarians in a Knowledge-Based Society

In order to provide multidisciplinary services to the personal and professional needs of the library users, the conventional role of library and information science professionals was to gather, development, distribute, accumulate and make use of such information(s).

Information and knowledge are two different aspects of a person's ability to grasp due to which the digital information based society is not the same as a knowledge-based society. As such there is a difference in both the types which can be defined as:

In information based society the librarian deals with subjects, formats, documents and collections whereas in knowledge based society besides dealing with the people the characteristics of a librarian is cooperation, critical thinking, initiative, intelligence and individual and group learning.

Knowledge personnel become key resources hence libraries and librarians are essential pillars in this knowledge environment (Materska, 2005). Knowledge is found in the people's mind that's why librarians deal with people. It is essential to change a subjective and mental knowledge into practical and objective knowledge by establishing relations with people and learning and sharing of knowledge [4].

The diverse roles of the modern day librarians are–

9.1 Librarian-In addition to the management of library beside taking care of the quality of information they also perform as technical experts and guide.

9.2 Information Manager -In order to meet required need of the users, they should have sound knowledge to manage and distribute relevant information(s).

9.3 Information instructor/adviser -Make sure that the user and/or staff know how to access relevant sources of information.

9.4 Information Broker -Should know the sources and procedures to collect required information(s) from different sources and distributing the same in required format as per the needs of the user(s) [2].

10.0 Benefits of Knowledge Management

The application of knowledge management can be advantageous in research, help in the development of brochures, scholar & former students as well as administrative services and intended planning in the following ways:

- Facilitation of interdisciplinary research
- Speedy revision and updating of prospectus
- Improvement in services for students and capability of faculty and staff
- Better faculty development efforts, especially for new faculty
- Improved efficiency and usefulness of administrative services as well as awareness and communication capabilities [8].

11.0 Conclusion

Taking advantage of the new demands of the knowledge based society that leads to the enhancement and expansion of new services to users, in addition to increasing the use, formation and sharing of knowledge between the library employees, Knowledge management (KM) is a new thought for the expansion of the libraries into more efficient organizations. Though it is not only the management of documents but also manage both explicit and tacit knowledge.

Implementation of knowledge management in libraries leads to perfecting the capability of these organizations to learn, identify and use knowledge of internal and external resources in their processes and activities. The knowledge management in libraries will also lead to the generation of new knowledge, development of new methods and practices to improve the integration and sharing of knowledge within organizations. A knowledge management program modified specially for the libraries can reduce costs, increase profits and staff effectiveness, develop the activities, products and services resulting to improved library presentation and guaranteeing a position in the knowledge market (Porumbeanu, 2009) [9].

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