DIGITAL LIBRARY: A BENEFICIAL APPROACH

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Abstract:- The advent of multimedia technology has given rise to digital library which is becoming an imperative component in the electronic environment. Digital library provides easy access to digital collections or documents where user can search and retrieve the documents of his interest in an electronic environment. Digital library provides an effective means to distribute learning resources to users. Application of ICT has provided wider opportunities in archiving & accessing Knowledge in digital form besides conservation & preservation of the traditional knowledge.

The present study focuses on the benefits of Digital Library in an information era. In an information era, digital library became very necessary to meet the changing information needs of users. Digital library provides enhanced access to the electronic information sources and the users can access different types of relevant & recent information with a short span of time. This Study also discusses the features, purpose and downsides of the digital library.

Keywords: Digital library, ICT, Internet, Electronic Environment.

1.0 Introduction-

"Right information to Right user at the Right time and Right format." In an electronic environment the main aim of any library is the right information to the right user at the right time. Access to the Internet has become a part & parcel of librarianship due to World Wide Web. With the impact of information & communication Technologies (ICT), the concept of paperless library, Digital library, Electronic library, Virtual library & Cyber library have come into the existence. Today, we move from a single library to a network of libraries, from one collection to distributed collections, from the catalogue interface to multiple interfaces and from books & journals to information fields. Now, digital libraries are being created in different fields for diverse communities.

Application of information & communication Technology to library & Information Science has provided wider opportunities in archiving and accessing knowledge in digital form besides conservation & preservation of the traditional knowledge. Automation in the library has helped in providing easy access to collections through the use of computerized library catalogue such as On-line Public Access Catalog (OPAC) . Digital libraries differ significantly from the traditional libraries because they allow users to have an online access and work with the electronic versions of full text documents and their images (Ibrahim, 2012).

2.0 Concept of Digital Library

Digital Libraries are often labeled "Libraries without walls" because they rely on their connection to other libraries, information centres and sources of data that are not available physically in the library. A Digital

Library is much more than the collection of material in its depositories. It provides a variety of services to all of its users. The basis of the digital library is the information objects that provide the content in the form of digital resource. A digital library is a global virtual library and it can be defined as a collection of digital documents or objects. There are so many scholars who defined the term Digital Library in different way. Some important definitions are given below:

According to Candela et. al. (2007) " Since 2006 the term has been generally used to refer to systems that are heterogeneous in scope and provides diverse types of functionality. These systems include digital object and metadata repositories, reference, linking systems, archives, content administration systems & complex systems that integrate advanced digital library services,"

Vanitha et.al.(2006) say " A Digital Library is a library consisting of digital materials & services. Digital materials & items are stored, processed, and transferred via digital devices and networks. Digital services are services that are delivered digitally over computer networks.

Lesk (2005) defines digital library as a collection of information that is both digitized & organized and which offers capabilities beyond those of the traditional library.

Smith (2001) defines a digital library as an organized & focused collection of digital objects, including text, images, video & audio with methods of access & retrieval and for the selection, creation, organization, maintenance & sharing of collection.

3.0 Scope of the Study-

The present study focuses on the benefits of digital library in an information era. In an information era, digital library became very necessary to meet the changing information needs of users. Digital Library provides enhanced access to the electronic information sources and the users can access different types of relevant & recent information with a short span of time. This study also focuses on downside of the digital library.

4.0 Objectives of the Study-

- To emphasize on the benefits of digital library in an information era.
- To discuss the features of digital library
- To high light the down side of the digital library with its solutions.

5.0 Review of Related Literature-

1. Ananthnag, k.& Suvarna, m.(2014) discussed the role, requirements, functions, advantages & disadvantages of Digital Library. They also focused on the process of digitation & challenges of Digital Libraries.
2. Raj Kumar (2011) has discussed the advantages & disadvantages of digital library and the infrastructure required to start a digital library. He also focused on reason for why libraries should go for digitization.

6.0 Methodology of Research-

Methodology is very important to choose a suitable research method which is within the limits of the research. The Methodology of research provides details about how the researcher obtains data to complete the research. This study uses both qualitative & quantitative approaches along with review of related literature. The conceptual & textual information related to the present study were collected from primary & secondary source of information such as- Books, National & International journals, research papers & articles. Websites were also used for collecting information to prepare this research paper.

7.0 Discussions-

7.1 Features of Digital Library- Digital Libraries are playing a key role in disseminating information by providing different types of relevant & recent information to the users with a short span of time. They are often labeled **'Libraries without walls'** because they rely on their connection to other libraries, information centres and sources of data that are not physically available in the library. In order to provide the best digital library services, the libraries should be equipped with necessary facilities to distribute the required information which needed and accessed by the users. Digital libraries are the one which really help the users to get access to the digital resources directly on the screen of their computer itself. Digital libraries are reforming the dissemination of the information with respect to the availability of speed & access. The main features of the digital library are the following-
All resources are in digital form.

- Dynamic and ephemeral.
- Supporting multi-media content and fractal objects.
- Advanced search and retrieval of information.
- User friendly interface to access the information.
- Network accessibility.
- Accessibility from any where & any time.
- Scaffolding of data structures and richer contextual metadata.
- Providing access to very large collections including access to primary & secondary information sources.
- Unlimited access point, distributed collections and access control.
- Availability for long time.
- Provide client server architecture.
- Greater opportunity for publishing.
- Free as well as fee based.

7.2 Purpose of Digital Library-

Digital Information is nothing but an electronic signal which travels through the digital network to meet the information explosion and also it requires fast & better network. Digital Library has got a lot of changes not only in the library & information services but also in the roles & expectations of the library & information professionals. The goal of the digital library is to satisfy user needs for management, access, storage & manipulation of the variety of information stored in the collection. The main purpose of the digital library includes-

- Expedite the systematic development of procedures to collect, store & organize information in digital form.
- Promote efficient delivery of information economically to all users.
- Strengthen communication and collaboration between and among organizations.
- Encourage co- operative efforts in research resource, computing and communication networks.
- Take leadership role in the generation & dissemination of knowledge.

7.3 Benefits of Digital Libraries-

A Digital Library is not confined to a particular location but is virtually distributed all over the world. The user can access information on his own computer screen by using the internet. It is a network of multimedia system which provides finger access. Many users can access same sources at the same time. Digital libraries bring significant benefits to the users through the following features:

7.3.1 Wider Access- A digital library can meet simultaneous access requests for a document by creating multiple copies of the requested document. It can also meet the requirements of a larger population of users easily.

7.3.2 Improved Access-Digital libraries are accessed through the internet and Compact Disc- Read Only Memory (CD- ROM). They can be accessed virtually from anywhere and at any time.

7.3.3 Improved Preservation- The exact copies of the electronic documents can easily be made as they are not phone to physical wear & tear. The digital libraries facilitate preservation of special and rare documents and artifacts by providing access to digital versions of these entities.

7.3.4 Improved Information Sharing- The digital libraries can easily share information with other libraries through the appropriate metadata and information exchange protocols and can provide enhanced access to users.

- Apart from these benefits, these are some benefits of digital libraries as-
- Digital library provides faster access to the documents.
- Digital library can increase the repository by collaborating with other libraries.
- Access to information is available on 24x7 around the clock 365 days.
- Digital library helps users to locate both physical & digitized versions of articles & books.
- Multiple acces to information is possible in a digital library. Same information can be accessed by many persons at the same time.
- Digital library saves preparation & conservation cost, space & money.
- It provides online learning environment.
- It also provides online access to publication.

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7.3.5 Downsides of the Digital Library-Every coin has two aspects similarly digital library is also encountered with some problems such as lack of infrastructural facility, Lack of knowledge & skill of the information professional and user groups, lack of funds to acquire digitized, lack of telecommunication technologies (Reena, 2012). Some of the important problems are highlighted as-

1. Lack of clear cut policy at National level.
2. Non- availability of well trained professionals.
3. Lack of user education & training.
4. Lack of management support.
5. Non- availability of cost effective new technological advancement.
6. Lack of proper preservation policy.
7. Outdated software & hardware.
8. Lack of security against hacking and sabotage.
9. Copyright issues.
10. Rigidity in the publishers' policies and data formats.

8.0 Suggestions

1. To make better beneficial approach to the digital libraries, some steps should be taken such as-
2. User education & training is required for better services.
3. Trained man power is needed.
4. Provision of security against hacking and sabotage should be available.
5. National and International support, co-operation and collaboration is needed.

9.0 Conclusion

This study revealed that digital library is becoming an essential component in the electronic environment. It is playing a key role in providing the expanded access to the variety of information in digital formats for all level of users. Either today or tomorrow, every library has to acquire a hybrid structures to provide better services. Digital library is necessary in the present era not only for meeting out current demands In India but also for making reputation at international level. It provides an effective means to distribute learning resources to users. With the rising advancement in the field of ICT, the library & information centres should need to improve with the new technologies. It is also necessary that library should collaborate with each other so that more & more information could be made available to users.

The digital library can offer the reasonable & appropriate access to a large amount of assorted information resources through consortium. Digital library is reforming the dissemination of the information with respect to the availability speed and access.

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