TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS FOR LIS PROFESSIONAL IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT
Technologies have created a new service environment; Present-day libraries are under serious threat due to the increasing demands of achieving higher level of performance in the areas of speed, cost and quality. They are confronted with many challenges posed by the modern-day environment, most of which stemmed from technological innovations and digital revolution. This paper also discusses the impact of emerging changes on the role of libraries. It further explains different skill sets required by library professionals for the electronic environment. This article stresses that the growth and continued existence of librarians in this technology based environment is dependent on their ability to acquire new skill sets to navigate the electronic environment effectively and also compete favourably with counterparts from other disciplines who want to library responsibilities from the librarians.

Key words: Influence of ICT on LIS, Need for ITS Skills for LIS Professional, Software, Hardware.

http://www.iaeme.com/IJLIS/issues.asp?JType=IJLIS&VType=4&IType=3

INTRODUCTION
A library is an organization with a mission, which transcends the barriers of space and time, and its existence is not dependent on the physical form of documents. Its mission is to provide a link between the past and the present and shape the future of the society by preserving the records of human culture, as well as, enhance access to
global transformation by integrating the emerging information technologies. This mission of library is unlikely to change in the near future.

There is a significant role of ICT in LIS environment. It makes dramatic changes in the system and services of the LIS profession. This paper made attempt to study the need for ICT skills required for LIS Professionals in the changing environment.

2. INFLUENCE OF ICT ON LIS
One can amidst an information explosion and information technological revolution leading to the emergence of electronic information era. Rapid advances in information processing; storage and communication technology have revolutionized the role of world wide libraries in disseminating information services to their users.

As a result, libraries are facing new challenges, new competitors, new demands, new expectations and variety of information services from users tailored to their wants and needs.

Libraries are re-considering their positions, incorporating new technologies, updating information sources, training people, change of objects, models of communication and information delivery in order to add value to their services and to satisfy the changing information needs of user community.

3. CHANGES IN LIS
The only things that do not change are the phenomenon of “change” itself. Nothing is constant but “change”. Say for example, the changes in library catalogue code from simple author catalogue to AACR2, Metadata, MARC21, Double Core on the other hand the changes in classification schemes (knowledge organization), changes in institutional and organizational setups etc.,

The changes are not only to the libraries but librarians too. The rapid technological changes and the impact of ongoing developments in the IT have brought the changes in the librarian’s skills. IT has reduced the world into a global village. One can afford to have access to any piece of information from anywhere at any time. The challenge lies in harnessing and assimilating IT for the purpose.

4. NEED FOR IT SKILLS FOR LIS PROFESSIONAL
Besides gaining professional knowledge in LIS, the professionals need to acquire the knowledge and skills in IT for library applications. The purpose is to make the professional competent and efficient in the management of information.

Because private sector today is under pressure to get ISO 9000 accreditation and certification to stand in global competition. It will not be too long that this will penetrate to library services through ISO 9004 series which essentially a guideline for services.

Coming generation of the information professionals will increasingly work with non librarians and have a dialogue with specialists in networking, marketing, and finance and so on. The services will be more customers based. In particular, the need is to better equip them with IT tools so that they could handle the tasks more effectively such as;

- Jobs related to library operations
- Optimization of available resources
- Information services to users
5. THE REQUIRED ESSENTIAL IT SKILLS

In the following paragraphs, the most essential IT skills required for LIS professionals are given:

5.1. Knowledge about basic Computer Operations

All LIS professionals should have basic knowledge about computer operations such as:

- Knowledge of file, folder structure, file management
- Knowledge of computer network
- Management of network, networking architecture
- Printer setup, Printing with stand alone and networked environment

5.2. Librarians need to be fluent in

- Word processing skills
- Spread sheet skills
- Database skills
- Electronic presentation skills
- Web navigation skills
- Web site design skills
- E-mail management skills
- Digital cameras
- Video conferencing
- Scanner knowledge
- Computer security knowledge

5.3. And more especially, they should have knowledge on

- Software
- Hardware
- Network

5.3.1. Software

All the librarians and information scientists should have some basic knowledge about

- MS office products and other alternatives
- Anti virus software
- Firewall software
- HTML editions
- FTP (File Transfer Protocol)
• Telnet
• Communication software, e.g., E-mail software
• Web-designing Software
• Multimedia Authorizing Tools
• Ability to test and learn new software because librarians are often asked to troubleshoot any program installed on library computers. More particularly they should have knowledge about library automation software such CDS/ISIS, SOUL, LIBSYS, SLIM, VTLS, etc.,

5.3.2. Hardware
All librarians and information manager should have knowledge of computer hardware in general particularly,
• CPU and its parts
• Barcode scanner
• MP3 players and I-Pods
• Printers and projectors
• Pen drives and flash drives

5.3.3. Networking
All the professionals in LIS should have basic knowledge about
• Network Hardware such as hub, switches, network interface card and data cable, topology of networks
• Wireless networks
• IP address
• ISDN
• DNS (internal & external)
• NAT (Network Address Translation)
• VPN (Virtual Private Network)
• Proxy server & basics of how it works

5.4. Internet Skills
Now internet is revolutionizing working process in libraries. It is now possible to retrieve information independent of time zones and geographical location and to obtain the most up date information. Hence it is very essential that every librarian and information manager should develop skills on,
• Internet – its architecture, features, facilities, etc.
• Searching – techniques, tools
• Spy ware
• Use of various browsers including, Internet explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Opera, Netscape etc.
• URL & URL format
• Search engines like, yahoo, Google, AltaVista, Lycos etc.,

LIS professional also understand the features and significance intranet because it enables sharing of internal library resources and services, thus avoiding unnecessary duplication of purchases. It is a speedy channel for receiving user suggestions.
5.5. Problems of Implementation IT in Indian Libraries

Though IT has shown great potential for modernizing the library activities, it is only at university level that the initiation has been made towards automation. In some private professional colleges the adoption of IT is under way. Apart from this, the situation in this regard is pathetic in most of the academic institutions. Still large percentage of library professionals are not aware of the use of IT in library because,

- Lack of resources
- Lack of expertise
- Lack of manpower training
- Installation of computer in library is still considered as a costly affair
- The high cost involved, especially for accessing the remote databases and their installation.

5.6. Some Suggestions and Points for Discussion

- The LIS schools all over the country should include more on IT and ICT in their course curriculum as one of the core subjects in each semester.
- The students of final year should do project work on any topic related to IT application. This would enable them to gain practical experience in IT applications.
- Training for trainers, this will help teachers in imparting IT based education and training to students more effectively. It would be better if training programmers’ are planned exclusively for teachers in IT resourceful LIS schools and Libraries such as IITs, IIMs, and NITs etc.
- Training should be supplemented by having short term instructional programmer, workshops, continuing education programmer attendance to which should be mandatory to both teachers as well as students.
- Brainstorming sessions may be arranged to design the course, which may be done in such a way that, within the frame work of syllabus it offers opportunities to students to groom themselves to give quality services when they enter the profession.

6. CONCLUSION

According to the 5th law “Library is a growing Organism”, there is new mode of information resources and new approaches of user requirements. Hence the implementation of the IT in LIS will help in the growth of the organization. Only by making the best use of technologies we can serve the user community well. Hence all the professionals should be an IT skilled person.

REFERENCES