ABSTRACT

Development of new technologies in the field of library and information science especially in academic libraries has resulted in the need for library staff to be flexible in adopting new skills and levels of awareness. In addition to core technology skills, importance is to be given to other skills in communication, management, etc. This paper attempts to describe in brief the competencies and skills required for an academic library professional in the digital era. The paper also deals with the roles and responsibilities of the emerging technologies librarian to illuminate and maximize the possibilities of the position as libraries around the world provide new content in new mediums to an increasingly tech-savvy user group.

Keywords: Electronic Information Environment, LIS Professionals, Information Technology

INTRODUCTION

The changing role of the librarian over the past few decades with the developments in information technology has brought many changes to library service and infrastructure. As the library is constantly changing, different kind of skills is needed; on who is able to both create and implement change. The role of the librarian is absolutely crucial in the new digital environment.

LIS professionals are bound to act as knowledge navigators to search information available anywhere in the spectrum. Today, library and information service is experiencing a radical change that requires a new range of skills in the use and management of information and communication technology. The new technologies allow completely new solution to old problems and consequently old services are replaced by new services. ICT literacy is very crucial for the survival of library professionals.

Technology has brought drastic changes in every walk of life. Libraries are not exception. Computer and its requirement are use combinative in library or other field called information technology. Information Technology is helpful not only generating, storing, and preservation but also transmission, retrieval and disseminating of information. Automation of operation by using technology libraries provides better service to its readers like housekeeping operation in libraries such as acquisition, classification and cataloguing, processing preservation, circulating etc.

It is common knowledge that even when these technologies and accompanying resources in electronic formats are acquired by libraries particularly, in developing nations, the challenge of getting skillful personnel to man these equipment and resources still arises. Most often, this has caused libraries to hire and, be at the mercy of consultants in relation to the management of its facilities and resources, which is inappropriate. This has generated speculation by some individuals, especially those enamoured with high Information Communication Technology devices, that the Internet will displace libraries and information centres. They believe that the present era of electronic insurgency is meant to replace libraries. The questions that need to be answered are: Is this era actually meant to replace
libraries? What are the services required of librarians in an electronic environment? What skill sets and competencies are required of library and information science professionals in this era?

Main Objective of The Paper

- To discuss the need for LIS professionals to acquire core competences and new skills relevant for the management of the modern-day library and also, capable of making them remain relevant in the present competitive electronic environment.
- To realize the need is to better equip them with IT tools, so that they can handle the task more effectively.
- To find out the areas in which LIS professional need to acquire ICT skills.

Skills and Competencies In An Electronic Environment

Skills are abilities or proficiencies required of a person in position to plan and execute an action geared at accomplishing some tasks or achieving some goals. The basic goal of library and information profession has always been the satisfaction of the information needs of the library users through the provision of various forms of information resources. The activities aimed at actualising this goal have evolved and transformed over the years. In the present electronic environment, librarians are required to work both independently and as a team to deliver service-oriented and user-centred applications, instructions, programmes, projects and services. In addition to general traditional library educational qualification and requirements, a commitment to excellent user-centred services, effective oral and written communications, as well as team collaborator, librarians in the electronic information environment must also possess additional capabilities, experience, knowledge and skills. Such skills include:

a). Generic skills,

b). Managerial skills and,

c). Professional skills.

Web Development and Designing

Web development tools allow web developers to test and debug their code. Web development tools allow developers to work with a variety of web technologies, including HTML, CSS, Javascript etc. The role of the web developer is to create library websites and current information on various subjects and display it on the library website, and good number of users regularly use this service. On another hand LIS professional may deals with commercial vendors and annual maintenance for their websites. To minimum the external dependency, competency on web designing for professionals is definitely a boon for the organization, therefore the competencies and skills are required of web designing for LIS professionals.

Networking

Skills of handling different computer communication networking architectures and systems i.e. LAN, MAN, and WAN as well as using of internet and other library related networks like INFLIBNET, CALIBNET, DELNET etc. are required for a modern library professional working in IT environment to tackle the problems and challenges raised in building and maintaining a digital web-based library. Speedy resource sharing and dissemination of information is possible only with the proper computer networking skills.

Multimedia Navigation

locate, access, store and transform information resources, services and, instructions across multiple applications, databases, networks, platforms and systems.
Technology Skills

Technological skills mean those skills which are required to handle information technology and its other related fields such as computer operation, telecommunication Medias, creation of online database, designing of websites, searching information from internet etc. As the borderless libraries are nothing but the advanced application of information technology on the library, so the library professional should have to familiar with the skills to handle IT and its application in the library environment in the relevant context.

Information Literacy Skills

Information literacy comprises the generic skills, values and attitudes required to define an information need, find, evaluate and share information. This has to do with the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively needed information. Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning and enables learners to master content and extend their investigations to become more self-directed, thus assuming greater control over their own learning. Promoting information literacy, both formally and informally, is crucial to librarianship in this era. This is not just for librarians in educational institutions alone. It is also for special librarians in their day to day client service provision. And it is also very much for public librarians.

Technical Professional Skills

such as, information resource management skill, system development skill and, metadata standards skill require librarians to describe the content and attributes of any particular item in the digital library.

Knowledge Management Skills

this is required for managing organizational knowledge to solve the organizational problems. It includes managing tacit as well as explicit knowledge

Web 2.0 Technologies

Web 2.0 tools and techniques have strong features and potentials to spread out and reshape the entire process of teaching and learning. It also have the feature for creating personalized web services, self-publishing on the web, real time communication etc. Today, Web 2.0 has emerged as the most powerful medium for information retrieval, entertainment, learning and much more. Web 2.0 support libraries, librarians and users to connect each other even if they are geographically apart. The advent of web 2.0 has created a new break for librarians to deliver information services to users at their expected range. It is the web generation learners who are likely to be most attracted to these development and to improve the quality of the content of the library websites in collaborative age and active way to use the web 2.0 tools:

1. Flickr enable users to contribute, organize, share, and discuss photos;
2. Face-book as a tool for sharing digital media;
3. RSS (really simple syndication)
4. Wikis
5. Blogs and blogging
6. Tagging essentially enables users to create subject headings for the object at hand

CONCLUSION

Library professionals, especially academic librarians in India are facing challenges in the profession due to the rapid technological changes with the development of cutting-edge technologies in library work and services. Therefore, library professionals are well prepared for their duties and are also up-to-date with the current trends in their jobs. LIS professionals need to be responsive to these changes brought about by technological innovations and digital revolution and substantially embrace the
utilisation of information technologies in their information handling processes. They need to acquire the necessary new skills and be responsive to dynamic changes as they occur in rapidly globalized world.

REFERENCES


