

Review

User education in libraries

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In this User education in academic library topic we are mainly giving the information about different kinds of users and non users and using materials and how to use it. What is the nature of information and different kinds of information? Characteristics of the user and education and how to educate the user. Different kinds of user education specification if user education nature of user education and information displayed containing information about opening hours. Library information rules, Library timings, staff maintained. Lecture methods may be formal / informal, workshop about the CD-ROM, online services practice workshop. Advertising papers, journals, posters, pamphlets.

Key words: Type of users, Nature of Information need, planning of education, guiding signs and boards, introduction of library.

INTRODUCTION

In information system user is an important component. But our librarians and information managers neglected this aspect for a long time. Access to relevant information is highly essential particularly in industrial, research and development sectors. Right information to the right user can pave way to new directions to research and development. It is imperative that to achieve this objective we should understand the library user, how they interact with the system, their pattern of search and their pertinent information requirement. Pandey 1992, Chaturvedi 1994.

Objectives

In this unit will be able to understand the:

- i) The meaning and definition of user and user education.
- ii) Types of academic library users.
- iii) Analysis of user needs.
- iv) Planning of user education.

User education

Users

In a library or an information center the users are the last links or the recipient of the information in the communication cycle. There are number of terms used as synonyms

or near synonyms to users as patron client, member customer. Of these, user is the preferred term.

Definitions

According to a "Whittaker" a user may be defined as, "a person who uses one or more library's services at least once in a year". Users are individuals who can be divided in to different categories on the basis of tasks assigned to them in a library organization (Devarajan, 1989).

Types of users

The users are one type but libraries are different from those of another type. In a public library the users are mainly children, student's, housewives, farmers, retired persons, literates and even also researches. In an academic library the users are students, teachers and researchers, whereas as special groups of users of whom the library is intended. From what is stated above it can be assumed that in the public libraries the users are almost heterogeneous and in academic and special libraries the users are almost homogeneous in nature. For an effective information service as an information manager, he should ascertain about the information requirements of his library users.

Information users can be categorized mainly into 4 groups, on the basis of their approach to information a libraries, they are:

- i) Potential user: One who needs information which can

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be provided by specific services.

ii) The expected user: One who is known to have the intention of using certain information services.

iii) Actual user: One who has actually used an information service regardless of whether he derived advantages from it or not.

iv) The beneficiary user: One who derives measurable advantages from information services.

User groups may be divided in a number of ways. They can be divided as administratively into internal and external users. Another type of classification of user community on the basis of library service they make use of is the following.

General readers

This type of user group, for example associated with public libraries, generally use light lending materials.

Subject readers

This type of user concentrates their use of library materials on subject field they are working or specializing.

Special readers

The users placed in this group are those with special needs, the result of disabilities of one kind or another physical or mental disability may be distinguished.

Non-readers users

These are made up of sub groups who make use of library materials, but not reading materials. A user coming into the library just to borrow a video or audio-cassette is the best example of non-reading user.

On the basis of various type of services

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan has grouped user community on the basis of various types of services enunciated by him. They are, the freshman, ordinary inquirer and specialist inquirer (is one who specialist inquirer and general reader).

Here the freshman is the new member of the library, ordinary inquirer is ordinary reader and specialist inquirer is one who specializes in narrow field where as general readers are the associated groups. In order to satisfy these groups, Ranganathan has suggested 4 types of services such as initiation or orientation, ready reference service, long range reference and general help to general readers respectively.

Non- users

There are certain people who because of their style or other environmental problems could not become members of libraries in their vicinity and make use of the library

resources. It is the duty of a librarian especially in public libraries to convert non-users or 'on lookers' into potential and habitual users of such libraries. There are a number of ways by which librarian can attract such users into libraries by means of extension activities or other publicity methods. The duty of a librarian is more important to convert non-users into habitual users and mould them as capable citizens just like other citizens who are engaged in social development.

Analysis of users needs and demand of information

The major objective of library or information system is to satisfy the information needs of users. Information needs refer to individual needs of users regarding information, which should be satisfied, by the specific information needed by him. One relates to the kind of message, in terms of subjects, currency, etc and the others related to means of supplying them. Information needs of a user depend on a number of factors such as work activity, discipline and availability of facilities. Information can be primarily divided into type's viz. current awareness and adhoc need. In the current awareness mode the users require current information in their fields of specialization or interest. While adhoc type, is the need to satisfy a specific purpose. There are information about organization and information about external environment in which an organization needs to function. There are numbers of factors that effect information needs of users. The following factors influence the information needs users community.

- i) The use in which the information is to be put.
- ii) The background, motivation, professional orientation and other individual characteristics of the users.
- iii) The range of information sources available.
- iv) The social, political and economic system surrounding the user.
- v) The consequences of information use.

Nature of information need

According to Mellier Vaight information need is a multi-faceted concept which is generally dynamic in users. There are 4 types of information needs or approaches recognized among users. They are:

- i) Current approach: The current is that which users require to keep abreast of the nascent developments in his fields of specialization / interest.
- ii) Everyday Approach: It is the sought of specific piece of information required by the user during day to day investigation in the form of fact.
- iii) Exhaustive approach: It is sought when a researcher wants to have comprehensive detail about a specific topic on the field of study.
- iv) Brush-up of catching-approach: Is adopted in situations were a particular user requires information

pertaining to related subject fields.

User's characteristics

Lehman mentioned 8 user's characteristics that, if evaluate, would help the librarian in his efforts to satisfy user need. They are:

- i) Functional reading level.
- ii) Visual level.
- iii) Personality level.
- iv) Capacity level.
- v) Satisfaction level.
- vi) Interest level.
- vii) Variability level and
- viii) Vocational-a vocational level.

Systematic study of user community will reveal the various characteristics of users seeking information. This will give necessary base guidelines to librarians to serve various types of users groups.

User education

Education is a long life process, there is no end. As far as library activities are concerns, the users are illiterates. They need some sought of user education on how to use library resources and services. Because the collection libraries are very complicated. To know how to use and what the service available is etc., they must need assistance and guidance (Instructions, Initiation and education).

It has its own objectives. Broadly it means to bring the awareness about or to guide the users, about library facilities, collection, services etc, for new users this type of guidance is necessary.

Definitions

According to Shahi "It is a process of activities involved in making the users of the library conscious about tremendous value of information in day to day life to develop interest among the users to seek information as and when they requires".

General

A process or programme through which potential users information are made aware if the information sources".

Important specific objectives

- i) Made aware of the existence of the library, its content, procedures and services.
- ii) Create love and books and reading.
- iii) To provide the scientists with basis skills for information

collection that is, current, retrospective, date or facts, information whatever it may be.

- iv) To make the scientists aware of the different information holding agencies.
- v) To expose the method for strong scientific information collected on different search topics.
- vi) To provide techniques for information search from secondary periodicals, reference sources and other data basis like the online and CD-ROM.
- vii) Able to ascertain the relative merit and demerits of reading materials and reference tools.
- viii) Able to survey the current affairs in the different periodicals on his own.
- ix) Able to understand the time back between the production of information and in its receipt by the user and also availability of various channels of communication between the author and the user outside the preview of the library.
- x) To provide good foundation for the continued self-education by readers by during their life time.

Need for user education

Tremendous increase in the volume of publication as well as the resulting complexity of libraries and the methods by which literature is organized and disseminated necessitate the user education.

Rapid changes in teaching methods and the resulting trend towards a wider use of multi-media learning resources ranging from the press cutting to slide tapes package and multiple kit. Such format has added new dimensions to the learning process in all types of institutions.

Planning for user education

Programming and planning of user education programme is very important particularly in academic and research libraries. It needs a careful planning. According to "Thomas G. Kirk" planning of user education programme requires four things namely.

- i) Orientation.
- ii) Bibliographic Instruction.

Course in literature search and seminars

Kirk has also mentioned about acquaintance with 6 skills. Viz., reference sources, indexing and abstracting periodicals, library catalogue orientation knowledge, search strategy and subject analysis. As a matter of fact many library scientists have suggested many methods for planning of user education. All these may conveniently be grouped in following broad groups.

Guiding by signs and boards

Orientation

- i) Introduction to the library.

Table 1. Sample of some signs and boards.

Changing counter books	Periodicals reference
1	100
2	200
3	300
4	400
5	500
6	600
7	700
8	800
9	900

- ii) Introduction to the techniques.
- iii) Introduction to the information sources.

Literature search techniques

Evaluation of users

Guiding signs and boards: Signs and boards are the most potent medium of instruction a board of responsible size, with the work 'library' written on it should be affixed on the top of the library building in such a matter or it's visible from responsible distance. On the gate of the library a board should be displayed containing information about opening hours.

UNI LIB: Opening hours

Week days:.....AM toPM
 Sunday and Holiday.....AM toPM

The library remains closed on

Similarly single line boards for self-guide section guides should be displayed at appropriate places. Sample of some signs and boards are given in Table 1.

Orientation

Orientation programme includes educating or instructing user in topics like introduction to libraries, introduction to library technique and introduction information sources. Senior library staff or teachers of library science impart education of this type. Thou the classes may be short, that is, about 25 - 30 min. Course contents of each of the 3 areas may be as under.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LIBRARY

Library timing: Opening and closing hours on week days and holidays, close of the day, times for issues and

return of books. Layout of library building floor areas, collection etc., location of various sections, services.

Library rules: Number of books to be issued according to category of borrowers, type of books, loan period of reference books, periodicals, general books and other categories of books, overdue charges, reservation of books.

Staff: Introduction with in charges of each section.

Procedures: Membership, registration and borrowing procedure.

INTRODUCTION OF LIBRARY TECHNIQUES

Scheme of classification, its features and class number, representing subjects, arrangement of subjects, catalogue inner form, author, title, subject etc., of the catalogue, how to use catalogue, how to find book with the use of catalogue. Shelf arrangement and special collections.

INTRODUCTION TO INFORMATION SOURCES

Types of reference books and information contained in this e.g., dictionary encyclopedia, directory of quotations, bibliographical dictionaries, gazetteers, almanacs, subject encyclopedia, subject biography, abstracts, indexes, several publications, demographic sources, standards, primary and secondary information sources use of non-traditional sources.

Literature search techniques

Use of indexing and abstracting periodicals, Thesaurus, citation indexes, style manuals, how to use citation, prepare bibliography etc., introduction to all audio methods.

Evolution of users

The users are examined whether they have assimilated the instruction imported to them. During the course of evaluation they must be asked to locate, find a particular information and also be put to other search tests.

Important methods

- i) Lecture method: may be formal / informal.
- ii) Advertising: (Paper, Journal, Posters, Pamphlets). If it is limited to a particular small geographical area. In case of online and database then it requires very wide advertisement through papers, journals etc.
- iii) The workshop: About the CD-ROM, online services (then gives hands on practice-workshop).
- iv) Brochures: It is brought out by each and every industry. It may contain history, use benefits, comparison,

- purchases, addressee in brochures and leaves.
- v) News letters.
 - vi) Demonstration method.
 - vii) Book exhibition.
 - viii) Display of new arrivals.
 - ix) Mass media.

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