USER STUDIES CONCEPT AND USER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The concept and views on user study is mainly about the library users and usage of library. The first point for increasing the library usage the library staffs should be very skill full with the sources availability of their library and the extent of the usage of the sources available in the library. The librarian should arrange interaction hours to instruct about the library to the students and also staffs in their institution that means a Literacy Programme about library. The user study is to know about the different types of users, as Students, Staffs and also Research scholars and it will be very important for librarian to improve their library usage and to increase the satisfaction of users qualitatively and quantitatively.

Introduction

The libraries are now in the situation to meet the needs of their user's requirements as well as the electronic collections in the library should be valuable and easy to access the requirements successfully. The library faculties or the librarian are in the position to fulfil the needs of the users. The librarian should be knowledgeable person to help the users as per their requirements and should give good services. To educate the users about the digital libraries from the knowledge of librarian's by their experience in the digital libraries. The statistics made by the Digital Library Federation, about the usage of e-resources, online libraries of their members. User satisfaction becomes the ultimate goal of any library. Libraries, therefore, need to assess their services to ensure that the best use is being made of the available resources. They need to find out, if the services provided are appropriate to the needs of the users, reaching the target group and user's opinion about the services. For this, libraries regularly carry out user studies. Libraries and information systems are designed and built with the primary objective of meeting the information needs of a group of people who constitute their clientele. In the past, information systems and services were developed based more on 'literary warrant' rather than 'users warrant.

User Groups and Information Needs

Academic library serves the students and teachers of a specific school, college or university. Special library, attached to an R&D organization, serves personnel engaged in research and development activities and a public library serves the local residents of a region. Thus, each library serves a specific user group. Each user group need information for some purpose or other. Information needs vary from person to person.

S. No	User Group	Information Needs and Purpose
1	Students	Study, project work, general interest
2	Teachers	Teaching and research
3	Researchers	R&D information in specific disciplines
4	Professionals	Technical information to pursue careers
5	Planners, Policy Makers	Information to frame policies and take decisions
6	Managers, business people	Product information, market trends and regulatory information
7	Communicators, intermediaries	Information to create awareness in masses about new processes, products, etc.
8	Technicians, supervisors, and professionals in industry, business	Technical and problem solving information
9	General public	Vocation related information, general interest information

Need for User Studies

The changes in technology and society, goals of library user education have been changed from library instruction to information literacy and lifelong learning. In present days, libraries have developed and expanded programs to meet the changing needs of library users. Prominent among these is the library user education program. Information need surveys or user studies are potentially useful in bridging the gap between the kind of information services needed and the kind of services in existence. Any information system would definitely require identification of user requirements. However, there had been certain doubts regarding the point whether information needs could really be established through user studies or surveys. For instance, it has been stated that information needs distinct from wants, cannot be determined through public opinion poll type surveys. It has been further stated that information service is a professional service as opposed to a consumer service (such as packaging of breakfast food) and hence users of information services cannot provide correct guidance in the designing or improvement of an information system.

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. 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. Libraries periodically conduct user studies to ascertain the needs and opinion of the users.

User and User Studies

The user is the focal point of all information activities at all levels. User is a broad concept which may include both producers as well as clients of information. In LIS literature, a number of terms have been used to signify users. objective criteria, such as socio-professional category, specialist field, nature of the activity for which the information is sought, reason for using the information system, and social and psychological criteria such as the user's attitudes and values with regard to information in general and in his relations with information unit in particular. Users not yet engaged in active life, such as students, users with a job and whose information needs are related to their work. They are classified by main activity level of education and responsibility the ordinary citizen needing general information.

Objectives

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:
1. list different types of users and their information needs;
2. state the methods and techniques of assessing users' information requirements;
3. illustrate methods of information gathering habits of users;
4. design questionnaires for gathering information requirements of the users;
5. describe the purpose and methods of user education; and
6. Learn about user orientation and user education programmes offered by the libraries.

Types of users

The library / information system are of many types. Based on few criteria, they can be classified as:
1. By their library experience, they can classify into experienced and inexperienced users.
2. By the nature of their activities, they can be classified as student researcher, faculty, and so on.
3. By nature of their works, they can be classified into Businessman, managers, workers, etc.
4. Some other characters are also used to classify library the users: they are sex and psychological characters.

The user studies also help the libraries to:
a. Assess the information needs of the users,
b. Know unfulfilled information needs,
c. Find out the use of library resources and services,
d. Know users' opinion about the library collection, staff, and services, and
e. Ascertain need for new services.

Services to the users
Services to the users can be provided as follows:
  a. Search assistance
  b. Dissemination
  c. Notification
  d. Reference
  e. Referral
  f. Document reproduction and
  g. Translation.

User Characteristics

The main purpose of any user study is to gather information that is useful in design, provision and evaluation of specific information products or services geared to specific users, it becomes necessary to have full understanding of the user characteristics.

Individual Characteristics

The individual characteristics of users deal their perception of the problem and their definition of the problem faced along with their description of the needed information the specific ways in which they are most likely to use information and their capacity to use a particular type of information.

Stages in the Information Diffusion

This aspect relates to the amount of knowledge an individual (or a group of users) has about a specific idea or innovation.

Information needs at various stages are different and therefore information products and services have to be tailored for each stage. This might be possible only when the capabilities of the user are clearly perceived.

Environmental or Social Characteristics

The factors in the social system (such as the norms, situation, reference groups, etc.) that have an important effect on the individual's behaviour and communication fall under the category of environmental or social characters pertaining to an individual (or group) of user. Awareness about these factors enables the system designer to precisely gauze the information requirements of the user.

Communication Characteristics

The elements related to the use and diffusion of information constitute what are known as communication characteristics. Some of these include information sources, information structures, communication channels and information systems. These aspects need to be correlated with other characteristics. A proper and systematic user study aims at collecting all the pertinent data concerning the users with the objective of building an efficient information system. Such data enables establishment of close relationship between users and the information system designers.

All the user groups, researchers are the most extensive users of library resources and services. They need information to keep up to date, to find new areas of research, to avoid duplication of research and to solve problem. A large number of user surveys have been conducted to ascertain information needs of all categories of library users including common man.

Digital Environment

This is to improve the use of web sites, the OPAC system of catalogue of library sources, subscribed electronic resources and digital library collections.

a. The developments of digital libraries are by conducting a survey with the users such as
b. Identifying the communities of users
c. Types of use as per their requirements
d. Find out the whether the digital collection and developed website was very useful to the users
e. Future needs of users
f. Finding the satisfaction of users
g. Informing the digital collection to users
h. Find the extent of use of providing the additional activities to the library website or increasing the e – resources
i. Informing about the redesigned and developed web site of the library
j. To improve the usage they can conduct a statistical analysis of user using information.
k. Improving the maintenance of system such as web page maintenance, requirements and also the human and financial resources.
l. By all these surveys with users the library administrators will improve the Digital Library usage.

The use of online libraries, Databases will increase by assessing the information needs in the area of different disciplines. After assessment the librarian will gather the mindset of users about their selected and proper needs of research by giving ideas of which site they have to investigate and how to collect the information.

Present Status of User Education

This under utilization has the direct adverse effect on the intellectual creativity of the individuals. This will leads to under development of the country with minimum intellectual works coming from the researcher.

The competitive advantages are possible only on the capacity of country to gather analyse and disseminate the information on proper manner. These functions are mostly carried out by libraries. But these functions are only completed if the libraries are come forward to expose their resources to its users. This results in the development of OPAC system, electronic document delivery system, multimedia applications, and internet and so on. As the user of the library bewildering fractional arrangements of classification and cataloguing, their implicational of IT complicated or aggravated this further. This results in preventing and minimizing the use of library resources as well as services of the library.

Conclusion

Information technology plays a unique role in storing, managing and retrieving information effectively. In the age of computer, libraries are changing themselves from traditional to digital. Library resources are changing from traditional print resources to electronic and digital resources. Libraries are changing their ways of rendering services to the users. Proper user education helps the library users to save the time: the saved time can be used for other intellectual works. Thus, it is an essential phenomenon for every type of library from school library to special library to have user education. The concept and view of user study overall was explained to some extent to investigate the actual needs of users and to know the implementation of that investigation for increasing the usage of libraries, and as well as creating a needful awareness to the library users to acquire their requirements very easily. The level of particular methods of research will get a recognition and motivation by the questions raised in the assessment of needs Data analysis will give a valuable result for users with less use of time. The improvement in the use of current systems in the library is getting

successful by teaching the interaction with the current systems of library.

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