

# Internet Based Library Services: Its Impact on Libraries

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## ABSTRACT

*Internet is more than technology. Internet is an important part of human lives. Today Internet has revolutionized the traditional library activities viz document acquisition, technical processing, circulation services, reference services, resource sharing, document delivery etc. One of the most significant achievements in the information and communication sector is the introduction of advanced communication network i.e. the Internet, the technology connecting a computer with millions of computers in the networks. The Internet today has become one of the most important modes of communication and its services are being subjugated by the people in every walk of life such as business, education, defense, medicine, etc. In the field of library and information science the Internet has become one of the most popular and talked about subject. The emergence of Internet requires a reconceptualization of the information creation, dissemination, and consumption processes and the role of libraries in these processes. This paper highlights on internet, components of internet, characteristic of internet, importance of Internet in library profession, Internet base library services, and impact of internet on libraries.*

**KEYWORDS:** Components, Characteristic, Importance, Internet based library services, & its impact.

## INTRODUCTION

Internet was established in the early 1960's by the US Department, primarily for military purpose. There are many benefits associated with Internet use, such as access to needed information, worldwide access to news and events, and interpersonal communication through the e-mail. The digital world is designed for communication, sharing ideas, playing games, getting information of any kind. Today Internet has become one of the tools in searching the information in the digital age. Users can access the digital information at any time and at anywhere at minimal cost with

speed and accuracy. Due to the advent of Internet, researchers or scientists can search the OPAC and can request for Inter Library Loan (ILL) services from their library's desktop. This superhighway, the Internet, is an international computer networks surrounding thousands of smaller interconnected networks.

## WHAT IS INTERNET

Information Technology (IT) consists of different components like electronics, computer hardware, software, and telecommunications. Integration and application of the above technologies in information handling for efficient and effective information management

is termed as information technology. By using IT we can obtain process, store, transmit and output information in the form of voice, picture or text. Internet is the part of Information Technology (IT).

### **COMPONENTS OF INTERNET**

The Internet consists of WWW and all the hardware, software, products on which WWW runs. One of the main characteristics of Internet is that it is a decentralized system i.e. there is no single person or organization that owns or control Internet, all who use Internet or supply material to it, have a role to play.

- **World Wide Web (WWW):** The WWW is a set of programs, standards, and protocols governing the way in which multimedia files are created and displayed on the Internet.
- **Hardware:** Physical parts of computer. Hardware means the computer (supercomputer, web server, and personal computer), modem (external or internal) and cables or telecommunication lines. The cables with jacks and rackets connect the modem with the computer and telephone. The users possess the terminal or the computer, modem, etc.
- **Modem:** Modem is a device that allows computers to communicate over telephone lines, it converts a digital signal to an analog signal and vice versa.
- **Software:** It is set of programmers. It includes the operating system and web browser.
- **Operating System (OS):** Windows, Linux are examples for operating system. The higher versions of the OS

are preferable because it has an inbuilt component to support internet connections.

- **Web Browser:** A web browser is the software program that is used to access the WWW or to visit web pages and display it in the computer screen, e.g. Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, Netscape Navigator, etc.
- **Telecommunication Lines:** The telephone companies own the equipment and cables that carry signals to the services providers.
- **Internet Protocol Suit:** The Internet Protocol Suit also known as Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) is the set of communication protocols used for the Internet and other similar networks. It governs the way data travels from one machine to another across a networks. It is named from two of the most important protocols in it the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) and the Internet Protocol (IP), which are the first two networking protocols.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNET**

- Users across the world can connect or access information irrespective of time and space factor.
- Point-to-point communication, rather than one to many broadcast communication.
- Provides access to large number of databases.
- The facility of hyper linking from one server to another by clicking on a highlighted word which enables the user

to directly switch to another data source, on the other side of the world.

- Instant and interactive community creation on a global base.

### **IMPORTANCE OF INTERNET TO LIBRARIES**

- By designing clearly organizes, easily accessible and well published library web sites librarians can extend the traditional librarianship to the use of Information Technology (IT) and seize a leadership role in both field.
- The libraries can initiate Bulletin Board Services which gives complete information regarding services, products, and various events organized by them.
- Ready Reference Services can be provided with greater speed and in much shorter time.
- Books and journals can be ordered online, technical processing of the documents too can be done without much efforts.
- E-mail services can be used for delivering information to the users and communicating with the fellow information professionals.
- E-SDI services can be used for delivering information to the users.
- Access to various databases and OPAC of other libraries located in remote areas can be provided.

Internet has thus integrated nearly all library activities e-mail, discussion through the list serves, support reference services through the search of remote databases, exploiting the catalogue of other institutions, participation Inter Library Loan (ILL), ordering books and

journals, inter library loan establishing home page etc.

### **INTERNET BASED LIBRARY SERVICES**

From the mid of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were drastic change of library services. A large number of different library services came into the picture. Computer came during the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the mode of library services changed dramatically. It became information service and new kind of offline service came into picture and last one decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century it was started to provide online service. Due to the tremendous growth and continuous development of technology, the role of library becomes more responsive in making the users techno-savvy. Technological developments have affected not only the formats and sources of the information, but also how and where to provide library services. Libraries and their resources have partially moved to the virtual world of the internet. Following are the some internet based library services as under:-

- **E-mail Services:** E-mail can be used as a tool to communicate with the users, to serve them by giving Electronic Document Delivery Services (EDDS). It is a web based excellent media and most apparent most popular media. And we the library professionals can use this web medium for various purposes specially for delivering some web based services. E-mail service helps to contact publisher, vender etc.
- **Ask-a-librarian:** These services are Internet based question and answer service that connects users with individuals who possess specialized subject knowledge and skill in

conducting accurate searches. Most “Ask-A-Librarians” services have a web based question submission form or an e-mail address or both. Users are invited to submit their queries by using web forms or through the e-mail. Once a query is read by a service, it is assigned to an individual expert for answering. An expert responds to the query with factual information and or a list of information resources. The response is either sent to the user’s e-mail account or is posted on the web so that the user can access it after a certain period of time.

- **Bulletin Boards Services:** A bulletin board is an electronic communications forum that hosts posted messages and articles connected to a common subject or theme or interest. It allows to call in and either leaves or retrieves messages. The messages may be directed to all users of the bulletin board or only to particular users. But all messages can be read by all the users. Several libraries are using bulletin boards services for their web-based library services. The bulletin board system is also used as an interactive interface to invite suggestions on the activities and services of a library. It can also be used as an interface to distribute library services.
- **Virtual Library Tours:** Websites of libraries provides virtual library guide to the physical facilities including collections, services and infrastructure available in the library. The

combination of library maps and floors plans, library departments and photographic views are used for the tour. Virtual library tours are also using new technologies such as Quick Time movies etc and are beginning to replace image maps on main campus Web sites.

- **Library Portal:** It is a single access point combining the library catalogues subscribed databases, electronic journals etc. Library portal meets individual needs of the users and the portal is now the standard interface to generate library resources and services through a single access and management point for users. Librarians are becoming increasingly aware that multiplication of electronic resources is a problem for end users. Users find it difficult to have the most appropriate database or resource to search for their information need. Library portal reduce the barrier of users to remember various log-ones. E.g.: Jayakar Library Portal.
- **Web OPAC:** Simply stated, a Web OPAC is a library catalog on the Web or Intranet. Users can search the required information by connecting to Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of Web OPAC anytime during the day and from anywhere in the world. Web OPAC is an online catalogue facility that enables speedy searching of library database including books, journals, periodicals and manuscript. In this system, the books or reading materials are arranged according to the subject content that is given a call number. The

Web OPAC uses MARC-21 format, its standard format used internationally to search for database.

### **IMPACT OF INTERNET ON LIBRARIES**

Internet services and resources influence library services. New opportunities and benefits include:

- **Leadership Opportunities:** Libraries frequently take the lead by introducing the Internet to user communities in industry, academia, and K-12 Schools, and often provide training and access for customers as budgets allow. Public libraries are beginning to offer similar services to the public at large.
- **Cost and Time Savings:** List serves and other electronic forums facilitate information exchanges among librarians from all over the world. Librarians now keep up with advances, challenges, and issues without having to attend expensive conferences or subscribing to multiple library journals.
- **Question Answering Services:** Ask ERIC is a network-based education information service offering library media specialist (as well as K-12 teachers, administrators, parents and students) access to a question answering services. Another service, Stumpers-L, provides networking resources for reference questions.
- **International Inter Library Loan (IILL):** Libraries now have customers from all over the world. Internet accessible library catalogs assist research endeavors, provide interlibrary loan verifications, and offer a myriad of

reference materials that enhance local library collections.

- **Document Delivery Services:** There has been a rapid growth in fee-based document delivery services that use the network to order and/or transfer documents to libraries and often to end-users, by passing libraries completely.
- **Online Transaction:** Government information can be distributed over the network to libraries allowing unparalleled opportunities and constituents about government issues.
- **Information Sharing:** Technical standards, such as Z39.50, coordinate the transfer of information between different systems and forums over the network. These standards are essential to libraries as automated library systems share information and streamline processing using the Internet.
- **Other Impacts:** Using the Internet resources may include some increase in workload for librarians, but that is offset by the library's increased visibility and value to the community and the opportunity for the library to become an information provider rather than dispensary.

### **CONCLUSION**

Internet has brought about drastic changes in social contact and tries to by pass physical face to face contact. Today it is used daily by billions of people, who access it for a variety of purpose. The main popular existing library services are cataloguing, classification, circulation services, reservation, renewal, new

arrivals, current contents, CAS, SDI, indexing and abstracting services, reference services, document delivery services, inter library loan services, externally purchased database, CD-ROM databases, access to other library catalogues, access to online databases, internally published newsletter, reports and journals, bibliographic services, and so on. All these services have changed its mode to an extent with web environment. Internet has revolutionized the way people access information, and has opened up new possibilities in areas such as digital libraries, virtual libraries, scientific information retrieval and dissemination. Not only the world is becoming interconnected, but also the use of Internet and Web has changed the fundamental roles, paradigms, and organizational culture of libraries and librarians as well.

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