

Embedded Librarianship: Librarian Faculty Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

Embedded librarianship is an old concept in new context. It is an old phenomenon to initiate a new range of services in the present environment. This paper defines the attributes of embedded library services such as user-oriented, no physical proximity required, miniature group centric, expertise, etc. It also endows with suggestions to the future embedded librarians which embraces acting as a group and not as an individual, support from the organisation and associates, commercial outlook, risk taking competence, etc. This paper also explains the practicing embedded librarianship process which starts with the identification of a faculty member who is library-friendly and ends with providing with embedded library services in the hi-tech era. It is a transformation process of traditional librarian to embedded librarian. As compared to traditional librarianship which is based on transaction, embedded librarianship is based on relationship with the faculty, or user community. When an embedded librarian initiate interacting with the patrons, it takes them to the another level of understanding with the user. Librarianship with the help of IT has developed into a fruitful affiliation. Most of the high-flying libraries in India are providing embedded library services to its users, some of the libraries are Delhi University Library system, IIT Delhi, Indira Gandhi National Open University, etc. The success of embedded librarianship depends not only on the understanding of librarian and the faculty members but also on the support from the organisation.

Keywords: Embedded librarianship, librarian-faculty collaboration

1. INTRODUCTION

Embedded librarianship is not a new term but a novel concept in the present era of librarianship. It is an expanding trend and a term used to cover a range of initiatives and service concepts in the present world of librarianship. The development of digital information resources and related economic and administrative changes, have made embedded librarianship critically important to librarians and information professionals. With so many decades of support of ICT in the domain of LIS, librarians are crossing not only the four walls of the libraries but also the physical and virtual outreach of the libraries. Libraries are providing new services to their patrons with the access to e-resources to their users; digitised material and many other high-tech services like 'ask a librarian', 'real time reference service', etc. The association among the faculty members and librarians are helping in achieving a height at which librarians can entrench library instructions or library techniques in the curriculum.

The embedded librarianship depicts an array in the innovative services in set up different organisations. This, in particular, also helps in explaining the job of an academic librarian who contributes in curriculum and courses on regular basis and helps in learning information literacy skills. It now embraces in the job profile of librarians in research institutions or any other type of organisations¹.

Shumaker² has defined it as "Embedded librarianship is a distinctive innovation that moves the librarians out of libraries and creates a new model of library and information work. It emphasises the importance of forming a strong working relationship between the librarian and a group or team of people who need the librarian's information expertise."

2. EMBEDDED LIBRARIANSHIP SERVICES ATTRIBUTES

2.1 User-oriented as an Alternative of Library-oriented

Embedded librarianship permits a more concentrated

approach and negligible inhibition for librarians so as to engage themselves in a team/group or department work. Embedded librarians evolve highly focused, targeted, specialised information research results due to cogent and firm relationships. Noticeably, it leads to a more integrated and analytical approach as compared to what a library conventionally provides.

2.2 Physical Proximity

The meaning of embedded librarianship may be different to different people but the prime element of it is to move librarians out of the traditional library setting whether physically or virtually into a new framework for providing library services. It shifts the thrust from reactively responding to research queries to developing a unique comprehension of patrons requirements and providing farsighted outcomes.

2.3 Miniature Group-centric

It is to be believed that its more entertaining to deliver high level of service to a smaller group as compare to larger population, i.e., rather providing a superficial standard of service to a larger group.

2.4 Experts rather than Generalist

The embedded librarians transform themselves as a chief source of information which makes them specialist and experts in this field. Thereby to use their specialisation in definite forms that will have a direct and profound impinge on teaching, learning and research. Librarians shift from a supportive position to a collaborative role with their client by developing more cogent and solid relationship and tie up with those they deliver or serve.

2.5 Reliant on Universe of Knowledge and not only Library Skills

Embedded library services are based on the whole universe of knowledge and not only on the knowledge about the library skills. It includes library skills as well as the tailor-made services to its users.

2.6 Aspiring for Further Study and Amalgamation rather than Delivery

Embedded library services are broader than the traditional library services which are based on the delivery of the content to its users.

2.7 Based on Trusted Guidance not Service Deliverance

After establishing the relationship and trust, it becomes imperative on the part of embedded librarians to engage themselves to know the needs and interests of their customers. More often embedded librarian tend to learn while doing their job, viz., having one to one interaction with the clients,

participating in meeting and conferences and joining e-mail distribution lists. Another concern for embedded librarians are as to how they get embed themselves in a practice group. Once a they are well equipped with adequate knowledge or understanding of that are of law including practice specific resources and corresponding knowledge of usage of these resources to disseminate information on evolving issues and trends in that practice area afterwards embedded librarians can effectively open the dialogue with clients in order to determine their needs and eventually deliver results as per their needs³.

3. SUGGESTIONS FOR EMBEDDED LIBRARIAN

3.1 Group not as an Individual

Embedded librarian should work as a team player and not as an individual. He should understand that how the group should work and perform their tasks, be aware of his authority and responsibilities, responsibilities of other members of the group.

3.2 Support from Organisation and Associates

Embedded librarian needs the whole hearted support of the organisation as well as his associates. Embedded librarian should know the role of the librarian which works outside the boundaries of the library. It is redefining the duties of the librarian and his staff and enlarging the working of the librarianship.

3.3 Commercial Outlook

Embedded librarianship is a new opportunity for the librarianship to start innovative products and services of knowledge. They may have a commercial outlook as they have to upbeat in providing new services and products to their users. They should be proactive in defining opportunities. They should know how to sell themselves and tell people what new services and products they can offer.

3.4 Risk-taking Competence

Embedded librarian should be able to take risks because when a new work has to be started there is a lot of risk in that. This risk is limited not only to the librarian but also for the organisation. For example, in the business when a businessman starts a new venture it takes a lot of time to make profit out of that venture. It is to be remembered that risk taking is essential for the transformation.

3.5 Transformation of Library Science to Information Science

Embedded librarianship needs to pertain library skills in a new mode. Most people are unaware of a librarian's duties and tasks. Embedded librarian has to be capable to enlighten them about his knowledge and expertise. It is a very time consuming job.

3.6 Making Dependable Relations

Embedded librarianship is based on the interactions of the librarians with the user community, work with a focus on teaching and learning from both the parties. The user should know the librarian and the librarian should know the user perfectly. The motive behind this is to develop trust between them and alliance between the embedded librarian and the user.

3.7 Get out of Comfort Zone

Embedded librarianship demands that librarian should get out of his cozy and comfy library environment and take a plunge into unfamiliar zone. While venturing into new territory, do help when users need it. When things are indefinite then the librarian must take counsel from reliable colleagues. In this ever-changing era of research which invokes different needs and requirements on the part of researcher, embedded librarian must have adequate skills to deal with it.

3.8 Don't Just Think, But Act

At the moment, most librarians realise the necessity to re-evaluate the roles of librarians at colleges/universities and accommodate their work to a novel era of research. It is high time to move forward with actual transformation at ground level beyond merely thinking of it⁴.

4. PRACTICING EMBEDDED LIBRARIANSHIP

Embedded librarianship starts by identifying a faculty member who is library friendly and is open to an embedded librarian. The next step is to include writing emphasis courses in the universities so as to promote research component that would require the use of library materials and resources. Having said that, one must adopt effective marketing measures and informational materials to draw attention towards embedded librarian services. An embedded librarian should participate regularly in departmental/divisional/school meetings to ground their feet and also provide relevant information at faculty workshops/seminars or conferences etc. The embedded librarian should use ICT to interact with faculty programme to enlighten them about embedded librarianship programs. Next step is achieve access in learning management system. First and foremost, need to get permission from faculty who is teaching the course. Interact and work together with IT staff who can add you into courses or a librarian job can be displayed in learning management system. Embedded librarian can start a discussion forum and can introduce new knowledge products and services for example tutorials, etc. The embedded librarian has to convince the users about the services they want to provide to the users. Embedded librarian

has to encourage students to ask queries. For this they need to be always welcoming. One student's doubt can be other's too, so it needs to be posted on social platforms. They need to develop a list of ready to go posts. These posts can help trigger discussions and questions at various forums. To achieve success, librarian may want to target all sections of a particular course for embedded librarian. They can develop some higher level activities that can be embedded⁵.

Librarianship with the help of IT has grown-up into a prolific affiliation. In the recent years technology has become an integral part of librarianship. For example course management systems are been used for providing library services to meet the requirements of the users.

Embedded librarian is the one who actively participate in the online environment. He can provide links for the other e-resources to interact with the patrons through online mode or can communicate with its user via e-mail, discussion forums or real-time reference or real-time chat. With the help of faculty librarian collaboration librarian becomes a part of course, and the faculty members and students can interact with them immediately for the library help, suggestions from the librarian about the library resources can also be sought. When the librarian is a part of course, students and faculties are more interested to take help from him. These services are used by the various academic institutions, universities and colleges in the form of feedback from its users.

The embedded librarianship is very beneficial for the users because in the present environment the students start their search on the internet. The students cannot access all the library resources as the resources may or may not be remotely accessed. The faculty and students want their information at the right time, in the right form at the time of need. With the help of embedded librarians, the students and faculty members can increase their knowledge by using peer reviewed information and databases provided by the library. The future of embedded librarianship assures fresh prospects for the librarians to assimilate into the professional and academic lives of its users⁶.

5. EMBEDDED LIBRARY SERVICES IN INDIAN PROMINENT LIBRARIES: EXAMPLES

5.1 Delhi University Library System

Delhi University Library System (DULS), University of Delhi, has more than 34 libraries in its fold to reach to wider academic community. The website of DULS name it as 'Knowledge Portal'. As a part of embedded librarianship, the DULS is providing a lot of services and activities which includes:

- Information Literacy: To empower the students, researchers and faculty members to serve, evaluate, use and create information effectively and efficiently and to achieve their educational, social, occupational and personal goals, the Delhi University Library System (DULS) has started Information Literacy activities since 2006 in the domain of E-Resource Orientation Programmes; Online Searching Techniques; Open Access Resource Orientation Programme; Instructions for Bibliographic Citations; Virtual Referencing; Exposure to Copyright and Plagiarism Issues; Citation Analysis and Online Information Literacy Tutorial⁷.
- E-Referencing: DULS has introduced 'Reference Service' through e-mail which is responded immediately⁷.
- Virtual Reference Service: DULS provides an option of 'chat' with the library staff. Chat option is available to provide virtual reference service to the users. They can chat with library staff regarding their queries. For this, user has to sign in.
- Workshops: DULS organises information literacy workshop for the assistance of the faculties and research scholars in all the disciplines. This workshop is organised annually to encourage the use of e-resources for the purpose of teaching and learning to make aware the researchers, faculties and students about the e-resources subscribed by the University of Delhi. And to give demonstration and to expose faculties and researchers about the different searching techniques on the web for federated search. The purpose of these workshops is to give orientation of various electronic resources; information about the open access electronic resources; and information about the information services provided by University of Delhi⁸.



Figure 1. Virtual reference service at DULS.

5.2 Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Library & Documentation Division

The IGNOU library is the most resourceful

information centre in the country in the field of distance education. The library has the largest collection of books, journals and other related materials in the field of distance education, throughout the country. It was established in 1986 in tune with the objectives of IGNOU. The primary mission of the library is to support the educational and research programmes of the University by providing physical and intellectual access to information. IGNOU L&DD is also providing lot of activities and services which includes:

5.2.1 NODLINET

IGNOU has started a project known as NODLINET which is an integrated electronic platform for sharing resources of the networked libraries at the national level across open and distance learning system.

- Implements latest technologies for resource sharing and dissemination of information among the distance learning fraternity to provide them the high quality information as good as traditional education community.
- Provides faculty members and students of the distance learning community the ways to access networked resources online
- Acts as a support system of IGNOU and other distance learning institutions for providing quality education
- Put forward flawless access to library resources
- Integrate ICT for the target of integrating all the libraries in the realm of distance learning system into a network
- Premeditated commotion for open and distance learning system
- Offer access to e- resources such as e-journals, e-books, e-databases, etc., disseminated across all libraries

Further, it will look forward to create digitised contents of all significant material and other resources. It also planned to provide guidelines and standards for establishing distance learning libraries for automating libraries, building library collection, providing broadband connectivity for the target libraries, etc. The various activities have been clustered as: VISDOL (Virtual Information System for Open and Distance Libraries) with its constituent CERDOL (Consortium of e-Resources for Open & Distance Libraries) and includes availability of digitised content; intensification of ODL library system; junction with traditional system; association with other networks; literacy on e-resources; system assimilation; web portal with access administration and endorsement and an integrated platform for library allied and other services⁹.

5.2.2 IGNOU Online

IGNOU Online provides one stop window catering to the learning needs of IGNOU learner community. It provides the links to access all learning resources including *eGyanKosh* which is the digital repository of programme-based learning content available in text and video formats. It provides Education broadcast which a webcasting facility is linking to educational channels like *Gyandharshan*, *Gyanvani* and EDUSAT. It also provides 'Virtual Class' links to all the online programmes of the University. It also includes the *Sakshat* link HRD⁹.

5.3 IIT Delhi Library

IIT Delhi Library provides VPN for faculty facility in their library. IIT Delhi support VPN for IIT Delhi's internal network from outside IIT Delhi. The VPN feature is useful for the faculties while traveling outside Delhi. It can be used to access software license servers and for accessing internal SVN repositories. Faculties can access online databases through IIT Delhi website with the help of VPN. VPN helps in accessing internal web servers for the purpose of accessing software repositories, forms, etc. It also helps in accessing Internal DNS, mail servers, etc., as and when required at the time of need. It is very useful when faculty members have to access the resources available on the internal systems.

The Central Library, IIT Delhi takes an active role in the user orientation programmes for new students in the beginning of every academic session familiarise them with library resources and services¹⁰. It organises training, workshops and conferences etc., for the library professionals working in S&T libraries to assist them update and uphold their skills and knowledge. Following services are provided to its users through seminars and workshops; web-based instructions; orientation programmes; presentations and demonstrations; and mailing lists.

5.4 Tamil Virtual University Library

Tamil Virtual University¹¹ is an autonomous institution, established by the Government of Tamilnadu. Its



Figure 2. Tamil virtual university library.

courses include certificate courses, diploma courses and bachelor degree in Tamil. The virtual library of Tamil Virtual University provides all material in digital format with virtual reference services.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Embedded librarianship is a new term but it is an old concept in librarianship. Tailor-made services have always existed in the libraries from their inception. In the present environment, many libraries are using latest technologies to provide new services to their users. Collaboration is an important aspect in the present scenario. The success of embedded librarianship depends not only on the understanding of librarian and the faculty members but also on the support from the organisation. Embedded librarians have to meet future challenges. They should be proactive in making relationships with the faculties and users and in building new partnerships with academic departments and providing important services to users.

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