Guest Editorial

Embedded Librarianship

Recent Developments in the field of information technology particularly emergence of social networking tools and mobile technologies have forced the libraries to rethink about their strategies. Due to digital revolution now large amount of library resources are available in electronic form over the internet with anywhere anytime access option. This has also kept users away from the library. Now the general perception is that users do not require libraries but the libraries require users for their survival. People have started raising questions about the existence of libraries. This is mainly because traditional libraries have failed in coping up with the latest changes in the library and information environment. But, I believe, more than earlier, now users need more help from the librarians. In good old days, in traditional libraries, librarian's job was to collect, organise, and disseminate the library materials. At the most, librarians were providing indexing and abstracting services. But now with information explosion and availability of tools like Google, users are getting so much information, which they cannot read even in their life time. So they are confused, as many times it is difficult for them to find out information which is relevant and authentic. To sort out this confusion, librarians can play an important role as knowledge navigators. Moreover, libraries are not just storehouse of books and other library material. It is an environment to enhance the knowledge horizons of the users. But it is true that in changing context, the libraries need to redefine their roles and strategies. Now it is not important how many users are coming to the libraries, important is that how many libraries are reaching out through innovative library information service wherever they are—at office, hostel and even at the home. Now, it is more important for the librarians to understand the user profile, their needs in more systematic and analytical manner to serve them better, and more importantly libraries need to develop a partnership with them. As partners, the librarians need to design different instructional programmes, strategies and services to suit their needs. These kinds of strategies and programmes have been seen as emergence of new form of librarianship known as 'embedded librarianship'.

Embedded librarians need to demonstrate their expertise, specialisation and skills to help researcher in achieving various research and information objectives. Various kind of instructional programmes, outreach programmes, workshops, library orientation, discussion forums and mutual learning forums can be initiated by librarians in the libraries.

To achieve above, librarians may require some changes or adjustment to their present roles and responsibilities. Some of the important qualities of embedded librarians as mentioned by Jake Karlson and Ruth Kneale in their article 'embedded librarians in research context' are as follows:

(i)   Be a team player

(ii)   Secure support from your organisation and colleagues

(iii) Have entrepreneurial mind set

(iv)   Ready to accept risks

(v)   Translate library science to other disciplines

(vi)   Well trusted relationship with users

(vii) Move out of comfort zone

(viii) Adjust themselves to act outside the box

Embedded librarianship is still an emerging model. Embedded librarianship is an innovative and modern librarianship which demands more human efforts rather than infrastructure or technology support. It also demands innovative approach, and out of box thinking. I believe more importantly, librarians have to adopt this new form of librarianship for their survival.

New scholarly communication initiatives like institutional repositories, open access publications, and development of support system for e-learning are some of the areas where librarians can play a important role in improving the visibility as well as research output of an institution. This also includes creating awareness about copyright and licensing issues, various open access models, open access policies of

the various publishers in the area of interest of the researchers, etc. Various workshops and hands-on in 'What is plagiarism and how to detect and avoid it', 'how to right and get it published in books and journals', various reference management tools, and language remedial courses may help researchers in improving their research capacity. Librarians can contribute immensely to the research infrastructure and support system of an Institution and may add scientific value to a research team by providing advice on data curation, metadata analysis, search strategies, bibliometric analysis, and reference management tools, etc. Besides, librarians can better help researchers in organisation of their research work, guiding them about the works done by others at present as well as in past. This has been proven fact. Such a case study entitled 'The librarian as research informationist: A case study' by Lisa Fédérer based on programme of National Institutes of Health grant no. 3-R01-EY021590-02S1 from the National Library of Medicine and the National Eye Institute has been published in *J. Med. Lib. Assoc.*, October 2013, 101(4), 298-302.

Librarians can embed themselves in an university or in a research institute by using vide range of online tool. In almost all Academic and research institutes digital resources find a major share may be 90 % of total resources. With the help of various Web 2.0 applications including social networking tools such as blogs, wikis, social bookmarking sites, Facebook, LinkedIn, instant messaging, chat reference and mobile technologies, the librarians can connect with its users anytime anywhere. Using various technologies librarians can also collaborate with researchers for various innovative services. For example, tools like Skype can be used to deliver various instructional programmes to the students, to collaborate with other librarians and particularly helpful in connecting with users spread over different physical locations. Embedded librarianship can be used to help users in creating their personal learning and reading environment.

Special issue of *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology (DJLIT)* on 'Embedded Librarianship' includes 4 papers on the theme. It also includes 6 general papers. The response seems somehow satisfactory as this is the new and emerging form of librarianship and librarians in India are still in process of learning it.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. S.C. Jindal, Director, DESIDOC for appointing me as the Guest Editor and also having faith in me to bring out this special issue of *DJLIT on '*Embedded Librarianship'. Thanks are also due to Mr. Ashok Kumar, Associate Director, DESIDOC and Ms. Alka Bansal for their support in bringing out this issue. I am grateful to all contributors for their special contributions to the journal. I am not an expert in embedded librarianship as I am still learning from experiences about this very complex and challenging subject. I am sure the articles published in this issue would be helpful to library and information science professions and students in India in particular and other part of the world in general. Once again, I thank you all. Special thanks to the editorial team of *DJLIT*.

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