

## Marketing and Building Relations in Digital Academic Library: Overview of Central Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Shiva Kanaujia Sukula\* and Parveen Babbar\*\*

*Central Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi- 110 067*  
*E-mail: \*Shivasukula25@gmail.com, \*\*parveenbabbar@gmail.com*

### ABSTRACT

Though the concepts of marketing and public relations are interrelated yet the example of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Central Library reflects how these have been walking hand-in-hand together to maximise the usage of library collections and keep the users well-informed. The paper discusses about the various practices taking place at Central Library which have been customised and functioning as tools of marketing. The in-depth analysis of these practices and services has been showing the endeavors in the direction of building relations with user community to achieve optimum use of library resources, specially the digital kinds.

**Keywords:** Marketing, digital collection, public relations, Jawaharlal Nehru University Central Library, service automation

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The building of a digital library takes place after much planning and considerations such as academic requirements, budget provisions, technological infrastructure and the library manpower as well, the once planned techniques are meant forever. The innovative technologies and advancements are there to be chased once the digital library is complete. It is difficult to find out the best platform and mechanisms to build the best and most advanced digital library at any point of time due to certain limitations. What is the most significant component of a digital library? The collections or resources part which is to be used by the user community make the most vital component in running of a digital library. The libraries tend to maximise the usage of digital resources by applying the marketing skills. The pointing of methods and understanding the requirements of users generate the right appeals to direct the users towards the digital resources. The movement of library planning towards specific needs depends on identification of needs and resources. The trends in libraries have been quite amusing as well as thought provoking if these efforts have been effective<sup>1</sup>.

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The methods of marketing for library and information services and products have been through transition due to increased role of digital environment. The concept of relationship through marketing has come handy when there are various means and methods to develop relationships with library users. The effective marketing brings the digital resources and users closer to each other with

the help of relations created through effective services, social media and feedback. Though the techniques are altered because of changed scenarios in libraries yet the applications remain same. The practices of marketing confer better results if applied in thorough manner.

While Henderson<sup>2</sup> discussed about the marketing strategies, the 'relationship' with users highlighted the 'digital directions'. Though the then digital libraries were not this much advanced as one sees today. The digital libraries create a niche of complex yet complete information environment in which the users' categories are benefited. These users may be academicians, scholars, or any other kinds of users. The interfaces for kinds of users may not be easy to pick or design but there are certain conditions which reflect the need of different interfaces. The question arises if it is feasible to have multiple interfaces for digital libraries for different kinds of users. The inclusion of various collections and services requires attention for classification of webpages, etc. The use of blog, giving demonstrations, writing articles and using social media have been suggested and used actively. The promotion of collection, specifically, provides opportunity to reach to collection specific users in better way. Lepczyk<sup>3</sup> advised for actively publication of the collection.

The marketing of digital libraries has embarked on a journey which is continuous in nature and striving for new successes so far. As per Ohio Library Council<sup>4</sup>, while the marketing makes the librarians understand their users and library is for them<sup>4</sup>, it is always felt that the main reason for library's existence are the users. Misra<sup>5</sup> elaborated that the concept of 'customer' and building

'relationships' have tremendous effects on making the marketing user-centric as the emphasis has always been concerned with their needs. Somehow the concept and processes of marketing are directly related to the actions taken to achieve the objectives of library.

According to Soroya & Ameen<sup>6</sup>, the marketing plan and processes involve the entire library staff as team and their coordination towards single objective of users' satisfaction. The marketing of digital libraries brings the users closer in digital world. The intrinsic aspects such as user satisfaction and libraries' services are related with marketing. The necessity of marketing is in the area of usage of resources. As said, "Schools and libraries in all forms are transitioning their spends from providing physical items that are being stored on shelves and branches to digital items—the fastest portion of their growth,"

### 3. MARKETING OF DIGITAL LIBRARY BY JNU

The JNU Central Library understands the value of visibility in the marketing of information sources. The following services reflect the visibility of library in various forms:

#### (a) Significance of 'MAY I HELP YOU'

At Central Library, JNU, the library staff is responsible for informing the general guidance and queries to the newcomers and other users. The provision of 'MAY I HELP YOU' desk has been a clear visibility of library staff assistance to the users. The availability and efforts of library staff to help the users is very significant in the perspectives of building relationships with library users. The staff, interacting through this service, market the available resources and services to the users.

#### (b) New Arrivals

The spread of information through the 'New Arrivals' is visible on library website. The users are informed in a manner that is comfortable as well as fast changing. The acquisition of books of users' needs is the primary job of any library and these books are supposed to reach to them. Though it takes time to be in hands of users, the display of new arrivals on library website as well as physical display in the entrance area of library gives an opportunity to catch the eye. The alerts can also be used for the information of new arrivals by informing the users about the latest and recent additions. The library plans to inform users by sending e-mails along with the scanned pages of content pages of journals.

#### 3.1 Changing Spaces and Services: Building Relations

##### (a) Technology Spaces

The technology spaces are must haves in the times of digital learning and library services. The Central Library JNU has technology spaces in the form of 'Cyberlibrary' and technology supported 'reading halls'. The location of Cyberlibrary and reading halls is significant to serve the

users at the point of entering of them into the library. The availability of big number of computers, laptop chargers, scanning facilities are few of the features that are supported by the library and staff. The access to millions of e-resources is facilitated by these technology spaces. The users have access to e-journals, e-thesis, and e-books apart from other digitised information materials. The access is controlled and available to authentic users of the University library due to provisions of internet id and password given to users. The users can get their internet id and password from the concerned staff.

### 3.2 User Services

#### (a) Imaging Services

Various kinds of imaging services are being provided to users in the following formats:

- Photocopy Facility—This facility is available to users and is offered by a private operator against payment.
- Scanning Facility—This service is given to the visually-challenged students.

#### (b) Interlibrary Loans

The interlibrary loan supports library when the books and other information sources are unavailable and needs to be found for the readers. The requests are ranging from entire books to an article of a journal or book. The library staff keeps record and endeavours to serve at the earliest. The users interact with the staff of circulation section.

#### (c) Information Desk

The information desk provides kinds of services to the casual entrants and serious members of the library. Being located on the ground floor, it is easy to located and in reach of the users. It provides help in aspects such as:

- Referral service which is beyond the casual queries such as 'Directional assistance'. This service is provided through website and the queries are solved on telephone, on site and over the telephone.
- Readers' queries about the library holdings, locations, verifying the ILL stage etc.
- Information related to library services, access to e-resources, etc.

For the convenience of users, the access to information desk and the concerned staff, is available through library website as well as telephone.

#### (d) Downloading 'Interaction' Forms

The members are provided the facility of downloading various kinds of forms in pdf format that are useful for the development of relation with the library as members:

- Membership form for students (Hindi)
- Membership form for guest faculty/special members (Hindi)
- Library clearance form for students (Hindi)

- Library clearance form for faculty/staff (Hindi)
- Library consultation form (Hindi)
- Library rules (Hindi)

### 3.3 Visibility, Access and Interfaces

- Library Catalogue/OPAC

The library catalogue and OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) are the access points for the users towards the desired document in the library. The approaches provided in the catalogue are enhanced by the OPAC and their features. The library catalogue and OPAC are the strong tools to interact and access the library resources.

- Single Window Search

The single window search has made the library resources and their access popular. Various features extend marketing of resources by the following methods and access to: (a) Search All; (b) Articles; (c) Books & E-books; (d) A to Z Search; (e) JNU Catalogue; (f) E-Thesis to ETD; and (f) Newspaper Clippings.

The users are facilitated to search every kind of resources available through the library website. The search box lead the users to full-text, scholarly resources as well as the resources listed in catalogue. The 'Discovery Service' supports searching across the databases and different formats of information resources. To support the users about 'how to access' and use the 'discovery service', few links are given which publicise the methods as well as the tools employed for discovering the information hidden in thousands of information resources. Few of these tools can be downloaded on personal devices also. These 'Search Guides' are as following:

- Discovery Service Search Guide
- EDS Result List Guide
- Create Search Alert Guide
- EBSCO eBooks Search Guide
- EBSCO eBooks Downloading Guide
- EBSCO eBooks iPad Download

### 3.4 Trial Digital Resources

The information sources available through the trial access require thorough marketing. Users need to be informed for wider and deeper access. The information spread through newsletters, e-mails, circulars and notices on website are very helpful in creating awareness of this kind of resources. The role of marketing comes into picture as these resources are not available forever but for a limited period of time. To inform users in a very short time is the challenge yet the JNU library has taken steps time to time. The users review these resources hence their close interaction, time-spending and in-depth searching take place.

### 3.5 Digital Services' Marketing through Library Portal

The library website informs about various digital

resources and the library website providing well-framed marketing services. The presentation and linking of various kinds of information sources such as online catalogue, single window search, electronic resources, remote access, data portal, institutional repository, subject gateway, open access, ETDs and press clippings are given in a 'menu-driven' manner. The e-resources are further classified as online databases, e-journals, e-books, etc. The remote access is provided by 'EZProxy'. The users may login and access various resources which are accessible through secured access. The users have their 'cyberid' to access the resources. Another remote access method is 'OpenAthens'.

#### (a) Data Portal

Data portal is another way to attract and invite library users to library website and provide them specific kind of information and access to these sources. The provisions of this data portal envisage the access to data sets, reports which may be free or subscribed in nature.

#### (b) Showcasing Institutional Research

The Institutional Repository (IR) of Jawaharlal Nehru University has been instrumental in providing organisational research output. The interface of IR markets the research output of the academic community. The IR provides links to various subjects such as: Arts & Aesthetics; Biotechnology; Computational & Integrative Sciences; Computer & System Sciences, Environmental Sciences; International Studies; Language, Literature and Cultural Studies; Life Sciences; Physical Sciences; Social Sciences; Molecular Medicine; Nanoscience; Sanskrit Studies; Law and Governance; and Administration.

The IR also provides links to publications of affiliated institutions and Central Library.

#### (c) Open Access

The open access movement has affected the library resources usage patterns. The libraries have altered their methods related to marketing practices of their services, interactive platforms, etc. The provision of open access sources through library portal is one of the method to connect to library users. The connection established with the users by the means of open access facility is directed towards the inclusion of sources which are beyond the library subscription yet in the reach of users. The website provides access to open access resources such as journals, e-books, institutional repositories, e-databases, audio e-book, Directory of Open Access Journals, computational linguistics, etc.

#### (d) ETDs

The availability of electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) supports the marketing of information products of JNU Library. The accessibility to theses and dissertations in digital format. Increased use and that informs about the success of marketing.

**(e) Press Clippings**

Reading the related news on digital platform is a different experience for the readers in a technological environment. The digitisation of news items is significant for the preservation too. To popularise and maximise the press clippings service, the library portal supports the users in accessing the same. This service is available through library software and database. The library staff also supports the press/newspaper clippings service and markets the same.

**3.6 News and Events**

The news spreading regarding the various activities and events organised by Central Library JNU have been functioning actively as a tool of marketing. The wide coverage and information on library website, notices, etc., also take shape of awareness functionaries. The details covered by different media help the library in informing the readers about the steps taken and programmes organised by the library. These programmes provide learning sessions and modern means of interaction with the library. The involvement of library users with the learning sessions, workshops, etc., is advertised thus proving a effective marketing technique. The following methods are being used as advertising and marketing techniques:

- Library News
- Seminars/conferences
- Training Programme
- Workshop
- Book Release
- Lecture Series
- Exhibition
- JNU Forum for Mutual Learning
- Other events

**4. MARKETING AT VARIOUS LEVELS**

Marketing of digital library and information services is needed to give a platform to users for increased access and usage. Different levels of interactive sessions, creation of awareness and display of digital information products have been instrumental in creating the buzz around the users about the digital library.

- (a) Latest News:** The 'Latest News' on library website gives the glimpse into the current and future activities, programmes, additions, etc. This serves as a strong marketing tool as it is accessible to readers far away too.
- (b) Seminar/Conferences:** The organisation of seminar and conferences involving library staff and user community at JNU has been spreading the message of library as a 'happening place' and 'active place'. For example, the awareness of ETD has been done at great level by the means of conference.

**(c) Training Programme:** The library has been active in organising training programmes which involve the user community very well. The training programmes on scholarly writing skills, tools for digital information searching, using software/databases for academic research, etc., have been very popular.

**(d) Workshops:** The workshops have taken the role as teacher by the efforts of library. The range of topics/ concepts and activities declares about the need of such workshops which function as marketing tool leading towards better utilisation of digital resources.

**(e) Book Release:** The book release programme have been instrumental in bringing the user community for understanding the role of library as an academic enhancer. The library creates opportunities for more interaction and providing the library space for further academic activities. The users relate to library in better and path-breaking ways.

**(f) Lecture Series:** The lecture series held by JNU Library have been active in informing and marketing the informative academic role of library among the student community.

**5. MY LIBRARY: UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR ACADEMIC USERS**

Few services have been designed keeping in view the needs of research scholars and other students. These services are handful yet able to serve the users at individual level thus functioning as marketing tools which are small in size yet impressive.

- (i) My Library Record
- (ii) Renew Book Procedure
- (iii) Reserve a Book
- (iv) Articles of My Interest
- (v) Can't Find book of Your Choice

This service has been intended to support users in finding the books on interlibrary loan.

- (a) Research Tools:** The research tools help in creating understanding of research related activities, resources and digital libraries available for the users.
- (b) Suggest book(s):** The users are given opportunity for suggesting books/titles for acquisition related to their coursework/research work etc. This kind of interaction provides the users direct access to be part of collection development process. The users place their requests by recommending in prescribed forms available through library website.
- (c) Document Delivery Service:** When the users do not know where they can locate or find the book, the document delivery service has been very significant. Helping the users by the document delivery service has been an effective marketing tool.



## 6. RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR AUGMENTED INVOLVEMENT OF ACADEMIC USERS

- JNU e-Thesis Submission Guidelines
- Shodhganga
- Research and Plagiarism Awareness

The library organises training programs as well as workshops to educate about plagiarism issues and supports the research ethics among user community at JNU. The library has been busy in tutoring the use of software such as Turnitin, IThenticate, and Urkund.

Library advertises and showcases about the research publications of the faculty members of JNU. The link to 'Scopus', development of an institutional repository and highlighting books have been few aspects of marketing of digital presence of faculty and their publications.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The marketing of library and information services, digital information products and creating relations with user community is not a simple job but the task to be accomplished in a continuous manner. The ongoing marketing processes and building public relations with the academic users' community is the significant aspect of routine jobs of libraries. In academic library, the marketing aspect is very much required due to the varied nature of information sources and diversity in subjects as well as user community. The concept of marketing, though old is yet intricately woven with the library activities and services.

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## Contributors

**Dr Archana Shukla** is a Assistant Professor (Sr. Scale) in the Faculty of Library and Information Science. She has MA (English), Masters and PhD in Library and Information Science from Bundelkhand University, Jhansi. Her areas of interest include: Management of library and information centres, information consolidation and repackaging, academic library system, classification and cataloguing. She has many research papers and articles to her credit. She has ten years of teaching experience and two years of administrative experience in library, as Assistant Librarian.

**Dr Parveen Babbar** is presently working as Deputy Librarian at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Prior to this he has been Assistant Librarian in Library & Documentation Division at Indira Gandhi National Open University in New Delhi. He holds PhD from University of Rajasthan, MPhil (Library & Information Science), MLISc, Masters of Computer Application and Masters of Business Administration. He had been Gold Medalist in MLISc from Delhi University, India. He had been Junior Research Fellow and has cleared JRF-NET exam from UGC, India. He has taken many projects of Library Automation & Digitization like CALPI Library Setup for Swiss Agency. He has about 40 papers published in National and International Journals and Conferences to his credit. He had been Invited Speaker at International M-Libraries Conference 2012 at The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK. He is a member of Special Libraries Association (SLA), USA and had held various positions in SLA Asian Chapter. He had also been the Webmaster in the Board of Asian Chapter, SLA. He has received many awards and scholarships—2013 *Bonnie Hilditch International Librarian Award* from SLA; *Young Information Scientist Award* 2012 by SIS, India; and *SLA Asian Librarian Award* at SLA 2010 Annual Conference in New Orleans, USA. He received the scholarship from Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, 2009 and IFLA grant for the assignment in 2010. He is associated with several professional associations in various capacities in India and abroad including SLA, USA; Society for Library Professionals, India; Society for Information Science, India.