Chapter 15

Designing Library Atmospherics for Information Delivery: Problems and Solutions

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ABSTRACT

Learning environment comprises providing physical environment, cultural context in which students learn, and growth and development of institutions at large. However, learning environment is influenced by multiple factors such as institutional factors, physical infrastructure tools, budget, services, ICT, marketing the services, and evaluation of the services. Given the advent of web 2.0 technologies, there is need to provide active and two-way, student centric learning environment for effective learning and gaining of skill set. The chapter explores the aspects of how a conducive learning environment can be created by designing library atmospherics for information delivery.

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally the focus of libraries was to provide information to anyone who walks into the Library. However, with passage of time the focus has shifted to using technology for reducing time to retrieve information. A well-stocked Library does not mean a well-used library. The core competence of the Library staff depends on engaging the students to make best use of the well-stocked library. As E. Stewart Saunders pointed out in 2007, “The Internet and Google have changed the information landscape.” Recently the Pew Internet & American Life projects found that 72% of respondents who have access to the Internet rather than the library for their research needs (Estrabrook and Raine, 2007).

How the increasing dependence on information technology and online sources changed the landscape of librarianship? With internet revolution creating competition in form of YouTube and search engines and Meta search engines. The library is often without users hence, adopting technology has become important for libraries so that they can be utilized.

Any institution of higher learning can be rightly described as a community where teachers and scholars are the head, students are the body and the library its heart. The vital role of libraries in higher education has been well recognized by educationists. The Webster’s Dictionary defines library as “a place in which literary, musical, artistic or reference materials are kept for use but not for sale.” In the present scenario libraries are identified as storehouses of printed and non-printed information and manage to serve as many as they do.

During the twentieth century because of the information explosion, knowledge got published not only in books and serials, but also in technical and scientific reports, standards and patents. In this way, printing technology helped the mass production of books and other printed materials and brought them to the library and became the primary storage media of information in the library.

THE PARADIGM SHIFT TOWARDS IT ENABLED SERVICES

The resources were acquired and organized by means of cataloguing, classifying, indexing and other procedures. Until 1960’s all information sources and the bibliographic tools to access them were available only in printed media. It was followed by film and magnetic media and now is the “optical media age”, where CD-ROMs and e-journals have entered in the library as a source of information.

At present the electronic gadgets and virtual personal assistants are few examples that are making the users more dependable and making a paradigm shift towards the technology is expediently available in the market. Though the libraries have transformed themselves by automation and establishing digital libraries there is a need for certain change from the user’s point of view by providing them a conducive learning environment for information delivery. The ROI of any library is footfalls of users. Information delivery is as important as possession of information. The librarian and his staff should work together to attain 100% satisfaction levels of the users by delivering the information. The number of users visiting the libraries for information has tremendously fallen due to the advent of high-speed internet with affordable prices and other technological aspects. At this juncture to overcome all these incredible transformations there is need for change in libraries starting with physical form of the library. The library atmospherics involves all these components which play role in information delivery to the users. For this there is need for redesigning of the libraries.
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