Chapter 26

Impact of ICT on the Changing Roles of the Librarian, Other Library and Information Science (LIS) Professionals, and Managerial Change

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ABSTRACT

In the age of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), everything is available electronically or automatically, so academics and publishers believe that there is no role for the librarian in this age. However, the librarian plays a vital role in this age. e-Journals cannot be delivered directly to the users’ desktop because there is a complex license agreement that has to be signed so that the title can be available throughout the campus. Beside this, librarians and other LIS professionals are responsible for building new generation digital library/Information Repository (IR) library, virtual library, automated library, etc. to serve the pin-pointed information to the users in a smart way, and he/she plays an important role as search intermediary, as facilitator, as end-user trainer/educator, as website builder/publisher, as interface designer, as knowledge manager/professional, as shifter of information resources, as information architect, as information scientist, as information specialist/consultant, and as resource preserver.

Fast-paced change in technology, particularly the origin of ICT and social, political, economical change forced to managerial change in Libraries and Information Centres (LICs) is necessary for LICs to survive in the twenty-first century. In this context, managerial change towards structure, technology, task, people, library policies, objectives, and functions of information systems and processes of managerial change in LICs are discussed, and the chapter concludes that “Change Management” is the only feasible solution to overcome all the difficulties and problems created in the ever-changing environment for the overall development and progress of LICs in the ICT era.

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NECESSITY OF LIBRARIANS/ 
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION 
SCIENCE (LIS) PROFESSIONALS

There are a growing number of academics and 
publishers who believe quite firmly that once the 
transition from print to electronic journals has 
been made—particularly within the Scientific, 
Technical, and Medical (STM) sector of the jour-
nal market—there will be no role for libraries in 
the scholarly communication chain. Electronic 
journales can be delivered directly from the pub-
lisher to the user’s desktop. Such a scenario is 
certainly possible, but it is unlikely for a number 
of reasons. Even assuming that all academics and 
researchers had the technical expertise to deal with 
the range of hardware and software required to 
access a variety of relevant electronic products, 
individuals will not wish to purchase, out of their 
own pockets, the range of titles required for their 
research, and therefore some form of departmen-
tal/faculty or central purchasing will be required. 
Moreover, an individual academic will have scant 
regard that the titles they are interested in having 
delivered to their desktop may be of interest to 
other colleagues on campus. They will not want 
to read and sign a complex license agreement so 
that the title can be networked across the campus. 
Even if they did, who would be responsible for 
implementing the security requirements imposed 
by most publishers? Currently librarians perform 
a valuable service to the academic and research 
collegues by facilitating quick and easy access 
to information. It matters little to the researcher 
that behind the scenes the librarians is dealing 
with selection, acquisition, licenses, hardware 
requirements, and software. What really matters 
is that relevant information is quickly and easily 
available to support research, teaching, and learn-
ing. In addition, librarians are currently playing 
a pivotal role in this process.

BUILDING A NEW GENERATION 
LIBRARY: NEED OF THE HOUR

Users expect libraries to deliver high quality, 
comprehensive, user friendly new generation 
services. As the world advances, the library must 
also evolve and redesign their activities in order 
to deliver high quality, need-based, and value-
added services according to the expectations of 
today’s library users such as automated library, 
computerized library, electronic library, digital 
library, virtual library, library without walls, and 
Internet library.

MAJOR CHALLENGES OF 
21ST CENTURY LIBRARIAN

In a fast-changing, expanding diverse global digi-
tal information environment, libraries are facing 
a variety of complex challenges from multiple 
sectors of knowledge society in the 21st century. 
The major challenges are:

• Information explosion.
• Information and Communication Tech-
nology (ICT).
• Growth and usage of web resources.
• Use of digital resources.
• User’s expectations.
• Virtual learning environment.
• Virtual educational institutions.
• Development of digital, virtual, and hybrid 
libraries.
• Online bookshops and information 
services.

These challenges have called for orientation, 
reengineering, transformation, and great changes 
in the information environment, library functions, 
and the roles of library and information service 
professionals.