CALL FOR TRANSFORMING LIBRARY: SOME STRAY OBSERVATIONS AND THINKING

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Introduction

While going through the main theme and subthemes of the this international conference, I found all the topics equally important and timely. In fact, there is hardly any recent topic uncovered. Rightly thought, that if transformation is to be brought, it has to be brought at all levels from collection building to processing, organization, dissemination and generation of services. All contributors might have been allotted respective topics by the organizer, however I was privileged having giventhe autonomy to make choice of writing on any of the topics. This made my choice more complex under the circumstances of shortage of time and preoccupationin other assignments. I could write a few pages worth or not so worth on every topic. Then I thought, let me put some stray thoughts before this august international audience on the theme of the conference that may generate more thinking on contemporary issues in the profession. When we think of innovating or transforming library, it is imperative to review the present status and identify collectively where further changes can be brought in. I, being in the profession for many decadeshaving gained some working experience which I would like to share with other professionals with this understanding that our collective thinking may bring better results by innovating something new which may interest our users. I believe that every experience good or bad is educational. The present digital age is both with challenges and opportunities to our profession as all of us know. The challenges and the opportunities are well placed before us to be met and availed respectively. What could be more challenging than tothink and discuss about 'Transforming Library'. Techno-Savvy new generation of librarians has the potential and capability if not to transform, at least can add more value to the profession by improving andinnovating the services and compete doing better than other service providers. *'Transforming library'* means to me restructuring and evolvingnew model(s) over the present structure of hybrid nature of libraries. We may realize that bringing radical changes is neither possible nor so much required. Aim is to provide effective library services to the utmost satisfaction of the user and prove that there is no substitute to libraries and has the potential to dobetter which other service providers including search engines cannot.The foundation and the roots cannot be changed but can only be further strengthened and nurtured.

Changing scenario

Libraries did not change in their basic philosophy of service to the users. Change is in techniques and tools which will go on further changing from time to time. Therefore, status of libraries would continue to be transitional. As soon as we settle with adoption of today's available technologies, a few more are there at your door to knock, calling for application. How long 'library would continue to change the existing technologies? Improved technologies are always likely to come on our way to replace old ones. We know how difficult it is to adopt and adapt to these frequent changes. CD ROM technology which revolutionized

our services, we adopted that successfully, then came Internet, WWW and Google Guru, we are making use of all these technologies. Changing nature of libraries will continue but basics cannot be transformed. It cannot be ruled out that our old literature published during 19th century or earlier has no relevance today in this technological age. Problem is that we have to live in the present digital age and adapt with our old background and professional knowledge being taught under LIS education system in place. Librariesare heading towards more and more digital which includes creation, acquisition and use of digital resources which need special skills and competence. Teaching departments perhaps have a big challenge today as to what curriculum should be adopted; entirely new or combination of old theories and new technologies applicable in libraries. Problems are being faced both by teaching and practicing professionals, but definitely more in libraries. Solution lies in collaboration of teaching community, practicing professionals, publishers, aggregators, and above all the users.

User attitude

Expectations of users are high at times, but with passive attitude and non-participative nature in library activities. However, advocates of participatory librarianship plead for involving users in all activities of librarianship right from creation to dissemination and use of information and information products. But the pertinent question is where are such users and how libraries can involve them in such activities. Sometime they exclusively depend on libraries, sometime least, sometime not at all. Despite, such unpredictable attitude and behavior, libraries have to be as close to their customers as possible and feel their nerves properly. Our clientele is too diverse too difficult to identify and meet their needs. We should admit that our customer service needs a lot of changes and improvement despite the fact that our Library & Information Science Departments worldwide have done a lot of research on user studies. In India, maximum PhDs have been produced on user studies and this trend is still going on.

Innovation, constant changes, experimentation are not options but compulsion to survive failing which other service providers may leapfroglibraries.Our jobs are becoming tougher and tougher day-by-day, therefore something new has to be evolved to attract users to use our available resources.

Where are we today?

Libraries have been changing from time to time responding to every call of technology. Some have done expected advances, some could not do so much due to various reasons. It is important to note that despite passive attitude of users and the administration, libraries still have been progressing. Professionals are left with no enthusiasm in this environment. Services so generated are under used, even unknown to most of the usersand are unaware about the resources available to them.There is hardly any motivation and incentive for professionals. It is difficult for libraries to build good and representative collection without the active participation of communitywhich is basic function of every library.As stated above that dependence of users on libraries is declining in view of information available on Google or any other search engine. First preference of users is to search on Google.They may go to library resources in case they don't find required information on search engines. Millions of resources are available on various websites and search engines, which take library users away from the libraries. All we need is to do some introspection and visualize what is to be done and perform better.

Where we would like to be

What is our mission? Our role should not only be important but indispensible. User dependence on libraries must be restored as it used to be in the absence present technology. Think on the following issues and decide as to what can be transformed, innovated, modified and improved. Most of the libraries are

already on these jobs, nevertheless reviewing and revisiting them may be of worth consideration.

i) Review existing operations and services.

ii) Find the gap between services being offered and customers' satisfaction and use.

iii) Again go to your clientele to fill up gap.

iv) Make necessary innovations, modification improvement based upon the findings and your perception and future vision.

v) Generate valuable services that can meet needs, wants and demand of your immediate users.

vi) Create more and more quality digital contents.

vii) Manage and Integrate all resources under single interface.

viii) Make all services web enabled on library websites or library portal.

ix) Provide all services on preferred devices of users wherever they are.

x) Apply marketing approach to advertise your services.

xi) Be always close to your customers and develop harmonious relation with them as emphasized by S R Ranganathan in his laws and other writings.

Transforming What?

We may recall again and again and quote Ranganathan's laws which will not be out of context while discussing any one of the topics of this conference. The simple messages contained therein will never lose their relevance and their fulfillment will continue to be a challenging task. I often think that technology entered our profession as commandments in compliance to these laws. Technology says, I am here and would be ever there to help your professionals in achieving their changing goals. These messages are concomitant to 'transforming library'. What is to be transformed and innovated? Our physical landscape has already been changed to digital space, Libraries as an institution has also been de-institutionalized. Our basic resources have multiplied that are coming in different formats and typeswhich are to be acquired, processed and managed for easy access. Ownership is being replaced with accessibility, etc. Who brought these transformation, is the question before us. We the professionals, or the users, may be none of them. It might be the impact of technology alone which itself forced us to adopt and apply, that resulted in new services and dimensions of the profession. What are the contemporaryareas where we need rethinking to bring transformation. Transformation for me is to bring changes in exterior structure without disturbing the basics. Our basic philosophy is to provide better and better services. Some transformation is required in the following areas in particular:

i) Leadership

ii) Library staff

iii) Users.

Transformation of leadership is prerequisite for all other transformation and innovation. If leadership does not want to change, nothing will change. Leadership has to be visionary, innovative, receptive and enthusiastic to bring changes wherever required. He also has to make his staff willing who will deliver the goods. Equally important is to transform your user, some of them may be non-user, some passive and some active and potential keeping in view that whatever is being done, all is for them only.

My experimentation
Creation of digital content

All libraries are launching digitization projects at small or large scale. Mission is to create more and more digital resources. Libraries are confronted to make right choices of material to be digitized. What is important and useful to be digitized are under copyright restriction. In a knowledge society, knowledge is expected to

be available and accessible to all. But fact is that your own publications which were written and published at the cost of the institution is neither available to the authors nor to the institutions. Libraries were enthusiastic to build institutional repository, but I doubt the success of any of them. I happen to be associated to develop digital repositories in three universities. Snapshot of Sikkim two university repositories are given below:

Sikkim University

Communities in DSpace
Choose a community to browse its collections

- ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS
- AUDIO VIDEO COLLECTION
- CONTENTS OF JOURNALS
- DISSERTATIONS & THESES
- E RESOURCES
- FACULTY PUBLICATIONS
- LIST OF E BOOKS
- OPEN ACCESS RESOURCES
- PROF A C SINHA COLLECTION
- REPOSITORY ON NORTH EAST REGION
Literature on Sikkim and Eastern Himalayas

Discover

Author / Subject

Community in NEHU Digital Repository

.	Administrative Documents	2816
.	Central Library	2499
.	Department of Anthropology	189
.	Department of Biochemistry	262
.	Department of Biotechnology and Bioinformatics	33
.	Department of Botany	466
:	Department of Chemistry	500
.	Department of Commerce	60
.	Department of Economics	233
.	Department of Education	64
.	Department of English	84
.	Department of Environmental Science	163
.	Department of Geography	111
.	Department of History	68
.	Department of Khasi	118
.	Department of Library & Information Science	218
.	Department of Linguistics	20
.	Department of Mathematics	40
.	Department of Physics	251

- Department of Political Science   90
- Department of Sociology   31
- Department of Zoology   320
- Examination Question Papers   46
- NEHU JOURNAL   159
- Thesis and Dissertation Digitized   1131
- Administrative Documents   2816
- Central Library   2499
- Department of Anthropology   189
- Department of Biochemistry   262
- Department of Biotechnology and Bioinformatics   33
- Department of Botany   466
- Department of Chemistry   500
- Department of Commerce   60
- Department of Economics   233
- Department of Education   64
- Department of English   84
- Department of Environmental Science   163
- Department of Geography   111
- Department of History   68
- Department of Khasi   118
- Department of Library & Information Science   218
- Department of Linguistics   20
- Department of Mathematics   40
- Department of Physics   251
- Department of Political Science   90
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- Department of Zoology   320
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- NEHU JOURNAL   159
- Thesis and Dissertation Digitized   1131

First and foremost problem is to establish a good digital lab, which is not affordable to all libraries. This is followed to decide what to digitize and why. Though it is useful to digitize all possible resources, but right priority and choices have to be taken, considering many factors. Regarding developing institutional repositories, which is a common preference have many problems which we may not perceive in the beginning. Some may think that faculty would themselves upload their publications and extend their all possible cooperation. The reality is that most of them are unwilling to participate due to some or the other reasons, predominate among them is copyright issue. I could only succeed due to my personal contacts with the faculty after a lot of discussion and persuasion. I thought of arranging the publications in the following order:

i)   Department (Community)
ii) Authors
iii) Publications

One can go to his or her department and click on it to reach all the authors of the department and find his or her name, on clicking on respective name, all publications are listed to browse and download. Administrative documents of the University and other resources as displayed below were added in the repository. These

were difficult to index due to their different nature. Integration of agenda and minutes of various meetings of the University like EC, AC, etc. required splitting and merging of relevant pages to combine agenda and the minutes together as expected to be at searching level. It was perceived that digitization of collection on North East which was readily available in the Library and in other libraries in Shillong should be digitized being main area of research. The same was taken up. All books were digitized on Google model of digitization of e-books which includes cover page, content pages and some chapters. Some snapshotsare given below:

Discover

| Author		Subject	
Bhattacharjee J B		Assam	(191)
Gassah L S	(47)	North East	(130)
Dutta S	(13)	Meghalaya	(112)
Goswami Shrutidev		Manipur	(107)
Nag Sajal		Arunachal Pradesh	(105)
NEHU		North East India	(84)
Sen Soumen		Tripura	(71)
Sharma Manorama		Mizoram	(64)
Ghosh G K	(10)	North-East India	(67)
Gopalakrishnar R	(10)	Nagaland	(49)

Other initiatives

Like all other libraries, we also subscribe to more than 250 journals in printed format in addition to some e-journals. In view of under-use of the current issues, we thought it worth to digitize contentpages of all the volumes available in the library andmake the contents searchable in DSpace with cross reference from serial catalogue. Serial OPAC provides access to current and back volumes available in the library or at publishers' website. All e-books of different publishers have also been put on OPAC alongwith their searchable table of contents, Keywords and subject headings given by the publishers.

Integration on single interface

All resources of all types have been brought under library website developed in-house with all possible access points. Library apps also was developed to reach all users on their mobile with interactive facility with the users.
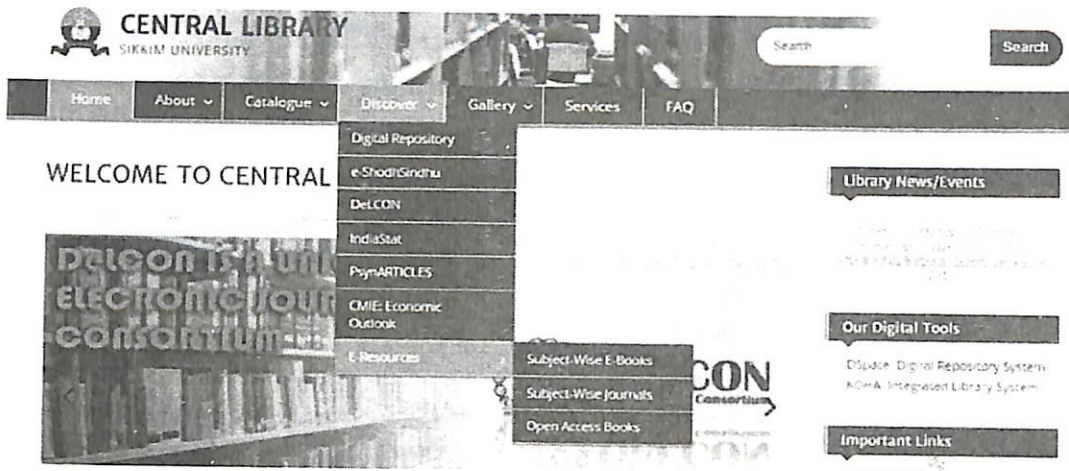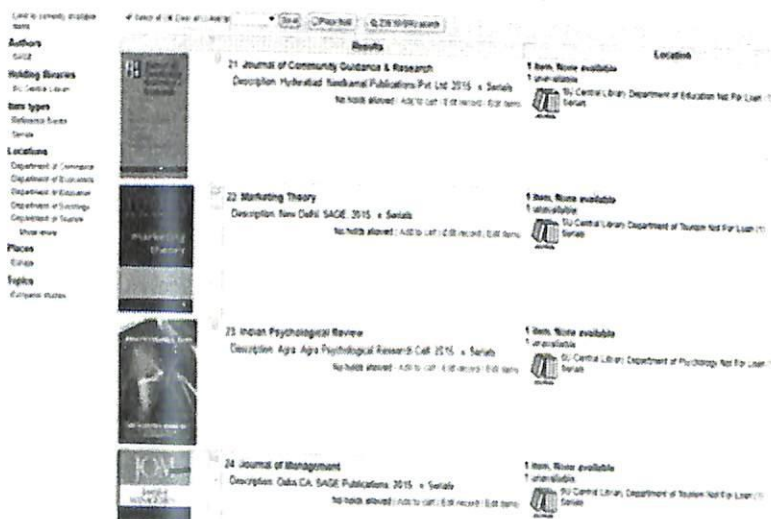
E BOOK WITH CONTENT
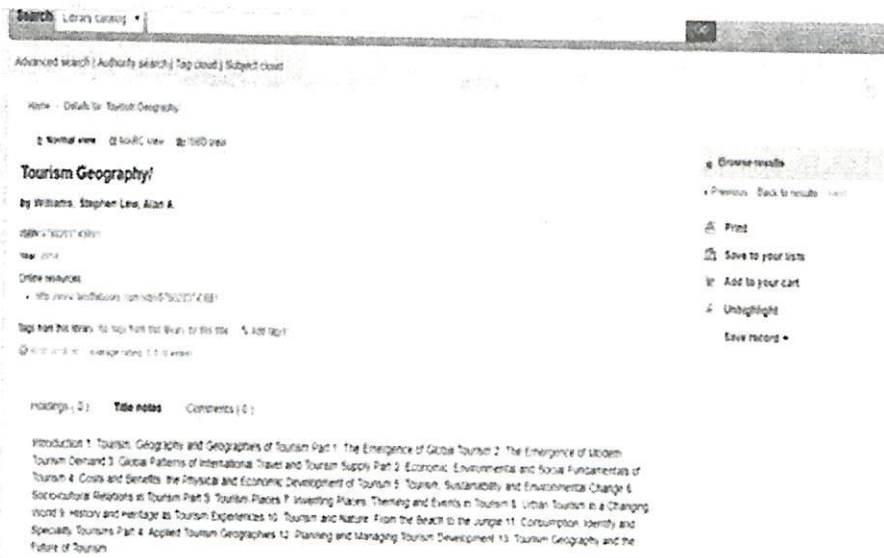
Serial OPAC

JOURNAL

Conclusion

Libraries have been accepting and managing frequent changes and responding to the calls of technology applicable in library organization and management. The progress is not discouraging. Libraries of 21"century have come a long way which are today with a new vision and look. Young library professionals are increasingly becoming IT-Savvy and improving their IT skill and competence. Some of them aredoing exceptionally well. Technology not only changed library scenario but society itself was massively effected and benefitted. The advent of IT proved boon for the professionwhich not only added prestige to the profession but also changed the old image of libraries and librarians. Nevertheless, profession has many challenges, and more to come in future also. Resources have multiplied; their selection, acquisition, processing and management are becoming increasingly complex. Publishers are bringing new upon new information products, but too expensive to afford by every library. It is a dilemma to the libraries what to select and de-select.There is a tough completion among publishers also who are bringing better and better products, hence choice is becoming difficult for librarians. Digital products and byproducts are growing at a fast speed. Even technology may not be able to have complete control over them. Library budget remains almost constant, or may have cuts without realizing the importance of these new resources.

Creation of digital resources is the priority of every library. All material cannot be digitized nor it is worth the efforts. Whatever is being digitized must be made effectively searchable, keeping in view all possible approaches of the users. Content analysis and indexing part is most important to organize resources for accessibility and use. This requires subject as well as professional knowledge, which most of us may not possess. Digitization, no doubt looks attractive, but the task is not easy. Every record to be put on web must be accurate and authentic. The process includes conversion of visible documents to virtual or invisible and then these are to be restored back with original and added features that could be conveniently used. Pre-requisites for transformation or innovations arethinking,reviewing and planning. To do so, seniors professionals shall have to come out from their routine work to innovate and search for better ways of doing thingswith the application appropriate technology. This requires transforming leadership and team work of motivated staff members.Mere planning is not enough, implementation and execution is equally important, in which willingness, involvement with mission by the competent staff is required. They should have the ability and skill to do things in a better ways.

Admittedly, some of the professionals might have improved their services by creating and adding valuable information products. Value is also measured in terms of demand and usage. My personal experience is thatthere is low or under-usage of even usefulresources. In such cases, efforts and money spent become counterproductive. Our customer services are not up-to the mark neither at teaching level nor in practice. If some innovative marketing strategies are adopted, we may be able to change our users' attitude and behviour and achieve our objective of being close to your users and know them better and give them better.