

View on the Buildup of New Service Capability of National Library of China From the Point of Development Trend of Reference Work

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ABSTRACT

With the change of information environment, the emergence of new technology, services, and new media, reference librarians and users have more choices in information acquisition methods, tools, and means. The reference consulting service is the most valuable part of developing collections, increasing comprehensive service ability, and revealing a library's social roles in the information age. The change in user demands has accelerated the transfer process which shifts the focus of library reference work from the literature retrieval to the individualized, information-oriented deep content mining, or metrology analysis. Improving the new service capacity to accomplish library service transformation is also an important goal of functional improvements to the National Library of China. In the coming years, the National Library of China will promote new services through improving the reading guidance, developing literature resources, innovating service methods, supporting national development strategy, strengthening the library's essentials, and promoting business cooperation.

KEYWORDS

National Library of China, Reference Work, Service Capability, Service Transformation

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Library of China (NLC) is a comprehensive research library. Its predecessor was the Capital Library, which was founded on September 9, 1909, and began performing the functions of the National Library since 1929. With a floor area of 280,000 square meters, the NLC is the largest library in Asia. As of the end of 2016, the total number of collections was over 3.65 million, and received about 15,000 users per day.

According to the "Public Library Law of the People's Republic of China," which came into effect on January 1, 2018, the functions of the NLC include: national literature information preservation, national bibliography and joint cataloging, serving national legislation and decision-making, organizing the work of national ancient books protection, library development research and international cultural exchanges, and providing operational guidance and technical support to other libraries. The National Library also has the function of a public library prescribed by this law.

The reference consulting service is the most valuable part of developing collections, increasing comprehensive service ability, and revealing a library's social role in the information age. The service has been run for 100 years in NLC, and over 1 million consulting services are provided each

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Figure 1. National Library of China



year. How to give full play to, and improve efficient reference work service in the new information ecosystem is an important research topic of promoting the new service capacity's buildup in NLC.

2. THE CHANGE OF INFORMATION ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT CHALLENGES TO THE REFERENCE WORK

The development of technology and the following change in the information environment provides ample space and a higher platform for the continuation, and further development of library information service. But for libraries, the change brings a great influence on the existing service model, and then, form a new trend of change, which caused the library community to undergo profound changes in the field of information service.

2.1. The Basic Relationship Between the Librarian and User Has Been Overturned

Human history and civilization are recorded and passed down through the literature. Libraries have long been known and utilized as the places of preserving human cultural heritage, and transmitting knowledge and information. Librarians act as effective information intermediaries between the extensive collection of literature, and the specific needs of users to help library users find and utilize the literature.

This situation was soon broken with the advent of the information age: most college students see the search engine as a perfect lifestyle choice (*OCLC, 2006*). Although people attach great importance to the service and human resources of traditional libraries in the field of information, they have adapted to the new information world, and the new opportunities to approach information resources (*JISC, 2010*). The development of digital resources and network services has greatly enhanced the

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