

Chapter 14

Establishing the Digital Library: Don't Ignore the Library Standards and Don't Forget the Training Needed

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ABSTRACT

The literature on Digital Libraries tends to be about developing your own digital library, but most usage of digital libraries worldwide is access to commercial databases of full-text material: initially scholarly materials, but more recently, newspapers and monographs. There is no difference in principle between the industrialized world and developing countries; everyone wants to access the same materials. Electronic materials are cheaper to deliver to developing countries when compared with printed materials. The main problems concern spending wisely the little money that developing countries have and establishing the infrastructure to get the digital material to the users who need them. The standards needed to implement digital libraries are universal, and librarians in developing countries need to be aware of these standards and support their implementation in their systems, develop an appropriate infrastructure, and put resources into training so that the tools can be used to good effect. The Open Access movement must be taken into account and repositories set up for institutional materials as in the industrialized world.

INTRODUCTION

Much of the literature about electronic libraries is devoted to the implementation of software to host digital materials or deals with the technology

of digitising one's own collection. Much of the published literature deals with projects some of which have become the foundation of technology for commercial applications. Dempsey (2006) discusses these kinds of aspects in his paper "The (Digital) Library Environment: Ten Years

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After” where he considers how the digital library environment has changed in the ten years since *Ariadne* (an electronic journal about electronic library issues) was first published. However the majority of accesses to digital libraries worldwide are to the commercial digital libraries of journal articles and conference papers, with the recent addition of monographs which their publishers have allowed to be loaned for a set periods or sold outright over the internet. This material is devised by the owners of the material to be reasonably accessible with the proviso that they must protect the copyright of the authors and their own income from the sale or licensing for use of the material. Moreover since much material that used to be in print is now becoming digital only, this has management implications for libraries. Libraries have to set up new infrastructures to supplement the old printed collections and move towards a digital library which is unlikely to be totally digital for the foreseeable future but will be a hybrid library, a mixture of digital and print. This is the situation in the industrialized world but it cannot be and in fact is not very different in developing countries. Copyright is worldwide and establishing one’s own digital library may be technically possible but it is fraught with the possibility of infringing copyright.

ACADEMIC MATERIAL IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES’ LIBRARIES

In developing countries there has always been a problem for libraries acquiring books and journals. In the days of print journals, they were too expensive to purchase at the price they were available in the industrialized world, and additionally there were postage costs to be accounted for making it actually more expensive to provide materials to developing countries than to the industrialized world. In the case of journals, there was a feeling that a run should be complete and subscriptions

could often not be kept up for financial reasons. Today material can be transferred digitally either on CD ROM or over the internet which reduces postage charges although it requires a certain level of bandwidth if the material is accessed over the internet.

Electronic Journals

Digital journals (e-journals) have been in existence now for some years. Initially they were made available on CD-ROM for the benefit of developing countries, but nowadays a large number of academic institutions in developing countries have bandwidth good enough to download articles from e-journals. CD-ROM is now an obsolete medium except for organizations which are usually not-for-profit and provide materials for use in developing countries. For example CABI (Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau International) publish in partnership with KIT (the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam) *TROPAG and RURAL*, a bibliographic, abstracting and indexing database that brings together literature on tropical agriculture from the developing rural areas of Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Americas. This database is available on CD-ROM as well as on the Internet (updated bi-annually) (CABI, 2011). E-journals for the most part, especially those aimed at the industrialized world, are available today only on the internet and are not bought like traditional journals. A new publishing model has been devised and they are licensed and not purchased outright. Publishers have set up bundles of journals for sale to try and maximize their income. Libraries while purchasing bundles often gain access to journals they may not know about and which may not even be useful to the majority of their readers. Publishers have to take into account how easy it is for users to copy material and make it illegal. The photocopier made a difference to publishing as libraries had to set up mechanisms to ensure that the readers did not make copies of articles and sell them, so users can only photocopy items for

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