

Chapter 2

Integration of Digital Reference Service for Scholarly Communication in Digital Libraries

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ABSTRACT

Digital libraries are a key connector to the information resources that are necessary for the growth of research in today's era. The ability to disseminate and promote one's work and research is an important component of managing and communicating information. Digital libraries and the Web have brought enormously powerful search mechanisms to the desktops of many researchers. The present chapter is a conceptual approach to discuss the various aspects of digital libraries, scholarly communication, and the integration of the digital reference service in the digital environment. The chapter analyzes various skills required of the researcher for searching quality information in digital libraries. As a result, researchers should be trained to read and evaluate material from a much wider range of subjects than previously necessary.

INTRODUCTION

The Web-based digital environment has enabled the formation of many new kinds of works that are available and accessible to end users directly, and many of these resources have become essential tools for scholars conducting research (Maron & Kirby, 2009). The digital libraries are playing an important role to bring together digital and

non-digital intellectual collections that benefit the research scholars by providing value added e-services to facilitate research, teaching, and learning. Scholarship and research in academics involves a complex network of local and international relationships. The organization of documentation for scholars has rapidly evolved in the early twenty-first century. Many journals are now available on free websites or in a wide

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variety of broad-based digital libraries. Moreover, there are increasingly sophisticated searchable interfaces to digital libraries that allow authors to search by keywords across wide subject coverage or even across all disciplines. Some of the reasons researchers start moving from physical libraries toward digital libraries are as follows:

- The users of the physical library need to go to the library physically while this is not the case in a digital library.
- In a physical library, people cannot gain access to the information other than library timings while in digital libraries people can gain access to the information at any time.
- In a physical library, the same resources cannot be used simultaneously by a number of institutions or clients, while not is the case in digital libraries.
- In physical libraries, searching resources is somewhat difficult while in digital library the user is able to use any search term (word, phrase, title, name, and subject) to search the entire collection.
- The traditional libraries are limited by storage space, while digital libraries have the potential to store much more information.
- Digitization is not a long-term preservation solution for physical collections, but does succeed in providing access copies for materials that would otherwise fall to degradation from repeated use.

SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

Scholarly communication is a term used to describe the process of academics, scholars, and researchers sharing and publishing their research findings so that they are available to the wider academic community and beyond. In the past when print was the only form of publication, scholars would assume that the products of their work would live long lives on library shelves as books and journal

articles. In today's publishing environment where electronic publications are proliferating, as electronic resources for scholarship proliferate, more and more scholars turn to their computers rather than to print sources to conduct their research.

In an effort to address their concerns, several digital preservation projects have been developed in recent years. Technological change is undermining the traditional functions and business of publishing and is giving individual scholars new choices: to publish in traditional print or in electronic journals. Today, the libraries are playing a central role in distributing both print and online resources, but the networked digital environment has enabled the creation of many new kinds of works that are accessible to end users directly.

DEFINING DIGITAL LIBRARIES

Digital Library has been defined by a UCLA-NSF Social Aspects of Digital Libraries Workshop as

a set of electronic resources and associated technical capabilities for creating, searching and using information. In this sense they are an extension and enhancement of information storage and retrieval systems that manipulate digital data in any medium (text, images, sounds, static or dynamic images) and exist in distributed network (Gourley, 2001).

A Digital Library is simply an on-line system providing access to a wide variety of content and services. The content of digital libraries includes data, metadata that describes various aspects of the data (e.g. Representation, creator, owner, reproduction rights), and metadata that consist of links or relationship to other data or metadata, whether internal or external to the digital library. Figure 1 shows some of the kinds of content and services (Swanson & Smalheiser, 1997).

In a digital library, collection selection means acquiring, describing, storing and delivering

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