

## E-LEARNING INFORMATION RESOURCES IN DIGITAL LIBRARY

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### Abstract

The current era has acquired the name “Digital era”. The technology has accelerated the research and development and lead to information explosion. The library has a good collection of electronic resources, databases and full text resources. Most of the electronic resources are available in the library. As we know, the growth of Information Resources in the electronic/digital age is enormous and the demand for the access of such resources also has been increased by the public. So we, the library professionals have the responsibility to manage the available information in ever-accessible way by the user community. This article gives an idea about E- Learning Information Resources in Digital Library.

### Keywords

E- Learning Information Resources (ELIR), Information Technology (IT), World, Wide, Web(WWW), Digital Libraries(DL).

### Introduction

A rapid growth in media, transformation of technology and improvement in communication has brought changes in the library system. Recent development in ICT forced libraries to cope with the new and innovative ways to access and browse the scholarly information and archives it for, the future.

Digital library is commonly viewed as electronic information resources fully replacing conventional archival and print media by electronic version. It is a comprehensive logic of greater information exchange and value added professional elevation. It is a collection of all kinds that are indexed efficiently. It comprises of formal / informal communications text/images/videos repositories across languages and culture. A digital library comprises of widely distributed resources, maintained autonomously by different organizations having no adherence to uniform interface (Gopalakrishnan 2000).

Application of ICT in digital libraries has become inevitable in the present era of Information explosion and widespread use of digital information resources. Effective application of E- Learning Information Resources (ELIR) in Digital library helps in performing their operations and services most efficiently. E- Resources are mostly used as learning tools and their use is widespread in the recent years. Users learn more quickly and with greater retention when learning with the aid of electronic resources. Their attitudes

towards education and learning are positively affected by electronic resource use. Thus, electronic information services are now widely implemented in the libraries in the form of

- OPAC( Online Public Access Catalogue)
- Electronic publication through Local Area Network(LAN) ,Wide Area Network (WAN) ,World ,Wide, Web(WWW) etc.,
- National and International Networks
- CD-ROM/Multimedia Networks
- Internet
- E-mail and Bulletin board on Internet and Intranet ; and
- Other Electronic/Digital Resources of Information.

These are some of the Digital / E- resources content resource by which the required content may be accessed, organized and managed for providing content service to the users. Web- based infrastructure is < “Hypermedia based instructional program which utilizes and attributes the resources of the World Wide Web to create a meaningful learning environment where leaning is fostered and supported(Khan, 1977).

The growth in online learning or e-learning information resources, in which education is delivered and supported through computer networks such as Internet, has posed new challenges for library services. Now E-learners and traditional learners have to access a universe of digital information through the information superhighway. New information and communications technologies, as well as new educational models, require librarians to re-evaluate the way they develop, manage and deliver resources and services.

### **What is e-Learning?**

E-learning can be defined in many ways. In its simplest form it is individual or group use of electronic mediums that provide access to online learning tools and resources. These dynamic mediums offer shared community spaces, support digital communication and collaboration, and link to information sources such as streamed video, pod casts, web casts, digital libraries, WebPages, and videoconferencing (Tripathi 2007)

### **Status and Importance of E-Learning Information Resources**

Information Technology (IT) infuses all aspects of modern life, and the growth of digital information continues at an unprecedented rate. Higher education institutions have invested heavily in campus IT infrastructure, and educational philosophy emphasizes learner-centred pedagogy, with learner-centred technology widely available in most of the campuses.

The shift from teacher-centred education has increased the importance of online resources. Students can choose content based on their own learning needs. Perry (2007)

says that learner-centred education acknowledges the value of active constructivist learning, including individual learning styles. The student is an active participant in the learning process. Course management systems can be learned to create this environment. Digital library technologies and web-based learning gateways are complementary developments, and include MERLOT (<http://www.merlot.org/>), EDNA (Education Network Australia) online (<http://www.edu.au/edna/pagel.html>), National Virtual Library (<http://www.nou.edu.ng>), and the SMETE Digital Library (<http://www.smete.org/smete/>).

Digital resources range from archival documents to historical images to primary source materials from scientific field research. These collections may include specific learning activities or be used as resources for teachers to use. For online resources to be useful, reliable networks, universal access, and a sound IT infrastructure are also needed. Rudatebwa and Stockman (2007) observe that online resources demand electricity, PCs, Internet connectivity, and a network.

Association of Research Libraries (2000) enumerates the importance of online resources:

- The resources will never be out on loan and will be available at anytime, any place, and anywhere;
- Access is provided to more complete set of journals than, in many instances, now exist on many library shelves;
- The cost of tracking the arrival of each journal issue, claiming, and periodical binding will be eliminated;
- The need for added library space may decline.
- Cost of retrieving and reshelving materials will be reduced.

The importance of e-learning is growing in higher education. Key advantages of e-learning are flexibility, convenience, and the ability to work at any place where an Internet connection is available and at one's own pace ("E-learning" 2011). E-learning is a viable option for those with commitments or conditions such as family or work, or who cannot participate easily for reasons including disability. The time and cost of commuting to and from campus are eliminated. E-learning provides students with the ability to communicate with classmates independent of distance and can be adapted to learners' needs. E-learning promotes individualized instruction or learner-centered education where students may set their own objectives and explore their own learning needs online.

E-learning has brought about the transformation of an old pedagogy to a new one. Table 1 shows the transition, from old to new pedagogy.

**Table 1: Pedagogy Transition**

<b>Old Pedagogy</b>	<b>New Pedagogy</b>
Compulsory	Voluntary
Teacher-centered	Learner-centered
Minimal learner control	Education as freedom
Training for life	Assimilation of learning with life experiences
Convergent thinking	Divergent thinking
Rote Learning	Active learning
Depends on educators learning	Depends on learners needs for learning
Imparting, information	Opens vista for continuous learning

**Instruction**

E-learners are frequently silent and invisible as they search and explore a library's online resources, and they do not have the same access as that on-campus learners have in formal library instruction sessions. With the array of digital resources available to them, the multiplicity of interfaces and search tools, and the need for evaluation and critical thinking when using the Internet for research, "information literacy" skills are a must-have for e-learners. Information literacy refers to competencies with information sources in a variety of formats. According to the Association of College and Research Libraries (2001), An information literate individual is able to

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.

Many libraries provide instruction to e-learners by making information available on their Web pages, including frequently asked questions, library glossaries, research guides, and "how-to" pages. Athabasca University Library's Digital Reference Centre integrates resources with contextual instruction and provides links to instructional resources, including a detailed guide to Internet searching that encourages e-learners to think critically about Internet resources (<http://library.athabascau.ca/drc/intro>

.htm), and library research guides such as the AU Library Guide to Researching Topics in Women's Studies([http://library.athabascau.ca/help/wmst/intro\\_wmst.htm](http://library.athabascau.ca/help/wmst/intro_wmst.htm)).

Online tutorials usually operate on a model in which the e-learner interacts in isolation with a computer. Their effectiveness can be enhanced by the addition of more interactive forms of instruction. The librarians at the Florida Distance Learning Reference and Referral Center, for example, have experimented with chat software to stimulate a virtual classroom and open up “live” group instruction to e-learners (Viggiano & Ault, 2001). Librarians can also work with faculty to develop a library thread in a course discussion area, or to open a discussion forum on the library Web pages.

### **E-Learning Information Resource Services in Digital Libraries**

Online services in e-libraries have evolved since computers were first used in education. Lang, in Ubogu (2006) identifies the following as core services in e-libraries.

- The collection: a wide variety of materials in digital forms - books, journals, manuscripts, reference works, thesis and dissertations, government documents, maps video, images and pictorial materials, music scores.
- The provision of information about the library’s services and collection to remote users.
- Access tools: online library catalogues, subject gateways, portals.
- Services: reference services, online tutorials, on demand publishing, electronic reserve-short loan and course packs, electronic course pack, lecture notes.
- Networking and imaging technologies to support and enhance all aspects of library basic operational activities - Z39.50, repository software - Dspace, e-print, etc. Open Archival Initiative (OAI).
- Networking and imaging technologies to facilitate closer co-operation with other bodies.
- Expertise within the library for the application of new technologies to library activities and bibliographical research of all kinds.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, E-Learning Information services are an essential component of a quality online learning system. An access to Internet-based courses grows; an increasing number of e-learners are dispersed around the globe, often in parts of the world where physical access to the collections of large academic and research libraries is impossible. These users are largely dependent on the quality and academic usefulness of services that the library can offer electronically. The strength of digital libraries and digital collections depends on the relationships, libraries develop and maintain with the creators, publishers, and aggregators of e-resources, as well as with those who use, learn from, and evaluate these resources. Providing ongoing technical, reference, and instructional support to e-

learners requires that libraries redefine their values and services, collaborate with their users, and approach their tasks creatively. Last but not least, for managing specific digital collections like e-books, e-journals, e-reference and on-line databases both at the regional and national level appropriate initiatives of concerned institutions and/or government agencies. The initiative rooted by UGC (India) through INFLIBNET center, Head band for promoting digital library collection management by professionally qualified and Trained manpower have brought in fruitful results. E- Learning information resources will help the information professionals to provide more accurate, precise and relevant information to their users.

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