Punjab University Library Information Resource Centre: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This case study throws light on some efforts carried out in order to establish an Information Resource Centre in the Punjab University Library. Year wise statistical growth of databases and number of on-line journals subscribed by H.E.C for University of the Punjab, which are in use of IRC, has been given. Statistical report for the month of July, 2006 of the articles which have been mailed to Faculty members and research scholars have also been reproduced. In addition to that it also discuses what is library? What is an Information Resources Centre? In Pakistan how libraries are gradually converted into Information Resource Centres with reference to their services.

What is a Library?

Harrod's Library Glossary defines library as "A collection of books and other literary material kept for reading, study and consultation."

A library is a collection of information in different forms, printed, non-printed, published or un-published materials, including audio-visual. The

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collected material are catalogued and arranged so that a person using the library has ready access to the information it contains.

What is Information Resource Centre?

Harrod's Library Glossary elaborates IRC "Usually an office, or a section of a bibliographical centre, research bureau or documentation centre, which gives information on a subject with which the organization providing the facilities of the centre is concerned."

An Information Resource Centre scrutinizes and evaluates primary and secondary sources of scientific and technical information usually neglected by the librarians. The result of the resource centre retrieval either in answering very specific questions or dissemination of specialized information in a highly processes form which is directly accessible for the users.

Library vs Information Resource Centre

The difference is quite apparent from the above discussion. Libraries acquire and preserve knowledge in a better way but so far as concerned about dissemination of information, librarians don't do justice and neglect this sophisticated service. Now libraries are becoming Information Resource Centres because readers have forced the libraries and librarians to change their pattern of service. If there is flood of information, there is also flood of information seekers, who is there to quench their thirst of knowledge, readers don't want to know only about books or they don't need to get only some sources of information but they need and demand for specific information. Libraries seem to be ineffective for fulfilling the needs of researchers, so Information Resource Centers are inevitable for big libraries.

Sue Samson (2005) says change bas become a cliché, a worn-out concept that has lost its power to inform. At the same time change continues to be a constant-and, indeed, what would be the alternative? Perhaps nowhere has change been more profound than in the arena of information technology. Being a librarian means adapting and learning something new every day; being a librarian means navigating the Web while still being able to use microforms; being a librarian means change is a dynamic premise of professional effectiveness.

History and Background

University of the Punjab is the oldest and largest University of Pakistan; located in the City of Lahore. There are more than seventy Institutes/Departments/Constituent colleges which have been further divided in twenty two faculties, contribute for education in more than one hundred degree, diploma and certificate programmes. Research leading to Ph.D degree is an integral part of each academic discipline. There is an enrollment of above twenty thousand students and five hundred faculty members are present for grooming these students.

Punjab University Library was established in 1873 as Punjab University College Library. This college was up graded to the status of a University in 1882. So this library became Punjab University Library from the same year. Besides more than fifty independent libraries of the teaching departments, constituent colleges, institutes the University of the Punjab has a central library which is called "Punjab University Library". The library came into being with the purchase of Sir Donald Macleod collection of 2000 books in 1873. This was a good beginning. India Universities Act of 1904, "to erect, equip and maintain University Libraries, Laboratories and Museums," marked the beginning of a new period for the library. During the next two years the Syndicate sought and obtained from the Government of India a special initial grant of Rs. 30,000 and a smaller recurring grant for three years for the expansion of the Library. In the year 2005-06 University of the Punjab has given Rs. 1,00,00,000 for books and Rs. 16,00,000 for Journals in our Library Budget.

The readers come in libraries especially in educational institutions with their refined queries; now they don't accept only books rather they stress for core information. This new trend of seeking information of students and teachers forced the libraries to think about special centers which could cater the needs of readers and must come forward to solve the queries of students at the instant. Keeping this objective in mind the Punjab University Library launched the Information Resource Centre. Since long the need of an Information Resource Centre was felt in the Punjab University Library but due to paucity of funds for infrastructure and also non-availability of trained professional staff remained major hurdles in creating IRC. The need of IRC became inevitable when H.E.C (Higher Education Commission) had subscribed full-text journals for University of the Punjab. The teachers and researchers were pouring in Punjab University

Library in search of passwords of full-text databases of journals. The idea of IRC was again floated with a view to provide service without additional staff, and to create a centre where all questions of teachers and students could receive answers during all open hours of library. The following objectives of IRC were identified.

- Selects, acquires, stores and retrieves specific documents in response to requests of teachers, researchers and students on their e-mail address.
- Announces, Abstracts, extracts, indexes, documents.
- Disseminates documents in response to requests for documents or for content
- To provide up to date core research material and peer reviewed articles online to researchers in order to save their time.
- Hard copies of material can be provided on request.
- Facilitate students to find accurate and to the point information Internet using HEC and other digital resources.

The Plan

At the beginning of the process, the following goals were identified.

- Designing the infrastructure.
- Identifying proper place for the Centre
- Designing of data profile cards and posters for advertisement.
- Publicize it to all Departmental Heads.
- Proper time for opening ceremony.

Sources of Information will be:

- HEC Resources.
- On-line Digital Libraries.
- On-line Full text Reference Collections

A committee was constituted to suggest ways and means of IRC. A proposal had been designed highlighting the purpose of IRC, its infrastructure (computers, printers, photocopy facility, furniture etc.), its location and its services. Initially a corner with five online terminals had been agreed and the service or IRC was limited up to Teachers only. A good looking counter equipped with full accessories of computers has been designed and housed in the Reference Section of Punjab University Library. It was planned that this Centre will not only provide on-line service from H.E.C digital resources to clients but will also solve reference queries with the help of Internet and other resources.

A letter had been circulated all the Departments/Institutes/Constituent Colleges announcing this IRC service alongwith a data profile card which had to be filled by the teachers. Majority of the departments had returned profile cards of their teachers. A database of profile cards had been designed highlighting teachers research queries with their e-mails.

Service

The H.E.C has subscribed valuable and research oriented journals for University of the Punjab, which are now more than 20,000. IRC focuses its service in searching these databases which have been subscribed by H.E.C. Majority of our faculty members, researchers and students prefer to consult these journals. Their queries are mostly related to these peer reviewed literature. In addition to that readers are served using every method of accessing digital resources available in any corner of the world.
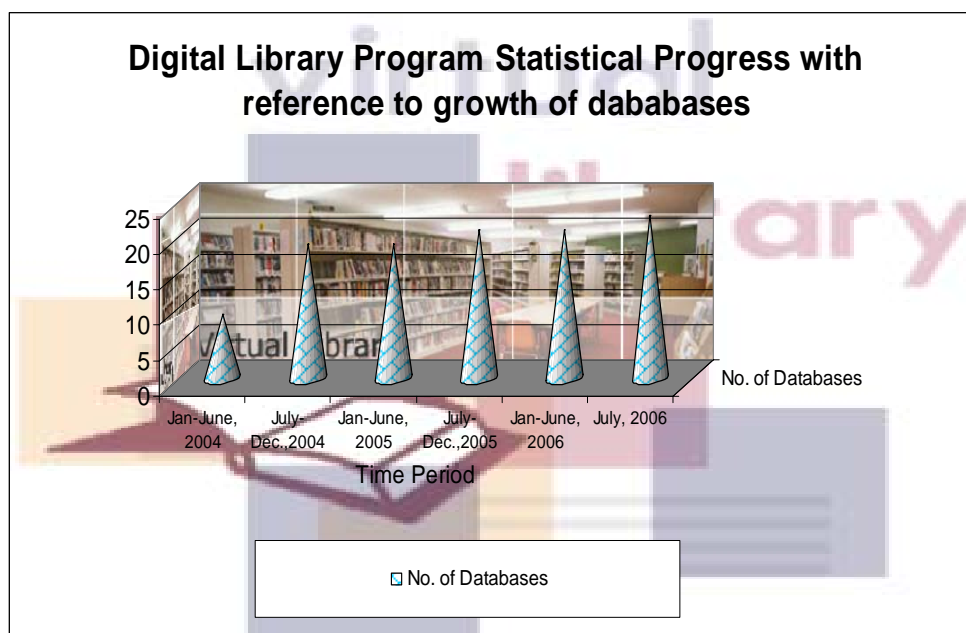
We received the data profiles of two hundred sixty one teachers and seventy one research scholars in first phase. Our staff matches the interests of teachers with our digital resources and sends these full text materials and links to the e-mail of concerned teachers and scholars. This unique Selective Dissemination of Information of IRC, has much appreciated not only by teachers as well as Vice-Chancellor gave excellent remarks. Our two e-mail addresses are available for queries and questions. These are ask@library.pu.edu.pk and haseeb@library.pu.edu.pk.
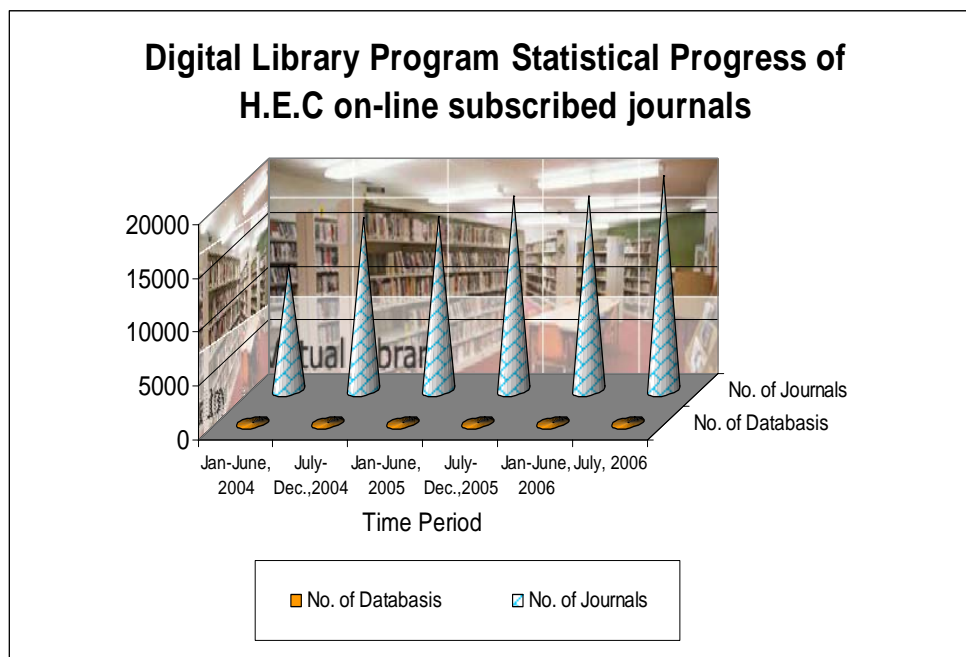
H.E.C Sources

While discussing the IRC services let us see the growth of H.E.C digital resources. This shoes our wide spectrum range of databases we cover for giving service. Names of databases, statistical progress of databases and progress of full text subscribed on-line journals of H.E.C are given below.

- AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICS TEACHERS
- AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY
- AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS
- AMERICAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY
- AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY
- AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MICROBIOLOGY
- AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERS

- ASSOCIATION OF COMPUTING MACHINERY
- BENTHAM SCIENCE
- BLACKWELL SYNERGY
- CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS (CUP)
- EBSCO HOST
- ELSEVIER (Science Direct)
- EMERALD INSIGHT
- ISI WEB OF KNOWLEDGE
- JSTOR
- MARY ANN LIEBERT
- NATURE PUBLISHING
- OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
- PALGRAVE MACMILLAN
- ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY
- SCIENCE ONLINE
- SCOPUS
- SPRINGERLINK

Digital Library Program Statistical Progress with reference to growth of dababases

Digital Library Program Statistical Progress of H.E.C on-line subscribed journals

The faculty members, research scholars, students of M.Phil and Ph.D are regularly served once in a month by IRC. Their monthly statistics have been maintained. Statistics of July, 2006 are reproduced below:-

IRC Users Statistics

No. of Faculty members	Numbers of Articles mailed	No. of research scholars	Number of Articles mailed
216	1512	71	497

Work Station Availability and Training

A unique feature of this IRC is to serve the readers at any cost. Nobody will go back without getting answer of his/her query. 10 workstations are available for these on-line databases. A number of Workshops and seminars have been conducted of faculty members of University of the Punjab in order to familiarize them with these databases. Majority of our researchers which belong to Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines are not familiar with computer searching techniques. Some computers are reserved for their training. Searching of

precise and to the point information is a time-consuming and tedious job. Our trained staff is every time busy in giving them training of searching techniques so that they may be able to find good articles themselves.

The Future

In future majority of information will come in digital format. Microsoft declares that by 2020, 90% reading material will be delivered in electronic form (Yates, 2001). So far we have to use some computers of our Internet Lab. for searching of IRC. We are planning a separate digital library with the collaboration of Iran Government. Soon we will shift IRC there. Numerous on-line services will be hired to build a strong digital collection. Networking with separate server machine and 10 workstations will be installed. In this way faculty members and scholars can be served well. Libraries of all sizes and types are embracing digital collections, although most libraries will continue to offer both print and digital collections for many years to come.

Plagiarism Checking

Information Resource Centre has been given another duty of plagiarism checking of Research Articles/Thesis/Reports which will be submitted or published in the Punjab University. A plagiarism software iThenticate has been purchased by H.E.C for Punjab University. A large number of articles of faculty members and thesis have been checked on this software.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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