

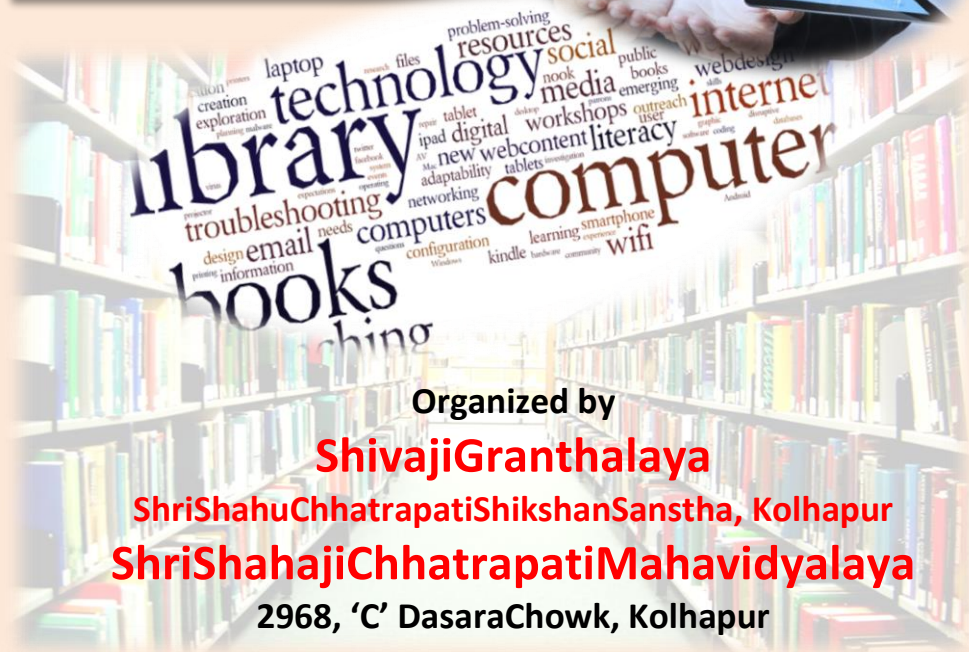
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# Best Practices And Innovative Library Services In ICT For Academic Libraries

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## **Abstract:**

The global changes particularly in Information and Communication Technology have impact on the functioning of Academic Libraries. Considering the importance of ICT, the present paper highlighted the possible best practices and innovative services in ICT era. The suggested innovative services and best practices are playing a crucial role in enhancing the services of Academic Libraries. Application of innovative services and best practices in effective manner will be benefit a lot to the library users.

**Keywords: ICT, DIGITAL REPOSITARIES, E-RESOURCES, WEBSITE, UGC etc.**

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## **1) INTRODUCTION:**

The innovation in Information and Communication technology has influenced libraries to serve better and adopt the changes. The Libraries also changed drastically with service provision, collection development, human resource planning and training. The Librarians also have changed their mind set towards the services and management of libraries. The UGC has laid down the various policies for the development of higher education & tries to empower the faculties as well as the students.

## **2) BEST PRACTICES FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES RECOMMENDED BY NAAC:**

University Grants Commission created a higher education body (whose job is to assess the quality of university and college institutions) in 1994 in Bangalore on the recommendation of National Policy of Education (NPE) in 1986. This is National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) which strives for quality and excellence in higher education and advocates for enhancing the role of library and Information Services in improving academic environment. Document prepared by NAAC for "Best Practices in Academic Libraries says : "Best practice may be innovative and be a philosophy, policy, strategy, program, process or practice that solves a problem or create new opportunities and positively impact on organizations.

"NAAC developed a set of best practices followed in academic libraries and presented under the following four broad areas:

- 1 Management and Administration of Library
- 2 Collection and Services.
- 3 Extent of User Services.
- 4 Use of Technology.

NAAC has developed the following set of best practices for college libraries:

- Computerization of library with standard software.
- Inclusion of sufficient information about the library in the college prospectus.
- Compiling student / teacher statistics
- Displaying newspaper clippings and a clipping file maintained periodically.
- Career/ employment information services
- Internet facility to different user groups
- Information literacy programmes
- Suggestion Box
- Displaying New Arrivals
- Conduct book exhibition on different occasions
- Organizing book talks
- Instituting Annual Best Use Award for students
- Organizing competitions annually
- Conduct user survey periodically

NAAC has also included the following set of best practices for college libraries:

- Making of a Path Finder to the library
- Keeping the library premises neat and clean
- Compiling a list of Current Serials/ catalogue of journals.
- Updating and maintaining library website.
- Maintaining useful statistics regarding the use of the library and displaying them on the library walls
- Compiling checklists on different subject/topics as a part of documentation service
- Library Committee formation
- Distribution of useful handouts

### **3) INNOVATIVE BEST PRACTICES IN LIBRARY SERVICES IN ICT:**

Innovation and transformation are important concept in today's libraries especially in light of the libraries' ongoing transition from acquiring serials in print to providing access electronically, thus moving toward the virtual library (Carr, 2009). Libraries are remain relevant to their customers, they must follow the fundamental rule of business, that is, to supply what is demanded by their market. Library services have been shifted from book-centric to user-centric. As the Academic Library continues to redefine its role in the digital environment, it needs to leverage its strengths and innovate to create responsive and convenient services (Li, 2006).

**Innovative and best practices in ICT for Academic Libraries are as following:**

#### **I On-Line Information retrieval (Internet access facility):-**

Internet Access center's main function is to provide online access for globally generated information to the students and researchers. One of the most important role of the libraries are to provide the access to information for the society. Access to current and comprehensive information is important to improve teaching and learning activities.

The impacts of above practice will be that the Community will receive it with enthusiasm within a short span of time; it will become one of the most utilized services of the library.

## **II Free browsing Unit (Internet access facility):-**

Through the browsing unit, Libraries can provide access to web resources & easily access to Web resources and educate the users for the systematic approach to the current information and it can support their projects, assignments etc. Librarian and senior faculty members should guide them to searching the relevant topics.

Internet access facilities are important for users. They can use it for e-mail, browsing Internet, accessing e-journals, databases, and institutional repository etc., Web OPAC and accessing other libraries facilities through this centre.

The impacts of above service will be seen on students. They will be well informed about the e-resources and they will use the facility only for academic purpose. Students will get benefit by getting current information.

## **III Library homepage for Information dissemination:-**

The homepage or website is the mirror of any organization. Library is a service organization so it must be highlighted through the website or home page. Library website is a marketing tool. Library services can be reached to the users by updating their own services & facilities as well as informing the free web resources. Library homepage should be attractive with good design with minimum clicks in reaching to the required information. The page layout should be user friendly with all the useful information organizes logically.

## **IV Dynamic Library Website:-**

The Academic Libraries should have their own library website. It must be dynamic. It should not be static. Dynamic website can update regularly and users can get the update information of library activities as well as functions. It can also provides thousands of links to various web resources', e-journals etc.

Libraries have to provide the OPAC on the website. It also links to its electronic library consisting of all e-journals through UGC- INFONET/INFLIBNET along with its own subscribed databases. Website also has links to various other resources created by the library. Library has links to all the free resources on the web and enables the users to personalize their searches using "My Library" Software.

## **V User feedback through library homepage:-**

N can be useful to disseminate library resources to the users' desktops and to receive user feedback on e based services. To create a new environment and use innovative means to maximize use on the investment in technology and to deliver online services with remote access facility.

Library homepage is key to its resources with extended facility to link useful resources with dynamic and seamless access facility to electronic resources available globally. The library users will visit the homepage regularly and the total hits per day are a measure to know the steep increase over the period. Users interact with the web master with suggestions and appreciations as the case may be. Feed-back enabled the homepage to be user friendly with ease of access to useful information resources.

## **VI 24/7 Access to e-resources:-**

The Academic Libraries should provide uninterrupted world wide access to the library resources, web resources and the access should be from anywhere, anytime, by anyone. The Library should have their own web server and they can

provide access on 24/7 basis for the users. For that purpose library have to maintain infrastructure e- resources facilities. E-resources, subscribed journals, external databases, digital resources which are created and subscribed by the library should be open for 24/7 access.

**VII Group concessional Night Services offer for outside students and scholars in accessing e-resources.**

To make resources available to the faculty and researchers, the above facility is uninterruptedly provided. For this service, Computer with printer facility should be provided to the outside students and scholars on the basis of pay and use at nights also. So the library resources are utilized maximally.

**VIII Access to Digital repository through library website:-**

The Library website is a platform for library to provide the access for digital repositories, e-resources and library services. The important resources like theses and dissertations, project reports and question papers etc will be accessible from a remote location without visiting the library.

**IX Digital access to all internal documents:-**

Libraries should try to provide common system to access and use all in-house generated resources. Digitalization of in house generated documents not only of academic but also administrative, staff welfare, general announcements etc. will be helpful for all types of users.

**X Digital repositories:-**

Universities and colleges are generating a lot of information resources every year as internal publications apart from faculty publications, theses & dissertations regularly. These resources are presently not accessible widely. Creation of Institutional Repositories by the Universities and colleges enable wider access 24/7 basis.

**XI CD Mirror server facility**

CD Mirror server disseminates the information from magnetic sources like CDs, Floppies and DVDs etc. Library non-book materials are mounted on CD mirror server on regular basis and the users can access these materials through the Campus LAN. These CD and DVD resources are very delicate. These resources not allowed outside the library to the users. So these resources can copy to the CD Net Server and the connectivity to this server on the Intranet enable the users to access these resources.

**XII Digitization of manuscripts**

To harness the knowledge embedded in the manuscripts, preservation and conservation of the cultural heritage of our Nation and enhanced digital connectivity for wider access.

It is necessary that to digitize all the manuscripts of rare materials in the library. Use of manuscripts will increase manifold. Several research Scholars may be access the national and international material on regular basis as primary texts.

**XIII Using self developed integrated Library software (Automation of in-house services):-**

According to type of library, the user's needs are varied. So considering the user's needs, the Librarian or Library staff should develop the integrated Library software as per needs of Library in-house operations.

#### **XIV Web OPAC**

Library collection's availability and its status are very important for the users. The card Catalogue was converted into machine-readable format i.e. OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) available over the Internet.

#### **XV Campus-wide local area network (LAN) facility**

LAN is implemented to network the information resources of the library with the entire academic and research activities on the campus. To develop user friendly environment by using the Information and Communication Technology Tools to provide quality and quick retrieval to the information sources along with the resources available in other libraries at their desktops.

#### **XVI Electronic surveillance system**

Academic Libraries are using various tools for libraries security and safety. It will protect the reading materials from theft and misuse. So various libraries are using 3M Magnetic Tape system, CCTV and RFID technologies.

#### **4) CONCLUSION:**

Academic Libraries are changed greatly in recent years because of the development and application of new technology especially the Internet and web technologies. The present paper has given the importance to Information and Communication Technology and ICT related services. Such services can enhance the library services and best practices are effectively implemented in academic libraries.

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