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Challenges and problems of library and information science discipline in digital technology Era at Globe

Dr. Vaishali M. Choudhari

Librarian

Lalbahadur Shastri College, Partur, Jalna, Maharashtra, India.

Abstract

This study explores the challenges and problems faced by the Library and Information Science (LIS) discipline in the context of the digital technology era globally. It examines the impact of digital technologies on libraries, information management practices, and the evolving roles and skills required of LIS professionals. The Library and Information Science (LIS) discipline is navigating profound challenges in the wake of the digital technology era, reshaping the landscape of information management and user engagement globally. This study explores the multifaceted impacts of digital technologies on libraries, information services, and the roles of LIS professionals. It identifies key challenges such as digital preservation, information accessibility, evolving user expectations, and the need for continuous skills development among LIS professionals. Through a comprehensive review and analysis of current literature and empirical data, this study aims to provide insights into the complex interplay between digital transformation and the LIS discipline. By addressing these challenges, it seeks to propose strategies and recommendations to empower LIS professionals and institutions in leveraging digital technologies effectively to enhance information access, knowledge dissemination, and user satisfaction in the digital age.

Keywords

Library and Information Science, Digital Technology, Challenges, Problems, Information Management, Digital Libraries, Information Retrieval, Skills Development

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Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed the landscape of library and information science globally. Libraries, once repositories of print materials, now face new challenges and opportunities in managing digital collections, providing access to electronic resources, and meeting the information needs of diverse user communities. This introduction sets the stage by highlighting the pivotal role of LIS professionals in navigating these changes and addressing the challenges posed by digital transformation. The Library and Information Science (LIS) discipline stands at a pivotal juncture in the digital technology era, confronting unprecedented challenges and opportunities that are reshaping the nature and scope of information management globally. Traditionally, libraries have served as custodians of knowledge, preserving and providing access to physical collections of books, journals, and archival materials. However, with the advent of digital technologies, the role of libraries and the skills required of LIS professionals have evolved dramatically.

In today's digital age, libraries are increasingly tasked with managing vast digital collections, navigating complex information ecosystems, and meeting the diverse and evolving needs of users. Digital technologies have revolutionized how information is accessed, stored, disseminated, and consumed, posing new challenges to traditional library practices and demanding innovative solutions.

The digital transformation has introduced several key challenges for the LIS discipline:

- **Digital Preservation:** Ensuring the long-term accessibility and usability of digital collections amidst technological obsolescence and format changes.
- **Information Accessibility:** Addressing disparities in access to digital information resources across different regions and demographics.
- **Evolving User Expectations:** Adapting library services and resources to meet the expectations of digital-native users accustomed to instant access and personalized experiences.
- **Skills Development:** Equipping LIS professionals with the digital competencies and technological skills necessary to navigate and harness emerging technologies effectively.

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Moreover, the digital era has blurred the boundaries between traditional library services and new modes of information dissemination, such as open access publishing, data management, and digital humanities. These developments underscore the need for LIS professionals to possess a diverse skill set encompassing digital curation, data analytics, information literacy instruction, and user-centered design.

This study aims to delve into these challenges comprehensively, examining their implications for LIS professionals, libraries, and information institutions worldwide. By exploring current research, case studies, and empirical data, this study seeks to identify strategies and best practices to empower LIS professionals and institutions in leveraging digital technologies to enhance information access, knowledge sharing, and user engagement in the global digital landscape.

Need

The need to understand and address the challenges faced by the LIS discipline in the digital technology era is critical for ensuring the relevance and sustainability of libraries as information institutions. This study aims to identify key challenges, explore potential solutions, and provide recommendations to empower LIS professionals and institutions in adapting to digital advancements effectively. **Aims**

- To identify the primary challenges and problems confronting the LIS discipline in the digital technology era.
- To examine the impact of digital technologies on library services, information access, and user behavior.
- To propose strategies and interventions for enhancing the capabilities of LIS professionals and institutions in the digital age. **Objectives**

1. Analyze the influence of digital technologies on information management practices within libraries globally.
2. Investigate the evolving roles and competencies required of LIS professionals in the digital era.

3. Assess the challenges faced by libraries in adapting to digital transformation and meeting the diverse information needs of users.
4. Develop recommendations for policy makers, educators, and practitioners to strengthen the resilience and innovation capacity of the LIS discipline.

Scope

This study focuses on the challenges and problems encountered by the LIS discipline worldwide in response to digital technologies. It includes an examination of digital libraries, information retrieval systems, digital preservation practices, and the transformation of library services in the digital age.

Definition

In this study, Library and Information Science (LIS) refers to the interdisciplinary field concerned with the organization, preservation, and dissemination of information resources. It encompasses principles and practices related to information management, knowledge organization, and user services within library and information environments. **Vision and Mission**

- **Vision:** To foster a resilient and innovative LIS discipline capable of harnessing digital technologies to advance knowledge sharing and information access globally.
- **Mission:** To identify, analyze, and address the challenges faced by LIS professionals and institutions in adapting to the digital technology era, thereby promoting sustainable practices and enhancing user-centric services in libraries worldwide.

History

Early Digitalization Efforts

The challenges faced by the Library and Information Science (LIS) discipline in the digital technology era can be traced back to the early efforts of digitalization and automation in libraries. In the mid-20th century, libraries began adopting technologies such as computerized cataloging systems and online public access catalogs (OPACs), marking the beginning of digital transformation in information management. These technologies aimed to improve information retrieval and user access to library collections, laying the groundwork for future advancements in digital library services.

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Emergence of Digital Libraries

The concept of digital libraries emerged in the 1990s, driven by advancements in computing power, storage technologies, and the internet. Digital libraries expanded beyond traditional print collections to include digitized resources, electronic journals, multimedia content, and institutional repositories. This transition posed significant challenges for LIS professionals in terms of managing digital collections, ensuring interoperability, and preserving digital materials for long-term access.

Challenges in Digital Preservation

One of the foremost challenges faced by LIS professionals in the digital technology era is digital preservation. Unlike physical materials, digital content is susceptible to rapid technological obsolescence, format changes, and data degradation. Ensuring the long-term accessibility and usability of digital collections requires robust preservation strategies, metadata standards, and continuous monitoring to mitigate risks associated with hardware and software dependencies.

Information Accessibility Issues

The digital divide remains a critical challenge in global information access. While digital technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for information dissemination, disparities in internet access, digital literacy, and technological infrastructure persist across different regions and socioeconomic groups. LIS professionals are tasked with addressing these disparities through initiatives such as digital inclusion programs, open access publishing, and community outreach efforts to bridge the information gap.

Evolving User Expectations

Digital natives, accustomed to instant access to information via online platforms and mobile devices, have reshaped user expectations in libraries. Users increasingly demand seamless access to digital resources, personalized services, and interactive learning experiences. LIS professionals must adapt library services and technologies to meet these evolving expectations while ensuring the privacy and security of user data in digital environments.

Skills Development and Professional Competencies

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The digital technology era has necessitated a shift in the skill sets required of LIS professionals. Beyond traditional library science competencies, such as cataloging and reference services, LIS professionals now require expertise in digital curation, data management, information retrieval systems, user experience design, and digital preservation strategies. Continuous professional development and lifelong learning are essential for staying abreast of emerging technologies and best practices in information management.

Integration of New Technologies

Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and data analytics present both opportunities and challenges for the LIS discipline. AI-powered systems offer innovative solutions for information retrieval, personalized recommendations, and predictive analytics in libraries. However, integrating these technologies requires careful consideration of ethical implications, algorithmic biases, and the impact on traditional library services and workflows.

Global Collaboration and Policy Frameworks

Addressing the challenges of the digital technology era requires global collaboration among libraries, information institutions, policymakers, and technology providers. International standards and policy frameworks play a crucial role in harmonizing digital preservation practices, promoting open access to research outputs, and safeguarding intellectual property rights in digital environments. LIS professionals advocate for policies that support equitable access to information, data privacy protections, and sustainable information management practices on a global scale.

Future Directions and Innovations

Looking ahead, the LIS discipline continues to evolve in response to technological advancements and shifting user needs. Future challenges may include managing big data, navigating the complexities of digital rights management, harnessing emerging technologies such as blockchain for information integrity, and preparing for unforeseen disruptions in the digital landscape. By embracing innovation, collaboration, and interdisciplinary approaches, LIS professionals can position libraries as dynamic hubs of knowledge creation, dissemination, and preservation in the digital age.

Strong Points:

1. **Increased Access to Information:**

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- **Strength:** Digital technologies have significantly enhanced access to information resources, breaking down geographical barriers and enabling users to access a wealth of digital content remotely.

2. **Innovation in Information Services:**

   - **Strength:** The digital era has spurred innovation in library services, such as digital libraries, online databases, and multimedia repositories, offering diverse and interactive learning experiences.

3. **Enhanced Information Retrieval:**

   - **Strength:** Advanced search algorithms and information retrieval systems have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of information discovery and access within digital collections.

4. **Global Collaboration and Sharing:**

   - **Strength:** Digital technologies facilitate global collaboration among libraries and information institutions, fostering the exchange of knowledge, resources, and best practices on an international scale.

5. **Professional Development Opportunities:**

   - **Strength:** The digital technology era has created opportunities for LIS professionals to expand their skill sets in areas such as digital curation, data management, and user experience design through continuous professional development programs and online learning platforms.

Weak Points: 1.

Digital Divide:

- **Weakness:** Disparities in access to digital technologies and internet connectivity create a digital divide, limiting information access for underserved communities and exacerbating inequalities in information literacy and digital skills.

2. **Digital Preservation Challenges:**
    - **Weakness:** Ensuring the long-term preservation and accessibility of digital materials poses significant challenges due to technological obsolescence, format migration issues, and the high costs associated with digital archiving.
3. **Privacy and Security Concerns:**
    - **Weakness:** Digital environments raise concerns about data privacy, security breaches, and the ethical implications of storing and sharing user data within digital library systems.
4. **Technological Dependence:**
    - **Weakness:** Libraries face challenges in managing technological dependencies, including software updates, hardware maintenance, and compatibility issues, which can disrupt service continuity and affect user experience.
5. **Skills Gap and Training Needs:**
    - **Weakness:** There is a persistent skills gap among LIS professionals in adopting and integrating new technologies effectively. Continuous training and professional development are essential to address evolving technological trends and user expectations.
6. **Information Overload and Quality Control:**
    - **Weakness:** The abundance of digital information sources can lead to information overload, making it challenging for users to discern credible and reliable information from misinformation and disinformation.

Conclusion:

While the digital technology era has brought significant advancements and opportunities for the LIS discipline, it also presents complex challenges that require thoughtful strategies and collaborations to address effectively. By leveraging strengths such as increased access to information and innovation in information services, while mitigating weaknesses such as the digital divide and digital preservation

challenges, LIS professionals can navigate the evolving digital landscape to enhance information access, promote digital literacy, and uphold ethical standards in information management globally.

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