Advanced Concepts of Development for Federal-University Level Libraries: Our Views

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Abstract: The views on development for federal-university level libraries according to the most up-to-date challenges are given. The purpose of this study is to show the experience of the Library at Southern Federal University, Russia, in modernization and improving the library services for better integration into the world educational process. New approaches to the library acquisitions management, forms of the document presentation and the ways of development are discussed. Ways for improving the quality and the reliability of the library services, solving the issues on selection of the most topical and relevant information in Internet, decisions in library personnel management are offered herein.

Key words: Library • E-library • University • Internet • Future of library • Literature sources • Library personnel management

INTRODUCTION

Russian education needs to be more integrated into the international education. The university libraries play a very important role in this process. So the development of the libraries according to the international up-to-date requirements becomes an important task for universities in Russia. The existing integrated library system maintained by many federal-level universities is aimed to meet the readers’ and user’s requirements specified 10-20 years ago, in the pre-computerization era. The said obsolete system is based on individual work with users (under personal participation of a librarian) who get access to printed sources within the library only. Moreover, providing for a more wide access to other hard copy documents available in other libraries is hardly possible and associated with a lot of problems [1-5].

The intensive computerization and electronic networking lead to the fact that real visiting a library and physical contacting in the existing way is no longer necessary for users. Every library has its own electronic catalog on the university’s website, so every user is capable of getting an access and downloading any materials available there. But it should be stated that to our very much regret, due to a lack of financial support of the libraries, an imperfect legal groundwork for the proper operation of the library enterprise, along with an inefficient mechanism for acquisition of copyrights to distribute the electronic versions of intellectual property items free of charge, we have to deal with a situation when 99% of the library electronic catalog are covered by papers written by the university’s own staff who carry out their research activity at the same university only. It is evident that such a limited range of papers cannot satisfy the readers’ needs. Practically everything that cannot be found in classical library catalogs is downloadable from Internet and, frankly spoken, in doing so, sometimes with violating licensing agreements. Nowadays, new concepts and fundamental theories in many scientific fields are changing or modifying at an ultra-rapid rate. The volume of advanced scientific and educational knowledge and the rate of its creation is increasing so much that the classical process of delivery of data to the reader (by writing a book, publishing, ordering by the library, delivery and further application) appears to be too long and cannot be accepted by all scientific and engineering fields.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The issues described above require defining new approaches to the process of the library acquisitions, forms of the document presentation and identifying the
ways how to develop the modern library under the today’s conditions offering conveniences and benefits to the reading public.

Taking into account the necessity to maintain rendering of the classical library services, it is reasonable to propose two ways of further development of the university-level library, aimed at attraction of more new users and a closer integration into educational and research processes, which are as follows:

- An improvement in the quality, the reliability and the efficiency in rendering library services.
- Further expansion and modernization of the library services.

For improving in the quality and the reliability of the services, based on the world-wide accumulated experience, it is necessary to introduce elements of the digital/electronic/virtual library with simultaneously maintaining the classical hard copy stock that should finally lead to the formation of a hybrid-type library. In this case, getting an access via the network should be the main possibility to use the library stock. It implies that a number of specific measures in logistics should be taken, namely:

- Development of a concept and regulations to provide the proper performance of the university-level library;
- Digitization and optical character recognition (OCR) of all available books and periodicals;
- Complete updating of the computerization system in the library, with network and server equipment updating prioritization to provide big data storage capacities and capabilities;
- Entering into all required licensing agreements to properly regulate intellectual property rights in legal manner to cover all the available and coming new content and soft copies;
- Concluding long-term agreements for subscription with the leading electronic publishing houses;
- Reorganizing the library management to provide acquisition of e-books and e-journals.
- Changing the staff list of the library to significantly increase the number of IT-people.

In particular, implementation of the above activities allows minimizing the acquisition of hard copies because of full scanning and providing an open access to the respective electronic copies of the printed books in the library electronic reading halls, avoiding license agreement infringement. This will allow extending the scope of available sources in all fields of the university’s activity, including scientific research, with minimum of the financial resources used.

The second way of the library development is a creation of a closer integration into the university’s educational and scientific processes by extension and modernization of different forms of the library services.

The main tools for searching information in Internet are search engines (google, yandex). But they do their search throughout the whole information massive in Internet. The results obtained thereby are often not structured and represent an endless list of links to the corresponding electronic resources. The further selection of the materials should be completed by the user in this case, i.e., it is the user who decides whether the information is relevant or not. Therefore, issues on selection of the most topical and relevant information in Internet, library catalogs, journal and conference materials might be solved by the library by composing topical collections [6-11]. Using these collections, the user has to select from a significantly shorter list of sources as it is shown in Fig. 1 below.

Selection and processing of such collections can be carried out by the 3 methods:

**Searching for the Specified Scientific Materials:** (selection of the materials for researchers and postgraduates, for the purpose of saving their time in conducting their research, including analyzing of the available evidence and developing a new knowledge);

**Updating the Existing Training Courses:** (selection of the materials for lecturers in order to consider the up-to-date state in science and technologies in the corresponding disciplines. For example, the Russian National Educational Standard of the 3rd generation has come into force and leads to introduction of a great number of new courses and re-consideration of the existing ones);

**Educational Process Support:** (selection of the specified materials for undergraduate students with prioritization of analysis and processing of the selected information instead of a simple search for material on a given topic);

Many universities use big financial resources for obtaining licenses for legal access to a number of foreign and national electronic library catalogs. But the efficiency of their use is low due to many problems related thereto:
users’ imperfect skills in searching in such extensive databases, difference in approaches to presentations of the search results and low-level in foreign language competence of the Russian scientists, researches, students etc. involved therein.

The educational process at a university of an undergraduate student should be maintained uninterruptedly [12, 13]:

- By unassisted training & education (modern computer technologies allow studying practically everywhere, including home);
- Attending lectures and practical courses at the university (lecture-halls and laboratories intended for 20-100 participants should be properly equipped);
- Team-work for solving specific problems in small groups (colloquiums, student projects, scientific research, etc.).

There are no specialized rooms in a university for the educational activity type as mentioned last above. Therefore, the library might organize such educational activity in small groups from 2 to 5 students. Such practice is a topical issue everywhere in the world, in the recently reconstructed Library of University of California, for example. In that library only 25% of the area is intended for readers’ individual work and 50% of the area is used for different kinds of group work, respectively. The central place in the group area is occupied by the so-called Pods, a specifically structured workplace for small groups, provided with all necessary equipment.

To accomplish successfully the tasks outlined herein above, it is necessary to make some quantitative and qualitative changes in the library personnel management. Staff allocation and hiring of new skilled personnel is one of the challenges that libraries are facing. The required competencies and skills needed to be effective in the management of the up-to-date digital library were widely discussed [14-20]. More IT people are needed, the librarians should be better trained and qualified in searching and classifying the sources in specific scientific fields and the level of foreign language competence of the reading public should be significantly improved. Now we are capable of predicting only some essential changes in the personnel management is an advanced hybrid library as given below.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The implementation of the concepts proposed by us herein in combination with other measures to be taken (increase in financing for acquisition of new library items, electronic catalog updating, renewal of computer equipment, modernization of electronic services software and computer equipment) will transform every university-level library into a key element in the education and scientific research, increasing at the same time the prestige of the library and attracting new customers.
REFERENCES


