

Chapter 3

Role of Virtual Libraries in Learning Process

Amandeep Kaur
DAV University, India

ABSTRACT

In modern era, libraries are playing role in two parts- first is physical and second is virtual. Library users are demanding virtual library as well as a physical library because of their learning demands can be fulfilled by virtual libraries. Virtual library planning and designing can provide a rich learning environment. In library and information Science various terms are used to describe virtual libraries: digital libraries, electronic libraries, e-libraries, and the broader term virtual library. In this paper, the term virtual library is used to describe any managed collection of information sources in an electronic format. Therefore, virtual libraries can include digital collections of pictures, maps, Web sites, or library records.

1. INTRODUCTION

Virtual libraries described as organized collections of digital information. It includes organized collections for satisfying a particular community of users, and they are designed to support the information needs of that community (Saracevic, 2000). A virtual library provides access to tools such as databases, electronic journals, alerting services, electronic reference, and quality-vetted e-resources. The term electronic library, digital library and virtual library have been used synonymously. However, there exists some basic difference as like an electronic library consists of electronic materials and services such as video

tapes and CD-ROM, while a digital library consists of digital services and materials that are stored, processed and transferred via digital devices and networks. Virtual libraries can offer resources from many sources and in many formats, including audio and video. The items in these virtual collections do not have to reside on one server, but they share a common interface to assist the user in accessing the collection. The emphasis in virtual libraries is on organization and access, not on physical collections (Baldwin & Mitchell, 1996). Libraries can exist in two different spaces, a physical space and a virtual space. Each space enables different learning activities and serves different purposes for learning (Bruce & Leander,

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1997). Many libraries exist only in one space, whereas others maintain a hybrid space, both a physical and virtual space, in recognition of the distinct information uses and learning activities that can occur in each environment. All libraries, whether virtual or physical, create an environment for learning (Abram, 1999). This paper explores the advantages of virtual libraries for student learning, the types of learning that can be supported in virtual library environments, the importance of design to enable different types of learning, and the concerns posed by virtual libraries.

2. PURPOSE OF THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY

Virtual Library is to underpin learning and acquisition of knowledge, to provide a more solid basis for education and to enhance quality of life by drawing on digitally available books, materials and journals via ICT based tools. A Virtual Library provides remote access to a variety of curricula, learning materials, books, journals, magazines, newspapers etc in national and international level. Virtual Libraries is an effective educational tool in the public service, it must respond to the needs of and provide affordable access for prospective users, students, teachers, researchers and academics.

3. FEATURES OF A VIRTUAL LIBRARY

1. Virtual library provide speedy and wide access to updated information in a National & International manner.
2. Virtual library changed the traditional library systems of cataloguing only book materials.
3. Cataloguing of NBM (Non Book Materials) includes not only in databases but also in websites.
4. In Virtual library emphasis is given on access not on collection.

5. Virtual library saves the time of its users.
6. Virtual library needed strong funds for automation and fulfilling infrastructure requirement.

4. BUILDING A VIRTUAL LIBRARY

The building blocks for a virtual library are its digital collections, which are not just a random assemblage of digital objects or uniform resource locators of free web- based resources (URLs). Building digital collections requires traditional library skills, in addition to information and web technology skills. The process of building a virtual library includes:

A. Digitization

Digitization involves the process of making non-digitally materials available in digital format. The retrospective conversion of printed library cards into a machine readable catalog represents one of the earliest digitization processes librarians have been involved with. The digitization process includes selection of collection, materials, scanning, transcribing, and creating markup and an index, creating metadata, quality control by subject specialists, processing images and populating the appropriate digital asset management software (DAM). Digital assets software such as DSpace, Eprints, Fedora, and Greenstone collect, index, and provide queries over a catalog of metadata records that are accessible locally and remotely.

B. Acquisitions and Collection Development

Acquisition involves acquiring and securing ownership of electronic resources such as databases, e-books and journals through license. Subscribed electronic resources are stored on a remote server hosted by the vendor and made accessible to a target community after authentication and authoriza-

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