Chapter 8
Security Challenges in University Libraries of India

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ABSTRACT

Security is a true concern for the modern and well-equipped libraries, and this situation worsens with the application of information technology virtually in all areas of library services. The older security threats in the library transform into modern cyber crime and network hazards. This chapter briefly describes two different sets of threats in modern libraries and the measures that can be adopted for prevention. The chapter provides some of these prevention measures.

INTRODUCTION

The value of Information and the communication of information are immense to the present society. Information consists of relevant data and used for some specific purposes. Thus, information has been recognized as a valuable commodity just like any other kinds of precious objects. It is therefore imperative that everybody who uses the information should realize the importance of it and have easy access.

There are different levels of institutions in our society which collect, store, preserve and disseminate information in different manner through exploiting several mechanisms. Libraries are one such organization, which involved in the processing and evaluating information. Libraries are now considered as the storehouse of knowledge where data and information are stored in both the print and the non-print format. Users use this knowledge to meet their information requirements. The function of the libraries is to provide timely information with the available knowledge objects. Now users visit the library for their specific information need and the role of the librarians and library staff is to satisfy the users using the available information resources. With these changes of demand, basic infrastructures of the libraries undergo vast changes (Chaney, 1994). Libraries are now transformed into information centre where not only conventional documents are stored but also non-conventional or neo-conventional documents are kept. Library and information centres are now filled with the various new technological equipments like CDs,

DVDs, E-Books, E-Journals, Databases, and Digitised materials. Internet facilities become very common to all kinds of libraries. With all these developments, the libraries become more technologically equipped for acquiring different sources and providing services to its clientele.

MODERN LIBRARY SERVICES

Library is a service organisation and the main emphasis is to meet the specific information requirements of the users. To meet this information need the librarian procured and processed different kinds of documents. Now-a-days libraries are now considered as information centre where varieties of services are provided to satisfy the users. Following are the traditional services provided in most of the university libraries in India:

- Issue-return of books.
- Reading room services.
- Reference and information services.
- Access to current issues and back volumes of journals.
- Access to rare books.
- Inter-Library loan.
- Photocopying services.
- Display of new arrivals.

These are the traditional services provided in most of the university libraries in India from beginning. Now the scenario of university library services has been changed drastically. It is because of the changed nature of the information demand of the users which is much more specific and pin pointed and they want the information in portable form which can use very easily. With this change of the demand and the rapid use of the ICT elements forced the librarians to take initiative to provide modern user oriented ICT based services (Constantinou, 1995). These new services have changed the dimension of the library and it will run side by side with other traditional services.

The following are the modern services provided in most of the university library and information centres:

- Providing Current Awareness Service of books and current journals.
- Internet access via the library's workstations or network.
- Wireless computing and Internet access via laptop within the organization.
- Access to the online and digital documents.
- Maintaining digital repositories within and outside the campus.
- Access to Databases, Abstracting and Indexing Journals.
- Information Services through CD-ROM and online databases.
- Printouts from CD-ROM databases and online databases.
- Services through Social Networking tools.
- Use of different Web 2.0 elements like wikis, blogs, RSS, etc.
- Different e-mail-based services.

All these new services restructured the library to information systems in our country. The emphasis is to build proper library systems, which ultimately help the library users to get their required information in time. Use of these new services modernized the vision of traditional libraries. But there are many constraints emerged in the due course of time due to rapid use of technological elements in library. Since the libraries are using different technological systems and tools, there is enough chance to face different security related problems in the library.

BACKDROP OF THE SITUATION

The situation of university libraries gradually changes with the implementation of information and communication technology, virtually almost every aspect of the library and information centre.

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