Knowledge Management in Library and Information Centre: A new challenge to librarians in the today's environment

by

Sharanabasappa

Librarian, Govt First Grade College, Badhami, Bhagalkot (D)

Abstract

Information Technology and its applications in Library and Information Centers, the concept of document management has been changed to Knowledge management and again the entire scenario of information management has started its change to Knowledge Management (KM). This paper mainly focuses on the concept of Knowledge Management and the role of LIS professionals in managing the knowledge and information in the digital environment. It also highlights the importance of library and information professionals in the organizations such as knowledge creation, acquisition, preservation and sharing knowledge and information. This paper also describes the development and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the library and information centers.

Keywords: Knowledge Management; ICT; Information Management; Digital Library; Library and Information professionals

Introduction

The conventional functions of libraries are collect, process, disseminate, store and retrieve information to provide better services to the end users. In the digital environment, the role of libraries is changing to provide the competitive advantage for its users. The success of library and information centre depends upon their ability to utilize information knowledge of its staff to serve the user community. The ICT has played a significant role in this dynamics which has not only made access across the globe easier, but has facilitated integration of thought processes, synergy in working methods and places, team learning and in enhancing organizational transparency. With the development of IT and its applications in libraries, the concept of document management has been changed to information management and again, the entire scenario of information management has started its change to knowledge management.

Knowledge

Knowledge is an intellectual capital when people out of creation, add value to information. It is generated. Knowledge is classified and modified. It may be indexing. It is shared. Sharing of knowledge is a core element of knowledge management. IT has provided with number of possible solutions for sharing via e-mail, intranet etc

Information

The process for knowledge creation and use as a continuum where data transforms into information, information transforms into knowledge and knowledge drives and undergoing behavior and decision making. Information is visible, independent from action and decision, different in format after processing, physical product, independent from existing environment, easily transferable and duplicate. Knowledge is invisible, closely related to action and decision, different in thought after processing, spiritual product, identified with existing environment, transferable through learning and not duplicate.

Types of Knowledge

Knowledge is classified into three types.

1. Explicit knowledge

2. Tacit knowledge

3. Cultural knowledge

Explicit knowledge

It is formal and easy to communicate to others. It is the knowledge of rationality. That is, policies, rules, specifications and formulae. It is also known as declarative knowledge.

Tacit knowledge

It is complex form of knowledge. It has two dimensions namely technical and cognitive. This is personal knowledge, which is in human mind and difficult to formalize and also difficult to communicate.

Cultural knowledge

The cultural knowledge as knowledge which includes assumptions and beliefs. It is used to understand, describe and explain the reality as well as conventions. It is also useful to form the framework among organizational members, recognize the new information and evaluate alternative interpretations and actions.

SOUTH INDIAN JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, ISSN 2395-3195, (OCT-DCE-2014) VOL.01, ISSUE 01.

2014

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is generally understood to mean the sharing of knowledge inside or outside of an organization. Knowledge sharing has been greatly facilitated by modern computer based technology. There is no agreed definition of Knowledge Management, even among practitioners. The term is used loosely to refer to a broad collection of organizational practices and approaches related to generating, capturing, and disseminating know-how and other content relevant to the organization's business. Knowledge is no just an explicit tangible "thing", like information, but information combined with experience, context, interpretation and reflection. Knowledge involves the full person, integrating the elements of both thinking and feeling. Knowledge management is the process of creating, capturing and using knowledge to enhance organizational performance. It is most frequently associated with two types of activities.

- Process of transforming information and intellectual assets into enduring values
- A system or framework for managing the organizational processes that create, store and distribute knowledge as defined by its collective data.
- Exploitation of an organization
- Generating new knowledge
- Accessing knowledge from external sources
- Representing knowledge in documents, databases and so on embedding knowledge in processes, products or services transferring existing knowledge using accessible knowledge indecision making facilitating knowledge through culture and incentives
- Measuring the value of knowledge assets and the impact of knowledge management.

Knowledge management in library and information centers

The exponential growth in human knowledge in a variety of formats, libraries need to develop their resources, access and sharing strategies from printed to electronic and digital resources. Restricted by limited funding, technology, staff and space, libraries must carefully analyze the needs of their users and seek to develop cooperative acquisition plans to meet the needs of users.

SOUTH INDIAN JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, ISSN 2395-3195, (OCT-DCE-2014) VOL.01, ISSUE 01.

2014

Libraries should be developed and maintained an integrated online public access catalogue (OPAC) with both internal and external resources as well as printed and other formats of knowledge. Useful websites and knowledge sources should be regularly searched and selected from the internet and included in OPACs. A system for the reviewing and updating of these resources should be performed. Going beyond explicit knowledge, libraries should also develop to capture all that tacit knowledge that is of importance to their users, their organizations, and to the internal operations of libraries.

The website of each library should serve as a "portal" for all sources of relevant knowledge and information whether explicit or tacit, whether on site or remote and in all formats. In the current digital and networked knowledge age, the size of information sources on the web is growing exponentially. No one really knows exactly how many web pages are on the internet, because new web pages are added every second. Universities and research organizations are knowledge reservoirs. These highly valued intellectual assets, regardless of whether they are explicit or tacit, should be inventoried, archived, indexed, frequently updated and made accessible in digital form, Libraries should use the new approach to capture web information by cooperative efforts such as Dublin core metadata and the cooperative online resources catalogue (CORC). Other new methods such as data mining, text mining, content management, search engines, natural language searching, linguistic analysis, semantic networks, knowledge extraction, concept of yellow pages, and such technologies in information visualization as two dimensional or three dimensional knowledge mapping etc., have been a part of recent developments in knowledge management systems.

Resources Sharing and Networking

Traditionally, libraries have a long practice of resource sharing and networking. These have been greatly expanded by the rapid development of computer, telecommunication networking and digital technologies. The sources of the cooperative work and resources sharing of OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) and Ohio LINK (Ohio Library and Information Network) in US, is the best examples in resource sharing and networking with the result of the full cooperation and participation of all member libraries without selfishness. Large and major libraries must take the lead in such an Endeavour.

SOUTH INDIAN JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, ISSN 2395-3195, (OCT-DCE-2014) VOL.01, ISSUE 01.

2014

Characteristics of Knowledge Management in Libraries

The role of KM in Libraries will become more and more important along with the development of knowledge economy. It is a new management mode. The following superiority and characteristics are incomparable with conventional management.

1. Information technology is a tool for Knowledge Management

2. Human resource management in Knowledge Management

3. User Services in Knowledge Management

Information technology is a tool for Knowledge Management

To facilitate the implementation of knowledge management, a well-defined and operational knowledge management system should be in place. Latest information technology should be used in the libraries. In this regard, the library director / librarian should consider himself as the chief knowledge officer of the entire organization and should work together with the chief information officer, heads of the planning department, the computer and information technology center, the human resource management department, the finance department etc., to design and develop such a system. Such knowledge management system should be built on the existing computer and information technology infrastructure including upgraded intranet, extranet, internet and available software programs to facilitate the capture, analysis, organization, storage and sharing of internal and external information resources for effective knowledge exchange among users, resource persons (faculty, researchers, subject experts etc.,), publishers, government agencies, business and industries and other organizations via multiple channels.

Human resource management in Knowledge Management

The most important resource in the knowledge economy system is the talents who grasp knowledge. The talent competition has become the focus of market competition in the knowledge economy era. In the knowledge economy era, the libraries will attach importance to vocational training and lifelong education of library staff to raise their scientific knowledge level and ability of acquiring and innovative knowledge. They also will respect the human value, guide and bring into play wisdom potentialities of library staffs. It is an important way for raising work efficiency of library staff. An all-round improvement of library staff's quality and positioning of the human value will become important objectives of knowledge management in

SOUTH INDIAN JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, ISSN 2395-3195, (OCT-DCE-2014) VOL.01, ISSUE 01.

2014

Library and Information centers. The library staff members of Universities and research committees should be inventoried, indexed regularly and be made searchable and accessible through electronic databases created and maintained by libraries. The expertise should be appreciated with appropriate rewards and incentives. As a learning organization, libraries should allocate annual funding to provide continuing education and staff training to all staff members.

Knowledge must be renewed and expanded to prevent it from becoming stagnant. Libraries should also encourage the transfer of knowledge and experience from experienced staff to new staff members. A mentoring system should be in place to help new comers to learn from experienced library staff. Informal seminars, discussion sessions for staff can interact and exchange "lessons learned" "best practices" and other experiences should be scheduled at regular intervals and at convenient times sit and chat rooms can be created through intranet libraries should be attending to favorable working conditions and environment, which will contribute to better staff retention.

User services in Knowledge Management

The utmost goal of knowledge management is to provide users with a variety of quality services in order to improve the communication, use and creation of knowledge. Information about each user can be obtained by analyzing the records of user registration, surveys, circulation and inter library loan, frequently asked reference questions and the use of e-journals and digital resources etc., User satisfaction and needs should be collected through periodical user's surveys. The findings should be used for the planning and redesign of the existing library services. Some of the manual services of the library such as "new publication alert" and "dissemination of information" should be done automatically by employing the "push technology" with great efficiency and convenience. Each library user can also set up his virtual "my library / portal" for new information / resources provided by the library.

TECHNOLOGIES FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Library and information centers should be developed / modified based on the perfect environment for new media applications. Due to impact of globalization, economic competition and revolution of ICT, the libraries are undergoing tremendous change its environment. ICT tools and techniques, knowledge management systems, internet, web resources, digital libraries

SOUTH INDIAN JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, ISSN 2395-3195, (OCT-DCE-2014) VOL.01, ISSUE 01.

2014

have made a significant change in the existing library systems and services. It is a major challenge for the library professionals. Knowledge acquisition is the starting point of knowledge management in Libraries. The application of IT enlarges the scope of knowledge acquisition, raises knowledge acquation, speed and reduces knowledge acquisition cost. It is impossible to accomplish such important tasks by using man's brain only in the modern society in which the knowledge changes with each passing day. It will be possible to link closely knowledge sources and knowledge workers by computer networks, thus constructing knowledge networks in libraries based on realization of single point informationalization.

Data wise technologies developed the following list of technologies for the knowledge management.

• Intranet within an organization

• Document management systems

• Information retrieval systems

• Relational and object databases

• Electronic publishing

• Groupware and work flow systems

• Push technologies

• Help desk applications

• Brain storming applications

• Data warehousing and data mining

CONCLUSION

Knowledge Management is an emerging field, much tooted or hyped since late 1990s. Due to the complicated nature of knowledge and its management, it is often difficult to estimate or demonstrate the value of the Knowledge Management. In the business world, knowledge management has been regarded as strategically important for organizations to gain a competitive advantage over their competitions, to add value their products, to win greater satisfaction from their customers. In the library world, there is a lesson to be learned from the business world. For any library to succeed in implementing knowledge management will require a strong leadership and vision from the top administration. Information Technology and systems can provide

SOUTH INDIAN JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, ISSN 2395-3195, (OCT-DCE-2014) VOL.01, ISSUE 01.

2014

effective support in implementing knowledge management. Libraries should work together with Information Technology Professionals and others

to develop the appropriate knowledge management systems. Libraries, with limited budget and human resources, should utilize the current management structure and technology to implement KM, either bottom-up or top-down. With an effort, KM will help to increase libraries operational efficiency and later to the ever increasing needs of our clientele.

REFERENCES

1. Saffady, William (1989).Library Automation an overview, library trends, 37(3)

2. Griffin, SM (1999).Taking the initiative for digital libraries, the electronic library, **17**(5)**:** 287-288

3. Vipul Bansal (2010), Emerging information communication technologies to modernize college libraries, International Journal on Emerging Technologies **1**(1): 102-104

4. B.V. Kannappanavar and others (2010), information communication technology & special libraries, conference proceedings: Indian academic libraries 2020, Tumkur, 474 – 478.

5. B.Rajiv and others (2010), information communication technology in libraries and information centre's : a new dimension in librarianship conference proceedings: Indian academic libraries 2020, Tumkur, 474 – 478.

*****