Original Article

Importance of Digital Library in Academic Institutions

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Abstract: Digital library is nowadays an integral part of the academic intuition. Without having a digital library system an academic institution cannot run smoothly. Today most of the information are available in various digital platform but all these information are not authentic. Digital library provides authentic kind of information to the users. There are various kinds of digital library platform available which an institution can easily use, some of them are commercial and some of them are open source. DSpace is one of the popular kind of digital library or we can say institutional repository software being used by various higher educational organization. DSpace is very much user friendly also, the most important thing about DSpace is, it is a open source software so, there is no cost involved to install DSpace at all. If anyone knows how to install DSpace and how to customize it, then they can easily use this software without spending any money. This paper aims to review and analyze the importance of a digital library system in academic institutions. This paper also aims to explore the role of digital libraries in the academic institutions. This paper explored more deeply what advantages might be obtained from the digital library practice and what are the challenges that managers might face in using digital libraries.

1. Introduction

Digital library provides library resources in an electronic format other than print format and enhances searching of electronic collections distributed across networks, ther than merely creating electronic repositories from digitized physical materials. A digital library is a library in which collections are stored in digital formats and accessible by electronic gadgets. The content may be stored locally, or accessed remotely. Digital library can save time of the library users. Library users can search the resources from anywhere at any time. Multiple users can search a single material at the same point of time which is one of the most useful features of digital library. The concept of digital library is not new, but nowadays most of the library users want digital library. In an academic institution it is now very much essential to provide digital library facility to the library users.
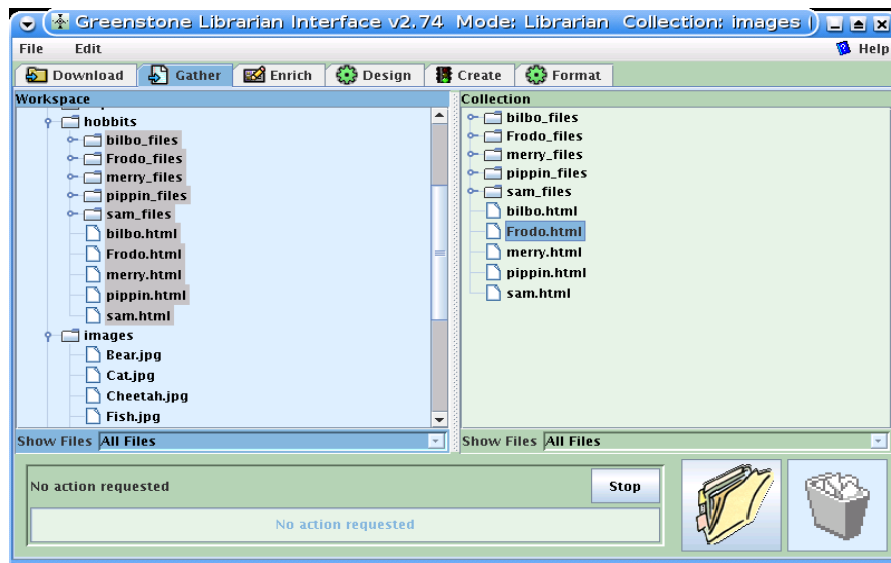
Following are few Digital Library Platforms

A. DSpace

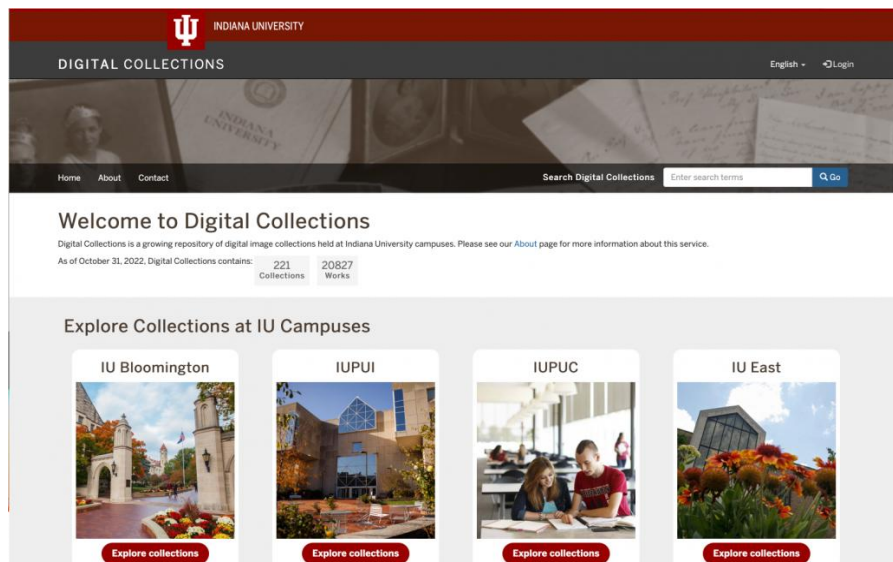B. EPrints

C. Greenstone

D. Fedora
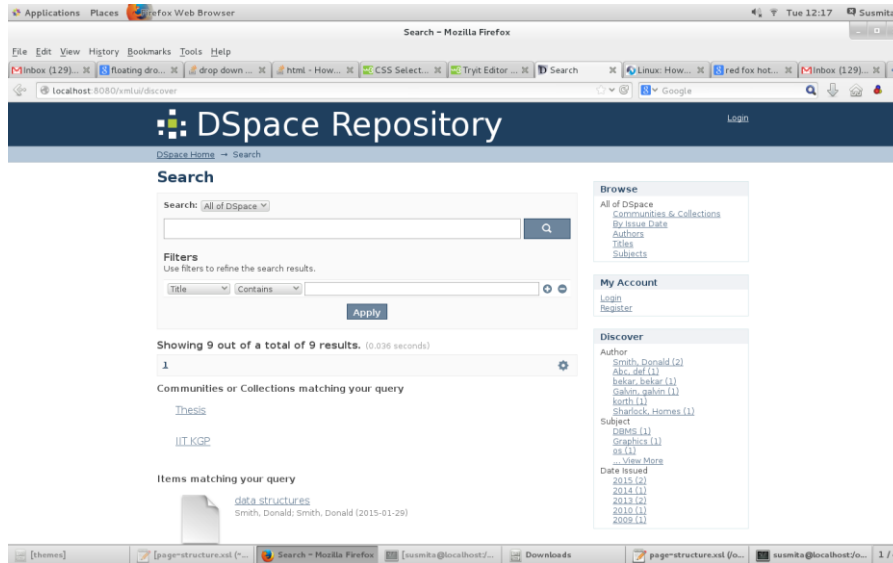
DSpace Digital Library Software Interface
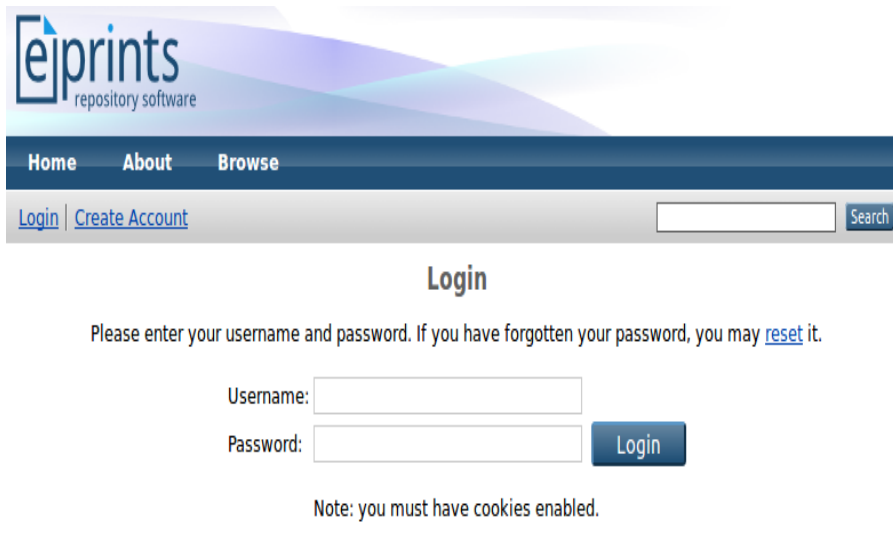
EPrints Digital Library Software Interface

Greenstone Digital Library Software Interface

Fedore Digital Library Software Interface

2. Statement of the Problem

Nowadays the Digital Library is one of the important aspects of every academic institution. The topic has been chosen to know the usefulness of digital libraries in academic institutions and their importance among library users. Implementation of Digital Library in an academic institution is not that much tough, if an institution desire to implement the digital library they can easily implement it. There is various open source digital library software available. One can use these software without spending any money.

3. Significance of the Study

The study is very significant in recent times. Everyone nowadays wants ready-made reading materials in their hand. Most of us do not have time to visit the library and read the print materials. A digital library is the only opportunity for those who have very less time in their daily schedule; they can easily read books or other reading materials

such as journals, and magazines through digital library platforms. Many publishers have shared their materials through the open-access platform, anybody can read these materials free of cost by using digital library services.

4. Objectives of the Study

Following are the main objectives of the study:

- To know the awareness about digital libraries among the library users of academic institutions;

- To find out the importance of digital library system;

- To identify the barriers faced while using the digital library platform.

5. Research Methodology

To conduct the study the researcher has chosen a simple random sampling method of research. To collect data the researcher has used a questionnaire as a data collection tool. The researcher has also taken interviews with a few respondents as well as observed their attitudes. After collecting data, the researcher has analyzed the data by using MS Excel application software and based on the analysis the researcher has interpreted the result in the discussion part.

6. Review of Literature

Abbasi and Zardary (2012) in their paper mentioned that in the twenty-first-century change is considered a key element and makes lots of challenges for individuals' life which are most imposed as a result of technological influence. **Perdana and Prasojo (2019)** wrote a research paper to describe the importance of digital libraries to be applied in university libraries through the exploration of the advantages offered by digital libraries, as well as the challenges that will be faced in the implementation of digital libraries as infrastructure to support education. **Shem (2015)** in her research article examined trends and issues in digital education programs globally, drawing examples of the developmental growth of Library Information Science (LIS), schools, and digital education courses in North America, Britain, and Southern Asia, the slow growth of LIS schools and digital education in Nigeria and some countries in Africa and India. **Anyim (2018)** said that university e-libraries are adopted to complement university conventional libraries by providing students, faculty staff, academic researchers, and members of the university community with equal access to relevant information in digital formats without discrimination and at no cost to the patrons. **Ilahi, Widiaty, Wahyudin, and Abdullah (2019)** revealed that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has been widely applied in digital library services to improve knowledge and the public interest. **Khan (2021)** in his research paper mentioned that during the past recent years, there has been tremendous development reaming the concept of digital libraries, the biggest online platform of knowledge that can be stored and retrieved through online networks. **McMartin et al. (2008)** wrote a paper and summarizes results from a national survey of 4,678 respondents, representing 119 institutions of higher education in the United States regarding their use of digital resources for scholarly purposes.

7. Digital Libraries and its Importance in Academic Institutions

A Digital library based on information technology is very important in that it makes reading materials readily available to the readership. While many libraries and academic institutions are digitizing their materials to be accessible to members and the general public, let us take a look at the main benefits of digital libraries for academic institutions:

1. ***Instant access to resources:*** With the help of digital library one can instantly access the library resources available in the digital library platform. It saves the time of the library users and also library users can easily access many information related to his/her topic within a short period of time.

2. ***No physical boundaries:*** There is no physical boundaries to access digital library. Library users just need a compatible electronic gadgets to access the digital resources from anywhere in the world. The condition is the resources should be available online and the users must have a internet connection.

3. ***Preservation of resources:*** Preservation of digital resources is not that much tough, just we need proper gadgets to preserve these resources. Nowadays many cloud platforms are available where we can preserve the digital resources easily.

4. ***Real-time interactions:*** One of the main benefits of using the digital library is that students can clarify their doubts then and there with new-age management software that can facilitate interaction between readers and administrators.

5. ***Updated information:*** In the digital library environment information can easily be updated without any delay. It is one of the most important benefits of having a digital library. Nowadays information are changing rapidly with no time, every day so many information are coming which a library have to share with its users. Digital library system helps the library to easily disseminate updated information to the library users.


Source: *https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/digital-library-system*
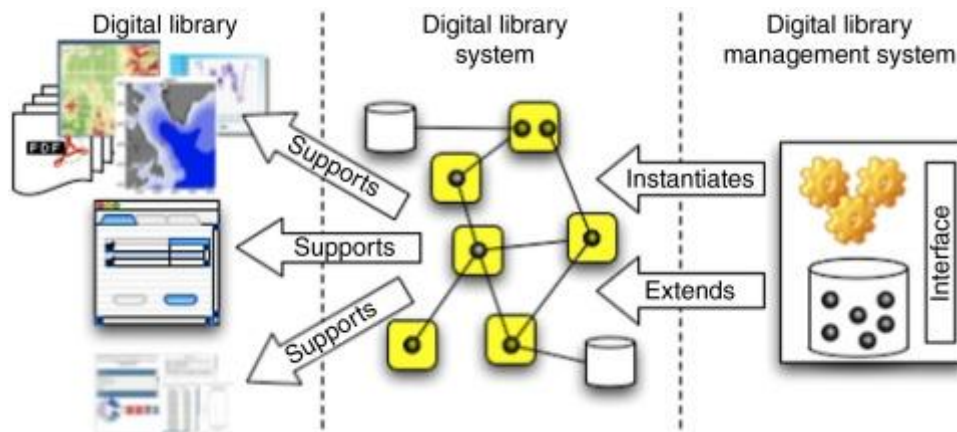
8. Difference between Digital and Traditional Libraries

The most major differences between the digital and traditional forms of libraries are:

1. ***Being local vs. Being global:*** In the traditional library environment users can only access the resources available locally in the library but with the help of digital library system a person can access resources globally which increase the chance of getting exact information or we can say various information easily.

2. ***Just-in-case vs. Just-in-time:*** Traditional mode of library may provide information just-in-case or if the material is available in the library but in digital library system information can be shared just-in-time. Information can be searched globally so it is easy for the library users to get the information just-in-time.

3. ***Ownership vs. Accessibility:*** Traditional libraries maintain physical materials, but today's large amount of information is electronically transformed into digital objects that can be stored in networked computers. Traditional library needs the ownership to keep the materials in the library but in digital library system no such ownership is require only the subscription is enough to access the materials. Open access platform helps the digital library to access the information without any subscription.

4. ***Separation vs. Coordination:*** Digital library users do not need to have physical attendance in the library to access the information. Whereas in traditional mode of library system users have to visit the library to access the information which is very much time consuming.

5. ***Acceleration of Information Circulations:*** In the digital library environment acceleration of information is very easy. Sharing of information is so easy nowadays that within a short period of time information can be shared globally through various digital library platform.
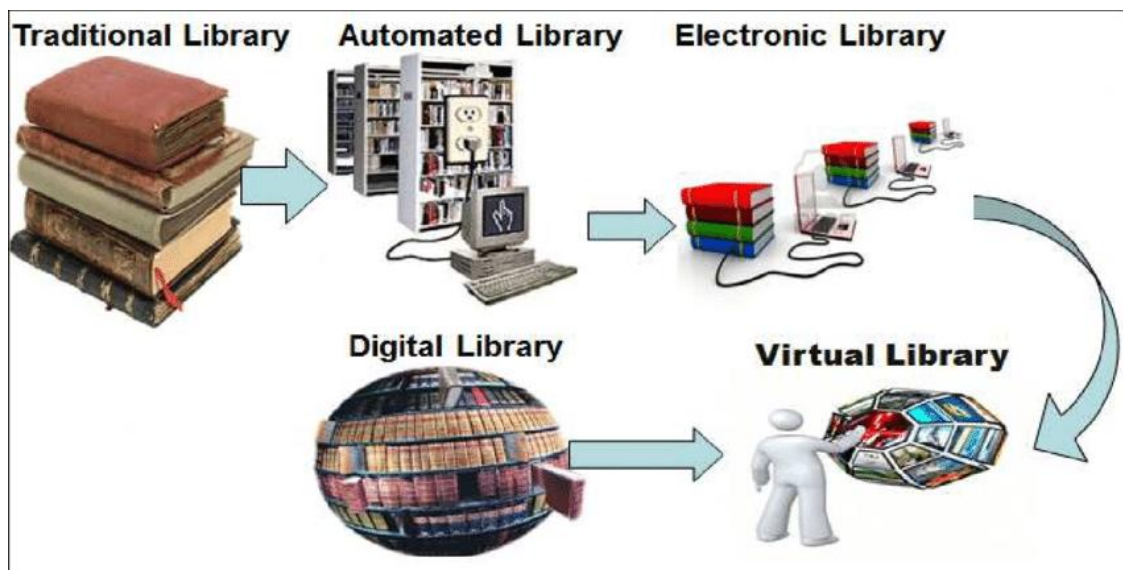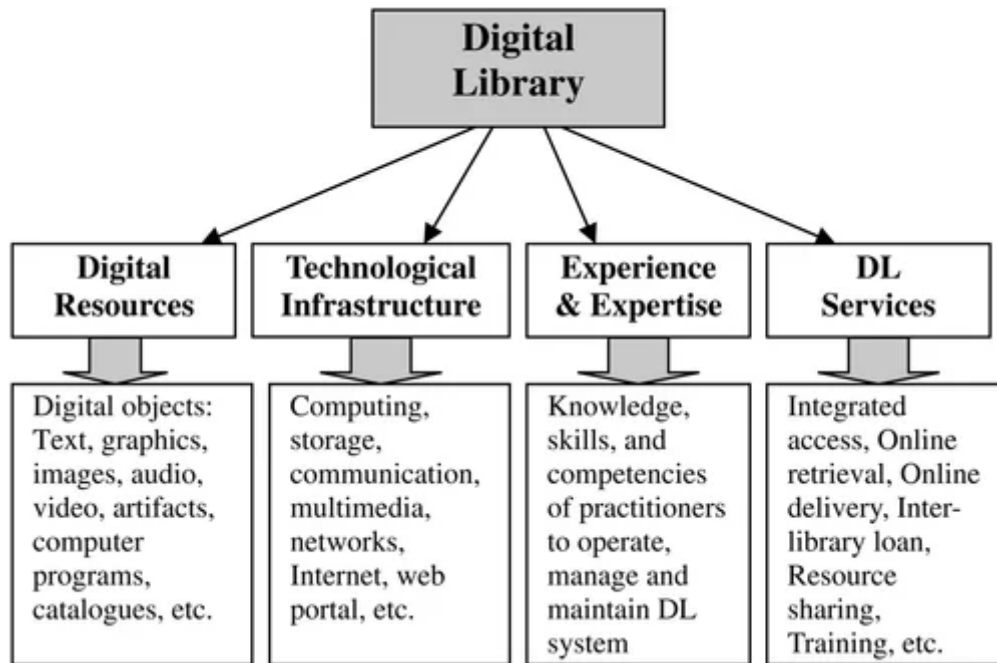

Source:
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jamil-Itmazi/publication/281838709/figure/fig1/AS:669548642566151@1536644244467/Se quences-from-Traditional-Library-to-Virtual-Library_W640.jpg

9. Purpose of Digital Library

The main purpose of digital library is to provide easy and quick services to the library users. In an academic institution, number of library users are huge, so to provide the best library services to the users the institution must have adopt the digital library system. Digital library provides various kinds of information which can be easily accessible by the library users. Another purpose of the digital library is to provide services with an easy accessible facilities to its users at any time, any place. Digital libraries are expected to enhance reading interests and habits as information banks or reading resource centers. Learning institutions should manage digital libraries as they determine their successes in the world of education.

Source: https://www.indiamart.com/proddetail/digital-library-system-4110648688.html

10. Advantages of Digital Library

- More efficient, accurate, and guaranteed authenticity.
- Control of plagiarism can be easier.
- Students can easily retrieve and construct knowledge out of digitally stored reading materials.
- Authors will be proud if their articles are highly cited.
- Can be accessed from anywhere making it easier for users.

10. Disadvantages of Digital Library

- Lack of clarity on Copyright rights
- Electronic documents, articles, or books management process goes through several stages.
- Digital library cannot be accessd if any technical problem occurs.
- Without the internet it is not possible to access digital library resources.
- To access digital library compatible gadgets are required, so it is not possible for everyone to buy these costly gadgets.

11. Major Findings

Online questionnaire designed on Google Form has been shared among the library users. A total of 839 responses have been received. Below mentioned findings are based on their responses.

- Out of total respondents 58.29% are female.
- 31.11% respondents are studying at UG level, 50.77% respondents are studying at PG level, 10.07% respondents are research scholars and 8.05% respondents are from other categories.
- 68.53% replied that they visit the library once a week.
- 89.87% replied that they are highly aware of the digital library system.
- 83.91% replied that they are regularly using digital library platforms.
- 82.36% replied that the digital library platform is very much important for their study purpose.
- 55.90% replied that they use their mobile phone to access the digital library.
- 15.02% replied that they found few difficulties while accessing the digital library.
- From the study it was found that very few academic institutions have their own digital library system.
- Most of the academic institutions conduct orientation programs on digital libraries as well as e-resources platforms and also provide training on how to access these facilities.
- All the academic institutions under study have internet facilities in their libraries.

12. Discussions

From the study, it is found that most library users are aware of the digital library. They are frequently using many digital library platforms. Most of the respondents replied that they always use the National Digital Library of India (NDLI). Also, they use many open access platforms to access the e-resources. Few academic institutions have a digital library platform. Library users use these platforms too. A few respondents replied that they are less aware of the digital library platform. As they mostly prefer to visit physically in the library and are also in favor of reading printed materials.

13. Conclusions

Digital library provides many services which benefits the library users. Nowadays many academic institutions has adpoted digital library system in their institution which is very much benificial for the stake holders of the institutions as well as others. Digital library provides easy access the resources and also anyone can access these resources from any where which is a the best part of the digital library. Earlier library users needs to go to the library to access the information of their need, which was very much time consuming as well as tough also. But now there is no need to go physically to the library to access the informatiion and also one can acccess multiple types of information by staying in the home also, the only thing require is a compeatible electronic gadgets and an internet connection.

Digital library offers many options to library users to do the task as quickly as possible. The use of the digital library enables the library to save space and save the time for the users. Although there are some challenges that users are facing while using the digital library. To meet these challenges librarians should play an important role. The library should possess well-trained library staff that can guide the users and can teach them how to use digital

resources. The most important thing librarians should do efforts to create more awareness among users about digital libraries and e-resources.

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