

Circulation of Documents in Covid Time: Is Whatsapp Blessings for Library Service?

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ABSTRACT

Most of the Academic libraries (school, college or University) are providing traditional as well as digital library services to their target community as per their strength and capability. Circulation of documents in a college Library in West Bengal is mainly done in the traditional way. Covid-19 virus has stopped all types of traditional activities once upon a time. Most of the students did not have the access of computer. Libraries were not ready with the digital archive of materials. The aim of this paper is to show that in this situation how “Whatsapp” the web 2.0 tool became a temporary solution to the users and Library professionals and how a library professional can give library services through Whatsapp.

KEYWORDS: Innovative library service, Digital archive, Traditional circulation, Web 2.0, WhatsApp etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

Library service is getting innovative when some invention of services is added to the regular way of activities. In any Library the regular way of activities are related to Documents and users. Document related activities are mainly of four types: Acquisition of documents (books, Journals), Cataloguing, circulation and control of documents like preservation, binding etc. Acquisition is the process where books or Journals are being purchased from vendor or shop and maintain their unique number (Accession number), write their details in the accession register. Cataloguing is the next process where catalogue cards are being prepared in offline mode or Koha cataloguing data are filled up in an online mode. Catalogue cabinet is present in the offline service where as OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) is present in the online service. Call number is given in each and every document for retrieval of document in right time. Circulation is the procedure where Library professional give the document to their users after issuing cards to their users. It may be in offline or online mode of service. In offline mode, Library professional can take user card from users and can issue books or journals as per norms. In online mode, Library professional can give soft copy of the document through mail or WhatsApp. Control is the process where books are maintained through preservation, conservation, book or journal binding etc. User's related activity is to register the name address and all the necessary details of an user and give them users card so that they can borrow a document and can

read in the reading room section of the Library. Library operates its service through either online mode or off line mode or a mixture of online and off line mode. When Novel Corona virus came, then all educational institutes were closed. Offline library services were very much affected as institutes were closed for many days or rather upto two years. Any types of offline services getting off. So focus should be given on the online services. Whatsapp can be a temporary solution in this situation.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This paper investigates about the document circulation from library during covid time. As all institutes were physically closed then how a library can survive? Online or blended mode of service will be the solution for providing service to its users.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this context research questions are:

- 3.1 How an academic Library did provided library service to its users during the said period.
- 3.2 Which platform was correct for giving the services?
- 3.3 Which types of services were given at that time?
- 3.4 What were the online sources for providing services?

4. METHODOLOGY

Accumulation of name and phone number of the users and creation of various groups in whatsapp or telegram may be the solution for providing library service through web2.0 tools. Whatsapp is the best solution as it supports sharing of video, real time chat, pdf, doc file etc.

5. WHATSAPP

Whatsapp is a platform as well as an independent application of web2.0 tools where through instant messaging system people can connect to each other in real time. Video can be shared with a person or different group of person. Anyone can send and receive various data through audio clips, video, MS word file, pdf file, and it provides the opportunities for sharing real time location as well. The developers of Whatsapp are Brian Acton and Jan Koum who were the former employees of Yahoo. (Wikipedia, 2022).The stable version was released on 2009. Whatsapp become a most popular social networking application in India where people can send and receive real time data. Now a days, a large number of academic personality like teachers, students and research scholars are using Whatsapp in free of cost. According to Arunkumar, "Whatsapp is the top mobile instant messaging platform in India with increasing number of users day by day"(Singh P K and Singh A P, 2018). Mobile instant messaging application is the blessing of science and it has changed the life of people. As additional cost is not required in the use of Whatsapp, and most of the people are using smartphone, Whatsapp, so Libraries can use this application as a measure of online services.

6. LIBRARY SERVICES/ CIRCULATION THROUGH WHATSAPP

There are various types of circulation services done within the library in online or offline mode. Now here it is to be found that which types of services can be given through WhatsApp.

6.1 Document delivery service

Here users ask for document and Library professional provides the right documents to the right person at right time. Document may be a book or a book chapter or a journal article etc. through Whatsapp, Library professional can provide copy right free materials or open source materials in MS-word file or Pdf file to the users.

6.2 Current Awareness Service

Current Awareness Service or CAS is a service where users get news about current documents status of the Library. Through Whatsapp, Library professional can sent ToC (Table of Content) of a journal or Can take photo of the cover page of the book and sent it to the group of users of that Library.

6.3 Selective Disseminate of Information

SDI is a service where specialized documents or information have to be sent to the users as per their demand. Through Whatsapp application it can be done. A group can be made in Whatsapp where users can access, share information with each other.

6.4 Ask a Librarian and reference service

Users can ask a librarian about opening time of the library or library rules for taking books at a time etc. users can search OPAC and can make a query to the librarian about that particular document. It also maintains the 4th law of Rangana than in library science which clearly states that “Save the time of the reader”. Through Whatsapp Library professional can provide reference service to the users. Librarians can sent reference pages of a particular document, or picture of some pages of reference book to a group of users until and unless it violets the copyright rules. Librarian can sent link of the open source material in Whatsapp through which users can read online or download the materials.

6.5 Collection development list

Libraries in every year purchase books as per their users' need. For acquisition of documents Library professional can collect list of documents through Whatsapp at anytime from anywhere in any format. Here users are free to submit list of documents from anywhere. They need not to come in the Library within stipulated time.

6.6 Library activity and Reminder if any

Whatsapp is a strong platform through which a group of users can get information on various events conducted by the Library like Librarians day celebration, Online or offline quiz competition, Debate competition, Seminar, workshop, Students Induction programme etc. Library professional can send reminder notification to its user community about return or renewal of books, renewal of Library cards, or Library Clearance after completion of course etc.

6.7 Reprography service

Library professionals without violating any copyright rule can provide reprographic services by scanning the documents to its users through WhatsApp.

6.8 Online searching services

Library professionals may provide “online searching reliable sites” from where users can download and share documents.

7. SOURCES CAN BE CONSULTED FOR DOCUMENT DELIVERY

There are mainly three types of sources of information for consulting documents. Open source, Commercial, and Close source. Open sources documents are always safe for download and share among the group of people. There are various sites like: DOAJ: DOAJ stands for Directory of Open Access journals. The web address is “<http://www.doaj.org>”. Here a list of Open Access journals is present. It is online and launched in the year 2003. Users can search journals, articles from here. They can read online or sent pdf. DOAJ provides 17500 peer reviewed open access journals in all areas of science, technology medicine, social science, arts and humanities etc. Another site is “<http://www.doabooks.org>”. DOAB stands for Directory of Open Access of Books which can provide fifty thousand plus academic peer reviewed books. NDLI is stands for National Digital Library in India. It is another initiative of MHRD GOI. NDLI is a virtual digital repository of learning resources. Internet Archive is a nonprofit Library of millions of books, music, movies etc. the web address is “<http://www.archive.org>”. From Internet Archive anyone can download copyright free Bengali language materials also. N-List is the National Library and Information services Infrastructure for scholarly content. N-List can provide different e-journals and e-books. Library can take membership from NList provided by INFLIBNET and can sent documents to the users on demand. Beside these, E-PGpathshala, E-Gyankosh, NPTEL courses are also present for consultation of documents.

CONCLUSION

Mobile users with internet facilities are rapidly increased day by day. The invent of smart phone with existing 4G internet facility and upcoming 5G internet facility, are the blessings for library services and an opportunity for remodeling the old traditional type library services into new one. Whatsapp is a strong and very effective social media platform through which millions of people are connected with each other in real time situation if Internet is there. So, Libraries can easily use this web2.0 tools application in present time which will lead the library services in new direction.

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