

# **Knowledge Management in Academic Libraries**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This article describes an overview of the concept of knowledge Management. This article explains the need for knowledge management and the objectives of knowledge management in academic libraries. It also narrates the role of library professionals in knowledge management and what types of knowledge should have the librarian professionals to provide multidisciplinary services to the personal and professional needs of library users. It also examines tools and applications of knowledge management in academic libraries. The paper deals with barriers to knowledge management in academic libraries.*

**KEYWORDS:** Knowledge Management, Academic Libraries.

## **INTRODUCTION**

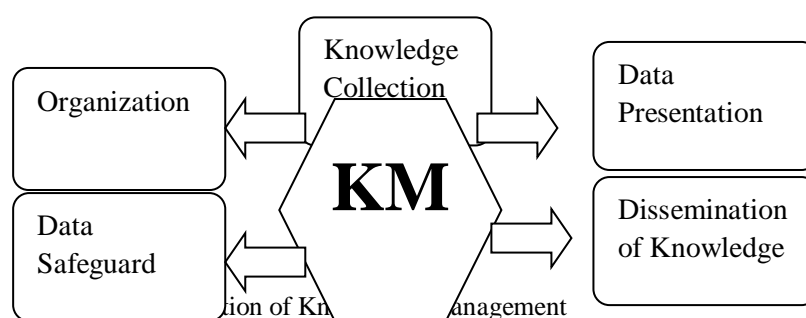
The concepts and name knowledge management was started and popularized in the business world during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was the business world that first recognized the importance of knowledge in the global economy of the knowledge age. In the new knowledge economy, the possession of relevant and strategic knowledge and its unceasing renewal enables businesses to gain a competitive advantage. The application of knowledge management has now spread to other organizations including government agencies, research and development departments, Universities and others. Evolving information and knowledge has impacted all organizations, including academic libraries. This has made knowledge management important. The conventional function of academic libraries is to collect, process, disseminate, store and utilize information to provide service to the university community. However, the environment in which academic libraries operate today is changing. Academic libraries are part of the university and its organizational culture. Whatever affects universities has an impact on academic libraries. As a result, the role of academic libraries is changing to provide a competitive advantage for the parent universities. The success of academic libraries depends on their ability to utilize the information and knowledge of their staff to better serve the needs of the academic community. This requires academic librarians to reappraise their functions and expand their roles and responsibilities to effectively contribute and meet the needs of a large and diverse university community. Knowledge management is a diverse means by which academic libraries could improve their services in the present knowledge era.

### **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

According to Srinivasan, “Knowledge Management refers to a collection of processes, technologies and principles that serve to promote a learning environment supportive of the research community goal.”

Knowledge Management is a process, which deals with knowledge creation, acquisition, packaging and application or reuse of knowledge. Knowledge Management consists of the following five steps:

- Knowledge Collection
- Organization
- Data Safeguard
- Data presentation
- Dissemination of Knowledge Information



### **Need for Knowledge Management**

The whole world is becoming a knowledge society. So it is a need of the hour for each one of us to think in terms of investing in knowledge management and harvesting the benefits.

- To explore the knowledge available with in
- To harvest the knowledge of individuals who may be the leaving the parent organization to avoid the loss of knowledge
- To bring the culture of knowledge sharing
- Better utilization of knowledge
- Reuse of existing knowledge

### **OBJECTIVES OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES:**

The main objectives of knowledge management are to ensure that the right information is delivered to the right person just in time, to take the most appropriate decision. The objectives are as follows:

- To promote collection, processing, storage and distribution of knowledge.
- To promote scientific research
- To promote relationship between library and users
- To protect the intellectual property right
- To create knowledge repositories and manage knowledge as an asset
- To organize the value of knowledge and improve effective research

## **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS**

Knowledge Management is the way to keep knowledge growing through the same sort of influences that many other organizations must deal with. The changing environment of academic life demands new competencies in academic librarians. As a result, the knowledge and expertise of academic librarians need to be seen as the library's greatest asset. The conventional role of library and information professionals was to collect, process, disseminate, store and utilize information to provide multi-disciplinary services to the personal and professional needs of the library users. But now, their role is not restricted to information management only. They play a major role in knowledge management programs and identifying, acquiring, developing, resolving, storing and sharing knowledge. Library and information professionals have to manage relationships with external providers of information and knowledge and should negotiate with them. Knowledge management has created new ground in the field of library and information science. Library professionals should have the following types of knowledge.

- Knowledge about library's information sources.
- Knowledge about where these sources are stored and its use
- Knowledge about users including teaching staff, researcher and how to increase its users.
- Creativity and ability to learn and adapt the new technologies to provide better services to its clients and ability to create, share, harness and utilize knowledge.
- Understanding of knowledge creation process and impact of knowledge.
- Information literacy skills creating, finding, sharing and using
- Understanding the principles of 'Organization of Knowledge'.

## **TOOLS AND APPLICATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES:**

Key types of knowledge-related tools are given below which effective in managing and handling information and knowledge thereby are maintaining the knowledge base organization:

- Intranets/Extranets
- Electronic Document Management
- Data Analysis Data Warehousing
- Help Desk Technologies
- Mapping Tools
- Machine learning
- Workflow management systems
- Groupware
- Information Retrieval Tools
- Data Warehousing: Metadata
- Portals
- Agent Technologies
- Ontology's (Computer based)

## ***Knowledge Management in Academic Libraries***

An effective knowledge Management program is a long term project and requires a significant commitment from the organization. How to manage knowledge will become an important subject facing libraries in new future. Knowledge Management in libraries should be focused on effective research and development of knowledge, creation of knowledge bases, exchange and sharing of knowledge between library staff (including its users), training of library staff, speeding up explicit processing of the implicit knowledge and sharing up explicit processing of the implicit knowledge and realizing of its sharing.

Knowledge Management in libraries is the combination of different processes such as the acquisition of knowledge from different sources (print, electronic and human) and classification, storing, indexing and dissemination of that knowledge using people, processes and technology in such a way by which library could fulfill the mission of the parent organization in term of users' satisfaction. It is to promote relationships in and between libraries, between library and user, to strengthen knowledge internetworking and to quicken knowledge flow. The libraries are moving from collection management to knowledge management and digital technologies offering new information services and products. The Application of Information Technology (IT) enlarges the scope of knowledge acquisition, increases knowledge acquisition speed and reduces knowledge acquisition cost. Information Technology is indispensable in the application and exchange of knowledge and other fields.

### **BARRIERS TO KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES**

Every library professionals who work in academic libraries want to use the techniques of knowledge management to achieve the organizational goal and provide better service to its users but due to some following barriers they are not able to use:

- There is no co-operation between superior and junior staff
- Generally, the junior staff cannot share their knowledge and ideas when they feel there is no benefit of this in terms of salary increases.
- Every library cannot participate in terms of modern technology and management
- Lack of communication skills
- Lack of staff training
- Lack of Sufficient financial support
- Lack of tools and technologies

### **CONCLUSION**

The primary goal of knowledge management within academic libraries is to control the available knowledge that may help academic librarians to carry out their tasks more efficiently and effectively. Knowledge management is also aimed at extending the role of librarians to manage all types of information and tacit knowledge for the benefit of the library. Knowledge management can help transform the library into a more efficient, knowledge-sharing organization. The knowledge management process involves the creation, capturing, sharing and utilization of knowledge. Knowledge management is a viable means in which academic libraries could improve their services and become more responsive to the needs of the users. The success of academic libraries depends on the capabilities and skills of its staff to serve the needs of the academic community more effectively. To be successful in this environment, individuals need to acquire a new combination of skills. Academic libraries need to encourage

librarians to constantly update their skills and competencies in this changing environment. Academic libraries need to recognize the knowledge of its staff and create an environment in which their knowledge can be valued and shared.

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