ADINET e-News Digest

No. 4   January 2015

LIS News - National

Internet in 2025: Educational institutes may move from bricks to clicks

The changes in the Internet technology will lead to a revolution in the education system and will change the role of teachers by 2025, said speakers at a session, 'Internet in 2025', at the Indian Science Congress on Monday.

Ashok Kolasker, former advisor, National Knowledge Commission, said there is an exponential growth in knowledge. "The fundamental structure of textbooks has not changed since the 17th century and the question we need to ask is whether we will move from bricks to clicks approach. Though sweeping changes have taken place, our universities have remained largely stagnated," Kolaskar said.

He said experts are aspiring for a gross enrolment ratio of 30% from the current 19% by 2025, for which we will have to increase our capacity. "The best way to handle the increase in enrolment will be distance learning."

Bijendra Jain, vice-chancellor of BITS-Pilani and one of the speakers at the session, said e-attendance could be a reality and

is largely achievable. "Using automated attendance will digitise the entire process," he said.

Stressing the importance of online, virtual education and its wide reach, Jain said, "When a course has to be taught to 7,500 students, we require at least 16 instructors, of which all may not be great. However, if the course is made available through platforms such as e-dX, we can provide the best instructor to all students."

Jain said with time, Internet would achieve greater reach in developing and developed countries with wireless access beyond 3G, 4G or LTE. He also pointed out that education should be hybridised, which means it should be made available in both online and offline forms.

Other speakers at the session were Bharat Bhaskar from IIM Lucknow and Stephen Wolff, one of the fathers of the Internet.

Source | Hindustan Times | 6 January 2015

Digitisation in education

Many institutions in India are using technology and new pedagogy to improve the educational experience of students on their campuses or

elsewhere. More such efforts are needed if India wants to bring in a revolution in the education sector

The digital era has brought the most sweeping changes in scope and hope, if not yet, in depth and in immediate reality to education since the printing press. The primary manifestation of this over the last quarter of a century has been in the form of availability and ease of access to content from newspaper reports and social records to scholarly articles and literature. This has permeated education in many ways as students and teachers are no longer confined to the limited means of their own institutions. But more importantly this has created awareness among students and teachers that importance of mode of information as a means for growth has reduced significantly. Gathering information as a skill is now of the same importance as that of arithmetic skills in the post-calculator era. In these and many other ways, digitised access to information over the Internet and through mobile devices has become instrumental in democratising education in the broadest sense.

Until recently though, the impact of digitisation in classroom teaching had been minimal. For more than a decade the use of online learning platforms such as Blackboard and Moodle has been prevalent in some countries and has been becoming common if spotted in India. But they had remained supplementary tools to traditional classroom lecture formats. Also, educational institutions in India and abroad have been offering digitally-recorded lectures in the form of removable media earlier and over the Internet in the last decade. This has provided enhanced access to structured digital content for those who cannot physically attend an institution.

More dramatic innovation has come in the form of flipping the classroom, i.e., providing lectures in recorded form to students beforehand to be absorbed at their own pace and convenience but engaging students in a classroom in t activities that were traditionally expected of the student outside the classroom: discussions, problem solving, peer collaboration, etc. This change in pedagogy t although orthogonal to technology per t se has been significantly enhanced by the use of online learning platforms. t Platforms offering MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) such as Coursera, edX, and Udacity, to mention a few, are enabling a global marketplace for formal teaching where a course can be developed and offered by a great teacher but made accessible to practically anyone who has access to the Internet. This global reach has brought a certain amount of hype to this model but admittedly the last word on where this model will settle is not yet written. The hype is not without substance though: it is clear that the Internet will soon be accessible by any human

being anywhere on earth; and early experiments on MOOCs suggest that the physical distance between teachers and students can effectively be bridged by diligent teachers with adequate technology and supporting manpower.

The flipped mode of pedagogy and content that is tailor-made for self learners are key requirements for success of the MOOC model. And this combination may indeed change the way a conventional university functions internally students enrolled and physically present in a university may take their courses through an online platform so as to learn at their own pace and con venience while hopefully finding more fruitful methods of engaging with teach ers to gain from their expertise and experience.

Institutions like IIT Bombay and BITS Pilani apart from others are using technology and new pedagogy to improve the educational experience of students on their campuses or elsewhere. Many more such efforts are needed if India were to leapfrog on the education front to this century as it did in the case of access to mobile phone services. It is the only way to nourish the large younger generation of this nation which in turn is the only hope for the nation to go forward.

The writer is Professor of Computer Science and Dean of Academic & Resource Planning at BITS Pilani Views expressed are personal

Source | Times of India | 7 January 2015

3.7 million students to use eBooks

New initiative in Indian state and first of its kind in the country's public school system.

The Indian state of Kerala is introducing e-textbooks for its schools. The 'Digital Collaborative Textbooks' will feature multimedia content - including audio and video, along with scanned content from existing textbooks.

More than 100,000 teachers and 3.7 million students will use the new digital textbooks from June, according to A Shahjahan, Secretary of the Department of General Education (DGE). This is the first roll-out of its kinds in India's public school system.

Managed by IT@School, an agency within DGE, the digital textbooks will be accessed by classroom tablets as well as in computer laboratories and e-learning centres.

According to IT@School's Executive Director, K P Noufal, the digital content will also be made available to private schools in Kerala.

Source | http://www.futuregov.asia/

How online technology is changing the way the world learns

Indian higher education is at an inflexion point. Several forces from within and outside are hitting the entire sector. These forces including cost, technology and new sets of demanding learners, are forcing education providers to re-look at existing models of education delivery.

The questions is will the existing brick and mortar, infrastructure-led higher education system be able to meet the rising new demands or cope with the large scale changes. With each passing moment, it is clear they cannot. While access, equity, and quality (or excellence) remain the thrust areas of the Human Resources Development Ministry's mandate, it is time policy makers and administrators consider how higher education can be delivered differently but, with the same thrust and objectives.

More than any other force, technology today is a large force multiplier, that possesses the ability to answer the most critical questions around the same issues of access, equity, excellence and affordability today, unlike, even the recent past.

Technology can mediate higher education delivery since it can help us new pedagogical tools, make higher education more learner-centric, and make the entire curriculum transaction, far more innovative and engaging for the learner.

Everyone agrees on how technology can improve higher education transaction. But it is pertinent to argue more on how a technology-mediated system can help meet India's national goals, and how it offers considerably higher leverage for institutions and administrators.

Source | http://www.firstpost.com/living/online-technology-changing-way-world-learns-2027677.html

Technology and public libraries

There is tremendous potential to turn around public libraries with some value-addition as community information, knowledge, resource, and service centres.

Libraries are the life blood of a nation. This is particularly true for a country such as India, which has a large number of young people aspiring for a better life. Yet, our public libraries are grossly neglected. Each one of the country's 676 districts has at least one public library, an enormous resource that can deliver a critical public good if properly utilised.

Have public libraries become relics of a bygone era with rarely utilized resources? Are they struggling to survive in the contemporary world, amid change

and new generational demands? Without enough visitors to serve their purpose, has their existence become largely symbolic, especially in states such as Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar, and that, too, in the backward districts?

Have public libraries—the most democratic and community-centric points—become a sorry story with unpaid librarians, vacant positions, untrained staff, dilapidated structures, no innovation in content and services and unmotivated environment?

This, despite that libraries are in our governance list with a budget allocation, even if a meagre amount, and time and human resources are being invested? Where's the outcome? What is the change that libraries are contributing to?

The scenario is not completely disappointing. There is tremendous potential to turn around public libraries with some value-addition as community information, knowledge, resource and service centres.

Let's consider some small examples. The Maharaja Harendra Kishore Public Library, set up in 1905 in Bettiah in West Champaran, a backward district in Bihar, was almost closed for years until the end of last year with no visitors to avail the resources available. With a new approach and method, the library since then has had more than 400 visitors as members were provided with access to Internet

and communication technology (ICT) services. More than 400 people were trained in information technology (IT) skills and more than 200 availed the electronic resources. The existing library staff were introduced to new tools, membership was automated and digital cataloguing is being introduced, an information service for public schemes and services has been introduced, new partnerships forged with local agencies, schools, colleges and the local administration to make the public library a hub of activity. From no women visitors to more than 150, the library has seen a transformation. The enthused district administration has come up with investment in infrastructure, refurbishing the library, investing in furniture, building public toilets and giving a new look to the campus.

In another case, the Kanpur Nagar Public Library in UP had a daily average visitor base of 20 with other infrastructural, environment and management limitations. With a new push, it today has more than 50 visitors and still counting. It has provisions for access, learning IT skills, ICT services, membership automation, digital cataloguing, digitization of manuscripts, e-book resources and staff motivational programmes. These changes are also sweeping across district public libraries in Unnao, Barabanki, Lakhimpur Kheri, Raebareli and Balia—all in UP.

These programmes are part of a national pilot intervention in 10 districts of UP and Bihar that Digital Empowerment Foundation, Pratham, Nasscom Foundation and Rajiv Gandhi Foundation—all non-profit organisations—have partnered with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation since 2013 to facilitate positive transformations in these public libraries with knowledge and support of the state and district administration. The vision and plan to work in all functional public libraries across UP is also being taken forward with the state government. An India Public Libraries Conference in March is being organized to take this momentum forward.

While the positive results are still emerging from these and other innovations in public libraries, there are enough reasons for the public library stakeholders to revisit and facilitate transformations in these public spaces. Apart from the need to invest in structural and operational changes, what has become urgent is to look into library services and content for the future; scope and role of technology in the library space; partnerships to strengthen capacities of libraries; and look into stakeholders engagement and policy amendments to enable public library subject as a programme and action priority in governance agenda at the district, state and central levels. The key national initiatives in the National Mission on Libraries (NML) and Digital Library interventions may require a big thrust to scale up and support public libraries in states. There has already been an effort to set up NML model libraries in 35 districts with emphasis on economically backward districts and provide 629 district libraries with network connectivity.

This could also be the right time to look at our library laws and revisit them to meet changing requirements. Strengthening district library committees, giving more ownership and responsibility to the librarians, adequate training and skills for the library staff, constituting citizen committees at district level could be relevant ideas to work upon. Connecting the knowledge networks with the public libraries beyond the academic institutional libraries is a challenging area. In a broader sense, we also need to think whether shifting the library subject from the state list to the concurrent list will better serve the cause. It also needs to be debated whether the responsibility of public libraries should shift from the culture ministry to the human resource ministry with links to the ministry of communications and IT to provide a greater boost to out public libraries.

Investing in public libraries is the need of the time. It has wider social, cultural, knowledge, economic and political significance that has been ignored for long. It's time to revive our libraries, and restore their prime position in our society.

Osama Manzar is founder & director of Digital Empowerment Foundation and Chair of Manthan Award. He is also a member of working group for IT for masses at ministry of communication & IT. Tweet him @osamamanzar.

Source | Mint – The Wall Street Journal | 12 January 2015

When it comes to billionaires and book clubs, it seems that Mark Zuckerberg, like Oprah Winfrey, also has a magic touch.

Zuckerberg's goal for 2015 is to read one new book every other week and discuss it with fellow readers on his "A Year of Books" Facebook page. In this page they will read a new book every two weeks and discuss it on this page. Their books will emphasize learning about new cultures, beliefs, histories and technologies. Suggestions for new books to read will be always welcomed. Everyone who participates read the books and they will moderate the discussions and group membership to keep them on that particluar topic .His first book club read, "The End of Power" by Moisés Naím.

Source |http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/30-things-facebook-founder-mark-zuckerberg-accomplished-hits/story?id=23701760

Forthcoming Events

ADINET Librarians' Day Seminar on 22nd August, 2015

ADINET in collaboration with INFLIBNET & Nirma University will be celebrating the birth anniversary of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan as Librarians' Day by holding a Seminar on 22nd August 2015 at the Nirma University

With the recent developments in Information Technology that is now known as disruptive technology in Higher Education, Libraries and Librarians have to redefine their role and relevance in future with respect to learning spaces. Looking to the future, there is a concern about the existence of Libraries. But the future of libraries can be really bright with innovative Library practices in terms of resources, services, skills, users and usage of Libraries. Hence, this year's Seminar topic has been decided as:

Library as a Learning Space - Role and Relevance of Libraries in the Future

The Sub Themes are as follows:
Library Resources
Library Services & Facilities
Skills of Library Professionals
Users & Usage of Libraries

Please note the last date for Registration*: 13th August 2015.*

The last date for paper submission: **22nd June 2015**.

You are cordially invited to participate in the Two days National conference on 'Contrivance of Academic Libraries in Digital Era' NCCALDE-2015 organized by School of Studies in Library & Information Science, Vikram University, Ujjain on 6th and 7th February, 2015. Please grace the event by contributing research paper or active participation.

Theme - 'Contrivance of Academic Libraries in Digital Era'

Source| http://www.vikramuniv.net/userfiles/libraray-conf1115.pdf

Department of Library and Information Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Under the UGC-Special Assistance Programme (SAP DRS-I) is going to organize a National Conference on "Knowledge Management in Libraries and Information Centers (KMLIC-2015)" on 18th – 19th March, 2015.

For further Queries and details please feel free to Contact: Dr. Muzamil Mushtaq Department of Library and Information Science Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh – 202002

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International UDC Seminar 2015 CLASSIFICATION AND AUTHORITY CONTROL: Expanding Resource Discovery DATE: 29-30 October 2015 VENUE: National Library of Portugal, Campo Grande 83, Lisbon, Portugal

WEBSITE: http://seminar.udcc.org/2015/