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ACCESS TO E-RESOURCES / WEB RESOURCES IN THE DIGITAL LIBRARIES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION

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Abstract

The importance of the need E-Resources evaluation & development, it provides insight into a framework for digital library insight into a framework for digital library evaluation. The paper also discusses various evaluation techniques in detail. Information is needed in all aspects of society and in all disciplines. Users demand information i.e., timely, accurate, valuable up to date and quickly available.

Introduction

In the 21st century, the world has experienced two revolutions viz., the industrial revolution and the information (technology) revolution due to evolutionary changes in the field of information technology. Today, libraries across the globe are fast moving to the 'digital' mode. However, the development of digital libraries requires huge investment in terms of money, manpower, and technology etc., Hence it is necessary that time-bound evaluations are carried out to ensure that the digital libraries are meeting the objectives for which they are established. But the basic purpose of evaluation should be to help the decision making process. Though the development of digital libraries has reached a nature stage, the evaluation has not kept pace (Jeng, 2005).

Evaluation of Information storage

Evaluation is both performance assessment and evaluation the collection of information to make decisions.

It is necessary to address the following questions before hand while one is planning an evolution process:

- What is the purpose of evolution?
- What can be evaluated?
- How to evaluate?
- When is it appropriate to evaluate?

Answering these questions prior to starting the evaluation will bring a lot of clarity to the entire evaluation process. The methods and metrics for the evaluation of E-Resources may vary based on whether they are viewed as institutions/ as information systems, as new technologies, as collections or as new services.

Information sources over the web

- Electronic journals
- Electronic discussion lists/Forums
- Usenet News
- Data and software Archives
- E-mail based Information services
- Campus wide information systems
- Library catalogue –Web OPACs
- Online Databases
- Guide to Information sources
- Search Engines
- Subject Gateways
- Web Directories
- Online Chatting
- Bulletin board services
- Full text of documents.

Information is needed in all aspects of society and in all disciplines. User demand information i.e., timely, accurate, valuable, up to date and quickly available.

Types of Web Resources

Open Web - Anything online that can be found freely with a Search Engine.

Gated Web - Online Resources accessible by subscription E.g. OED, CA, LISA, BIOSIS, INSPEC, COMPENDIX etc.,

Invisible Web – Databases that are not found by search Engines and can only be accessible through a particular page front end. E.g. LC's American Web site http://memory.loc.org.

Means of Access to Web Resources
1. Through search Engines
2. Through Web OPACs
3. Through specified URLs/Web sites.

Evolution of Web Resources
Need for the evaluation of Web Resources
- Web resources are self –publishing medium
- Not all sources are equally valuable/reliable
- Sometimes , may not be authentic/accurate
- May not be current
- May not be filtered/mediated
- No standard in the publication

Analyzing Information sources
- Initial Appraisal
- Content Appraisal

Initial Appraisal
- Author
- Date of publication
- Edition/Revision
- Publisher
- Title
- Contributors/Collaborators

Content Analysis
- Intended audience
- Objective reasoning
- Coverage
- Writing/Presentation style
- Evaluative Reviews
  Major content/services included in DL are:
- Online Journals
- E-books
- Web OPAC

- Institutional repository (D space)
- Offline databases
- Online databases
- CD/DVD based training tools
- Services (ILL,CAS etc)
- Information about the library.

Each of the above is subdivided into further categories. Access to the online resources is IP based. Hence the user does not have to login for accessing individual resources.

Following methods were used for different categories of users:
- Informal interviews with faculty
- Group sessions for researchers
- Questionnaire for students
- Transaction Log analysis for collecting quantitative data.

Instead of individuals, the study was limited to studying the usage pattern of various groups like faculty, researchers etc.. and the results of the evaluation provided useful insights into the usage patterns of these groups. A few interesting findings of the study were the low awareness level about various resources available in the D L and the preference to use the same resources repeatedly instead of other resources of similar nature. The results of the evaluation were used in:

Collection development policy – It was found that the majority of users prefer using online journals instead of print version. Hence a decision has been taken to subscribe to online journals wherever possible.

DL user interface re design – majority of users preferred simple and easy to access DL interface.

User education – a large percentage of users were unable to use various resources/databases available in the DL due to lack of training. Many training programmes were organized for such users to make them comfortable with the DL.

Internal marketing – the evaluation confirmed that there was a low level of awareness about the DL in general and various services/content available in it amongst many sections of users. Appropriate steps were

taken to increase the awareness about the DL amongst the core set users.

Conclusion

Evaluation is defined as "The systematic process & assessment. Web evaluation techniques are only in the beginning and need to be developing standards and guidelines. DL technologies are under constant change the evaluation methodologies would also need to change and further research in this area is necessary for that to happen. Establishing evaluation procedures will be on ongoing evolutionary process.

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