



Information Seeking in An Electronic Environment

What are the trends and issues in information seeking and behavior in an electronic environment?



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Rationale

- The format and the mode of access to information resources have changed because of the electronic environment in libraries and the industry brought about by ICT
- Libraries, librarians and users have to cope with the challenge and make use of the advantages brought about by ICT

Scope of the Lesson

- Trends and issues in using both controlled and natural languages (as appropriate)
- Trends and issues in information systems
- Trends and issues in collection development and management
- Trends and issues in methods of supporting user's information seeking needs



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Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson students will be familiar with the trends in and issues about

- Using both controlled and natural languages (as appropriate) for developing tools for information seeking
- Supporting information needs and information-seeking behaviors of users
- Developing information systems
- Collection development and management
- Methods to support information needs and information seeking behaviors of users

The Electronic Information Environment

- Electronic resources are here and will stay because of the advantages they have over the print medium.
- However, there are issues and trends that provide both opportunities and threats to the electronic environment.

Issues and Trends in Information Systems in an Electronic Environment

- Technological
- Economic
- Human resources and users
- Socio-political
- Library service and Organizational Changes
- Structured and unstructured information environment
- Legal

Technological Issues and Trends

- Hardware—Faster, bigger capacity; Fast development and obsolescence
- Software—More powerful; Fast development and obsolescence
- Networks—Faster, more powerful, more difficult to monitor
- Reliability of system
 - Security of data
 - Upgrades to new technological environment
 - System support

Economic Issues and Trends

- More affordable hardware but fast obsolescence. Continuing expense.
- More expensive sophisticated software with frequent upgrades. Continuing expense.
- Training is continuous. Needs to keep up with developments.
- Faster networks. Continuous infrastructure development
- Useful life of resources dependent on the technological environment. Might need frequent conversion and back-up of data.

Human Resources and Users

- Continuing training on ICT needed.
- User needs and preferences must be established
- Information seeking behavior

Socio-political and Legal Issues

- Political preferences
- Social preferences
- Intellectual Property Rights
- Copyright and Fair Use
- Ethical Issues

Library Service and Organizational Changes

- New reference and information services
 - Document delivery
 - E-mail and push technology
 - Interlibrary lending
- Acquisitions policies
- New service teams in the Library
 - Systems support staff
- Automated Services
- Digitization issues
- Internet/CD-ROM use
- Management practices and strategic planning

Issues in Developing Information Systems

- Controlled vs. Natural indexing
- Internal use or Web enabled
- Human-Computer Interaction
 - GUI and ease of use
 - Ergonomic issues
- Technological issues—Emerging technologies
- Database structure
- Search strategies
- User requirements

Controlled vs. Natural language Indexing

- Controlled indexing-Use of predefined descriptors
 - Thesaurus
 - Subject Headings List
- Natural Language Indexing-Use of keywords found in the document
- Semi-structured-Combination of keywords and descriptors



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Conclusion

- The format and the mode of access to information resources have changed because of the electronic environment in libraries and the industry brought about by ICT
- Librarians, users and systems developers alike must cope with the changing and emerging technological environment to adequately respond to user needs.