

**PERSONALISATION OF LIBRARY SERVICES: BOON TO USER'S EXPECTATION  
IN DIGITAL ERA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The modern information age is characterised by the exponential growth of information. Information today is scattered among different system within a complex information technology environment. The Principle focus of library and information centres are to provide optimum library services to its users. As users have become more techno savvy and more demanding, Personalisation of library services will help in meeting the user's expectations. A personalised library service need not be based on individual user behavior or user input. The content of a service can be tailored for predefined user community and providing different sections for the users identified. This approach would give tailored content without implicitly building the one-to-one relationship that requires gathering knowledge on users. This paper discusses the various methods through which personalisation of library services can be done and advantages, disadvantages of personalisation of library services.

Key Words:Personalisation of library services, Library web sites, Institutional repositories, mobile technology, cloud computing

## Introduction:

Information Technology has brought a dramatic change in all the aspects of human life. Information technology has revolutionized the existing library services and had made it possible to reach the unreached through innovative services initiated by the libraries. Personalisation of library services has become more apparent in the recent past owing to the information explosion and to the emergence of information technologies. Information technologies have provided greater opportunities for librarians to tailor services and products to the users. Personalisation of library services involves a process of gathering user-information during interaction with the users, which is then used to deliver appropriate contents and services, tailor-made to the user's needs. Personalisation of library services need not be based on individual user behavior or user input. The content can be tailored for a predefined user community and providing different sections for the users identified. This approach would give tailored content without implicitly building the one-to-one relationship that requires gathering of knowledge on users. According to Frias-Martinez et.al. personalisation of library services can be achieved through adaptability and adaptivity mechanisms. Library 3.0 tools enable librarians and library users to create appropriate personal and professional profiles that help to tailor library services and products to their own needs.

## Need of Personalization of Library Services:

1. To better serve the users by anticipating their needs.
2. To make the interaction efficient and to attain user satisfaction
3. To build a relationship that encourages the user's to use the library resources.
4. To provide the available information through a single window to the users.

## Personalization of Library Services

1. Creation of library website

Library website can be created to help the users to search databases, catalogue, useful links, open access journals, open access directories, funding agencies for research, reading lists, career opportunities, past exam question papers, N-list resources by INFLIBNET etc. The library website provides lot of information about finding, accessing and using the library resources. Users have to move to the campus to access the IP enabled E-resources and electronic journals. Now latest technology called Ezproxy helps the libraries to make their resource available to its users off campus also. Lot of information that are relevant to the staff and students are to be collected and links are to be given to various websites to provide access at a single window using library website. For example [www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com), [www.yola.com](http://www.yola.com) etc can be used to create library websites.

## 2. E-mail Service

Reference service and other informative services through E-mail is a part & parcel of modern library. Details of available journals and books through e-mail is one such service that can be provided by the library. The details of newly received books in the library are informed to the respective departments through e-mail.

## 3. Use of mobile technology

Personalised library services can be provided using smart phones, cell phones, Ipods, Tablet computers. Secured Wi-Fi network or mobile data connections are required to make the services more adoptable. Text messaging or short message service (SMS) is a very important service of all the mobile technologies and services. SMS can be used to send reminder notices about overdue item or to pick up the reserved item from the library, to inform users about the timings of the library.

Blue tooth is very innovative mobile technology which can be very helpful to transfer library e-material to user's mobile phone. User can access information available in library e- by activating the blue-tooth and information can be shared among them. "Text a librarian" is a mobile technology library service where user can send a text message and can get their answer. WhatsApp can be used to text messages. To use this service user either has to register for the service or he/she has to download the application.

## 4. Institutional Repositories

Institutional repository is a digital collection maintained by the library to preserve the intellectual output of its staff and faculty members. Libraries can build institutional repository of their institution where in they upload the books, journal articles, theses and other works for which the institution has the copy right. Student's projects and question papers in e-format can be preserved for the future reference. There are many open access softwares like Greenstone, Dspace, Fedora commons etc. are available to create institutional repositories.

## 5. E-resources Management System

A number of electronic resources are subscribed by libraries to meet the need of its users. E-Resources management system provides single platform where users can search all these subscribed resources in one click rather than clicking on each journal or database. Softwares like Electronic Resources Management and search Solutions (ERMSS), Discovery, Fedgate etc are available to provide such facility in the libraries.

## 6. Use of Social Networks and Library blogs

Social networking sites play an important role in information dissemination. Blogs have exploded on the web, because they have made it much easier to publish content online. Library blog is a technique or tool for the librarian to disseminate information to the users. A librarian might find it useful to gather updates, service notices and event information all in one place.

#### 7. Cloud computing

Some special libraries use cloud computing technology (library in the cloud) in a Library 3.0 environment to personalise library services. Cloud technology is changing the way user read, store, use or share data. Cloud technology enables portable devices like mobile phones and enables users to synchronise their data regardless of the access device they use.

### **Role of LIS Professionals to Provide Personalized Library Services:**

#### 1. Marketers

The role of providing information played by librarians in the past has changed to that of providing access and marketing of information. This requires selection of information, offering of access services as well as new types of information services to remote users.

#### 2. Educators and advisors

Educating the users to identify information needs and prioritizing highly relevant information from a pool of information according to user's preference.

#### 3. Collaborators

Librarians have to become effective collaborators of information exchange by using the connectivity and networking prowess of today's technology.

#### 4. Content Manager

Librarians have to play a dynamic role in providing easy access to computer held digital information including abstracts, indexes, full-text databases.

#### 5. Information management consultants

Librarian can help network users to provide access to the subset of networked information sources relevant to each user's work.

### **Advantages of Personalization of Library Services:**

1. It improves user participation, self-sufficiency.
2. It inculcates user loyalty.

3. It enhances user control.
4. It facilitates better understanding of users need and how to meet them effectively.
5. Introduces flexibility, improves usability and enhances user satisfaction

#### **Disadvantages of Personalization of Library Services:**

1. Personalisation of library services can be costly.
2. It may trigger unrealistic user demands.
3. Sometimes it may expose the library to more risks.

#### **Conclusion:**

Use of available information technology in designing personalised library services to its users made the information access and search easy. It has made the users self-sufficient to perform varied searches and remain informed about the recent happening. The number of Indian libraries fully automated providing full technological services are less in number but our libraries are improving and changes are going to happen in many Indian libraries. Provision of personalised library services in research and academic libraries offers a means of combating information overload and leads to improved productivity.

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