University Libraries in the Age of IT: A Case Study of SLIET Central Library, Longowal, Punjab, India

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Abstract

The paper discusses the impact of Information Technology (IT) on central Library of Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering & Technology (SLIET), Longowal. . It describes IT infrastructure available, current status of IT application in library activities and reader services. It also suggests measures to be taken for full exploitation of library resources and increase efficiency of information delivery mechanism.

Keywords: Academic Libraries; Library Automation; IT Application

Introduction

IT as driving force has affected every activity of society whether it may be service sector or marketing or manufacturing sector. It has influenced educational institutions in such as way that teaching and learning process has become so comfortable feeling no need of class rooms, teaching staff, and other infrastructure through e-learning. University libraries are not legging behind in IT application in their activities and these are being automated rapidly. Growth of machine readable databases have also forced libraries to apply IT in their services, structure and collection development.

University Libraries in India and Information Technology

University libraries are regarded as heart of the institutions in teaching learning process. These libraries support the users community in achieving desired goals of their study. IT has influenced the university libraries in such a way that information seekers can get desired information just in one click irrespect of geographical location, time, space, and volume of information. It has enhanced the flow of information to the library users. Due to information explosion and availability of information resources in digital form no library can procure and handle all

information resources. Therefore, to apply IT in library affairs has become need of the hour to make maximum reading material available to readers at affordable charges. Consortia approach has become very popular for subscribing e-resources in university libraries at subsidized prices. UGC Infonet and INDEST Consortium have revolutionized the access needs of information seekers. IT has saved library economy, space, time, and ensured quality of services rendered by library professionals to users. ERNET India, INFLIBNET, Ahmedabad, are providing necessary IT infrastructure and network facility to university libraries to automate activities and share resources and exploiting existing reading material of university libraries.

SLIET Central Library in the Age of IT

Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering & Technology (SLIET) (Deemed to be University) spread over 451 acres of land was established by Government of India in 1989 to provide technical education in emerging areas of engineering and technology. It caters to technical manpower requirements at various levels by adopting a new concept of modular system in imparting technical education with emphasis on practical training in industry. The educational programmes of the Institute are non-conventional, innovative, practical oriented and contain all aspects of new education policy 1986 of Government of India. The Institute offers following programmes of study:

- Certificate Courses
- Diploma Programmes
- Degree Programmes
- M. Tech. Courses
- Ph. D. Programmes

The Institute is autonomous body fully funded by Government of India. It has been registered as a society under Society Registration Act 1860 and is managed by Board of Management which is responsible for its general administration, direction and control.

SLIET Central Library is one of the rapidly growing libraries in Punjab. Central library as a central facility, it supports the teaching and research programmes of the institute and caters to the informational requirements of students, teachers, and all other staff members of the Institute. It aims at bringing the reading materials and the students together under the conditions conducive for reading for pleasure, self discovery, personal growth and sharpening of intellectual curiosity. Central Library and 11 departmental libraries of the institute form Institute library system. At present, central library is housed in a two storey modern building having 2108. 36 sq. meter carpet area. It has a spacious reading hall at first floor having sitting capacity of 80 readers.

Central library has a collection of 66326 books including 959 books of SC/ST book bank 2496 of Certificate students book bank 1385 of PWD students and 5974 of departmental libraries.

In addition, central library has 689 video cassettes, 2130 CD-ROMs, 3500 bound volumes of journals and 293 M. Tech theses. It is subscribing to 68 national and international periodicals in addition to subscription of 31 magazines and 16 newspapers.

Central Library is observing following timings:
- Monday to Friday : 8. 30 AM to 9. 00 PM
- Saturday & Sunday : 8. 30 AM to 5. 00 PM
- Holidays : Closed
- Reading Hall : 24 hours

Membership is open to all students, teaching and non-teaching staff of Institute. Total membership of our library is 3526 including students members, staff members. Lending services to different categories of members are shown in Table-1 below:

Table – 1: Membership Categories and loan entitlement

A.	Student Category	Entitlement	Duration
	Research Scholar	05Books	01Month
	PG Students	05 Books	01 Month
	Degree Students	03 Books	14 days
	Diploma Students	03 Books	14 days
	Certificate Students	02 Books	14 days
B.	Staff Category		
	Teaching Faculty	10 Books	03 Months
	Non-Teaching Faculty	10 Books	01 Month
	Non-teaching Staff	02 to 05 Books (Depending on pay band of employee)	01 Month

In addition, facility of overnight issue of reference book is available.
Central library provides following readers' service:
-Reference service
-Periodical information (New addition list)
-Book exhibition
-Lending service
-Document tracing service
-Book Bank
-Photocopying service
-Current awareness service
-Document delivery service
-Press clipping
-OPAC
-Online Access service

-Orientation service
-EDUSAT service
-Video lecture viewing service

It has following ICT tools in addition to other ICT infrastructure:-
-Multimedia Projector
-LCD Projector
-Slide Projector
-Overhead Projector
-29" Colour Television and VCR
-Plasma TV
-CCTV, printers, barcode reader, barcode printer, DVD writer etc.

The staff position along with scales of pay, qualifications and strength is given in Table-2 below:-

Table-2: Pay Scales and strength of Library staff

Post	Qualification	Pay Band	Strength
Librarian	M. Lib. Sc.	PB-4	01
Librarian	M. A. ; M. Lib. Sc. ; M. Phil	PB-3	01
Assistant Librarian	M. A. , M. Lib. Sc.	PB-2	01
Clerk	Matric	PB-2	01
Peons/Helpers	Middle to B. A.	PB-1	05
Security Guards	10+2	4446. 00(Fixed	02
Sweeper	Middle	4446. 00(Fixed)	01

Organization of Centre Library
Central Library has been functionally organized as under:

Acquisition Section
Development of sound collection is one of the basic objective of library. Selection of good reading material and their acquisition is the major responsibility of library in order to provide required information to the current and prospective users. All books, proceedings. Video tapes, are acquired by this section. In addition book exhibitions are organized by this section to select quality and need based books.

Circulation Section
To provide right information at the right time to the right user is the prime objective of the library. Circulation section is fully automated and hold this responsibility to lend books to the users.

Periodical Section
Central Library has a sound periodical section having subscription of international,

national periodicals and e-resources to fulfill the requirement of user community.

Technical Section
Reading material acquired in the library requires systematic order so that it could be retrieved easily. It is possible only if material is classified and catalogued. This section performs this technical task for making the materials more searchable.

Book Bank Section
The objective of book bank is to enrich users by providing more resources. Therefore, this section provides books to SC/ST degree and diploma students and all certificate students for entire semester in addition to normal entitlement for borrowing books. Two books can be borrowed by the student at start of semester from this section for full semester.

Departmental Library
Besides Central library as central facility, 10 departmental libraries, one school library and one PWD section library form part of Institute library system. These departmental and section libraries fulfill the needs of users at departmental level and have a total collection of 5974 volumes of books.

Reference Section
This section look after all activities of interaction and relationship between users, reading materials and library staff in order to help the users for locating the required material in a very concise and precise way. This section provides computer assisted reference service(CARS) to information seekers.

Binding Section
In open access system, the library patrons and users have open access to all the documents available in the library. In this access, maximum resources are utilized and after some time the materials attract proper maintenance. Preservation of document is an essential activity of the libraries for making reading materials more serviceable for longer period. Secondly, journals are published in paperback form and procured in the libraries as such. These need more attention for preservation point of view. Keeping in views the above factors, binding section has been set up in central library to preserve the reading material for longer life.

Impact of IT
Library Automation
10 computer systems with wireless internet connections have been provided in Central library for housekeeping activities. Automation of Central library was started with purchase of CDS/ISIS software (version 3. 071) in January 1997 and a database of 12463 documents was developed by using this software at that time. During 2002 another software package "Alice for windows" version 5. 49 (web compatible) was purchased to accelerate automation work. At present databases of 66326 books, 2130 CD-ROMs, 689 Video Tapes and 293 M. Tech. theses have been developed and

circulation counter has been made fully computerized. All books have been barcoded and borrower tickets have been issued to student community with barcode.

IT Infrastructure
a. Hardware Infrastructure

Sr. No.	Item Name	Processor Details & Make	Qty.	CPU Speed	RAM	HDD	CD ROM	Ethernet Card
1.	Server	HCL Infinite GL	02	3. 6 GHz	2 GB	160 GB	48X	32bitpci
2.	Terminals	Pentium4 HCL	30	3. 0Ghz	512MB	80GB	52X	32bit
3.	Terminals	Pentium4IBM	10	2. 6Ghz	248MB	40GB	---	32bit

b. Software Infrastructure
- Windows NT Version 4. 0
- Windows 95/98
- Windows XP Professional
- CDS/ISIS Version 3. 071
- Alice for Windows Version 5. 49

Digital Library and Multimedia Room
Digital library section having 30 computers, multimedia room equipped with plasma TV and EDUSAT connectivity and 10 laptop computers have been established in Central Library to cater to the needs of user community. In addition to e-resources provided by INDEST Consortium, central library is subscribing to DELNET databases and e-resources of ASTM. All e-resources are also accessible through institute wide wireless network.

Being member of INDEST consortium, full text access of e-resources of following publishers is available to users:

Sr. No.	Publisher / Description	Available at URL
1.	IEEE	http. //ieeexplore. ieee. org
2	Springer	http. //link. springer. . de/
3	Applied Science and Technology Plus	http. //www. il. proquest. com/pkdauto
4	ACM Digital Library	http. //portal. acm. org/portal. cfm
5	ASCE	http. //www. pubs. asce. org/
6	ASME	http. //www. asme. org/pubs/journals/
7	JCCC(Bibliographical)	http. //jccc-indest. informindia. co. in
8	Nature	http. //www. nature. com
9	ASTM Standards	

More than 15000 online journals, conference proceedings, magazines, reports, newsletters are being accessed through databases of above publishers / association. In addition to above e-resources user community can access following IT based services:

    a. OPAC:-Manual catalogue of library has been replaced by OPAC. This OPAC is searchable through campus wide network.

    b. Internet Access: User can access internet in the library

    c. E-Mail: E-mail facility has been provide to the users

    d. E-Books: Library has a collection of 1000 E-books. These E-books are browsable in digital library during normal working hours.

    e. Video Tapes: Library has a collection of lectures of Professor of IITs in the form of video tapes. These lectures are viewable in multimedia room.

    f. E-Thesis: Library has 200 E-thesis of M. Tech. courses. These are accessible to user community through digital library.

    g. Digitization: Digitization is a process of converting printed resources into digital form. Rule books of SLIET have been digitized by library.

    h. CD ROMs: With print version of some magazines, CD-ROMs are provided freely by publishers. This e-version contains good reading material like projects, computer software etc. This material is accessible in digital library and issueable for three days for outside use.

    i. Online Lectures: Through EDUSAT facility available in central library, online lectures are delivered by IIT faculty members for users.

Future Plans and Suggestions

It has been planned to subscribe e-books of engineering, technology and humanities. It is suggested to establish institutional repository for use of institutional publication and faculty contribution by clientele. It is recommended to purchase index and abstract databases of various subjects to acquaint the users with latest development in the areas of study and research. Number of users have been increased due to introduction of new courses, implementation of OBC reservation policy and conferment of deemed to be university status to SLIET. Therefore, it is suggested that library staff including computer professional be increased as a step of upgradation of library to fulfill the needs of users effectively and efficiently. It is felt that e-resources available in CD-ROM, DVD, Video tape form are not being utilized optimum. It is suggested to purchase client server to enhance usage of these resources.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that IT application in the activities of central library of Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering and Technology(SLIET) has increased readership and efficiency of library. But the mission of complete transformation of library into information dissemination centre is to be achieved.

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