



ISSUES OF AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY AMONG THE DIGITALIZED MANUSCRIPTS FOR STUDENTS AND THE RESEARCHERS: THE CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Users have always relied on libraries as a bottomless well of knowledge. Libraries are evolving into new forms as content shifts to digital media and internet access becomes an essential human right rather than a luxury. Modernising academic libraries via the use of digital technology is a relatively new idea, but it is quickly becoming an integral element of the work culture in less developed countries. This study looks at these difficulties and possibilities from the perspective of academic libraries. A digital library is a cutting-edge piece of software that helps professionals acquire the knowledge and expertise they need to deal with digital libraries. This research sheds light on the best practises for archiving digital manuscript collections. Initiating efforts to preserve manuscripts and make them available in an ICT environment to information searchers is crucial given the significance of manuscripts as a source of historical and cultural knowledge. When we thought traditional reading materials were becoming extinct, advances in information technology opened us exciting new avenues for their preservation.

Key words: Digitization, Digital Preservation, Manuscripts, Academic Library, Library Professionals ICT, Digital Technology, Digital library.

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1. Introduction

Since its inception, the Internet has proven to be the most useful tool for this goal, and now, thanks to its accessibility, manuscripts can be shared with the world without jeopardising their security. Rare and valuable, manuscripts are an integral part of human

learning. Information specialists at libraries must be up-to-date on emerging technologies and adept at meeting patrons' information needs promptly and efficiently. For the sake of posterity, we need a solution to the problem of digital preservation, often known as the archiving of manuscripts for preservation and access. Today, most libraries' collections consist almost entirely of digital materials. There is an extreme need for the availability and utility of digital information.

The mission of the Library of Congress is to collect, distribute, and preserve the nation's written history. It's also one of the country's first centres for preserving and caring for bibliographic records from a wide range of disciplines. The library has begun digitising its manuscript collection in response to the widespread use of information technology in this sector. When we thought traditional reading materials were becoming extinct, advances in information technology opened us exciting new avenues for their preservation. The Internet is now the preferred channel for this, and with its help, manuscripts may be published without jeopardising their security.

Forms of Manuscripts : A manuscript is a written work of at least 75 years' age that has important scientific, historical, or artistic significance. Manuscripts may be written on paper, bark, fabric, metal, palm leaf, or any other material. Books and lithographs are not considered manuscripts. There are hundreds of distinct scripts and languages used in manuscripts. Numerous scripts are used to record the same language. For instance, Sanskrit may be written in a wide variety of characters, including Oriya, Grantha, Devanagari, and many more. Contrast this with the direct information provided by historical sources such as epigraphs on rocks, firmans, and tax records. The substance of manuscripts is knowledge. The Indian cultural heritage includes a wealth of manuscripts. These are the primary stores of our forebears' achievements in many disciplines, including but not limited to the arts, sciences, humanities, and medicine. They are the backbone of efforts to piece together India's history. The written word, in the form of books and other manuscripts, contains invaluable information about our society and its past. It's useful for studying and teaching about Indian heritage and culture. Research materials in the form of manuscripts may be discovered in the archives of numerous historical libraries, particularly those connected to Indological Studies departments in different parts of the globe. These establishments are modelled after their Oriental counterparts, down to the Oriental libraries that stock them. Rare and original sources of information, culture, and the history of human civilization make manuscripts the most precious documents. Professional librarians continue to play a crucial role in modern libraries, helping them provide enhanced services to their patrons and so increasing the quality and quantity of research conducted. Libraries and information workers have had to adapt to the changing ways of working as a result of technological advancements. Reference services are now accessed, preserved, and provided to patrons through electronic means by trained library staff. The worldwide recognition of the change from printed to digital media has been widespread. The library's digital media forms include digital texts, still photos, audio, video, and other materials. In addition to archiving information, digital libraries also facilitate its classification, search, and retrieval. A digital library is a repository for digital materials that may be accessed both on-site and remotely via the use of various communication

technologies. The current situation calls for the establishment of digital libraries and institutional repositories (IR). Library patrons need the historical records kept for scholarly investigation. The advancement of technology has had a positive impact on academic libraries and their patrons.

The Idea of Digitization: To digitise anything is to collect data, transform it into a computer-readable format, store it in a database, and make it accessible on demand. Specialised scanners are used to digitise handwritten documents, and the resulting compressed digital files are then filed away for future use. Information digitization refers to the process of transforming analogue content (such as text, drawings, etc.) into a digital version that may be shared electronically. Public and academic libraries alike must change with the times in order to reap the benefits of this new technology. Library automation, modernisation, and networking are prioritised in the country's tenth five-year plan for the library industry. The process of digitization is viewed as one task that might help accomplish this aim. No significant effort has been made in this regard thus far, with the exception of a few scattered efforts by individual institutions, organisations, and libraries. There are three main benefits of digital libraries over traditional ones: more remote accessibility, enhanced search and browsing capabilities, and a solid groundwork for the development of novel value-added services. When the collections are particularly distinctive or uncommon, digitisation may also be used as a means of long-term storage.

- i. To encourage use of available texts.
- ii. For the purposes of archiving in a more permanent media and making a duplicate that is almost identical to the original.
- iii. The need to limit the number of times fragile or heavily worn original manuscripts are handled.
- iv. The National Manuscripts Library that the Mission plans to establish will provide access to this massive historical repository.

Goals of Digitization: Due to digitalization, not only can primary but also secondary picture data be kept indefinitely. Only the original's luminance and colour palette can be recovered from the raw data. However, all of the attributes of the methods being used distort this data. The calibrated regions with their own colours may be digitised alongside the originals to achieve a higher degree of precision. The digital copy acts as an additional layer of protection for the original, or its picture. How much and at what cost the secondary images should be saved may be determined by future developments, experience, and measurements. It must be emphasised once again, however, that the originals are irreplaceable; as such, as soon and as broadly as possible, access to them should be restricted.

2. The 4 M's of Digitization Requirements

- “1. Man • Staff • User
2. Machine • Hardware • Software
3. Material • Print • Non-Print

4. Motivation • Manual to Machine”

Over the past decade, the world has seen rapid changes due to globalisation, including increased competition as well as technological advancements. With the advent of cutting-edge computing and communication systems, information management and storage methods have undergone radical transformations.

Tools Required For Digitization Of Manuscripts: The primary resources needed for manuscript digitisation are: Contrast: Hardware Software a)Computer: The computer's processing speed is of paramount importance while creating digital images.

- i. It's the brains of the computer, or CPU. The central processing unit's main function is to take in, process, and transmit programming instructions. The efficiency with which products like Adobe Photoshop may be used relies heavily on the processing power and complexity of the central processing unit. The Pentium III 733–800 MHz is the most advanced CPU currently available.
- ii. The computer is not an island; PCI bus. Through a data superhighway known as BUS, it processes data sent and received. The average bus travels quicker than before these days.
- iii. TCP/IP: - This is a protocol used in computer networks. It's a lot quicker than the regular serial port for sending information to printers and other computers. It may increase efficiency by a factor of 1.5–2.5.
- iv. To get professional results, employ Silicon Graphics' prepress service. For dramatic impact. It may make a 3D model seem as if it were taken straight out of a picture studio.
- v. Memory (RAM): The RAM on your machine may be swiftly depleted by digital photos and digital imaging software.
- vi. Without adequate RAM, we cannot load or produce digital images of the desired size and number of colours.

The most common digitizing devices are:

Scanners Digital Cameras

Scanners Scanning images such as pictures, artwork, and slides is their primary function. They can be found in a wide range of sizes. While some can create exceptionally clear images for precise positioning, others struggle to even meet the minimum quality bar. Flat bed scanners, slide scanners, rotary drum scanners, quick document scanners, etc. are just few of the various kinds of scanners available.

A Digital Camera With the push of a button, a digital camera converts the image to digital data, which is then stored on a tiny hard drive or battery-powered memory chips. After that, the pictures are sent to a computer using a SCSI or serial port cable or by using the phone lines. Mechanical gadgets that emit out Output devices include printers, modems, and CD writers.

Among the many available programmes are those that serve the following purposes: To modify photos

- i. To include text and pictures in page layout software
- ii. Software for moving data from one computer to another
- iii. Computer software that translate data across format types; converting graphic files
- iv. Software for compressing files Adobe Photoshop, Paint Studio Pro, FrontPage, Imaging Professional The software, etc. are all good options.

Beneficial Effects of Digitization:

- a. Remote Access Digitization makes its collections available online and accessible from any location.
- b. Several Entry Points Multiple users can simultaneously access digital documents, which is a major benefit of going digital. One person at a time can touch a book in its physical incarnation, but many people may access the same digital copy at once thanks to digitalization.
- c. Protecting and Retaining Life-size print replicas are used for conservation purposes, originals are handled as little as possible, and reconstruction is accomplished via the use of image processing software.
- d. Propagation and Spreading Internet-based dissemination of data, expertise, and customs is a phenomena unique to the 21st century. Problems With Scanning Manuscripts Insufficient enthusiasm from the relevant authorities to embrace digital transformation. Access to Manuscripts at the Central Library, B.H.U: Lack of Knowledge of Digitization, Lack of Trained Manpower, and Lack of Funds The breadth, size, and concentration of a library's manuscript collection all work to the benefit of its users. They are the foundation upon which historians build their accounts. They allow historians to piece together fragments of the past, interpret the national character, and clarify the facts surrounding events and figures buried in mystery and surrounded by dispute. We place great value on manuscripts as an important part of our cultural heritage.

Libraries and librarians now use digital resources as part of their daily routine [Fabunmi, Paris, and Febunni, 2006]. In response to the increasing diversity of users' information demands, it promotes the growth of library activities, standardisation, communication facilities, and housekeeping operations [Anuradha P. 2017]. A digital library is a newer sort of library that stores and provides easy access to information. It's deemed virtual since the collections are kept digitally and may be accessed from any location using a computer or mobile device. The terms "virtual library," "electronic library," "institutional repository," "library without walls," "digital library," and so on are all synonyms for the same thing: a library that exists entirely online. The term "Digital Library" is widely used and approved to refer to these collections. It adds extra ambiguity to the notion of a digital library. In 1999, the National Science Foundation (NSF) of the United States of America provided

one of the better definitions of digital libraries, which was emphasised by Seadle and Greifeneder (2007). To "keep resources in electronic format and efficiently handle big collection of such items" is what the National Science Foundation means by "digital library." A "World Wide Web" digital library is what is meant by Cleveland (1998). The vast quantities of searchable materials obtained by the Web were used in support of his concept. Layman (2017) mandated that libraries provide digital resources, cyberspace, and IT equal weight in the evolution of the library. He argued that digital libraries play a vital role in bringing about truly global, information-driven growth. The following are some of the primary aims of a digital library.

Objectives of the Digital Library: Library services, including identification, processing, acquisition, retrieval, and distribution, have been revolutionised by the rise of information technology. Users and experts alike have developed a practical understanding of the benefits of digital technology. The following are some of the overarching goals of a digital library:

- i. Keeping data safe and secure
- ii. Getting data out of storage
- iii. Library use of electronic resources
- iv. The activities of users in relation to digital content
- v. Library and information technology use
- vi. The University Library's Digital Environment
- vii. Interactions between librarians and library patrons.

Future of academic libraries and academic librarianship Academic libraries in digital age: Students, researchers, and teachers are using the library's resources more regularly than ever before. The options presented by digital library services have been invaluable in meeting the needs of the students, faculty, and staff who are the lifeblood of every successful educational institution. As knowledge banks, libraries play a crucial role in every schooling system (Mahajan, 2005). Since most high-quality research is being conducted in universities, academic libraries have an obligation to keep their collections and services current and cutting edge. Academic libraries play an increasingly important part in the dissemination of knowledge in the digital era. These days, libraries are more about providing a range of services than they are about housing collections. Today's libraries use OPAC (open public access catalogue) technologies to make their collections easily accessible. The primary goal of academic libraries is to distribute information in order to provide the highest quality services to its patrons. Libraries are constantly improving their services in order to meet the needs of their patrons by making high-quality material available in a variety of forms [Pandey & Misra, 2014]. In order to raise their institution's academic standing, academic libraries have been working to improve the quality of library resources, services, instruction, and research. When it comes to meeting the information demands of its patrons, libraries excel [Brindley 2009] due to their efficacy, efficiency, accessibility of resources, observation of use of library system, and qualitative analysis of usage to gauge patron satisfaction.

- a. Efficiency: This section is mostly for gathering hosted documents. Only those papers that are both necessary and valuable to the users may be digitised and added to the online archive.
- b. Effectiveness: It places emphasis on indexing the material, which aids in the search process.
- c. Digital library accessibility via Intranet and Internet. The digital library's access method (username/password) has to be determined. Access for authorised users should not be restricted in any way.
- d. Accessibility: The digital library's interface has to be simple and straightforward for the average user. Before making a digital library, quality indicators like the software's and information resources' can be evaluated.
- e. Cost-effectiveness and user-satisfaction are key to a successful digital library project.

Library Professionals In The Digital Age: Librarians and other library staff should be well-versed in a variety of technologies so that they may better serve patrons. Professional librarians now have a duty to encourage patrons to become information literate because of the growing prevalence of digital resources in libraries [Kulkarni 2014]. If the fundamental principle of quality management is to be successfully applied to libraries and information services departments, traditional librarians who refuse to adapt to new technology will have to provide an explanation for why they are still needed. Information and library systems can only thrive with strong performance, accountability, and management. Librarians may instruct and assist patrons in the use of electronic resources, including the library's online catalogue (OPAC) for document searches, information retrieval techniques, e-resources, e-books, and more. Professional librarians in the digital era face several obstacles as they attempt to reimagine their function and the delivery of information services. Professional librarians have a critical role to play in meeting the evolving information demands of their communities in the digital era. In the past, experts have often used elaborate systems of classification and organisation to locate desired data on their clients' behalf [Bhattacharya P. 2013]. Second, librarians and other information specialists have really been there to advise, interpret, and mediate between users and the information they need.

The new information cycle, which includes information generation, reorganisation, and representation, as well as its distribution and usage, should be embraced in its whole by professionals. Therefore, their function must be rethought, and information services must be reimagined to better meet the demands of modern users. Librarians must brace themselves for the demands and difficulties posed by library patrons. Karmakar (2018) explains that in order to drastically improve on key current criteria of librarian and professional performance, fundamental rethinking and radical reform of library procedures are required. Librarians now have a number of digital information management options, as outlined by Kaur (2015). These include the creation, distribution, preservation, and curation of knowledge. Current and future generations of users will need digital tools and specialised knowledge to effectively handle

the digital information. As a result, a trained workforce is necessary to maintain the digital library and provide its services.

Opportunities And Challenges For Academic Libraries In Digital Age: Tools like e-mail, newsgroups, mailing lists, online forms, bulletin boards, SMS, chat, video conferencing, and virtual worlds are all part of the digital environment that may be used to put a digital library into action. The integration of hardware and software, including but not limited to Workstations, Networks, Power Backups, Storage Devices, Dspace, Greenstone, Fedora, E-Print, etc., is necessary for the deployment of digital libraries, which allow users to access huge quantities of collections in digital form. As the infrastructure of a digital library is increasingly based on a single piece of software, the importance and criticality of this technical aspect cannot be overstated. The 5S framework—Steams, Structures, Spaces, Scenarios, and Societies—was proposed by Conclaves and others (2007) as the foundation for an effective digital library. As a result, it is crucial to frequently assess the effectiveness of a digital library from the perspective of its users. Gella Okojie and Olaniyi (2018) argued that digital libraries might benefit from semantic web and social networking technology. They argue that the bookmarking feature in digital libraries has the potential to significantly alter the information retrieval landscape. Preparation: The Digital Library requires a sizable budget for the scanning of their current holdings and the purchase of new digital materials [Bhattacharya P. 2013]. When creating a digital library, there are numerous obstacles that must be overcome.

What are the goals of creating digital libraries, what software will be best suited to those goals, what resources need to be digitised, what are the technical aspects of software to provide seamless access of digital library, and how can one secure the content uploaded in digital library? These are all questions that library professionals need to answer. Professional librarians need to know about intellectual property rights (IPR) concerns related to digitising information and have a firm grasp on how user-friendly digital libraries may be.

The great majority of publishing firms now provide free access to at least some of their works online, with the option for readers to pay for full access. The user now need the librarian's help in finding the required data. Due to budget constraints, libraries often cannot provide access to online, fee-based repositories of knowledge. Libraries, particularly in developing countries, are often dissuaded from offering such access due to the high cost of doing so. Due to budgetary constraints, users may be prevented from gaining access to the essential academic communication. So that they can provide their patrons up-to-date information, libraries will need to solve this issue by coordinating or creating a policy to subscribe to resources at any time. When discussing the challenges of creating digital libraries, Sharma and Vishwanathan (2001) highlighted issues with data preservation and format conversion. Avoiding unauthorised access and keeping up with technological advances, moving from analogue to digital formats, maintaining digitization tools, working with information published in languages other than English, and many other challenges lie ahead. He went on to explain how the lack of standardised practises hinders digital preservation efforts in numerous ways. Incorporating codes and standards early on in the process of creating a digital library is, therefore, essential. Shiri (2003) discussed many of the

main challenges that must be overcome while creating a digital library. One of them was locating resources that have yet to be digitised. Important areas where standardisation and protocol were recognised include digital library architecture, collection administration, metadata, connectivity, indexing, etc. Distinctive quality: Briefly stated. The concept of a sharing digital library, in which one user of a digital library may ask another user of a different digital library for permission to utilise the material that the requesting user is now viewing, is the subject of a patent application submitted by & Khillalia (2019) on behalf of Amazon Technologies. All of a user's reading activity, including highlights, notes, bookmarks for future reference comments, and more, is displayed here in real time.

Adamou and Ntoka (2017) looked at how happy Panteion University library and TIE of Athens patrons were with the services they received in Greece. Users of both libraries express greater satisfaction with the digital collections accessible to them. However, they noted that patrons were unhappy with the library's inability to help them and the quality of the technology they used to access digital materials. Interest in digital libraries grew across the world in the 1990s, as Saracvic (2000) pointed out.

According to Jain and Babbar (2006), efforts to create digital libraries in India remain in their infancy. Trivedi (2010) was the second author to draw attention to the preliminary nature of India's digital library projects.

3. Conclusion

The digital preservation of manuscripts and rare documents is of the utmost importance since they hold knowledge about our culture and civilisation that is relevant to both the present and the future. The majority of the priceless books and manuscripts stored in the world's libraries are not in excellent condition and have needed specialised preservation methods. To be effective, digital preservation requires not just dedicated resources, but also the availability of skilled personnel. Libraries are particularly affected and influenced by the pervasive presence of technology in today's academic institutions. Users may save time and have easier access to the knowledge they need thanks to digital libraries. As a result, it's crucial to put serious thought into the construction of any digital library. We now see digital libraries as a subset of physical libraries, but in the future, physical libraries will be viewed as subsets of digital libraries. Digital libraries, like their traditional counterparts, place a premium on meeting the needs of its users. There was a period when library patrons would go to the institution, but that time has passed. One of the primary goals of a digital library in any educational institution is the unrestricted sharing of knowledge. Librarians have a responsibility to inform patrons about digital resources and how to access them. When it comes to digital libraries, India has a lot going on.

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