

Library Beyond Walls

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Abstract: The present paper briefly discusses the concept of 'Library Beyond Walls' and the role of the librarian in such circumstances.

Key Words: Library Without Walls, Future Libraries

The development of electronic computer and communication technologies has radically impacted library practice. Until recently, library holdings such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, audio- and video-cassettes, and compact disks have traditionally been used by one person at a time. The challenges and opportunities brought about by technological developments made all these resources available in digital forms, these holdings can be accessible to multiple subscribers, in multiple places, at multiple times resulting in declined the visit of readers to the libraries. It is indispensable to accept the new realities of the 21st century library. The increasing availability of online access to information means that information resources are no longer confined within library walls[1].

Many of these developments have called into question what the role of physical libraries is (or should be) in the twenty-first century. For example, the concept of the “library without walls” has been mooted whereby patrons can utilize the services of the library irrespective of physical location [1].

Library Beyond Walls does not mean here to provide in-home delivery of library books and other reading material. as a Outreach librarianship – a concept which had a history of more than 40 years - has been diversely used in libraries all over the world. Outreach Librarianship is aimed to reach out to traditional and non-traditional library users, extending beyond the walls of a physical library to serve underprivileged communities. [2]

I think we need to ask ourselves some questions, namely:

What is the value of the library as a place?

What is the mission of the library as a place?

What do users want from libraries?

What do we, as librarians, want?

How do we translate values, missions, and desires into a place?[3]

The ability to provide library services is more important than the location or physical value of the library. The libraries now need to focus on assisting readers in making use of electronic resources made available by the library and to enhance the use of electronic resources. To teach information literacy skills to the readers. To increase understanding and confidence in their ability to locate and use information appropriately, To facilitate the access and use of electronic resources. These programs will increase the library's visibility, enrich its image among the readers. As the brick-and-mortar walls of the library continue to evaporate, and the information within is parceled out electronically with greater and greater frequency,[4]

What will twenty-first century libraries be like? I believe it is the responsibility of librarians to guide the design of the library; we must advocate strongly the role for the library beyond the “storage facility,” and even the “access facility,” and focus attention on the many other place-centered activities and services that the library can support. [5]

Finally libraries are cultural institutions and, as such, reflect the values not only of our profession, but of our institutions and our society. The library professionals need to work hard to design libraries to fulfill the demands of 21st century readers.

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