NILIS

National Institute of Library and Information Sciences University of Colombo

Annual International Research Symposium

2022

Innovative Approaches to Mitigating Challenges in LIS Education

29th December 2022

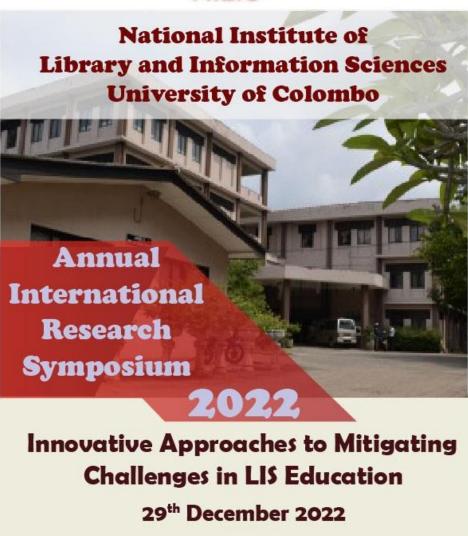Department of Library & Information Science University of Kelaniya

Sri Lanka Library Association

Indian Assocation of Teachers of Library and Information Science

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Proceedings of the
Annual International Research Symposium
2022

(virtual event)

Innovative Approaches to Mitigating Challenges in LIS Education

National Institute of Library and Information Sciences

University of Colombo

2022

Vision of NILIS

To be the center of excellence in Library & Information Science education

Mission of NILIS

To be the leading Institute for Library & Information Science (LIS) education, training, and research in the national and South Asian context.

Proceedings of the Annual International Research Symposium 2022

(virtual event)

Innovative Approaches to Mitigating Challenges in LIS Education

Organised
in collaboration with

Department of Library & Information Science	Sri Lanka Library Association	Indian Association of the Teachers of LIS

National Institute of Library and Information Sciences

University of Colombo

2022

Innovative Approaches to Mitigating Challenges in LIS Education

Proceedings of the NILIS Research Symposium 2022 (virtual event) held on 29th December 2022 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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The authors are solely responsible for the content of this publication and the ideas expressed in their respective abstracts are not necessarily those of the editors, National Institute of Library and Information Sciences (NILIS), or the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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MESSAGE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Senior Professor H.D. Karunaratne
University of Colombo

It is my privilege and pleasure to write this message on the flagship event of the annual calendar of NILIS – the International Research symposium. This year's theme *Innovative Approaches to Mitigating Challenges in LIS Education*, is highly momentous for the education and training of the librarians in Sri Lanka. The country faced a multitude of challenges during the past couple of years and the education sector was of no exception. Especially in the rapid shift of the educational paradigm from the conventional face to face mode to online mode, as a result of social distancing, the services of the libraries and the librarians became invaluable for teachers as well as for learning partners to access the teaching/learning resources. I am sure that on one hand the librarians encountered many challenges in serving the users in such a novel educational paradigm, and on the other hand the Library and Information Science teaching organizations encountered challenges providing education and training in the rapidly accepted online mode. Therefore, I believe the symposium theme is very timely, and I am positive that Sri Lanka will benefit from the two keynote speeches of Prof. Krymskaya and Prof. Tang. I am also aware that an invited paper session will be held with the contributions of six distinguished scholars of LIS education from India, Bangladesh, Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand, which I have no doubt would pave the way for better involvement and collaborations by NILIS in the Library and Information Science education.

I am also happy to learn that several key organizations like the Department of Library & Information Science, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka Library Association and the Indian Association of the Teachers of Library and Information Science are collaborating with NILIS in this endeavor.

I take this opportunity to thank the Board of Management of NILIS led by Senior Prof. Premakumara De Silva, the two keynote speakers, the invited speakers, and all the paper presenters including the graduate students of NILIS, all members of the organizing committee, the Director, and staff of NILIS, and also the Acting Librarian and the academic staff of the University of Colombo library who have extended their cooperation to make this event a success.

My very best wishes go out to all of you for a fruitful deliberation on this timely theme.

MESSAGE OF THE CHAIRMAN BOARD OF MANAGEMENT, NILIS

Senior Professor Premakumara De Silva
UGC Member and Chairman Board of Management,
NILIS

It is my honour and pleasure to pen this message on the leading event of the annual calendar of NILIS – the International Research symposium. ***Innovative Approaches to Mitigating Challenges in LIS Education,*** selected as this year's theme is extremely noteworthy for the education and training of the librarians in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan education system faced an array of challenges during the past two to three years, which did not avoid the higher education sector. As a result of the social distancing due to COVID-19 higher education system was moved to online paradigm almost overnight. Later the transport issues compelled the educational institutes to continue the delivery of their programs through online mode. The key method of delivering the information resources needed by the teachers and students was also through the online mode as the libraries were physically inaccessible.

The library's role as the provider of authentic information and the supporting services was highlighted during this period and this is not true only in the education sector, but also in the general community served by the public and other types of libraries. The librarians faced many challenges; technological, legal, economic, and social, to serve their user communities in the challenged environment. Similarly, the library and information science education not only in Sri Lanka but also in the global context faced numerous challenges. This symposium is the first of its kind held in Sri Lanka to discuss the challenges faced by the Library educators and what remedial measures were adopted or planned to be adopted. I am happy that there are many international papers discussing the problems and prospects. I am thankful to the two keynote speakers and all the international speakers, as well as the collaborating organisations: Department of Library & Information Science, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka Library Association and the Indian Association of the Teachers of Library and Information Science.

I take this opportunity to thank the Vice Chancellor, Members of the Board of Management, and the Academic Committee of NILIS, the keynote speakers, the invited speakers, and all paper presenters including the graduate students of NILIS, all members of the organizing committee, Dr. Pradeepa Wijetunge, the Director/NILIS and all the staff of NILIS, and all who made a positive contribution to make this flagship event of NILIS a success. My very best wishes go out to all of you for a fruitful deliberation on this timely theme.

MESSAGE OF THE DIRECTOR AND SYMPOSIUM CHAIR

Dr. Pradeepa Wijetunge
National Institute of Library and Information Sciences (NILIS)
University of Colombo

The Annual Research Symposium of NILIS, is a significant component of the series of annual symposia of the University of Colombo. This year, we selected the theme *Innovative Approaches to Mitigating Challenges in LIS Education* in conformity with the main theme of the university symposium, "Digital Transformation and Innovative Approaches to Mitigate Challenges in the Higher Education Sector". This symposium is unique because the first time a full research symposium is dedicated for Library and Information Science education in Sri Lanka. We strongly believe that the opportunity will generate a timely discourse on the contemporary issues and concerns of the LIS education in Sri Lanka. It is a pleasure to have the Department of Library and Information Sciences, University of Kelaniya and Sri Lanka Library Association, the other two leading LIS education providers of the country as collaborators. In keeping with the tradition, some abstracts of the students and staff of NILIS and University of Colombo are presented here, while the complete volume of the NILIS symposium will include all national and international abstracts presented.

I am thankful to the Chief Guest, Vice-Chancellor of University of Colombo, Senior Prof. H.D. Karunaratne and the Guest of Honour, Senior Prof. Premakumara De Silva, the Chairman of the Board of Management of NILIS, for gracing this occasion and their immensely valuable guidance, motivation and inspirations, and to the keynote speaker, Prof. Rong Tong of School of Library and Information Science, Simmons University, USA for the enlightening address, and to Prof. K.P. Hewagamage, Chairperson of the ARS 2022 for his constructive guidance, to all the presenters, to the Director and staff of UCSC, to the collaborating organizations, to Acting Librarian Mrs. S. Somaratne and all the academic staff of the university library for their extensive support, and to all the academic staff of NILIS, visiting staff, the reviewers, and the other staff lead by the SAR Mr. J. Wipularathne and the Acting SAB Mr. Charitha Bandara for their continuous dedication and commitment to NILIS.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER I

Albina Krymskaya
Associate Professor and Deputy Dean
Department of Library and Information Science
St. Petersburg State University of Culture, Russia
Chair of the IFLA Section on Education and Training

Albina Krymskaya is Associate Professor and Deputy Dean of the Library and Information Science Department of the St. Petersburg State University of Culture (Russia). She obtained a PhD in Library and Information Science and started teaching LIS in 2011 and since 2014 she has contributed on dual roles as an Associate Professor and the Deputy Dean in the LIS Department.

She teaches three courses: "Analysis of professional information", "Information resources in social and humanitarian sciences", and "Using information analysis to avert crises in book publishing, the arts, and business". Her publications focus on knowledge management, international cooperation in the library field, information resources, academic and cultural relations, history of information science, internationalization of library education.

She is the chair of the IFLA Section on Education and Training (SET) and has initiated such projects as "LIS Student Voices: Global Peer-to-Peer Dialogue" for the Building Strong Library and Information Science Education (BSLISE) Working Group and "A Webinar Series for LIS students" for the IFLA Division C Units. Both are aligned with IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 and aimed at involving LIS students into the LIS international dialogue and IFLA community. She is a member of the Section for International Cooperation of the Russian Library Association (2021-2024). She is a co-founder of the International Collaboratory on Knowledge Management Research.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER II

Prof. Rong Tang
Professor and Co-Director PhD Program
School of Library and Information Science
Simmons University, 300 The Fenway
Boston, USA

Rong Tang received her doctorate from the School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and currently a Professor at the School of Library and Information Science, Simmons University. Her research interests center on usability and UX research, mobile news information behavior, research data management services, open government data, and paradigm shift in the field of information.

Published in top-ranked journals, Rong Tang teaches primarily in areas of evaluation of information services, digital information services and providers, research methods and design, leadership and collaboration, leadership during crisis, theories of information science, and usability and user experience research. Her research areas span from research data management, open government data, usability and UX research, mobile news information seeking behavior, to paradigm shifts in the field of information science.

Since 2018, Rong Tang has been a Co-Leader for the Research Data Management Librarian Academy (RDMLA), which currently has more than 7,000 learners from countries around the world and also the founding Director of Simmons Usability Lab. She serves as the Director of the PhD Program at SLIS. Rong has received multiple grants including a WGBH subcontracted grant from NEH (National Endowment of the Humanities) in 2017 and an IMLS grant in 2019 on developing interprofessional informationist (IPI) post-master's certificate program. Within Simmons SLIS, Rong is the founding and current Co-Director of the UX and Emerging Technologies Lab. She is a faculty co-advisor for Simmons ASIS&T Student Chapter. Professionally, Rong Tang has served as the Director for External Relations for Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) from 2017 to 2020 and serves as the President of ALISE for 2022-2023.

IFLA / SET initiatives for Library and Information Science students

Prof. Albina Krymskaya

This presentation discusses the opportunities to Library and Information Science (LIS) students offered internationally and locally. Among them there are student conferences (or student sessions in conference programs), summer schools, camps; networking programs; student membership in library associations; volunteering at conferences; virtual events. Opportunities offered by international and local associations and other institutions (library schools, libraries etc.) are not always available to LIS students due to financial circumstances or academic requirements for LIS students serving as potential speakers. During the Covid-19 pandemic LIS students remained outside of the events – while there were a lot of different Zoom sessions on a various range of matters, there were none that would be relevant for LIS students. Realizing this, in fall of 2020, IFLA Section on Education and Training (SET) proposed a few projects in order to help LIS students enter the professional community. One of these projects is "A Webinar Series for LIS students" aimed at involving LIS students into an international dialogue with the IFLA community about the future of LIS. It is a joint project of the IFLA Division C Units. It was launched in spring 2021. Since then, twenty-four LIS students from 15 countries shared their project or research findings; there were 11 webinars on 9 topics with 19 keynote lectures from library professionals. A Webinar Series for LIS Students' project aligns with IFLA Strategy 2019-2024. It engages students to be members of a professional library community, introducing them to professional competencies and providing them with experiences that they can apply to future participation in IFLA activities; enables them to implement research or projects relevant in their communities and share their results with professional communities worldwide; inspires them to conduct research and consider libraries' experience in timely and important LIS areas which are relevant to the LIS professional community; and connects actors involved in the library field: IFLA community, LIS schools' educators and students, libraries of various types; library associations at various levels, etc. This presentation concludes that (1) such virtual (and free) events benefit LIS students with learning soft skills such as communication, networking, presentation, (2) the experience of "A Webinar Series for LIS Students" project can be spread in other countries.

Keywords: Library Schools, Libraries, Professional Communities, Library Association

Competency-based education (CBE) for LIS in general and data services in particular: responding to emerging needs

Prof. Rong Tang

Professor Rong Tang will introduce competency-based education (CBE) and its relationship to LIS education in general and data services training in particular. CBE is an innovative educational paradigm that promotes equity and empowers learners by enabling them to advance based on what they know and can do with high flexibility and individualized pathways to learning. As such, CBE has the potential to "address accessibility, affordability, transparency, and improved learning outcomes, all relevant to graduates' employability and strengthening of the workforce" (Book, 2014, pp. 2-3). Within the LIS professional field, multiple associations have developed competency frameworks, including, but not limited to, the American Library Association (ALA) "Core Competencies of Librarianship," the Canadian Association of Research Libraries "Core Competencies for 21st Century Librarian," the Australian Library and Information Association's "Foundation Knowledge for Entry-level Library and Information Professionals," and more. There are a number of scholarly publications reporting CBE-based LIS educational practices (e.g., Choi, 2020; Kim, 2015). The changing landscape of open data and open science presents LIS educators with the opportunity and challenge of educating and training information professionals to embrace their new roles or expanded responsibilities. Within the United States, the National Institute of Health has a "Data Management and Sharing Policy," effective January 25, 2023. The NIH DMSP requires that all NIH-funded research describe how data will be shared and managed in a usable format. In response to the demand for timely support and consultation, LIS professionals need to be trained and retooled to effectively deliver research data services. In this context, Dr. Tang will present data competency frameworks established by LIS professional associations and published research on the topic of data skills. She will then give examples of two CBE-based data services training programs: RDMLA (Research Data Management Librarian Academy) and DSCPE (Data Services Continuing Professional Education). By examining educational models for data skill development and retooling the workforce, Dr. Tang will present strategies for bridging the gap and preparing LIS professionals to provide successful data services.

Book, P. A. (2014). *All Hands on Deck: Ten Lessons from Early Adopters of Competency-Based Education*. Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

Choi, Y. (2020). Developing a specialization for LAM convergence using a competency-based approach in an LIS graduate curriculum. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, *61*(2), 212-228.

Kim, J. (2015). Competency-based curriculum: An effective approach to digital curation education. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, 56*(4), 283–297.

Keywords: Innovative Educational Paradigm, Continuing Professional Education, Data Management

INVITED PAPER SESSION

Reflections on experiences and perspectives of LIS Education (LISE) in Africa during Covid -19

Prof. Dennis N. Ocholla

Department of Information Studies, University of Zululand, South Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic has been experienced from multiple perspectives that includes research, teaching, and learning. These experiences have come with challenges as well as opportunities. Library and Information Science Education (LISE) has been part of this predicament. In my personal experience and recent published research in Library Management Vol 42 4/5 2021 on COVID-19 and LISE to reflect on the experiences and perspectives of LISE during the pandemic. There are more similarities on how COVID-19 pandemic has been experienced by LISE in the sampled LIS Schools in Africa and elsewhere. Essentially, Institutional management factors lead by administration and decision-making require more attention. Covid-19 disruptions and uncertainty are going to be with us for quite a long time. Fundamentally, access and use of ICT, innovation, transformation, self-learning, blended learning, and flexibility emerge strongly among the experiences. The role of technological factors in e-teaching and learning is growing and likely to escalate. While perceptions share close views with experiences, infodemic, link between Covid-19 and 4IR, importance of CPD, time effectiveness and safety of staff, revival of reading culture and digitization of the library are key issues. Most challenges facing LISE during the pandemic from PEST analysis are political (e.g., administrative), economic, social, and technological factors in that order. The closeness of opportunities and technological factors was strongly visible which we believe defines the "new normal" for LISE in the future. Most narratives focused on the middle level (during or reaction) of the disaster life cycle, which is understandable as the complete cycle of the disaster is yet to come. This makes longitudinal studies of Covid-19 as a disaster highly advisable and desirable. Experiences of COVID -19 pandemic are closer to 4IR influences in terms of rapid implementation of 'slow-motion' decision processes in higher education, stakeholders required minimal persuasion to support rapid change which is now playing to our advantage. This presentation has implications to research, teaching and learning for LISE as the study provides practical reflection on the effects of COVID-19 on the sector and HEIs that can inform discourse and responses to the pandemic. Please read "Echoes down the corridor. Experiences and perspectives of library and information science education (LISE) during COVID-19 through an African lens' for more details.

Keywords: LISE, LIS Education, COVID-19, HEIs, African Universities

Beyond formal LIS education: resource-based student-centered learning is the heart of the matter

Prof. Jagtar Singh

Department of Library and Information Science and University Library, Guru Kashi University, India and

Director, Collaboration and Partnerships, IATLIS.

There is a paradigm shift from education to learning, and learning is a lifelong process. Formal education is just a base to facilitate one's personality development. The whole process of being a competent person depends upon one's attitude toward lifelong learning. UNESCO, in a report titled Learning: the treasure within (Delors 1996) talks about four pillars of learning. These are: Learning to know; learning to do; learning to be and learning to live together. Similarly, Bruce (1997), in her book, talks about seven faces on information literacy to facilitate lifelong learning. These seven faces are: Information Technology Dimension; Information Sources Dimension; Information Process Dimension; Information Control Dimension; Knowledge Construction Dimension; Knowledge Extension Dimension, and the Wisdom Construction Dimension. All these dimensions are perceived as preconditions for becoming a competent person through lifelong learning. If one reads between the lines of the above research by Christine Bruce, one finds a complete package for facilitating the resource-based student-centered learning, which indeed is the heart of the matter for the knowledge society. This paper focuses on the state of the LIS education in India with cross references to other south Asian countries. Special focus is on the issues related to the faculty, students, courses, resources, infrastructure, and superstructure. It has been found that in many of the private institutions and the open and distance learning programs, at stake is quality of LIS education. Research is the weakest link. Also, there is gap between the theory and practice, as well as the traditional pedagogy is dominating. Whereas there is an immediate need to use ICT apps to negotiate the traditional constraints of space and time. Reference is also made to India's New Education Policy 2020, and the UNESCO MIL Curriculum for Educators and Learners (2021) titled Media and Information Literate Citizens Think Critically, Click Wisely. The paper underlines the need for flip classrooms, and project-based and resource-based student-centered learning to promote higher order skills among learners and make our LIS programs pregnant with employable skills.

Delors, Jacques (1996*). Learning: the treasure within: report to UNESCO of the international commission on education for the twenty-first century*. UNESCO.https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/109590engo.pdf

Bruce, Christine (1997). *Seven Faces of Information Literacy*. Auslib Press.

UNESCO (2021*). Media and information literate citizens: think critically, click wisely*. UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377068

Keywords: LIS Education, Lifelong Learning, Information Literacy, NEP 2020, Resource-based Learning, Student-centered Learning

Library education in Bangladesh: present scenario

Prof. M. Nasiruddin Munshi

Department of Information Science and Library Management and Library,

University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

The history of library education in Bangladesh goes back to seven decades only which has been started in 1952 with 3-month training program for the library staff at Dhaka University Library. At present, four public and private universities have been providing honors and Masters Degree on Information Science and Library Management and around fifty Institutes have also providing Post-Graduate Diploma on Library and Information Science including a number of private universities and three public universities around the country. About three thousand LIS professionals are being produced from these educational institutions every year. This number is sufficient according to the needs and demand of the country. But the quality of most of the professionals is not up to the mark. So that we need to work hard for the overall development of Library and Information Science Education introducing some technological and practical programs in LIS education in Bangladesh. This paper attempts to explore the present scenario of Library and Information Science Education System in Bangladesh. The study has also found the existing status of LIS education, problems found which create barriers for quality education, proper training, and professional development. This paper is based on primary data collected through short questionnaire, interview and observations. A pre-structured questionnaire was prepared with both open and close ended questions to collect data and information on different variables of this article. The author has gone through number of literatures on the related topic, which has been used as secondary sources of information. The objectives of the study are as to provide an overview about the LIS education system in Bangladesh; to evaluate the present scenario of education and training facilities offered by the different institutions; to assess the employment and career development opportunities for LIS professionals; to find out the problems in existing LIS education system and to put forward some suggestions. In the conclusion, some important recommendations have been given for the development of Library and Information Science education, training, and profession in Bangladesh.

Keywords: LIS Education, LIS Training, Present Scenario, Career Development, Bangladesh

The status and future trends of Library and Information Science education in Taiwan

Prof. Chao-Chen Chen

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In this paper, we will introduce the development trend of library information science education in Taiwan. Currently there are seven library information schools, one less than five years ago. There are three bachelor's degree programs, seven master's degree programs, and three doctoral degree programs. In education, the transformation of library and information sciences has been quite rapid and cross-disciplinary collaboration and development is a very important trend in Taiwan. For example, the Department of Library and Information Science at National Taiwan University is actively collaborating with the Department of Computer Science and Information Engineering, the Department of Information Management, the Department of Business Administration, and the Department of Bio-Industrial Communication and Development to offer cross-disciplinary programs. The Graduate Institute of Library and Information Studies of National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) combined with the Program of Learning Sciences and the Graduate Institute of Information and Computer Education to establish the School of Learning Informatics. The Department of Library and Information Science of Shih Hsin University has been renamed the Department of Information Communication from 2001, focusing on the training of professionals in digital convergence, digital content and communication. In terms of faculty, due to the cross-disciplinary development of library and information science, the faculty hired by each school is quite diverse, with more people having a background in library and information, followed by those with a background in information engineering. Despite the rapid changes in digital technology, the field of library and information science remains unique, with information processing and human services remaining at the core of the field. Due to the emphasis on the development of digital technology skills, students in the field of library and information technology can work in many industries and have a good employment rate.

Keyword: Cross-disciplinary Collaboration**,** Digital Convergence, Digital Technology Skills, Taiwan

Transforming Information education at Khon Kaen University, Thailand, under the new growth engine project of the national higher education policy

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The presently emerged disruptive technology has brought great impact on the management of higher education in Thailand. It is caused by several environmental changes both internally and externally: (1) The total change of employment in the government and the private sectors(2) The attitudes towards higher education have changed because recruitment of people in the industrial sector no longer emphasizes degree certificates, but the working competency, and (3) Population aged 18-22years or the Gen z have unlimited channels to acquire knowledge and develop themselves in the digital world, and have more chances to build incomes from online businesses or from independent jobs without having to rely on mainline higher education programs. The impact from disruptive technology results in a lot of transformation of education and instructional operations in Thai universities. At the national level, the MHESRI has come up with the New Growth Engine (NGE) Project to respond to the needs for manpower in the industrial sector, which has been put into action through transformation of instructional and curricular methods and from collaboration between the higher-education institutions and the industrial sector, government, the civil society or community towards the university education for the future. Many universities have turned to rely on education transformation strategies to expedite the changes. The Department of Information Science at Khon Kaen University (KKU) is one among many departments that have been transforming the information studies programs in response to the NGE Project. At present, all study programs; bachelor, Master's, and doctoral degree programs, have been totally revised and designed by using the smart education concept which included: demand-driven, competency-based learning outcomes, modular-based contents, active learning, and work integrated learning. The details of this transformation of information education programs at KKU will be presented at the symposium.

Keywords: Information Education, Smart Education, Education Transformation, Thailand

Education of Library and Information Science in Japan: case study at University of Tsukuba

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Japanese universities have faced difficulties caused by a super-ageing society in the 21st century. One of the critical problems that affected Japanese universities is the rapid decrease in the 18-year-old population, which forced Japanese universities to create new programs to attract students' attention locally and globally. Due to Japanese social changes, the University of Tsukuba, in 2020, proceeded with university-wide graduate schools' re-organization. The iSchool at the University of Tsukuba is the largest in Library and Information Science and provides students with the most advanced and comprehensive programs in Japan. The iSchool, created new degree programs, such as master's and doctoral programs in informatics. The degree programs in informatics incorporate broader research areas, such as arts, cultures, libraries, information, media, systems, and resources, under one umbrella to explore the synergy among them. Students can learn about knowledge and skills regarding information through an interdisciplinary approach that integrates all of them. We also intensely focus on recurrent education for librarians who already have positions in their libraries. We created certificate programs, the "Library Management Course" in 2006 and the "Library Resources Management Course" in 2021. Now, we will change the name of the "Library Resources Management Course" to the "Library, Museum, and Archives Resources Management Course" to reach more specialists in the cultural and information field in 2023. Library and Information Science is a practical science and strongly connected specialists in libraries, archives, and museums. Through our experiences, we should expand the scope of our field and simultaneously focus on specific targets, such as librarians, archivists, and curators in research and education in the context of the 21st century.

Keywords: LIS Education, Ageing Society, University of Tsukuba, Japan

Library and Information Science education in Sri Lanka: issues and concerns

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LIS education was introduced in Sri Lanka in 1961 by the Ceylon Library Association. From then onwards many programs have been commenced but the noticeable characteristic is that many of them were discontinued. In 2003 the National Institute of Library & Information Sciences started several new programs, but it was evident that the same issues which affected the previous programs were having an impact on the programs started not only by NILIS but also programs of the other LIS educational institutes. It was established that not only the history of LIS education in Sri Lanka, but also the present was dotted with issues. The objective of this study was to critically analyse the current LIS education system in Sri Lanka. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods and the study was based on primary and secondary data collected by means of questionnaires, semi structured interviews, observations, and literature reviews. Primary data were gathered from the LIS course co-ordinators, students, teachers, practicing LIS professionals and some key LIS decision makers while the secondary data were collected from the course documentation, and published material. Collected data were analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods.

The study revealed five major issues concerning the LIS education system of Sri Lanka: 1) absence of any national co-ordination of the LIS education system of Sri Lanka. 2) Severe imbalance of the current programs with respect to gender-, income-, regional- and cultural inequity. 3) Lack of students in the programs leading to a weak financial status of the LIS education providers 4) Lack of high-quality students in the programs and 5) Absence of quality assurance or accreditation procedures with respect to the LIS subject and the LIS educational institutes, other than the undergraduate program. The characteristics of the course contents, teaching, and assessment methods in the LIS education programs of Sri Lanka identified four key issues; 1) the need to develop strong curriculum development teams. 2) The absence of a core LIS curriculum. 3) Lack of relevance of the LIS education programs to the current employer needs and 4) The weaknesses in the teaching, learning and assessment methods. The nature of the LIS teaching faculty and the other infrastructural facilities recognised four significant issues; 1) majority (over 90%) of the current LIS teachers are serving only on part

time basis, 2) majority lack training in pedagogy 3) The volume of research and publications of the LIS teachers is scanty 4) Infrastructural facilities available at some LIS educational organisations are not appropriate for tertiary level education standards. COVID-19 pandemic provided opportunities as well as imposed challenges on LIS education. To overcome the identified issues, several recommendations are made.

Keywords: LIS education, History, Current Status, Issues, Sri Lanka

TECHNICAL SESSION - I

Digital divide as a major impediment for online teaching in LIS

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Teaching through online mode was much prevalent during the last 2-3 years when Covid-19 was at its peak. Things are coming back to normal, but online teaching or hybrid mode teaching option is still there. The objective of this study is to explore whether digital divide is a major impediment for online teaching in LIS. The digital divide is manifested in both its dimensions. Firstly, the affordability of smart phones to each member of the family, and secondly the lack of skills required to use features and apps of smart phones for teaching and learning. The first dimension, affordability, is essentially a manifestation of the economic divide. For students from economically disadvantaged sections of the society, affordability of smart phones for each member of the family has been a big challenge. This challenge gets even more challenging when data and mobile signals do not reach far-flung and remote rural areas where some of the economically disadvantaged students reside. The lack of skills required to teach contents of LIS among teachers and lack of skills required to learn through online mode has been another major challenge. Teachers have better adapted to using online mode teaching than some of the students who despite having smart phones are unable to take benefit of online teaching. Moreover, some subjects of LIS such as classification practice and cataloguing practice are not amenable to online teaching. Similarly, assessment during the semester and evaluation at the end of the semester has been a major issue with the digital divide. At the end, this paper summarizes that online teaching cannot replace the face-to-face mode of teaching. As an ad-hoc arrangement it can be used by giving benefit of doubt in assessment and evaluation to those affected adversely by the digital divide.

Evolution of Library and Information Science Education in Sri Lanka.

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Nearly one hundred thirty-five years ago the first-ever library school, the Columbia School of Library Economy was opened in North America on 5 January 1887. In Sri Lanka, the Ceylon Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research (CISIR) conducted a training program for six librarians in 1957, under the Colombo Plan project and D. A. Redmond, a Canadian expert conducted this two-week program (Lankage 1971). The purpose of this study is to the explore the evolution of LIS education from 1957 to 2022. The Ceylon Library Association (now Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA)) commenced the formal library education program in 1961 with the objective of training its members. Currently, there are several institutes that conduct LIS programs that can be classified as: (a). Institutions directly related to the library profession (2), (b). Institutions of Higher Education (9), and (c). Institutions conducting short-term courses (4). Fifteen institutes have conducted 59 programs during the last 65 years. Data were collected from published documents and the syllabi of eleven institutions. Findings established that, 59 LIS programs have been started and 29 (48%) continued and 30 (52%) have discontinued. It is also observed that the name of some programs has been changed to Diploma or Post Graduate level as well. The National Institute of Library and Information Science (NILIS) has introduced the highest number of courses by starting 21 courses, which is 35% in percentage. Nine programs have been started from 1961 to 1983, and all but one discontinued in different years. Seven programs have been started from 1984 to 1997 and 03 of them discontinued. SLLA, Dept. of LIS, University of Kelaniya, and the Faculty of Graduate Studies University of Colombo have started most of these programs. NILIS established affiliated to University of Colombo, started its education programs from 2002 and added 12 specific programs. By the end of 2007, there were a total of 23 programs conducted by NILIS, SLLA, Dept. of LIS, University of Kelaniya, Faculties of Graduate Studies of Universities of Jaffna and Colombo, Centre for Open & Distance Learning, University of Kelaniya, and a few other organisations (Wijetunge 2011). The findings also established that during the later part, more specific programs have been started especially by NILIS, i.e., school librarians and teacher librarianship while continuing the more general LIS programs. Most programs are conducted in Sinhala or English while there is a lack of programs in Tamil, other than the three-tier program conducted

by the SLLA. However, by the end of 2007, Sri Lanka has introduced different levels of programs from certificate to doctoral level.

Lankage, Jayasiri (1971). Library education in Ceylon. *Ceylon Library Review*, 4(1), 69 – 74.

Wijetunge, Pradeepa (2011). Fifty years of LIS education in Sri Lanka: a retrospective examination. *Sri Lanka Library Review*, 25, 1 – 14.

Keywords: LIS Education, Evolution, Sri Lanka

Current trends of Library Information Science (LIS) education provided by the Sri Lanka Library Association

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This study aims to investigate the current status of the LIS programs provided by SLLA and to explore the challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the prevailing economic and financial crisis. Data was collected from the present and past education officers of SLLA and lecturers who teach Tamil medium courses in Colombo, Batticaloa, and Jaffna Centers, by conducting an interview in December 2022. Findings depicts that SLLA conducts a Diploma in Library and Information Science (DIPLIS), and Higher Diploma, Level I & Level II. However, the recruitment of students to these professional courses of SLLA is not consistent with the requirement of the Public Service Commission. During the pandemic and the existing economic and financial crisis, SLLA motivated lecturers and students to use the e-learning system. They conducted e-teaching and online examinations. They face many challenges in conducting e-teaching and e-learning. The digital divide between rural and urban areas was identified as the major factor, hence there are issues with network failure, malfunction of network connectivity, data coverage, etc. Moreover, the lack of technical skills to teach via ZOOM, lacking devices other than smart phones, continuous power failure, high cost of data charges, academic integrity issues in conducting online exams, negligence, and nonchalant activities of students were identified as significant challenges. SLLA struggles due to lack of human resources to deal with the LMS. However, they are unable to conduct face-to-face lectures due to the fuel crisis, and the high cost of transport charges. This study recommends the SLLA to increase its entry-level requirement to DIPLIS and to revise the curriculum to get accreditation of Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) of Sri Lanka with the NVQ standards, in addition to the SLQF. SLLA must activate a very efficient Learning Management System. Asynchronous mode is recommended as this will help students to learn their lessons uploaded by the lecturers as per their convenience, rather than relying on synchronous mode.

Keywords: DIPLIS, LIS Education, COVID-19 Pandemic, Economic Crisis, Financial Crisis

Contribution of Sri Lanka to the Library and Information Education in the Maldives: a review[a]

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Maldives is a small country in the SAARC region, with a population of less than 400,000. According to the Maldives Library Association, the country had 294 libraries in 2012. Literature reveals that qualified LIS professionals in the country are still extremely few. Most of the literature on Maldives LIS education highlight the contribution of Sri Lanka in developing library human resources in the Maldives. Therefore, the study reviews to what extent Sri Lanka has contributed to LIS education in the Maldives. The library profession in the Maldives is still in the development stage. Therefore, the study assists policymakers in making informed decisions in designing knowledge transfer in the future. Literature confirms that formal training was started after the establishment of the 'National Library of Maldives' in 1982. Therefore, this study reviewed literature published from 1982 to 2022 on librarianship in the Maldives. Twenty papers published in journals and one monograph on the subject were reviewed. The authors observed that out of fifty-one (51) training programs conducted in the Maldives during the period 1987-2012, a LIS organization or an individual from Sri Lanka had directly contributed to 12. This includes the three-tier distance mode Diploma in Library and Information Science conducted by the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) However, there had not been a direct focus on the specialized needs of school library staff. The first local long-term LIS program was initiated in 2010 by the Maldives College of Higher Education, which was renamed as the Maldives National University in 2011. However, due to the shortage of local experts to teach these programs, the initial years of the program were taught with the contribution of LIS professionals from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Canada. The results suggest that a close relationship had been maintained between Sri Lanka and the Maldives in terms of capacity building through LIS education and training. The content delivered mainly focused on general librarianship. The Maldives authorities may obtain further assistance from outside the country to develop its school library programs.

Keywords: LIS Education, Maldives, Knowledge Transfer, Capacity Building, Sri Lanka

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Challengers and concerns encountered by doctoral students in LIS education in Sri Lanka

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Doctoral degree is the highest academic qualification that can be obtained by the Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals based on their original research, theory building or theory evaluation. In Sri Lanka, Doctoral degree program (PhD.) in LIS was started at University of Kelaniya in 2002 and at NILIS in 2007, 29 years after starting of the Bachelor's degree program and 09 years after starting the Masters program in LIS. According to past records, very few students completed the degree in time. Secondly, it is noticed that a significant number of students who have enrolled have dropped out at different stages of their study program. Thirdly, though a significant number of LIS professionals, especially all Assistant Librarians in the university sector complete the Masters in LIS, many are slow in pursuing a PhD. No study has been conducted to identify why the LIS professionals are reluctant to enroll in Doctoral programs or those who do dropout without completing. This study is expected to fill this void and it is expected that the findings would help the LIS educational Institutes to strengthen their Doctoral programs. The objective of the study is to identify the reasons for the low enrolment rate, delayed completion, and the dropouts in the Sri Lankan LIS doctoral Programs. Qualitative interviews and document analysis were employed for the study. Students who have registered for the MPhil./ PhD. programs conducted by the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences (NILIS) and the University of Kelaniya, selected senior staff members of the same institutions and library professionals who have not enrolled for a PhD. Program were selected as the study population. The study revealed that lack of research supervisors, limitation of funding opportunities, absence of motivation from employers and family commitments are key factors to reduce the enrolment rate for PhD. programs. The majority (67%) of the candidates who have registered for PhD. are university library professionals. It is found that a few candidates (06%) completed their studies within minimum period of candidature. A considerable number of candidates (36.33%) were reported as dropouts. Inadequate institutional support and guidance from course coordinators and supervisors, limitation of funding opportunities, study while working, and less motivation from

the employers, are some of the challenges encountered by the doctoral students which leads to delay or incomplete the study. Absence of significant number of doctoral graduates in the field of LIS, lack of motivation factors such as promotions in the employment, financial benefits after completion the degree and funding opportunities to cover expenses of the study program decrease the PhD enrolments. Technical support extended by the university should be increased to complete the degree in time. Proper guidance including By-Laws will attract more candidates to the program. Weight of the research component at the Masters degree level has to be increased which will lead to an increased practice of independent research. More institutional support should be extended to minimize the difficulties face by the candidates. PhD qualification shall be considered for the promotions and financial rewards.

Keywords: Doctoral Students, LIS Education, Sri Lanka

Perception of Tamil medium students at the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences (NILIS) towards online courses[b]

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NILIS had to switch the mode of delivery from conventional classroom to totally online interaction, including its examinations from 2019, due to COVID-19. However, there have been no studies about what and how students thought about the online mode of LIS programs. The objective of the study was to survey the students of Tamil Medium regarding their perception of online LIS education, especially the advantages, challenges, and their suggestions to improve. Two courses, namely Diploma in School Librarianship (DSL) and Higher Diploma in Library and Information Management (HDLIM-1) were selected for surveying and a semi-structured questionnaire was administered. Total population (61) was selected, and 42 responses were received (64.6%). Majority are in the age groups of 21 – 25 (32%) and 31 to 35 (24%), and majority reside in Badulla (38%), Ampara (16%) and Kandy (10.5%). Of the total respondents, 31.6% consists of library employees, 10.5% of teachers, 26.3% unemployed, 10% of other occupations, and 8% of trainees while 7.8% did not disclose. Of the employed, 60% work in schools. Related to the advantages of online learning, Cramer's V analysis shows that, the respondents have strong relationships with the availability of sufficient resources (0.073), more attendance (0.458), freedom (0.091), work-life balance (0.497), easy understanding of lessons (0.399), satisfactory LMS access (0.407), and confidence in learning (0.362). Affordability (0.117), possibility of group studies (0.220), and sitting for examinations (0.214) have weak relationships. Difficulty to focus on the screen (0.378), unfamiliarity with the LMS (0.260), inability to clear doubts (0.373), and decreasing motivation (0.301) are the challenges that have strong relationship with them. Weak Internet connection (0.175), inadequate technical skills (0.168), language barriers (0.231), difficulty of examinations

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(0.197), and high level of exam violations (0.168) have weaker relationship. In conclusion, students have exhibited strong admiration for online learning despite the challenges they encounter. Respondents suggested increasing the resources available in the LMS, sharing the pdf files via WhatsApp, and reducing the class run-time to one-hour. Overall, they appreciated the online mode of education. NILIS will take these findings into consideration to improve its program structure in future.

Keywords: Online Education, Library and Information Management, School Librarianship, LIS Education, Sri Lanka

A critical analysis of the selected research topics of the MTL students of NILIS: from 2004 to 2020[c]

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One of the main objectives of General Education Project (GEP-2) sponsored by the World Bank was to develop the school library system of Sri Lanka and as an outcome of this, the post of "Teacher Librarian" was introduced to the school library system. NILIS was established and assigned the training of these newly appointed teacher librarians. To fulfill this responsibility, NILIS commenced a range of academic programs including Masters in Teacher Librarianship (MTL) in 2003. MTL consists of seven taught modules and a dissertation with a research component. From 2004 to 2020, hundred and seventy-one (171) students have engaged in research related to their MTL dissertations. However, examination of these topics indicated that some themes are overly popular among the students while some others have never been researched. The main objective of current research was to identify the thematic variations of these dissertations. Content analysis was used to identify the major themes from a list of dissertation titles submitted to NILIS. Twenty-three (23) thematic areas were identified and of that, higher percentages are skewed towards four themes (information literacy (17%), role of teacher librarian (16%), Reading promotion and interest (12%) and ICT (12%). The study established that management and administrative aspects such as records management (2%), public relations (0.6%), marketing (0.6%) have received the least attention. Though MTL course work consists of seven modules, students have inclined to select their topics only from three modules: Teacher Librarianship, Information literacy and ICT. Further analysis of the titles revealed that the students select the same topic with a variation only in the educational zone. To avoid this imbalance of research areas, close guidance by the academic staff and more involvement of the school authorities in selecting their dissertation topics are recommended. A critical and strong dialog among the students, the academic staff, and the education administrators (i.e., Zonal Directors) is also recommended, to enable the students to place their research in the broader picture, contributing to the development of the school library system.

Key words: School Libraries, Teacher Librarianship, Research, Dissertations, Sri Lanka

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TECHNICAL SESSION - II

Utilization of social media by the Sri Lankan university academics as an academic tool

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Social Media (SM) are types of electronic communication tools in which users can create online communities to post and share ideas, opinions, messages, comments, documents, photos, videos etc. Contents and techniques have been evolved over the time with the advancement of technologies and are heavily used by people all over the world for various purposes. They media include several educational tools that can be used in teaching learning. Application of SM in teaching - learning environment is growing worldwide, and it is high time to adopt and utilize this technology by Sri Lankan university academics to reach the digital learning context. This study helps to explore the gaps in knowledge in the utilization of SM in higher education settings. The main objective was to identify the extent of adoption and utilization of SM as an educational tool by university academics in Sri Lanka. From the population of 429 academics, data were gathered from 201 samples selected through stratified random sampling, using a questionnaire as the research instrument. A case study was done in one state university limited to three major faculties; Applied Sciences, Management Sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences. Most (76.8%) academics were aware of and used different SM types. The most popular type was Facebook (85%). Twitter (8.5%) and Slide share (10%) had the least usage. ResearchGate (74%) was highly used for academic purposes, and it is the most popular tool. As referencing tools, Mendeley had the highest score (67%). High usage (89%) was indicated for personal use rather than academic and professional use (74%). Low usage of SM was observed in higher age categories (55-65 years) and high usage among younger academics, both for personal and academic purposes. The majority indicated that SM, especially academic and professional networks are valuable tools in the education context. Though there is comparatively low usage of some types of SM for academic purposes, there is an increasing trend among young Sri Lankan university academics in adopting SM technologies irrespective of the discipline. More awareness and attitude changes are required to enhance the adoption and utilization of SM technologies among Sri Lankan university academics since they should reap the benefits of emerging technologies to reach and grasp the changing environments of the higher education sector.

Keywords: Social Media, Teaching Learning Process, University Academics, Higher Education, Sri Lanka

Examining the perceived quality gap between service provider and service user in university libraries in Sri Lanka

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Service quality is still not properly investigated and different practices are used to measure it in university libraries. These practices should incorporate both the views of service provider and user to determine the proper quality. If the perception gap is narrow between them there is higher service quality. This study investigates the perceived quality gap between library administrators and users in university libraries in Sri Lanka. According to the literature, quality measuring practices of university libraries seem one-sided. The simultaneous investigation of both the service provider and user seems lacking. This study contributes to the knowledge in the field by providing practical and methodological implications as findings. This study investigates whether there is a statistically significant difference between the library administrators' perceived quality and users' perceived quality in university libraries. The population was library administrators and users. The library administrator sample included 95 librarians and administrative officers. The user sample included 2237 patrons (teachers + undergraduates), proportionally selected from four subject streams from seven state universities of Sri Lanka. A structured questionnaire, adapted from LibQUAL+ tool was used to collect data. Data analysis was performed with the SPSS package. Descriptive statistics showed that library administrators perceived 12 items higher than users did. In component-wise 'Service Affect' and 'Library as a place were perceived as higher by library administrators while users perceived the 'Information Control" as higher. The results of the Independent Sample t-test indicated that library administrators had a statistically significantly higher perceived quality level (M=0.83, SD=8.02) than users did. (M=-0.03, SD=10.86) in the Sri Lankan context $F(2319)=11.553$, $p=0.001$). This difference 0.86, 95% CI[-0.84, 2.58] was statistically significant $t(106.605) = -1.004$, $p<0.318$, (2 tailed). Thus, the variance in perceived service quality of the library administrators is significantly different from that of service users. There is a significant perception gap between service providers and users. Service quality should be perceived similarly by both the service provider and the service user. Wider the perception gap, the lesser the service quality. Library managers should conduct regular surveys to identify the users' requirements and perceptions of the existing services. Measures must be taken to revise the service attributes of the library. Library staff also should be educated to trace users' perception.

Keywords: Library Service Quality, Perception Gap, Quality Gap, University Libraries,

Efforts for actualizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by university libraries in the Asia-Pacific region

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Adopting the Sustainable Development Goals, which is a universal perception of development towards ensuring a secure and just place for all human beings and guaranteeing the same for the future generation, is increasingly evident in libraries. Even if it is embraced well in academic libraries in the Asia-Pacific region where Sri Lanka is situated, a lack of awareness in adopting SDGs by library professionals in Sri Lanka including academic librarians is identified. Therefore, actions of university libraries toward the actualization of SDGs were identified. This is significant since administrators could adopt the best practices which portray the institution as a sustainable university model that improves the institution's ranking. This was an exploratory literature review conducted using recently published peer-reviewed scholarly publications, conference proceedings and websites to analyze the efforts in actualizing SDGs revealed by University Libraries in the Asia-Pacific region from 2015 to 2022. The activities of University Libraries in the region were extracted, reorganized into a thematic matrix, and analyzed using content analysis methods. A total of 22 individual literature components were included in the final analysis. The academic libraries contribute towards actualizing the SDGs mainly in three ways such as providing information for planning the activities on SDGs, granting evidence for success, and assisting in communication. THE (Times Higher Education) impact ranking and UI (Universitas Indonesia) Green metric world university rankings are mainly used to measure the progress in university libraries. The major challenges academic libraries face are a lack of appropriate policies, inadequate funding and collaboration with related agencies, a lack of awareness and training, and a lack of studies and surveys. Hence, academic libraries are one of the important institutions in rendering services toward achieving the SDGs. Adopting SDGs would offer mutual benefits to the Nation and the institution. To report continuous progress in attaining the SDGs, librarians should have expertise in the knowledge of SDGs. Therefore, the development of library assessment frameworks based on SDGs with benchmarks is recommended to improve the performance of academic libraries. Hence, mapping the activities to SDGs is also recommended to be carried out by University Libraries.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, University Libraries, Asia-Pacific

Developing a blueprint to assess the digital literacy skills of Visually Impaired (VI) undergraduate-library users in Sri Lanka[d]

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Digital information sources have become more popular among the readers with the increased move towards online education, and the contemporary undergraduates use more digital sources than their predecessors who used more printed sources. A study at University of Colombo on the use of online/digital library resources by visually impaired (VI) undergraduates revealed that they face several challenges directly related to lack of digital literacy skills. Despite many global studies on the digital literacy skills of VI undergraduates, there is a profound gap in the knowledge about that of the Sri Lankan VI undergraduates, and the recent shifting toward online education intensified the challenges faced by them. This study was conducted to develop a blueprint to assess the digital literacy skills of VI library users. Literature survey and preliminary discussions were conducted with ten selected VI undergraduates, their instructor and three other officers at the Center for the disability research, education and practice (CEDREP) at the University of Colombo, which provides special services for the VI students. Additionally, five library experts were consulted to identify the factors that are connected to developing an appropriate tool. In this regard an interview schedule was identified as a blueprint. Gender, age, vision loss level, frequency of using the Internet, age of starting to use technology, previous training, and availability of needed resources were identified as the factors which affect the digital literacy of VI undergraduates. With the exploration of literature and discussions, 41 variables were identified under the self-evaluation of digital literacy skills. The identified variables were further divided into eight categories: information searching skills, communication, content creation, problem-solving, ability to work with computers, use of social media, digital learning resources, and ability to use audio devices. The tool developed to assess the digital literacy of VI students was based on their technical skills, social and demographic factors, cognitive skills, and availability of resources. The study recommends incorporating special modules of digital literacy for the VI undergraduates in their library training programs and make libraries buildings and collections more user-friendly for those with special needs including the VI undergraduates.

Keywords: Visually Impaired Users, Digital Literacy, Internet, Online Resources, Sri Lanka

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Upgrading Library Management Systems to cloud technologies: opportunities and challenges for Sri Lankan state universities

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Cloud platforms have become increasingly popular in today's world due to the multiple benefits they offer to their clients. State university libraries too can gain these benefits by moving their physical servers to cloud platforms. The present study explores the research problem 'what are the opportunities that the Sri Lankan state university libraries will have and what challenges they will face when upgrading to cloud technologies? Upgrading of existing library management systems to cloud platforms will be a crucial decision for the state university libraries. Therefore, it is important to do a feasibility study to assess the opportunities and challenges that the state universities will face in such upgrading. Population of the study consists of all 17 state universities. The sample was selected based on the availability of library online public access catalogue and digital repositories. Thus, 16 state universities that have this particular facility in their libraries were selected as the sample, following purposive sampling method. Thematic analysis will be carried out on bandwidth, number of daily users, server capacity, speed, server memory etc. To avoid OS updating issues, a test run will be done first, and then gradual migration will be carried out. To avoid RAM and Data speed issues, the findings from data analysis will be used to compare the present status with a forecast of about 10 years. Also, Microsoft Azure or AWS or Google cloud will be used as cloud platform. As for opportunities, servers always have internet connection as they are managed by a cloud operator in a different country, better security options, availability of expertise at the universities for successful upgrading etc. Challenges are that university libraries face problems in obtaining required financial resources, delay in decision making process, and many other constraints due to present economic crisis. Upgrading to cloud will give several benefits such as 99.99 availability, non-requirement of IT maintenance or disaster recovery techniques, cost-reduction when compared to in-house maintenance, high security, unlimited storage, while paying only for resources and services usage. Training of staff, development of infrastructure in a short period, creating an awareness among all stakeholders about the multiple benefits of upgrading to cloud platforms are recommended.

Keywords: Library Management Systems, Cloud Technologies, Sri Lanka, University Libraries

Inclusion of creative artworks in the Institutional Repositories of Fine Arts-related higher education institutions in Sri Lanka

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Institutional Repositories (IRs) are used as a tool for collecting, preserving, exhibiting, and disseminating all types of the intellectual and creative output of the parent institutions and allow librarians to take on new roles for adding value to their institutions. As per the existing literature in an international context, there is often a dearth of creative artwork done by the institutional community in IRs. The same scenario is observed in fine arts-related higher education institutions in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study helps to increase the visibility of creative art collections by providing a permanent uniform resource location for wider public accessibility through IRs. It leads to improving the visibility of the library, increasing the institutional reputation and creators being recognized by others as artists. The objective of the study is to explore the various aspects of the inclusion of creative artwork in the IRs and develop strategies and guidelines for their inclusion in fine arts-related institutions. The available literature from the period 2017 to 2022 was reviewed to collect adequate and relevant data. Exploratory qualitative research was employed to achieve the research objectives. The reviewed literature has clearly explained the collection, preservation, description, access, library's role, benefits, concerns, and expectations for the inclusion of creative artwork in IRs which helped to find the strategies and guidelines for their inclusion. There are many benefits and concerns explained for exhibiting artwork through IRs. Further, faculty members expect for adopting best practices on quality, storage, copyrights, and metadata of creative arts before the inclusion in IRs. However, IRs needs to be more flexible and adaptable to the unique context of the institution to derive the objective of the parent institutions. Understanding the various aspects of incorporating creative work in IRs is important for developing strategies and guidelines for the inclusion of creative artwork in fine arts institutions. Further, this study recommends, initiating IRs with streaming media and virtual gallery features for the inclusion of creative artwork, motivating the respective community to submit more artwork, adopting best practices for copyright concerns, educating on fair use, and requesting consent from the creators to provide open access, and improving outreach and marketing services related to repository services.

Keywords: Creative Artwork, Institutional Repositories, Fine Arts Libraries, Higher Education Institutions, Sri Lanka

TECHNICAL SESSION - III

Beyond books: potential of establishing Makerspaces in Sri Lankan libraries

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Makerspace help users to learn by doing things. It builds a strong library community while strengthening them through innovations and non-formal education supporting to the inclusiveness. Due to Covid-19 pandemic and Technological advancements, library usage has reduced, and libraries need to find strategic approaches to reach their user community while extending their services through novel trends. Makerspace initiatives in libraries have identified as a new trend in the global context. Hence, it is important to investigate the initiatives and possibilities in the Sri Lankan context. Identifying the status of makerspaces in Sri Lankan libraries is the main objective of this study. Identifying the global makerspace initiatives and exploring the applicability of them through the library service in Sri Lanka are the sub objectives. What are the available makerspaces and how we can apply them to the Sri Lankan context are the main research questions. Reviewing of research articles was used as the research method due to the time constraint. Identified makerspace initiatives are 3D printing, MediaLABs, Computer Numerical Control mills, craftsmanship, woodworking and metalworking, Quilling arts and recycling activities in the global level. Information and Communication Technology Agency, US Embassy of Sri Lanka with the help of Universities and some private organizations initiated programs to popularize makerspaces in Sri Lanka. Some initiatives are there in school and individual group levels, which needs developments. In the university level, there are very limited evidence found. Makerspace Lab of University of Peradeniya and Colombo Public Library makerspace program are some evidences. There are so many strengths and opportunities for libraries to initiate makerspaces for enhancing user collaborations and innovations. Study concludes that, libraries can initiate makerspaces for engaging with patrons to enhance critical thinking and learning. Librarians can help respective faculties to develop new assessments and inspire students to tryout with new media and space. Libraries have many opportunities for a progressive journey. Sri Lanka is somewhat behind in initiating makerspaces due to many issues related to the economic crisis. Study recommends developing makerspaces at university libraries to have more engagements as well as to support the nation building by innovation and entrepreneurship.

Keywords: University Libraries, Makerspaces, Sri Lanka

Geo libraries: Academic library involvement in geospatial data management

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Geospatial data is in significant demand globally, within and among academic institutions, especially in universities. Managing this data is a crucial service that academic libraries can provide. Geo library is an integrated service platform that collects, maintains, disseminates, and preserves geospatial data. However, South Asia, particularly Sri Lanka, has not made significant progress in sharing, preserving, and maintaining geospatial data, and there is a lack of involvement in this service by academic libraries. This study attempts to identify global perspectives and the potential of developing geo libraries within academic libraries in Sri Lanka. Based on the above research problems and objectives, the study attempts to identify the role of academic libraries in the management of geospatial data in Sri Lanka via an exploratory literature review. This paper reviewed and analyzed open-access and indexed journal articles, reputed proceedings, websites, and IFLA guidelines published during the last two decade to identify the global perspectives and Sri Lankan context on geospatial data management. The results were acquired through 32 publications and analyzed using content analysis methods. The results demonstrate different aspects of geospatial data services. Among them, 91% of the sources indicated well-developed practices in geospatial data management in a global context. Besides, 76% emphasize the requirement of geospatial data management as a service provided by academic libraries. Furthermore, 68% of them indicate the significance of preserving and maintaining geospatial data and its formats. Currently, nine Sri Lankan state universities are offering similar data services; nevertheless, those services should be improved. In addition, the authors could not find any indication of academic library involvement in developing a geo library service in the Sri Lankan context. Academic libraries have the responsibility of providing geospatial data and services to fulfill the requirements of researchers. Additionally, there is a need to develop policies and frameworks for geospatial data sharing, preservation, and maintenance. It is essential to conduct a requirement analysis on geospatial data needs in Sri Lankan academic institutions in the future.

Keywords: Geo-libraries, Geospatial Data Management, Academic Libraries, Sri Lanka

Community programs towards economic empowerment through arts and culture by the public libraries in Gampaha District

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Creative Economy is a concept that can give economic value to peoples' creative ideas. In the Asia Pacific region, the creative industries have been an essential element in developing mature economies such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia. It is important to develop craft industries as it is a motor for economic development among the poorer segment of the population (UNCTAD, 2010). The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the contribution of public libraries to craft industries through economic empowerment programs. Among the identified 16 industries the craft industry is one of the major industries in Sri Lanka and is leading position in the global market by developing countries. It has been identified lack of training, technology, and marketplaces are major constraints of the Sri Lanka Craft industry. As Public Libraries provide various economic empowerment services, they can be developed an atmosphere to support the craft industry. This study aims to find out what kind of contribution can be made by public libraries to empower the craft industry. Gampaha District is one of the largest employers in the craft industry. According to National Library survey statistics (2018), 73 Main public libraries are in the Gampaha district. Telephone interviews were conducted with those librarians and the data saturation point was achieved at the 15th respondent. Therefore, 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather information. Accordingly, every public library has conducted many programs for economic empowerment. The level of knowledge about the creative economy is at a minimal level among the librarians. 90% of libraries have completed two or more of the services of providing ICT facilities, market opportunities, job training, and support for self-employment. These are identified constraints of the craft industry. Public libraries are already successfully providing economic empowerment services. Accordingly, public libraries can develop environment to encourage the craft industry. It is important to aware public librarians about creative industries to intervene in creative economy. This study can be used as a baseline for future research. There is no national mechanism to obtain the support of the public libraries for the creative economy and this study can be used as a basic step for future planning.

National Library and Documentation Services Board (2018). *Statistical Handbook on libraries in Sri Lanka*. National Library and Documentation Services Board. http://www.natlib.lk/pdf/StatLib2018.pdf

UNCTAD (2010). Creative economy report 2010. UNCTAD.

Keywords: Public Libraries, Economic Empowerment, Craft Industry, Creative Economy

Application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in academic libraries

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an area of computer science which is used to produce smart machine with human intelligence. It is playing major role in many fields such as education, medicine, and economy. AI is applied in the library in different operations of the library, and it changes the library in better way. Academic libraries should provide better customer-oriented services in an efficient and effective way. AI will change the existing way of academic library operations and provide high quality of services for its users. There is no evidence for AI related knowledge and skills among many of the librarians. AI leads to provide the efficient and effective services to its users, and provide better teaching, learning, and research support experience for university library users and this study will provide an awareness for the librarians. Purpose of this study is to find out the application of AI in the academic libraries. Considering the limitation of time and money, author conducted a literature review to find out the results. For the data collection, ResearchGate, Google scholar web-browser were searched by using keywords such as artificial intelligence and academic libraries to get the scholarly articles from which ten research articles were selected by the author. AI is applied in reference services, cataloguing services, classification, indexing services and acquisition by using expert system. In natural language processing (NLP), AI is used to break the barrier to understand any languages in searching the database online. AI is used to recognize the patterns by using machine learning. Robotics is used to automate shelving and used for consulting in the reception of the libraries and used to analyze digital collection identify topics and entitles by using image recognition technology. Literature review of the study revealed that the application of AI enhances the existing library operations, service delivery and the research productivity by improving the search function of database, reducing the human errors, and saving the time of users and staff. Yet, it may also be a threat to the library professionals' job and data privacy. Based on the literature review, author suggests that there is a need for training for the librarians and allocation of funds for the implementation of AI in the academic libraries to enhance the existing library operation in an effective and efficient way.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Academic Libraries, Expert System, Natural Language Process, Robotics

Status of Information Literacy programs conducted in Sri Lankan schools: with special reference to 1 AB Tamil medium schools in Ampara District

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Information literacy has become a fundamental requirement for school students in Sri Lanka especially with the introduction of online teaching learning activities after the COVID 19. The objectives of the study are, to identify the library facilities and availability of library professionals in the schools in Ampara District, to analyze the information literacy skills and qualifications of the library professional in schools and to explore the current information literacy programs offered by the selected schools. Data Collection - structured questionnaire is used to collect the data. Population - the population consists of all librarians / library-in- charge of school libraries in 1AB Tamil Medium schools in Ampara District which is amounted to be 50. Sampling Method- since the population is low, the entire population was considered for data collection. Limitation - Due to language barrier only 1AB Tamil medium schools in the Ampara District were considered for the survey. Key findings - 45 (90%) schools have type II library with facilities and resources like space, furniture, and enough books and 5 (10%) schools are type III with low facilities. No school has the audio and visual unit and internet access for the students and teachers. 64 % of the total respondents have bachelor's degrees, 20 % have LIS diploma, and 16 % have GCE/AL qualifications. All schools involved one or more of the following initiatives: library tours, reading camps, reading months, and assignment completion. At the same time only 4% of them are conducting IL related workshop to the students in classroom level once a term. All the respondents had the training on Library management system but only 20% have obtained IL related trainings. Therefore, majority of the schools are not conducted major IL programs. Recommendations - School librarians must take the leading role in order to successfully implement an IL program in the classroom. Every school should take steps to implement the information literacy programs properly in their curriculum. So, school library should be updated with new technological amenities such as internet access and an audio and visual unit. All librarians and school in-charge persons should be provided proper IL trainings. Under the direction of the ISA and ADE of the educational department, IL activities need to be carried out on a regular basis to empower the students.

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Ranaweera, P. (2010). Information literacy programmes conducted by the universities in Sri Lanka. *Journal of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka*, 14(1), 61-75.

Keywords: Information Literacy, School library, Teacher Librarians, Ampara District

Creating virtual tours for libraries

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Libraries around the world organize induction programs for their patrons to introduce the collections and the physical structure of the libraries. Library virtual tours which are becoming popular now are the digitized versions of these induction programs that help patrons to understand a library remotely. Since Sri Lankan libraries lack virtual tours, it is important to investigate the possibilities of creating virtual tours as an educational tool to support library patrons. A library virtual tour is an innovative way to increase awareness of a library. Libraries were completely out of bounds or restricted to users, especially during pandemics. Besides, it is not convenient for the users to cover every single section in a physical library tour. This study was conducted with the objectives of identifying the resources and skills needed and the advantages and challenges of creating library virtual tours. Accordingly, sixteen scholarly publications were examined. In addition, ten virtual tours of foreign libraries were observed, and some information was gathered after interviewing the five members of the National Museum library staff. It was identified that several open-source software programs could be used to create library virtual tours, such as Lapenter, OpenSpace3D, etc. A good-quality virtual tour consists of a 360-degree panorama view, floor plans, a simple and user-friendly navigation design with a 3–4-minute time duration, a site index, etc. Most of the existing tours use JavaScript programs, QTVR format, or IPIX format. However, human resources with a high level of technical background, creativity, and good funding are the key factors in developing virtual tours. Library virtual tours are a better promotional tool for both locals and foreigners, as users could get a real-time experience of visiting the library irrespective of time, location, and cost. However, it required a considerable amount of human and technical resources and funding to create a quality and attractive library virtual tour. Library virtual tours can be identified as a smart educational tool that could be effectively used in special libraries. When the collections are special or rare and the library premises have a significant value, these types of tours are indispensable for both local and international patrons.

Keywords: Virtual Tours, National Museum Library, 3D Experience