

Electronic Library Management: An Ethiopian Scenario

V. Rama Devi¹

¹*Department of Information Science, Faculty of Informatics, University of Gondar, Gondar, Ethiopia*

Abstract- This paper discusses about “Electronic library Management: an Ethiopian Scenario”. Our main concentration is on University of Gondar, Library and Documentation Services at Thewodros Campus. The service of University of Gondar (UoG) Library System dates back to more than half a century during the establishment of the ‘Gondar Public Health and Training Center’. The Library was established in 1945 with the ‘Gondar College of Medical Science (GCMS)’. The study of this paper is, about the inception of the Library, the nature and Objectives of the Library, different functions like – Collection, Services, Infrastructure, Resource Organization, Management and utilization, Acquisition, Circulation and about Electronic library Management, Consortium of Ethiopian Academic and Research Libraries Network (COEARL Network) and its functions. It concludes that to rectify all the said problems, the UoG Library and Documentation Services (LDS) can reach its optimum level and stand by the ‘Balanced Score Card’ approach which brings integration between the Library’s functions and activities, the strategies and common vision of the University.

Keywords – Academic library, Consortia, Digital, Documentation services, Ethiopia, University library

I. INTRODUCTION

Academic library automation is the main concept of the recent past in all over the world. The World wide web become the most popular Internet resource, combination of hypertext and multimedia to provide a huge network of educational, governmental and commercial resources. Adopting a library automation system is the basic prerequisite for an academic library to realize the various objectives for which it is set up.

Once the library automation system in place, library can venture into other network based services such as participating in resource sharing and networks, interlibrary loan, creation and access of bibliographic and full text databases etc. A number of Library Management Software packages are available in the market. This paper is discussing one such package with the title” Electronic Library Management – an Ethiopian Scenario “. Our main concern is about the University of Gondar Library and Documentation Services.

The service of University of Gondar (UoG) Library System dates back to more than half a century during the establishment of the ‘Gondar Public Health and Training

Center ‘. The Library System was established in 1945 to serve the students of the Public Health and Training Center in the then Gondar College of Medical Science (GCMS). In 1978, when GCMS was established the GCMS Library was also redesigned in the Organization, manpower, and reference books including journals and supporting documents. Then the library was intended to serve for medical doctors, nurses and environmental students and researchers. The year 1999 was a remarkable date when the GCMS Library has its own building. Until then the college was managed and administered by the Addis Ababa University.

Along with the transformation of the college into Gondar University College in 2003 and to University of Gondar in 2004, a number of branch libraries were emerged together with the increasing number of faculties, and the expansion of the University Purchase and Finance System.

At present there are five branch libraries along with the university of Gondar Library and Documentation Services (UoG) LDS. Those are:

The College of Medical and Health Science (CMHS) Branch Library, G.C Campus.

The Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty and the Law School Branch Library at Maraki Campus.

The Natural and Computational Sciences and the Veterinary Faculties Branch Library at Theodros Campus.

The Business and Economics Faculty (FBE) Branch Library at Thewodros Campus.

The School of Technology Branch Library at Maraki Campus.

II. PURPOSE STATEMENT, VISION AND VALUES OF THE UOG LDS

2.1 Mission/ Purpose Statement of the LDS

UoG LDS is to provide best fit with the institutional mission and provide strategic organization and management of the Library’s resources and services. It will deliver appropriate, efficient, effective and intuitive LDS as an integral element of the University’s achievement of excellence in research, teaching and community services.

2.2 Vision of the UoG LDS:

The Vision of the UoG LDS is to be a source of first class range of information resources in the country supported by inovative, high quality and distinctive services to support the University's various communities and the continuing success of the Institution.

2.3 Values of the UoG LDS

UoG LDS supports and delivers the broad values and principles that shape and reinforce the University's work, as outlined in the University's mission statement:

- Students first – top concern for the students of this university.
- Quality at all – premier quality as a foundation of everything – ie., UoG LDS guiding Principle.
- Solidarity & Team Work
- Care for Staff
- Proudly Community Servant – Part of life with community.
- Innovation – value for innovation in Higher Education.
- Committed to Ethics – Compliance to legal, social and professional ethics and norms is crucial for the University development and goodwill.

III. EXPERIMENT AND RESULT

3.1. Stackholders needs of UoG LDS

- Students
- Academic and administrative staff
- Top Management, Departments, Faculties of university
- Guest Users, Publishers, Suppliers, MoE, The Regional and National Governments
- Donors and NGOs.

3.2 . Baseline Information and SWOT Analysis of the LDS

3.2.1 Baseline Information:

A). Collection: Library has more than

- * Books 100,100
- Journals,
Booklets,
And
Monographs 30,000
- Systems 100
- Theses &
Dissertations 400

The LDS will have a unique part to play in supporting the institutional mission and play a practical role in the rapidly changing environment in which it operates.

B). Services: The LDS is open for 24 hours a day and seven days a week to extend its services and increase accessibility of information sources and services for all branch libraries except the School of Technology branch library.

3.2.2 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis:

Strategic Plan of 2010-2015 help the LDS to maintain the continuity of strengths, to minimize or solve its weaknesses, use the opportunities that the environment is providing and take care of the threats/challenges ahead of its occurrence.

A). Collection Development:

Continuous request and budgeting for collection development.

The currency of the existing collection (the Library is trying to the best of its ability to build its collection with current information resources despite its shortage and diversification.

Organizing the collection data, the borrowers' data and search facilities using the eLM Software and providing separate reading room facilities to female students of the University.

B) Users: and the number of users at LDS raised to 18,077 in number. Users constituted from regular, continuing, summer schools students, and the academic administrative staff of the university. New building at Maraki campus starts soon (under construction) will upgrade the users extra 6000 in number.

c) Infrastructure and Facility:

The status of the LDS in relation to Facilities and Infrastructure (Reading rooms, Offices, Internet Facility, Computer rooms, etc.) is under consideration. The number of reading rooms are not enough to the increasing number of the user community. Internet connectivity in most of the branch libraries and LDS is not up to the level. A total 3800 users can be served in all branch libraries at a time. The library exists both physical and virtual entity, enabling researchers, teachers and students to research anywhere any time.

D). Resource Organization, Management and Utilization: Good Organization and management of information resources, the existing resources of LDS (Reference materials, books, journals, newspapers etc.) are organized to make their accessibility easier and faster for users. The materials have appropriate bibliographic records serving as guiding information for the actual materials.

E). Optimum Utilization of Library Resources: There is optimum information resources utilization in the library System. Most of the library resources at audiovisual, circulation, etc. , are set to serve the appropriate customers by implementing a 'Sharing Strategy '.

F). Services:

- Reliable, robust and timely circulation service.

Healthy, timely circulation and spot reading service for users.

- Automated Circulation Service.

There is an Automated Library Circulation System eLM

(Electronic Library Management) for keeping borrowers data.

The eLM Software also used for searching information resources in the Library using OPAC.

- Availability of Book Stores/ Stack Services in all branches

(Except Technology Library).

Availability of Internet Service at CMHS Library, supports users and researchers to have access to professional journals and Internet.

- Serving users 24 hours.
- Audio-Visual Service

The Audio-Visual Section of the library is serving the University as well as the community without any fees.

- Issuing Resources

The Library is borrowing library resources (Books, e-books on CDs, Sound Systems to students) for the University community.

- Open Access

All the books can access except for reserved books at Circulation Section.

Targeted Services: The Library is trying to reach its customers based on gender, programs and Staff i.e., it is serving females, staff and postgraduate students independently and this will foster to fulfill the information needs of these groups.

Orientation: The Library is giving Orientation Program to the new users about the library environment and resource use, how to use eLM Software and also whoever in need of the information.

G). Acquisition: Availability of fund for purchasing information resources (The availability of budget encourages the Library to acquire information resources to the required level).

Cataloguing & Classification: UoG LDS following Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2) and Library of Congress Classification (LCC).

H). Manpower:

Staff are committed and industrious. The Library has devoted staff and is committed to serve users to their maximum potential.

Efforts made to have required manpower. The Library is trying to fulfill the required professionals, discussed the issue with the Human Resource management Wing who are authoritative for the appointments and also efforts made the new building for the Technology Library at Maraki Campus and the facilities like, electricity/power installation, ventilation, sanitation, etc.,

3.3 . CEARL Network (Consortium of Ethiopian Academic and Research Libraries Network)

UoG LDS is a member of CEARL Network, which was established during 2008. Nearly 12 University libraries were participated in this network. Annually it will meet and discuss the necessary requirements amongst the member libraries.

UoG LDS is implementing another Network, which will be implementing soon as a University wide Infrastructure. It will create opportunities for sharing library resources, accessing online journals from 39 journal databases (some free basis and some by donors outside country) especially for researchers in different fields.

3.4. Availability of Open Source Software for Library Services and Resource Management

The existence of various types of Open Source Software for Integrated Library Management will support the Library to be introduced to the 'Integrated Library Management Systems' and manage its activities easily.

3.5. Favorable National Policy

The favorable Higher Education Policy has given main emphasis to the academic libraries and their infrastructure and digitization is a good opportunity to be exploited in the UoG LDS:

Free access to e-journals (digital resources)

The initiations from different library networks, donors and agencies sponsoring digital access to journals is another opportunity to the UoG LDS.

Higher Education Proclamation No. 650/2001

It is great to Universities Libraries which gives autonomy to UoG to meet its objectives.

Intake capacity of the University

Implementation of the University's Business Process Re-engineering Method (BPR).

The new BPR Method is implemented in the Teaching and Learning Core process creates an environment for the Library to serve students better and increase their reading habits.

IV. CONCLUSION

After seeing the overall picture of UoG LDS we can conclude that based on the SWOT Analysis, the Library and Documentation Services, UoG shall concentrate on the weaknesses and overcome through providing better solutions like:

- Creating Library Website to be used as a strategic tool for service delivery, increased internal visibility of Library resources (Research outputs and documents).
- Improved accessibility for local, national and global resources by the users and their satisfaction i.e. quality services.
- Support the Teaching, Learning and Research Process and increasing the research productivity and encouraging research-led learning.
- Increase the support for the target groups, high lightened the student awareness skills on gender issues and HIV/AIDS.
- Increasing the Library's participation in national and international initiations and seek the reputation of the UoG Library, as well as the University.
- Providing utmost user satisfaction through best library services, maintaining infrastructure facilities and well organized System which suits to the modern technological world.

V. REFERENCES

- [1] Budd, J. M. (1998). The academic library: its context, its purpose and its operation, Englewood, Colorado: Libraries unlimited.
- [2] Carr, R. (2007). The academic research library in a decade of change. Oxford: Chinos Publishing.
- [3] Checkole, K. (2004) Ethiopia Study, paper commissioned for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005, The Quality Imperative [Online], Available: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001466/146635e.pdf>[Accessed: 13August 2008].
- [4] Edoke, B. E. (2000). Introduction to Library Science, Onitsha: Palm Publishing and Links Comp. Ltd.
- [5] Tadess, M. (2006). Ethiopia strategy support program (ESSP): A landscape of Knowledge Systems in Ethiopia: The case of public institutions involved in rural development. Paper submitted for ESSP Policy Conference 2006, 6 – 8 June, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.