

Marketing of information products and services: A case study of Allama Iqbal Library, University of Kashmir, Srinagar

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Abstract

The study deals with the Marketing of Information products and services with special reference to Allama Iqbal Library of University of Kashmir. The paper discusses about the need and importance of marketing of information products and services in Libraries. It also provides a detailed account of role of marketing practices in achieving the Libraries goals and objectives successfully in accordance with the user's requirements. The paper also throws light on the inherent challenges in the process of marketing. It presents a detailed account of how the Libraries are actively following the marketing approach in making their collections more and more visible and accessible in the present electronic age. The practice followed, particularly in Allama Iqbal Library for the marketing of its information products and services is specified here after consulting the Library website, Professional staff and some secondary source materials.

Keywords: Marketing of information products and services, marketing of Library materials, Marketing of Library resources, Marketing and utilization of Library resources. Marketing practices, Marketing challenges, Marketing of information in Allama Iqbal Library.

Introduction

Libraries and information centers are the storehouses of knowledge and information. The treasure of knowledge and information collected, stored, organized in Libraries is available in the form of books, journals, magazines, reports, pamphlets, newspapers, manuscripts, images, films, recordings, audio and video materials etc. All these reading materials are collected now-a-days in print as well as in non print version. In addition to the explicit knowledge, Libraries also record, collect, store and organize the tacit knowledge after recording from eminent personalities, highly reputed and distinguished scientists, scholars and famous authors. The Libraries and information Centers across the globe are busy in the process of preservation and conservation of their collections so as to make the same accessible to those who have the thirst of information and knowledge. Libraries are the social institutions that have come to play an important role in sharing, retrieval, dissemination and communication of information irrespective of age, sex, religion, caste, creed and colour etc. They are always open for use and are continuously enriched with the latest, up-to-date information for the benefit of Library users. In the present era of Information and Communication Technology, Libraries leave no stone unturned in utilizing the modern technology in order to make their collection accessible and visible for optimum use on 24x7 bases. In order to ensure that the collection in Libraries and information centers is put to use for the readers to a maximum level, there arises the need for marketing of information products and services in Library and information centers.

Marketing practices

According to Kotler, (1999) Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of goods, services and ideas to create exchanges with target groups that satisfy objectives of patrons and organizations. Rowley (2001) says marketing is a management process that anticipates, identifies and supplies customers needs effectively and efficiently. Marketing is therefore, a process dealing with certain information products and services by adopting ideal strategies efficiently to fulfill the organizational objectives. One of the most important tasks of marketing is to inspire and invite the attention of more and more users towards available information products and services thereby to accelerate the use of Library resources to a great extent. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, the father of Library and Information Science and a renowned personality in India has also propounded his five laws for collection and use of information in Library and information centers.

After the advent of Information and Communication technology, Libraries have begun to market their resources by employing latest technology and have started displaying and making their holdings visible for users through their respective web pages/websites. The Library website acts as screen to showcase the details of all types of available resources. In all types of Libraries particularly in the academic institutions, the websites are updated regularly to help and guide the users about the contained information relevant to their subject field or topic of study.

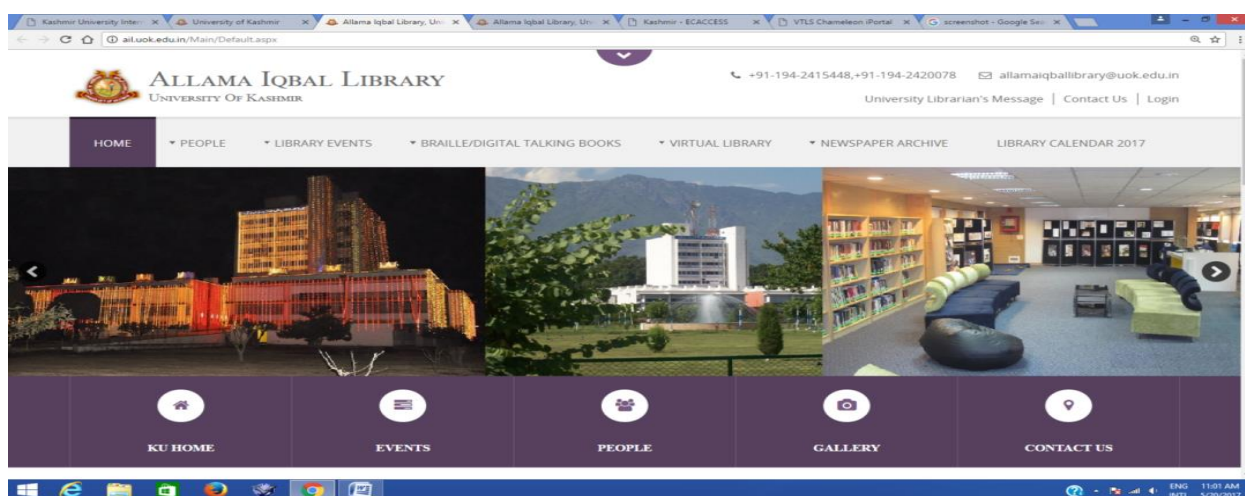
Challenges in marketing practice

While marketing, the Libraries encounter numbers of challenges like the rising prices of different reading

materials be it a book, journal, magazine, manuscripts or any other product. On one hand the prices are going up and on the other hand the Library budgets are shrinking day by day. The users also put forth their demands for new, latest, up-to-date, costly electronic and print resources. Similarly, the needs of users are increasing day by day. There is an overload of information known as information explosion that is also a concern for Library marketing practices. Marketing practice in Libraries also demand Librarians for acquiring latest professional skills to sustain in the profession and deliver the right information in the right way. Libraries have to be well prepared for effective

and efficient delivery of information and it is mandatory of Library staff to be well versed with the knowledge of web/electronic resources. There is need for making good relation with the users in order to make them familiar with the products and service. They also need to know the users perception in quest of knowledge to ensure the marketing of Library resources at a tremendous pace. There should be no compromise on the users' demands. Time has changed and the libraries have to embrace new developments taking place in the field of information and communication technology to run various kinds of housekeeping operations.

Marketing Practices in Allama Iqbal Library



Allama Iqbal Library main website

From the historical point of view Allama Iqbal Library System starts from 1948 with the establishment of "University of Jammu and Kashmir". Its foundation was laid to cater to the research and academic requirements of the students, scholars and teachers of the varsity. After the bifurcation of earlier established University of Jammu and Kashmir in the year 1969, the Library resources were shared among the Libraries of two Universities Viz., Jammu University and Kashmir University. In the year 1975, the Central Library of the Kashmir University was shifted to its presently located seven storied building. In the year 1984, it was renamed as Iqbal Library and later on as Allama Iqbal Library in the month of July 2002. The Library is presently the hub of University Academic System, with more than fifty seven (57) Departmental Libraries attached with different Departments, Centers, and the Institutes of research of the University. The Allama Iqbal Library is the largest library system in the of Jammu and Kashmir State and it fulfills the academic requirements of a huge number of University Community comprising of students, research scholars and faculty members across various disciplines. The Allama Iqbal Library is housed with 16 divisions in a well managed and systematically decorated with a meritorious and well qualified professional staff. The library offers useful academic and research oriented services to the user community in a clean, calm and tranquil atmosphere.

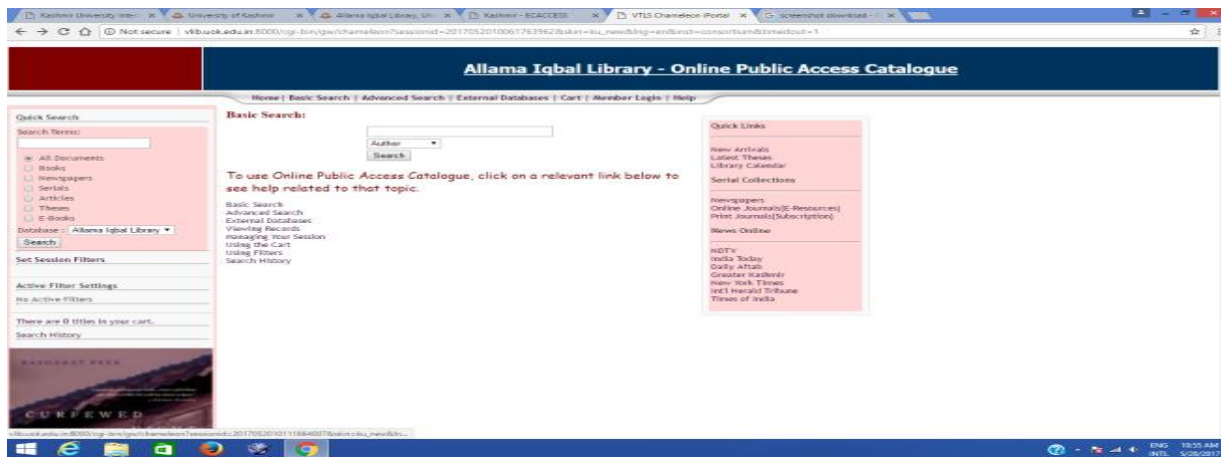
The holdings of the library in print and non-print format for marketing include:

Print and Non-Print materials

Books	6,30,000
Journal (Back volumes)	56,000
Digitized books	17000
Rare books	1400
Thesis & Dissertations	1430
DVD & CDROM	540
Manuscripts	410

Daisy Books (Digital talking books)	165
Microfilms	20
Microfiche	15

Library Web OPAC



The Library is fully automated and all the collection has been searchable through Web Opac designed and developed by its competent professionals and IT staff by using Virtua software. By using the Web OPAC of the Library, the users can get to know about the informtmon relevant to their subject or topic. The OPAC offers many options for searching like basic and advanced searching of books, searials, newspapers, and theses etc. It saves the time of the users in finding the particular needed document and shows also the location of that very document in the Library. The users can search by title, author, publisher, ISBN, ISSN, or any other key word etc.

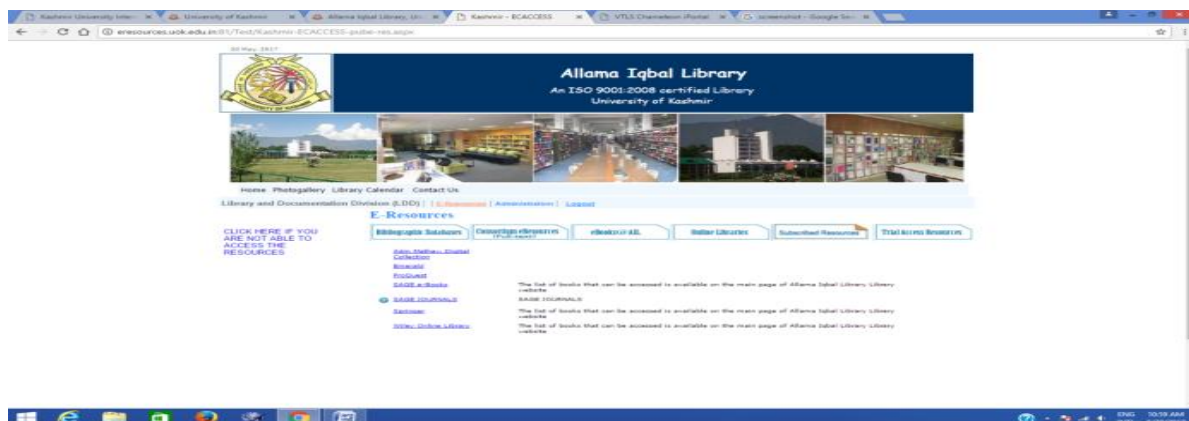
eShodh Sindhu

e-Shodh Sindhu is an alternative platform in which three consortia have been merged i.e. UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, NLIST and INDEST-

AICTE Consortium. The e-ShodhSindhu enables current as well as archival access to more than fifteen thousand peer-reviewed, core journals and a number of citations, bibliographic and factual databases in various disciplines from across variety of publishers and aggregators to the member institutions, centrally-funded technical institutions, Colleges and Universities.

e-Shodh Sindhu is a E-Resources Consortia for Higher Education and its objective is to ensure access to electronic resources of quality material including bibliographic, full text and citation databases to intuitions of academic and research at a low rates for purpose of subscription. The University of Kashmir is a member of e-Shodh Sindhu Consortia and has a distinction of having covered under this umbrella in the fifth stage. This is a very rich source of information for academic libraries for marketing of information products and services.

EZ Proxy



In the process of marketing, the Library has designed and developed its own Ez proxy server for the use of authenticated users. After getting an authorized log in, the users can get access to (Library products) online resources at any time feasible to them at remote locations. All the online resources like e-journals, ebooks, eZines, bibliographic, textual and citation database have been put for use through the Ezproxy server. The e-resources that are on subscription as well as available via eShodh Sindhu are accessible through the above server of the Library. Some of the database which are on subscription and those which are available through eShodh Sindhu consortia are prominently presented here with snapshots.

J Gate Plus

The University is getting access to J-Gate Custom Content for Consortium (JCCC) which is a one point platform, designed and developed as a gateway of access to e-journals and database solution. It acts as a one point aggregator to about 8000+ e-journals subscribed under UGC INFONET Digital library consortium as well as those University Libraries who have been designated as the Centers of Inter Library Loan (ILL) apart from index to open access journals. UGC INFLIBNET has chosen 22 academic institutions as potential in the country Universities as ILL Centers to fulfill ILL needs of the users related to Universities coming under UGC- Infonet Digital Library Consortium. A facility of triggering an e-mail request under JCCC for articles to Inter Library Loan Centers and to INFLIBNET Centre is available. It offers a variety of search options for users like, by title, by author, by subject etc. It also saves the record of searched information for reference in the shape of search history. In addition to this, it also enables users to see marked results against the hits attempted by them in searching topics relevant to them.

MathSciNet and IEEE Explore

MathSciNet is an online electronic platform providing access to easily searchable and carefully maintained database of abstracts, reviews and bibliographic information related to the literature of mathematical sciences. Each year, more than 80,000 new titles are added of which many of them are classified as per scheme of Mathematics Subject Classification. Identification of authors is uniquely made and the search for information is individual author based instead of name string. In order to ensure the continuity of the traditions of publication of papers, Mathematical Reviews (MR) being published since 1940, reviewing experts are being selected by the professional staff of mathematicians for purpose of reviewing of the currently published literature. In it about 60,000 reviews are included to the database per year. To carry on its tradition, MathScinet collection includes more than 2 million titles and provides

700,000 links directly to original papers. Collection of reference lists is done and then compared internally from amongst 300 journals, and databases of citation, articles, authors, and reviews. This citation database enables users to know much about the influence and history of publications of research in the mathematical sciences.

While as the other IEEE Explore is for Electronic, Computer and Engineering Departments. They are both available to the University of Kashmir through eShodh Sindhu Consortia.

Web of SCIENCE and SciFinder

Both of these databases are accessible under the said server and the University is getting access to them through eShodh Sindhu Consortia. Web of Science, enables access to the top ranking citation databases of the world. Its searching capability range is about 10,000 journals in about 45 various languages in arts, sciences, social sciences, humanities streams with 1900 back files. Its citation facility enables the user to navigate backward, forward, and search journal articles including journals and proceedings based on books. It has an Analyze Tool that helps to find the hidden patterns and trends, and helps in gaining insights into the newly unexplored fields of research, identifying highly standard institutions, researchers, and journals, and ascertaining the history of different fields of study. There is facility of perpetual access available through Web of Science to its member institutions who are on subscription before 2016, however, the new member institutions is provided access to back-files of 20 years old on lease basis.

SciFinder Scholar is an online research tool that enables campus-wide access to most comprehensive and largest database in Bio-chemistry, Chemistry, engineering, biotechnology, life sciences and allied sciences from CAS without any interruption. SciFinder Scholar is one point single window platform that helps to navigate in a number of unique ways the scientific information and knowledge.

These are the bibliographic databases and provide bibliographic information. In addition to that these database also provide links to textual database/information across a wide range of subject fields. These databases always remain in demand from large number of users and are often consulted for use. They have proved a long way very helpful for Libraries in marketing and have sustained their reliability and commitment.

Wiley online library and South Asian Archive

The above two resources are also available to the University for marketing under eShodh Sindhu Consortia and are constantly being consulted by user's community of Library. Wiley online Library provides access to many eContents while as the other one provide archival information to the users of related

subjects available in it. These types of electronic resources have surely made the Library presentable and charming.

Shodhganga and World eBook Library

Shodhganga is an online repository of electronic thesis and dissertations looked after by UGC INFLIBNET. The link to this database is given on the main website of the Library where under one can get full text access to a variety of theses and dissertations on 24x7 bases. Similarly, World e-Book Library (WeL): The World e-Book Library including 3 million (30, 00,000) primary sources spanning past 1,000 years

of world history in more than 320 different languages. In addition, contemporary journal collections of WeL include scholarly journals and academic articles from every academic field.

World eBook Library is very rich source providing access to world class eBook collection. The availability of electronic theses and dissertations has surely helped in the elimination of duplication of research in academic institutions. It also helps the researchers to know what has been published till date on any topic in any subject. The world eBook Library has greatly helped to fulfill the quest of readers who want to learn and study via eBook collection.

DELNET Database



The Library is actively subscribing for DELNET Database keeping in mind the academic requirements of users. Under this database, access to wide variety of open access journals in different subject fields is available. DELNET (Developing Library Network) provides also access to more than 10,000 eBooks and has enabled it document delivery through inter library loan. In addition to this, this database gives access to more than 100 medical journals to users. The establishment of DELNET was made with an objective of promoting sharing of resources between the Libraries by way of developing the network of libraries across the nation. It is aimed at to store, collect, and disseminate information and knowledge. Apart from this it also offers the users with the online computerized services, to make possible efforts for judicious development of collections and to avoid duplication of research wherever necessary.

There is an active role of DELNET in the compilation of different kinds of Union Catalogues pertaining to the resources that are available in the libraries who are its members. It has created in advance the Union List of Current Periodicals, Union Catalogue of Books, CD-ROM Database, Database of Indian Specialists, Union Catalogue of Periodicals, Database of Periodical Articles, Urdu Manuscripts' Database, Union List of Video Recordings, Database of Theses and Dissertations and sample databases of language publications using GIST technology and several other databases. The data in these databases is being regularly updated and is rapidly growing. All the databases of DELNET have been resident on DELSIS, which is the in-house BASIS plus developed software, product of Information Dimensions Inc. of USA an RDBMS that has been given by National Informatics Centre, New Delhi to DELNET.

Many types of facilities are being provided by DELNET (Developing Library Network) to its members Libraries for the benefit of Users. DELNET has been relentlessly making efforts in the terms of sharing of resources among Libraries and Information Centers in an effective and efficient way. In the process of modernization of Library sources and services throughout India DELNET has played a pivotal role.

Adm Mathew Digital Collection



The Collection is useful to navigate the history of South Asia between the foundation of the East India Company in 1615 and the getting of independence by India and Pakistan in 1947, through the rich and vast manuscript collections of the National Library of Scotland. Adam Matthew presents a unique collection of primary sources from archives across the world. It contains collection in Humanities and Social Sciences and covers multiplicity of topics like global politics, Medical family life Victorian medicine to 1960s pop culture. It has collaboration with academics and leading libraries of the world for producing strong research and active teaching collections for College and University Libraries. Its mission is to augment the goal electronic learning environment.

ProQuest Times of India



This newspaper is historical and gives access to researchers, genealogists, and scholars with easily-searchable online, first-hand information about politics, society and events of the time. Its coverage is from 1838-2007. ProQuest Historical Newspapers enables the researchers to explore digitally and different dimensions of historical events From leading events and issues, like the U.S. Civil War, westward expansion, immigration, race relations, industrial developments, and World War I and world war II including regional and local politics, arts, society, business, culture, and sports, ProQuest Historical Newspapers offers details about latest news coverage for historical explorers, researchers and providing invaluable scripts and information to users across variety of disciplines. The link to the archive is available under Ezproxy for use by authentic users.

The Library provides following services for purpose of marketing of its information products:

1. Indexing and abstracting service
2. Reference
3. Circulation service
4. Current awareness service
5. Selective Dissemination of information
6. Literature search service
7. Internet access service
8. Newspaper clipping service
9. Conduction of book exhibitions/conferences, seminars and workshops.
10. User orientation service
11. Display of new arrivals
12. Self check in check out for issue and return of books

13. Wifi connectivity round the clock
14. 24x7 Library facility
15. Inter library loan
16. Reprography
17. Printing of all types of reading materials
18. Remote access to e-resources
19. Retro-Conversion
20. Professional training to Library Staff of College and Departmental Libraries
21. Technical support
22. Library services for visually Impaired and much more

Activities being performed by Allama Iqbal Library for promotion of Library services

The library performs the following activities for the promotion of library services

- Exhibition of Rare Books available in Allama Iqbal Library;
- Photo Exhibition of World Renowned Libraries;
- Prize and Certificate distribution to the most Frequent Users of Allama Iqbal Library;
- Release of books published by Library famous authors, scientists, and scholars;
- Organizing Question Answer quiz about Best-selling Books and famous Authors among the users and providing them on-the-spot Prizes for giving answers correctly;
- Conduct of seminars and workshops on the different themes related to Library operations and activities;
- Conduct of user's orientation and awareness programmes.
- The Library through its notice board and website keeps the users informed about the latest updates. In addition to this the modern social networking techniques are also used like twitter, YouTube, whatsapp etc to keep the users well informed about Library sources and services.

Conclusion

In Libraries and information Centers, Marketing is not a new concept but it has been in vogue for centuries. The Libraries are social institutions and have been constantly carrying their mission of marketing by fulfilling the academic, research and recreational needs of people throughout the globe. In all types of societies, Libraries have come to stay and have maintained their relevance by providing relentless services to their clientele. Libraries are always busy in the marketing of their products and service from School, College to University level amongst the users, irrespective of age, sex, religion, caste and colour etc. They are socially recognized institutions in the form of Public, Academic and Special Libraries and are catering the needs of users according to their convenience. To carry forward the legacy for which these types of Institutions are known, Allama Iqbal Library lags no behind in the

practice of marketing and is offering variety of information products and services to its users comprising of faculty members, scholars and students. However, there is always scope for improvement and the Library is always stand for its clientele and encourages for feedback from all its beneficiaries to make its service more and more marketable and demandable. Generally speaking, it is for Librarians, Professionals and Library scientists to review the objective, mission and of course vision of Library profession and formulate / adopt certain marketing strategies in order to maintain the sanctity of the noble profession of Librarianship.

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