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Survey on

Dissemination of Science & Technology Information in

Sri Lanka Scientific & Technical Information Network Libraries Using Information Technology

By

V.N. Perera

(Student No. LISI/R/77/98)

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
Master's Degree in Library & Information Science

Dept. of Library & Information Science
Faculty of Social Science
University of Kelaniya
Kelaniya

August 1998

Abstract

Libraries use print and non-print materials to retrieve and disseminate information collected from various sources. Among one hundred (100) Sri Lanka Scientific & Technical Information Network (SLSTINET) libraries, some used printed based resources while others were using both printed and non-printed resources. This survey attempts to examine the problems confronted by libraries, which are in the process of automation, to identify how Information Technology (IT) is used in retrieval and dissemination of information to recognize the information media, services and products used by libraries.

Four types of libraries were considered in this survey; 68 special libraries, 19 university libraries, 12 government libraries and the National library. Data from the 67 responded libraries (42 special libraries (62%), 7 government libraries (58%), 14 university libraries (74%) and the National library) were analyzed.

The analysis shows that Information technology (IT) affects every aspect of every library service. New advancements in technologies has already turned library automation into a continuing process in which librarians need to be aware of more affordable, highly efficient and reliable systems available to improve the services. Among SLSTINET members, 4.7% of special libraries (2) and 28.5% of government libraries (2) were using traditional methods to disseminate information because of the non-availability of computer facilities. Libraries faced problems, such as non-availability of hardware, software, lack of IT trained manpower and lack of funds in computerizing their libraries.

Most of the library staff had been exposed to various types of IT training. IT training had been provided for professional staff than para-professional and non-professional staff.

Computer facilities were available at all the university libraries, 95.5% of special libraries, 71.4% of government libraries and the National Library. More than 50% of libraries that responded had computerized catalogues for dissemination of information. The use of the computerized catalogue helps in fast retrieval, exchange and printing of bibliographic

information. Users have the benefit of simultaneous access to the same database if the system is available in a network environment. Only 6 special libraries and 6 university libraries had library on LANs (Local Area Networks) and 2 university libraries had web catalogue. The functions of the libraries such as serial control, acquisition, article indexing, SDI, & CAS were in automated environment in few libraries. The National Library had used IT facilities only for cataloguing, acquisition and serial management functions.

High percentage of special libraries (61.9%) and government libraries (71.4%) had used CDS/ISIS software for computerizing their catalogue. High percentage of university libraries (78.5%) uses both CDS/ISIS and locally developed integrated system "Purna".

Dissemination of information among member libraries through E-mail was highest in the university libraries (71.4%) and lower in special libraries (52.3%) and government libraries (57.1%). 16.1% of special libraries, 42.8% of government libraries and 44.4% of university libraries did not have Internet facilities. In general, it is observed that the use of IT facilities for information handling among SLSTINET member libraries has begun.