

Destiny of Book and Libraries in the Digital Age

Fariba Jalili,

Master of Science, Islamic Azad University, Hamadan Branch, Iran
Corresponding Author Email: Faribajalili62@gmail.com

Atefeh Zarei,

Faculty member, Islamic Azad University, Hamadan Branch, Iran

Maryam Hemmati

Master of Science, Islamic Azad University, Hamadan Branch, Iran

ABSTRACT— In today's modern world, many changes have been occurred in book and book reading and this arena has changed very much, many of literary men believe that published and non-electronic books have maintained their standing between publishers, libraries and readers and will maintain too. Albeit, it is obvious that electronic books can decrease the boom of hard copy books in the publication market but these two types cannot eliminate the other from traditional publishing market or modern market of book completely in a country or all around the world. The current paper tries to define digital library and investigate advantages and challenges of these evolutions in addition to providing a definition about evolutionary trend of book in the digital age.

Keywords: book, library, digital library, electronic library

Introduction

Some believe that in the world in which phenomena such as radio, television, video, computer and satellite have expanded everywhere and grown, talking about book and its role in human life is difficult and even meaningless. They believe that creation of any new media results in the previous phenomenon to be paled. Even video and TV are outworn and find nowhere by emerging of computer and satellite, and meantime, book is more previous than everything and its elimination from this rapid arena is more probable. The day that thoughts and consequently art of human had not been developed up to this extent, book was playing its media role very well; history remembers many symptoms about this claim, but, flourishing of human reason and the emergence of new inventions led to retreat of book and today, book thinks to its survival behind this accelerating and dynamic caravan difficultly. After invention of cinema, its deceptive effects caused some people to believe that theater, the historical human art will not survive more and cinema will outdo theater, but some people who had lived many years with theater and had found its value and greatness as a human art, believed that emergence of this new born and modern competitor in the world of theater arts not only will not result in theater forgotten but also will make it more pure and another soul will insert it its body [1]. Methods used in written communication have been changed many times during the history. For example, clay tablets give its place to papyrus, and manuscript on vellum in turn was replaced with papyrus. Publication on paper, also was replaced with manuscript on vellum. In this way, there is no record and symptom to prove this belief that publication on paper will remain always as a superior formal medium for communication. In fact, it is surely possible that lifetime of publication on paper to be less than periods of dominance of other forms, namely to be measured by hundreds of years. Now, society finds itself at the early steps of natural evolution in communication, namely from publication on paper to electronic communication. Whether or not, destiny of paper publication will be replaced with electronic methods entirely more or less [2]. We without aiming to deny valuable presence of new media and close our eyes to significant symptoms of each of these surprising phenomena in complexities of human life, and neglect changing behavior and thoughts, believe that it has been more pure in competition with modern phenomena; therefore, re-exploring of this role in history has its importance [1]. Although librarian community has been aligned with evolutions of global society during past decades and has tried to be associated with technological progresses, but emergence of two great informational revolutions have intensified trend of these changes that have made it immediate and inevitable urgency to revise, change and even dissent in many processes and standards [3].

Change challenge

If digital technology is such unique, what prevents libraries to be entirely digital? A part of the answer is that digital libraries technology is not mature yet, but attempts for it are more extensive than the technology itself. An effort is required with dimensions similar to ability of individuals and institutions to find ways for more effective use of technology, attract changes and create social frameworks. The world of information has many participants that each of them are shared in providing of experience, profession and resources. In order to make fundamental changes in the system, some change must be made in social, economic and legal relations between these participants. Digital libraries depend on people and it is not possible to introduce them sooner than when people are ready to accept. This principle is true for builders, operators and support experts of information identically. Relations between these groups is changing. Using digital libraries, operators access information directly

and do not go to library building and expert people as a medium. Writers may do more measures in preparation of a writing. Experts need new technics and trainings to support these new relationships. Schools and educational institutions will adapt their libraries with these change but many years is required to apply these change in the system. Many hundred-year traditions are very deep. It seems that in all of cases except some special ones, traditional and digital libraries will be together and publishers will be able to maintain the market for their traditional works. But, huge decrease in maintaining of computer systems and dramatic increase in capabilities sometimes result in complete replacement. Computer processors have been replaced with typewriters during less than 10 years. Card index of libraries have replaced in the same way. In 1980 only a few libraries were financially able to have computer indexes. After 20 years, card indexes are joining to the history of libraries in United States. In some special fields, digital libraries may be completely replaced entirely with resources of traditional libraries. In long-term, no obstacle is seen on the way of digital libraries and electronic publication. There are technical, social, economic and legal efforts but these problems will be removed gradually. We are not yet sure that digital libraries how exactly will seem, but it is obvious that there have come to remain [4].

What is digital library?

Digital library can be defined like this: "A controlled environment which provides integral accessibility to a huge volume of informational services through appropriate legal and commercial frameworks regardless of whereabouts, information form and the authentication area" and in other definition on digital library it is considered as an organization which provides resources including expert employees for selection, organization, access, interpretation, distribution, maintenance and durability guarantee of digital work in a way that these resources are ready and accessible to be used by a specific individual of a set of groups. In fact, it can be said that digital (electronic) library is a library in which documents are saved in electronic form instead of paper of other local media. Basis of these libraries is storage of records in electronic form and also electronic usage. In this way, anybody all around the world may access to all information of a huge library using a common computer and a telephone line. Thus, it only need to collect these books and place them in storage units of these kind of libraries [5]. Digital libraries are not alternatives for traditional libraries, but they are considered an extension for them. There are three reasons that why digital libraries have more advantages rather than traditional ones: the first reason is that despite new methods for storing data, books and publications are not sufficient for provision of data of a modern library. The second reason is that guarantee to keep and maintain historical documents and contents is one of the main asks of libraries and archives all around the world. The third reason is that information are accessible for anybody who access internet from any point in the world by creation of digital libraries there are on internet [6].

Disadvantages of digital library

Although digital libraries have advantages, but they are not free from drawback. They include digital sets which are mainly in digital or electronic form. Electronic publications have their managerial issues compared to hard copies. These issues include infrastructure, accessibility, access constraints, reading standardization, confirmation, protection, copy right, interface environment for operator, etc. Digitalizing is the most important among these issues [7].

Ricco [8] suggests that disadvantages of digital libraries are more than their advantages. But, he believes that these problems will be removed by progress of technology. He said that now, disadvantages of digital libraries include the followings:

- Operators must remember different passwords for various products.
- Coverage area and accessibility of archives are often limited.
- Transmission and publishing of content are faced problems often.
- There is no saving when products are kept in both digital and hard copy forms.
- All resources are not accessible in digital form.
- There are constraints for use of products from an agent to other one.
- Digital libraries need computer networks to be accessible.
- It is not possible for operators to open resources and use them randomly.
- Operators are more comfortable to use books.

Web as a digital library

Some people talk about web in a way as if it is a stop till creation of fully digital libraries. A reason for this thought is that people who belong to other professions have problem to accept this fact that major works of digital libraries are done by physicists of a laboratory in Switzerland not by librarians or famous experts in computer sciences. But, web is not a subsidiary way to create real digital libraries but also it is the core of development of this kind of libraries. Furthermore, some people who are not familiar with digital sets, suggest some comments about web information including two major complaint about low quality and lack of access to them. These two critics are valid to some extent but it is far from truth. There is a huge volume of information in the web that most of them are worthless. But there is many service providers which have high quality information. Finding information in web is difficult but there are facilities and services that operator can find them having the lowest amount of cleverness. As a simple software in personal computer transformed to operating systems, web can be the basis of new generations of digital libraries [4].

Conclusion

The most important advantage of digital library compared to traditional ones is that digital libraries have no time and space constraints in information providing and officials must know that propelling traditional libraries to digital libraries is a crucial issue. We hope someday we will create digital libraries in Iran too so that we provide researchers access to information sources with more quickly. It is needed to creation of digital library as a national plan.

References

1. Stipevic A. Book in History. (Translation: Azhir HA, Sheikhi HR). Mshhad, Islamic Researches Foundation. 1994.
2. Lancaster, 1982.
3. Zhang Y, Sabala A. FRBR implementation in libraries. (Translation: Gilveri A.) Tehran: Ketabdar Publication. 1965
4. Arms AY. Digital libraries. (Translation: Shakouri F, et al). Tehran: Chapar Publication 2003.
5. Sharif-Abadi S. Digital libraries. Proceeding of conference on digital libraries of evolution of traditional libraries. Tehran: Dabizesh Publication. 2002.
6. Naeemi SH. Electronic, digital and virtual library: differences and similarities. Tehran: Khaneh Publication. 2013.
7. Gopal K. Digital libraries in electronic information age. (Translation: Rostami AR.) Tehran: Chapar Publication. 2004.
8. Ricco HM. Features the virtual library past, present & future" [online] available: <http://www.llrx.com/features/virtuallibrary.htm>. 2001.