

## **Repository: A Collection Management Tool**

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(**Abstract** : Space management is an important aspect of collection management. This paper try to focus on the use of 'repository' as a modern management tool for collection management in academic libraries)

### **1. Introduction**

Academic libraries are currently engaged in a period of rapid change, they are being transformed into Learning Resources Centres. The libraries have to cope up with the changing needs of the user community. They have to serve a wide range of information needs of users ranging from curriculum based needs of students to teaching needs of teachers and highly specialized needs of researchers.

The crux of any academic library is its collection. This collection built over the years is a result of efforts made by teachers and librarians to satisfy the needs of the users. It is evident that this collection built over a period of time is of prime importance but the effective management of this carefully built collection is very important. Today libraries are at cross roads where they have to create space to store the expanding print collection and also space for IT based services. Due to this trend space pressure to refit new requirements of students is very much in vogue in the academic libraries. The dynamics of campus space constraints, high construction costs and changing pattern of usage has led to new equation in space management. This is where collection management is required where both the print and non print collection in the library has to be maintained and provided access in the existing budget provision.

### **2. Collection Management**

There is a tendency to use the terms collection development and collection management synonymously, but collection development is concerned with selection,

acquisition and building library collection whereas collection management is about the systematic maintenance and management of library's existing collection. Collection Management can be seen as day to day implementation of collection development policies, extending to cover those aspects of library operations and services concerned with making the collection available to the library users.

Cogwell (1987) says that Collection Management is 'systematic management of the planning, composition, funding, evaluation and the user of library collections over extended periods of time in order to meet specific institutional objectives'.

Some of the aspects that seem to contribute for effective collection management are regularly reviewed collection development policy, assessment of users needs, evaluation of existing collection, ongoing programmes of collection maintenance which include preservation, weeding, relegation, discard and planning for co-operation among similar libraries, all these. It is easy to implement it are based on agreed written guidelines. But it is to be remembered that collection management is not a set of discrete tasks but a co-ordinated programme involving all units of the library.

### **3. Need for collection Management**

Collection Management is essential in academic libraries as the expectations from these libraries have increased. These are some of the reasons which warrant for effective collection management. Firstly, the academic libraries are experiencing budget difficulties this economic constraint leads to shrinking book funds, fewer staff, insufficient space coupled with prices of academic books and serials rising faster than the general inflation rate.

Secondly, the amount of publishing is showing no signs of diminishing in quantity. The abundance of information makes the user demand for his subject specific works from the library.

Thirdly, as the purchasing power of budget decreases the demands from the management for accountability increase, the librarian is under great pressure to ensure that the financial resources available to him is being used effectively thereby the users satisfaction is achieved. The pressure on higher education institution for quality services have also to be met in the available resources.

Fourthly, the new technology has significant impact on library operations. There is a increased demand for e-services, online journals, e-books and various databases are to be subscribed. Users demand separate study areas with multimedia tools, booths for

group work, wifi systems etc. The librarian has to balance both in terms of finance and also space in the library.

Fifthly, the librarian has to meet the challenges of storing information in digital media. Preservation of information in digital media needs regular migration of data to more current hardware and software configuration to maintain accessibility. Thus technological obsolescence, migrations of digital information, legal and organizational issues are also to be taken care of.

#### **4. Space Constraint and Collection Management**

With the libraries turning into Library Resource Centres, suitable learning space has to be created for the new services; all this has made physical space of the library a critical asset. In order to strike a right balance between both print and electronic resources, extension of buildings to accommodate the growing print collection and also to create space for the new requirements of the users is necessary. But libraries are encountering parent institutions' reluctance for new or extension of buildings, because the capital required to fund new buildings has grown substantially and there is a popular belief that with the uptake of digitization the requirement of additional space must have to be reduced. It is often believed that all information is or soon will be available in digital form on the internet but the reality is not so, it is clear that the current mass digitization efforts will fall short of encompassing all print content. The emphasis of such programs is on popular rather than References or research oriented material and the types of items found in special collections are largely excluded. Hence finding a long term solution to growing print collection of libraries has been bothering the librarians for many years. It is obvious that the materials acquired to libraries to support current research and teaching programs are of enduring value as they have undergone the process of selection from the faculty members and are expected to be preserved for future use.

In Indian scenario printed collection forms the major part of the collection in the academic libraries. The large university libraries over a period of time have enriched their collection to meet the teaching and researchers needs of their institution. This has led to steady increase in the collection which has occupied all the stack area of the libraries and corresponding extension of library building to accommodate the growing collection has not occurred. Hence the problem of space constraint has arisen. In this era of shrinking budgets, the libraries have responsibilities of catering the needs of users keeping in view of the present trends. They also have the responsibility of preservation, maintenance and providing access to earlier information in print. Though acquisition of digital content had promised to relieve space pressures on the large libraries, the demand

for more publicly accessible terminals is often satisfied by encroaching the space meant for housing the print collections. One of the impacts of digital revolution on libraries has been to bring about changes in the utilization of physical space; they are generally in demand for space to be provided for public access, computing facilities and for shared networked teaching and learning areas.

It is evident that all the library collection is not actively used, only a part of the collection is in heavy demand depending upon the curriculums. The entire remaining part cannot be termed as not useful and be weeded out. This passive collection also comprises of valuable and research rich collection which is less used. However this collection poses a problem for collection management as it occupies space and requires regular maintenance. To overcome this many leading libraries of the developed countries have opted for shifting them to offsite storages or repositories where they will be preserved and provided access as and when required. They are a boon to the libraries to overcome space problems where the valuable and less used documents are stored separately and retrieved as and when required by the users. Space constraints are the most common cause for storage. Repositories are the feasible solutions where the less used documents are shifted, as building new libraries would be far more expensive. The books in a remote storage are compactly shelved where more books can be accommodated in the same area. It's opined by scholars that repository is a better option for storing the less used collection of the libraries.

## 5. Repositories

The main aim of providing repositories is to retain books and other published materials when space runs out in the libraries. In making such a provision a further implied objective is to save money. On one hand, individual libraries will gain advantage through space savings in their libraries and on the other the potential to further improve service facilities for users and staff will be achieved. Reilly (2003) has defined repositories as 'a means through which multiple institutions work together and pool resources to manage significant portion of their holdings. They offer a shared space in which collection deposited by different libraries are maintained under a common regime: they are included in a common inventory control system, subjected to common standards for bar codes and labelling and shelved in standardized units. Their circulation is managed by a single organization.'

Jilvoski and Genoni (2005) describes print repository as a facility that brings together low use items from a number of libraries in a secure environment where they may be held indefinitely. This collaborative element which distinguishes the repository

from 'stores' owned by individual institutions, is the crucial factor in achieving the economics of scale that are essential to reducing the cost of long term storage. Genoni (2008) describes repositories as a joint library storage facility, the operation of which is supported by unified management policies and systems. The multi institutional and unified management and operational aspects of a repository provide it with its particular status are crucial to delivering its benefits, and distinguish it from a 'store'. Earlier acquiring physical copies of scholarly materials in a College/University library in anticipation of future demand was the most effective way to serve the need of users. As a result significant overlap developed between library collections with many scholarly materials being held in parallel at multiple institutions. The collection in libraries dealing with similar subjects is bound to overlap. If the overlapping of low use collection of libraries of a particular geographical area is stored in a repository, the best copy can be stored and rest of the libraries can weed out such material. Genoni (2007) also gives the benefits of repository libraries as threefold firstly, the relief from direct cost of storing and maintaining items of little use, secondly, permanent preservation and availability of low use materials in secure and cost effective storage; thirdly, the efficiency in discovery, retrieval and delivery of information which are possible in a repository environment which is not possible in a single library operating at a local level.

The cost efficiency of storage is accomplished to repository library by shelving books on the tall stacks rather than on traditional stacks and by sorting volumes by size rather than call number. Shelving like sized materials together increases shelving efficiency by many times. The life span of the paper-based materials under controlled environmental condition like a temperature of 55<sup>o</sup> Fahrenheit and 35% relative humidity

#### *A Growing Trend Around the World*

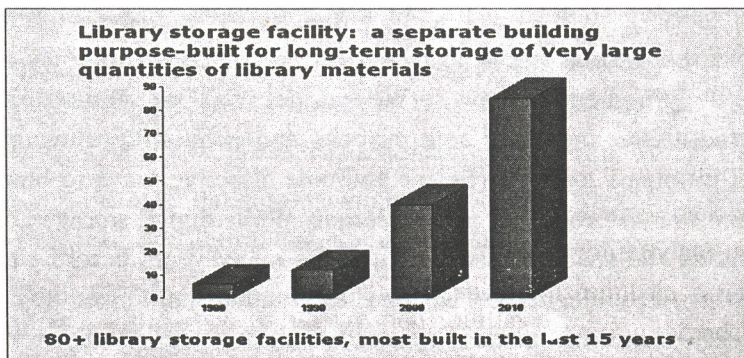


Chart 1

increases to 160 years. Payne (2008) gives the growth of library storage facilities through-out the world in last 15 years. The graph reveals the increasing trend towards growth of library storage facilities.

Hazen (2000) says “the promise that book stacks will shrink as digital collections replace print holdings have not yet borne fruit”. In this situation, repositories prove to be a compelling solution. After all the libraries today are judged not on how big it is but on how well they deliver. The academicians and researchers need to be assured that access is not dependent upon location. The Finnish National Repository Library, Finland; The Centre for Research Libraries, Chicago; Washington Research Library Consortium, Washington , The Research Collection and Preservation Consortium, New Jersey; CAVAL Archival and Research materials center (CARM), Australia; United Kingdom Research Reserve, Boston Spa are some of the leading repositories of the world.

## **6. Repository as a Collection Management tool**

Libraries all over the world have felt the need for release of space by storing lesser-used materials i.e. materials no longer critical to the institutional mission but of continuing value to the researchers. Space management is an important aspect of collection management. Library storage is clearly now a key component of the collection management strategies of major academic libraries. The establishment of print repositories not only reduces the space and cost associated with long term print storage but also optimizes the efficiency of discovery and delivery of low use material. O'Connor (2005) explores the place of the repository library in today's information world with five main lines to support his argument. Firstly the roles of conventional libraries have changed very significantly; secondly, the delivery of published information is going digital and affecting library budgets. Thirdly the amount of library space available to house ongoing collection growth as well as new functions is extremely limited. Fourthly, the economics of repositories needs to be set in the content of this new world order and finally, the development of new service models will re-vitalize old and emerging repository facilities generating new purpose and economic relevance. Libraries are facing great problems to find efficient and cost effective ways to house their existing collection and to make room for new materials. While digital storage hold great promise for ameliorating the space pressure, it may be many years before electronic versions supplant most print collections. The repository should be viewed as a live, active and accessible collection management tool rather than a 'dark store' for unwanted print items.

## 7. Conclusion

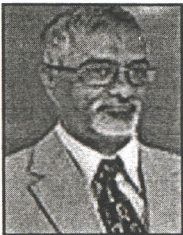
Collection Management is a more demanding concept, which goes beyond acquiring materials to policies on the housing, preservation and storage, weeding and discard of stock. It emphasizes the systematic maintenance and management of a library's existing collection. In view of all this libraries can find efficient and cost effective ways to house their existing collection and to make room for new materials by using the repository concept which is well established in the developed countries. Abby Smith (2004) questions when such an elegant solution as print repository is nearly at hand, what is preventing a full scale effort to build these repositories and enable local decision makers to focus on access rather than preservation?

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