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Proposal and Model for Designing a Cybrary - With Reference to Fr. Moseslibrary, Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kerala

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Abstract

Subject gateways are becoming one of the most commonly used media for effective and efficient delivery of information as it not only offers information about library resources and services, but also provides all the open access resources such as electronic books, electronic journals, online databases, online dictionary, encyclopedia, bibliography, software, etc. The Cybrary – Open Access Subject gateway proposal brings together all open access e-resources at one place so that the students, research scholars and faculty members may make optimum use of them. The building of a strong subject gateway for Library is needed in the present scenario as a tool which is useful for all users.

Keywords: Cybrary, Electronic Resources, Open Access Resources, Subject Gateway

1. Introduction

With the rapid growth of information in all disciplines and significant increase in the volume of research there exists a need to identify, organize and provide high quality information from around the web. The main objectives are:

- To meet the growing demand to access knowledge objects from anywhere at any time;
- To find reliable and comprehensive information in just a single click.
- Increased uncertainty over who will handle the task of preserving archived digital information from Scholarly/ Research materials.

When preparing a Detailed Project Proposal (DPR), it was noticed that a good amount of scholarly communications are generated from the different departments of any institution. It is also observed that there is no compilation of such publications at a central location and there is a need to develop some tool to have collection at one place.

All this led to this detailed proposal, "Proposal and Model for Designing Cybrary: Open Access Subject gateway".

2. Open Access E -Resources

Open Access refers to resources that are freely available for viewing and/or use. Open Access is not the same as Public Domain, and most Open Access creators do retain their copyrights. Open access can be applied to all forms of published research output, including peer-reviewed and non peer-reviewed academic journal articles, conference papers, theses, book chapters, and monographs.

"Open access resources are those materials on the world wide web that their creators make available for use without access restriction" Ochs and Saylor (2004) thus the OARS are not confined to scholarly community only, even though its driving force and primary purpose is academic and research communication. OARs can broadly be categorized as:

1. Open Access Journals (OAJ),
2. Open Access Institutional Repositories (OAIR), and
3. Open Access Software.

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3. Subject Gateway

Subject gateways are Internet- based services designed to help users locate high quality information available on the Internet. They are typically, databases which describe Internet resources and offer hyperlinks to the resources (Eldho, 2015)[1].

Subject gateways are online service that provides searchable and browsable catalogues of the Internet based resources. Subject gateway is an organized collection of resources on a given subject along with a retrieval mechanism. This essentially means that the scope of the search domain is well defined and limited to a subject. In the simplest form, the resources may be made available as a structured hyper linked directory as followed by some of the search engine sites that offer directory services. Subject gateways offer an alternative to the internet search engines and web directories. The content of a gateway is selected through some form of human input, normally a critical evaluation by information professional or subject expert.

4. Cybrary

In a simple sense, Cybrary means a collection of online reference material accessible online. It is a web - based collection of online databases of scholarly reference material. Cybrary - Open Access subject gateway is a web application tool intended for scholars/teachers and students who require various resources for teaching and learning such as e-books, e-journals, thesis and useful website addresses etc.

The Fr. Moses Library decided to aim at a "Cybrary" - a "virtual library" in a "wired institution" - which integrates state of the art information technology with traditional services. The cybrary concept - *a blend of cyber- and library* - has much in common with the hybrid library - a library in which access to a range of different information resources (printed and electronic, local and remote) is seamless, so that people use the resources which best suit their needs rather than those which are simply more easily available. (Pinfield, 1998) The cybrary is "a combination of real and virtual information resources, physical facilities and cyberspace and service delivery in person and online" (Schmidt, 2002).

Before this can happen, the user needs a front end that can access information in a variety of databases which are widely distributed and can contain a variety of information in different formats (Knight, 1997). Therefore, a key component of the Cybrary was to be a unified integrated Web interface to all Library collections and services.

In India some examples of cybrary are:

- Social Science Cyber Library, AMU - https://www.socsccybraryamu.ac.in/
- Banarus Hindu University Cyber Library - http://internet.bhu.ac.in/bhulibrary/cyberlibrary/

5. Objectives of the Proposal

The main objective is to design and develop a Cybrary - An open access subject gateway at Fr. Moses Library, Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kalamassery, Kerala. The following are the specific objectives:

To create a web application tool useful to all in need of subject related information providing access to high quality open access resources via a single portal.

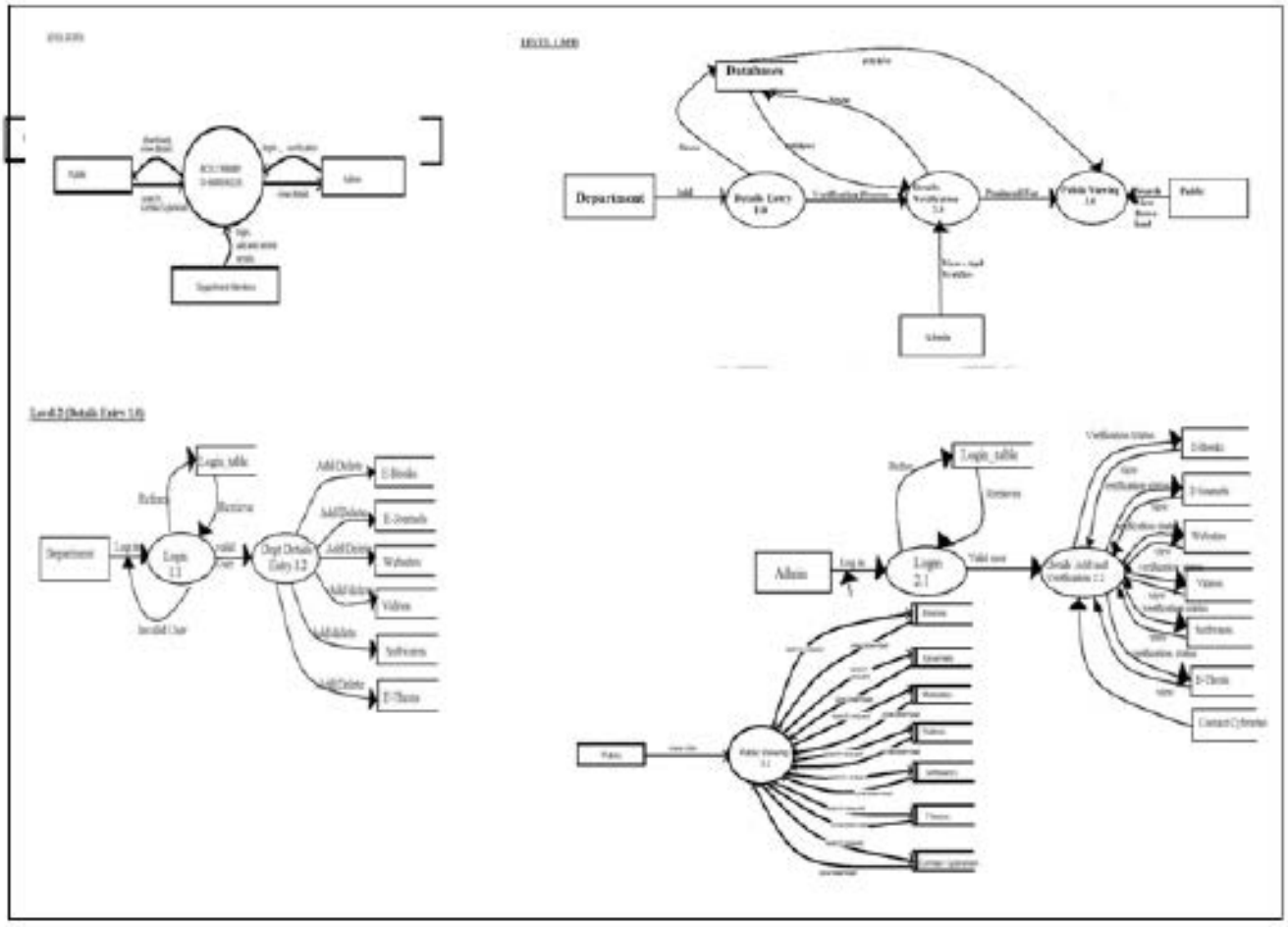
6. Why RCSS Cybrary – The need for Open Access Subject Gateway at RCSS

It has been noticed that a significant amount of scholarly communications are generated from different departments of Rajagiri College of Social Sciences. A Subject Gateway: Serves as an Open Access platform;

- Increases the visibility and prestige of an institution;
- Provides access to open access learning and teaching resources for specific courses;
- Assuming that a significant amount of content is deposited, subject gateways can lead to cost savings in the long run;
- The tasks in developing and running such a facility include: Regular uploading of data on to the repository;
- Continuous scrutiny, review and evaluation of resources;
- Removing dead links;
- Frequent discussions with faculty and scholars to keep a tab on focus areas; and
- Identification of and inclusion of new and relevant open access resources.

RCSS Cybrary Open Access Subject gateway contains information on online union catalogues of books, theses and serial publications. Web-links are provided to various National Libraries, open access resources of variety of

Graphical Representation of the System



subjects and databases. The said gateway is accessible through Internet and it is very useful to students, staff, researchers and general public and libraries of the various organizations.

The RCSS Cybrary Subject Gateway is an open gateway providing access to sources that meet the information needs of users.

7. The Cybrary

RCSS Cybrary - Digital Knowledge Repository is intended for scholars/teachers and students of the college. There are 3 levels of users in the System:

- Admin,
- Departments, and
- Users.

The Admin has the privilege to view and verify the details entered by the various Departments and can delete the details if necessary. The Admin can also view the messages sent to him by various users.

The Departments can enter details of e-books, e-journals, Software, theses and useful website addresses. They can also search the details and delete the entered details.

The Users can search, view and download the details as per requirement and can contact the Cybrarian by sending messages.

Subject gateways are important tools in higher and technical education for providing access to electronic resources. In the system described here all the information is verified by experts before and after uploading it. Before uploading, it will be checked by the subject experts of the concerned departments and afterwards admin will be verifying its contents as per the user requirements. This

dual verification process makes the repository highly reliable and useful. Any data which is obsolete will be immediately deleted by the admin. After checking the messages from the users, admin directs the subject experts to make necessary changes in the process of uploading information. This satisfies the user requirements in a precise and explicit manner. This attracts more users to make maximum use of the gateway. The future plan is to make the system accessible using hand held devices and support RSS fields.

8. Conclusion

In the age of information explosion, especially when there is an information overload, satisfying users' information needs in a simple, personalized and efficient way is becoming a challenge for Library and Information Centers. Just subscribing to online sources does not serve the purpose until and unless the users are informed about them so as to ensure full utilization of such resources. The budget at the disposal of libraries is limited and the demand for information is increasing. Hence, such subject gateways are important. These gateways need to be user friendly and should provide open access to the information through a single portal. This paper presents an overview of the system designed in the Rajagiri College of Social Sciences with features to serve the needs of its users.

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