



ICLIM - 2019



PROCEEDINGS

**3rd International Conference on
Library and Information Management**

*“Digital Transformation and
Reinvention of Future Ready Libraries”*

**3rd International Conference on
Library and Information Management
(ICLIM - 2019)**

**“Digital Transformation and Reinvention of Future
Ready Libraries”**

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PROCEEDINGS

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2019

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Sustainable Academic Library Transformation Approach: Hybridizing University Publication Collection of Ruhuna University Library

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Abstract

Transformation of academic libraries and its services marked a prevailing necessity at the present days, where almost all the aspects of peoples' lifestyles are digitally disrupted. Library transformation is a time consuming, serious process that should be conducted with a proper plan. However, the sustainable way of library transformation will add more value to the patrons and the suitable future to the library. Hybridization of library collection is such a proactive approach that can initiate at most of the academic library levels. Present study selected university owned copyrighted collection maintained since 1985 as the source of hybridizing. These artifacts were digitized through a cascading process until it reached up to 80,000 pages. Digitization was outsourced under the supervision of library staff. The collection was kept physically at the library shelf while the digitized materials were archived in an online institutional repository (IR). The IR was based on DSpace version 6.3 and customized according to the requirements of the university. Materials in the collection were classified and catalogued into the KOHA integrated library management system, while linking to the IR. Ultimately, a library collection that had been hidden as gray literature was opened to a vast community through hybridizing. As a result, the collection is now available physically and electronically, accessible from any cloud device, and visible through multiple search interfaces. It can be recommended that all academic libraries should embark on collection transformation through hybridizing as an initiative to sustainable library transformation.

Keywords: *University publication collection, Open archiving, Digitization, Academic library sustainability, Institutional Repository*

Introduction

Academic library is the prime information-service provider for research scholarship in the university ecosystem. Different types of libraries and their services were evolved through time to accommodate changing information needs of the society (Knight, 2017). Practically, personal, professional and pedagogical aspects of modern man are digitally disrupted at the present days (Allison, 2019). In the other hand, libraries are one of the major information organizations that contribute to the sustainable development of a country (Christine, 2019). Thus, libraries should transform with the changing needs of people (Christine, 2019; Knight, 2017; Wilson, 1998). However, this transformation expected in the future libraries should be shaped in a sustainable manner (Christine, 2019)

The term sustainability in this study denotes the attempt of providing demands of ever-changing information needs of present-day patrons and change the libraries gradually to become a popular information provider in future. Digitization of library collection is such change-oriented attempt (Michalak, 2012). Haji (2004) highlighting the importance of maintain internally or externally related resources in digital form as a key sustainable aspect. However, it is necessary to entail what the conventional libraries does and what conventional patrons need as well as the modern from of library operations while continuing with library change (Mwaniki, 2018). Hybridization of library operations is such sustainable approach to change. According to Rusbridge (1998) as cited in Gaohui (2018) hybrid libraries introducing a variety of technologies into the library, combines the advantages of both traditional and digital libraries; electronic and printed resources coexist, creating a complex environment to provide users with services (p. 814). Therefore, the hybrid mode of library operations (Gaohui, 2018) may result more sustainable outcome towards futuristic library management.

Library of the University of Ruhuna is one of the oldest academic libraries in Sri Lanka which consists with two major physical collections, namely the main library collection and the legal deposit collection. There are nearly 300,000 tangible artifacts, library materials available for the information needs of scholarly community. University of Ruhuna publication collection is one of the rare types of collection that maintained since 1985. Some of these publications were stored as the library copy of the publication and some of them were donated by the original authors themselves. There are few rare materials where the library requested from the original authors and very few rare materials photocopied from the original authors. The collection can articulate as, postgraduate thesis, dissertations, journals, conference proceedings, magazines, faculty level publications, convocation proceedings, felicitation volumes and past examination papers and rare collection of books. Most of the materials in this collection are under the copyright of the University of Ruhuna.

Objective

The prime objective of this study is to initiate transformation of the library collection of the University of Ruhuna into digital form in a sustainable manner, while enhancing the availability, accessibility and visibility of valuable gray literature to existing body of knowledge.

Methodology

Transformation of the library collection was limited to the library materials available in the “university publications collection” of University of Ruhuna. Five major steps of the transformation process is depicting in the figure 1.



Figure 1: *Library collection digitization cascade*

Screening step initiated the transformation cascade with screening printed, published and unpublished library materials in the library that has the copyright to the university of Ruhuna. A senate approved Senior librarian (one of the authors), and senior academics were involved in the process for four weeks to complete the screening process.

Materials shortlisted from the screening were sorted and selected depending on their physical nature, deterioration, vulnerability, rare, gray, and scholarship condition. Missing volumes and rare artifacts were lent from faculty members and individual authors for a short while. Altogether, 80,000 pages were selected at the end of the selection process (3 weeks).

Digitization was outsourced under the supervision of senior librarians of the university for two months. While a Classification librarian (one of the authors) classified the collection a technical librarian (one of the authors) were and designed the hierarchy of information organization. Classification were made depending on the nature and origin of the desired information, e.g. journal article, conference proceedings, thesis, dissertations, past examination papers, faculty level publications felicitation volumes, etc. Then they were grouped by Faculties and the rest of the content were organized separately depending on the content of the publication.

DSpace® opensource digital library management platform version 6.3 was customized to formulate an institutional repository (IR). Archiving of the digitized materials is currently conducting with the support of trained personals under the direct supervision of a Senior Assistant Librarian (one of the authors).

At the same time, the physical collection of the university publications was classified according to the Dewey Decimal Classification and shelved in the Sri Lankan collection of the main library, University of Ruhuna. Metadata related to the university publications were indexed in the KOHA integrated library management system (ISURu). This enables to search the collection through the library OPAC. A link to the digitized resources in the IR is embedded into the cataloging record of the OPAC.

Results and Discussion

The physical collection of the university publications were kept in the library shelf where walk-on customers can search through the library OPAC, or Google to gain access. In addition, a printed bibliographic index was formed kept it with the collection.

Digitized collection can be directly search and access through the IR interface and these records are automatically indexed in the IR. Patrons can also search and through the library OPAC and access to the publications since the URL is embedded into the OPAC cataloging record.

Further, IR has configured to synchronize its information with the Google index. Thus, the artifacts in the IR can be located even by a Google search. Google Scholar automatically fetch this scholarly information to its h-index and i10-indexes. It will also enhance the citation scores of desired authors as an extra benefit. Figure 2 depicting the overall outcome of the hybridizing endeavor.

Conclusion

University of Ruhuna publication collection was initially hidden as gray literature, under the walls of the library buildings for decades. Very few scholars aware about the collection and some of them are accidental visitors to the collection. However, the collection is enriched with valuable scholarly and historical facts that required by the university administration and academia in different ways. Digitization has made this collection to bring upfront by giving more visibility to the users.

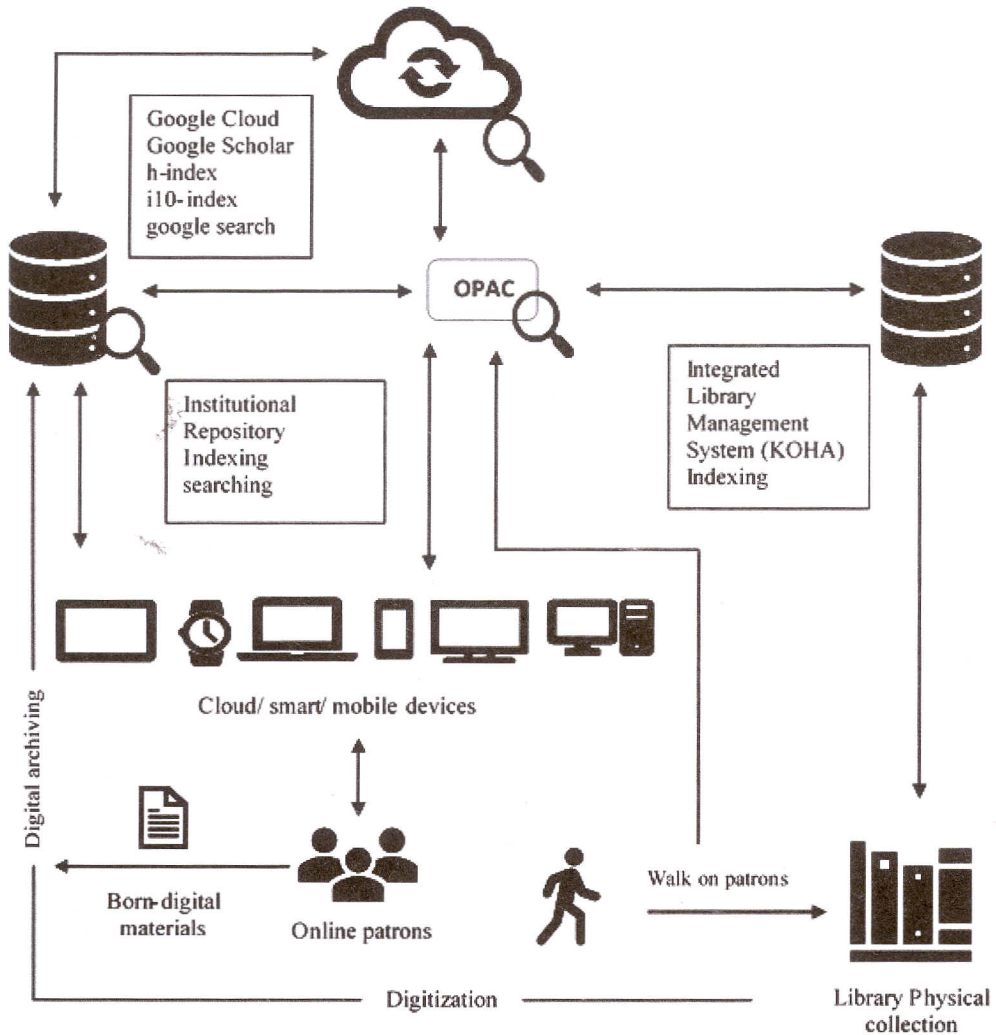


Figure 2: University publication collection hybridizing model

Ultimately it opens broader visibility to the resources through multiple search interfaces and by using different cloud devices it can be access by multiple mediums easily. Even though the physical collection cannot be access, the same resource will be available through the IR irrespecting areal and temporal boundaries. Academic library transformation should undertake very carefully in a sustainable manner (Christine, 2019). According to Juchnevič (2014) there are two major groups of people in the society, 1. digital world immigrants and 2. digital world natives. Thus, the digitization is not the only option for library change initiatives (Hvenegaard, 2019), even in the age of Google. There are patrons still willing to read printed materials, those who loves the smell of the old books. Thus, the sustainable approach of academic library transformation shall ensure the availability of both printed and digital types of materials (American Library Association, 2009).

Digitization process is better to be outsourced with a through supervision of the library staff. Depending on the nature and size of the artifacts, the digitization equipment should be change. It also required trained labor, maintenance and dedication. Thus, best practice is to outsource the digitization process if the libraries doesn't have all the required facilities when the time of digitizing.

Recommendations

To face the challenge of becoming a prime information center in future, academic libraries should push the traditional boundaries of conventional library management in a sustainable manner. Hybridizing the library collection will be more effective than operating only “over the counter” or “online mode of operations”. As a sustainable library transformation initiative, it can recommend to all the academic libraries to transform at least a portion of the collection that the university can claim the copyright. Formulate university level policies to obtain an official copy in digital format for all the publications composed under the copyright of the university. These practices can continue the digital culture in the university ecosystem in a sustainable manner.

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