Topic Reflection: The World Wide Web and Libraries

Ashley Luna

San José State University

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Author Note

Ashley Luna, Graduate Student of Library and Information Sciences, San José State
University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Ashley Luna,

E-mail: ashley.luna@students.sjsu.edu

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Libraries have undergone extensive changes with the management of different materials and services. Technological innovations, such as the World Wide Web, allow libraries access to an abundance of material and resource. Users access information conveniently through different platforms and applications allowing a wide range of sources available. I think that the web is one excellent tool for libraries to implement in their services, but with so much information available to users from this tool, there is much debate whether the information from the Web is valid or useful than from traditional retrieval sources from the library. As a result, libraries provide a wide range of services and resources designed around these new technologies that help assist users. Some questions that arise: How do libraries use the Internet, while filtering unnecessary information for users? How can users effectively utilize the library space using new technologies from the web? What are the potential benefits? I want to reflect on how these technologies are beneficial to libraries and users while discussing some of the methods and tools that they use to sort through the abundance of material.

The web is beneficial to libraries because it provides the capability to share information across different platforms and applications on a global scale. I think this is extremely useful to libraries because the potential to expand digital resources and databases allows users access to information from valued sources. Libraries access different types of databases not only from their subscriptions but also through other institutions using network links like interlibrary loans, Open Access and digital repositories. The possibilities of sharing information between institutions seem endless and this type of service provides valued information from professionals. These types of services help users filter irrelevant information from unreliable

sources. The more information a library offers through networks, the more users utilize this service when the Internet is not satisfactory. Although the costs of maintaining computers, software and upgrades for libraries may challenge libraries with limited funding.

Although the library can provide significant databases and book loans, a study found that 84% of Internet users used a search engine (Rubin, 2010 p.180). Search engines are relatively easy to use, are capable of producing information that is relevant to what a user enters and are convenient because all one needs is a device capable of connecting to an available Internet connection. Google scholar is an example of an advanced search engine that points you to scholarly articles and provides you a link to the journal or database it came from. This is extremely useful for students and scholars because it can direct them to the appropriate sources, while filtering out information not evaluated from professionals. Rubin (2010) explains the people like to use search engines because of its familiarity and ease of use. He also explains that many library catalogs are now redesigned more like web search engines, then the traditional catalogs (p.146). This is a significant improvement because if catalogs have the ease of use like search engines users will use them without hesitation. The future of catalogs and the library depends on the ability of old technology to adapt with the new.

Another tool that is significant to libraries is the emergence and popularity of E-books. Users and libraries have the ability to buy books and immediately download them via Internet. This gives the ability for libraries to save space and allows larger digital collections with broader subjects and topics. In the past, limited space made librarians critical to the types of material that was available to patrons, limiting access to certain types of information. Some libraries provide users access to e-books that are capable of searching for relevance through search features within

the text. I believe it saves users the time of physically searching for a book in the library and saves time by immediately looking up keywords within the text. In the past, I repeatedly use this tactic when researching and find it very time saving and effective. The ability to search within text filters unnecessary books quickly, which is beneficial to the user and potential saves space, time and money.

In today's society, we tend to have hectic busy schedules and the demand for fast services is high. Whether one saves a trip to the library or saves time eliminating the need to flip through pages of books, the web provides fast and convenient services and tools. As a student I often rely on the web across different platforms and applications to retrieve necessary information for assignments. As different platforms and tools develop using the web, I think it is critical for libraries to continue to provide and improve methods and services that allow users to effectively retrieve valued information from the web.

Reference

Rubin, R. E. (2010). *Foundations of library and information science*. New York: Neal- Schuman.