Information Seeking Behavior of Students in the Context of Digital Age Services at Chitkara International School Library - a case study

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Abstract

The technology integration has made a drastic change in society and among children and youth alike. Information seeking behaviour is mainly concerned with them who seek varied kinds of information for varied reasons, also how information is found, evaluated and used, and how their needs can be identified and satisfied. It is a process in which the users purposefully search for information by identifying, searching, selecting, interacting and analysing with appropriate sources of information. It's a proven fact that technology has brought in many opportunities to developing countries like India. The concept of information seeking behaviour in digital era is challenging. In view of this, my study is undertaken to assess students' information needs, information seeking behaviour in digital environment through the information services, provided by Chitkara International School Library.

Keywords: Chitkara International School, Generation Alpha, Generation Z, Information Channels, Information needs, Information seeking behaviour, School Libraries, SchoolPad, Types of learning.

Introduction

The 21st century can best be described as an era of information revolution, with the presence of information bearing material in different formats. Libraries and information centers are not only equipped with materials in traditional formats but also in electronic formats offering users a vast area of selection. Library provides wealth of knowledge and other materials to study stories, articles, reference material and other information whenever students need it.

What is Information?

Information plays a significant role in our professional and personal lives. People need information to work properly in their fields. Students generally look for word meanings, consult dictionaries, articles, encyclopedias, facts finding, current affairs and quiz reference books for

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preparing their competition. They also read fiction to freshen up their mind apart from academics. According to Davis and Olson (1985) "Information is data that has been processed into a form that is meaningful to the recipient and is of real or perceived value in current or prospective action or decisions".

Objectives

This study is undertaken with the following views:

- To understand the information needs of the students according to their learning environment;

- To discover the purpose of information seeking by students;

- To determine the methods used for seeking information;

- To explore the salient features of KOHA, which help the students to get rid of the problems while information seeking;

- To find out the problems faced by students while information seeking;

- To understand how technology impacts on the school libraries to provide fruitful sources of information towards the patrons;

- To empower the library staff for taking an initiative in effective decision making in concerned with dissemination of the information in the digital era.

Methodology

This study was conducted thoroughly keeping in mind the objectives of the same. This study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data has been collected from SchoolPad (School management solution provider) of Chitkara International School and the secondary data was collected from the library of Chitkara International School, literature readings from the books, internet and especially from the manuals of Chitkara International School.

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School Libraries in a Digital era

The concept of a school library in a digital age is challenging. With the capacity to download books onto a range of digital devices there is every possibility the library could look superfluous to youngsters growing up today. Why would you want to visit a room which is essentially about storage and distribution? We are in the middle of redesigning our school library. So, this question has exercised the mind of my school because senior school students are already equipped with iPads.

Information Seeking Behaviour

Information seeking behaviour according to Wilson (2000) entails the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information including active and passive information seeking. In the quest for information, different kinds of behaviour are manifested as students have different reasons for wanting information, different levels of search skills and preference for some types of information bearing materials. Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain (1996) affirm that information seeking involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information which are being sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought.

Generation Z learner as Digital Natives

According to Chitkara and Natarajan (2015) "Generation Z are a little nebulous than the other generations, with a variety of opinions for the actual start date. Some people claimed that this generation started around 1996, but others claim it started back to the middle 80s.Generation Z has amazing potential with so many advantages that past generations did not have. They are growing up in a changing world; though which sometimes can feel pretty scary and even threatening. This generation mostly stays in touch with each other through social networking for example: facebook, linkedin, twitter, quicker". In the digital era Generation Z learners could

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also be characterized as tech savvy, globally connected (in the virtual world) flexible and smarter, and tolerant of diverse cultures.

Generation Alpha: Google kids as Information seekers

Alpha generation children born after 2010 and expected to be more tech savvy, educated and materialistic than previous generations. Generation Z is followed by digitally superior and well informed generation Alpha. Generation Alpha being considered as Google kids want to adopt the technology faster and need information in more effective and efficient way, according to their day to day needs.

About Chitkara International School

Chitkara international school is a K-12 flagship institution of Chitkara Educational Trust which was established in the year 1998 and set up with a clear mission to pursue excellence in all fields of education and adhere to the highest standards of academic rigour in all its work. Since then, Chitkara has attained a leadership position in North India.

Chitkara Internatioanal school library

Chitkara International School Considers the word Library as a Knowledge Nook, fully automated library which is running on the wheels of KOHA, with a Motto to get an optimum usage of books or reading materials kept in the library. CIS Library facilitates its patrons as an information resource centre through organization, acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. In order to full fill the same, CIS has proven best in the community.

Patrons of CIS Library

- Students (Kindergarten & Senior wing)
- Teachers (All the teaching members)
- Non-teaching staff (Admn. Staff/Doctor etc.) and
- Parents and grandparents of CIS Students

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Information seeking behaviour of CIS students

Most times students' information seeking behaviour involves active or purposeful information seeking as a result of the need to complete their assigned task; for example if there is a word of the day given by the class teacher, students would come to the library for seeking the meaning of that particular word. Students' information seeking behaviour totally depends upon the information needs of the students. Sometimes students visit the library for reading newspapers and for keeping them updated.

Cycle of Information seeking behaviour of CIS students
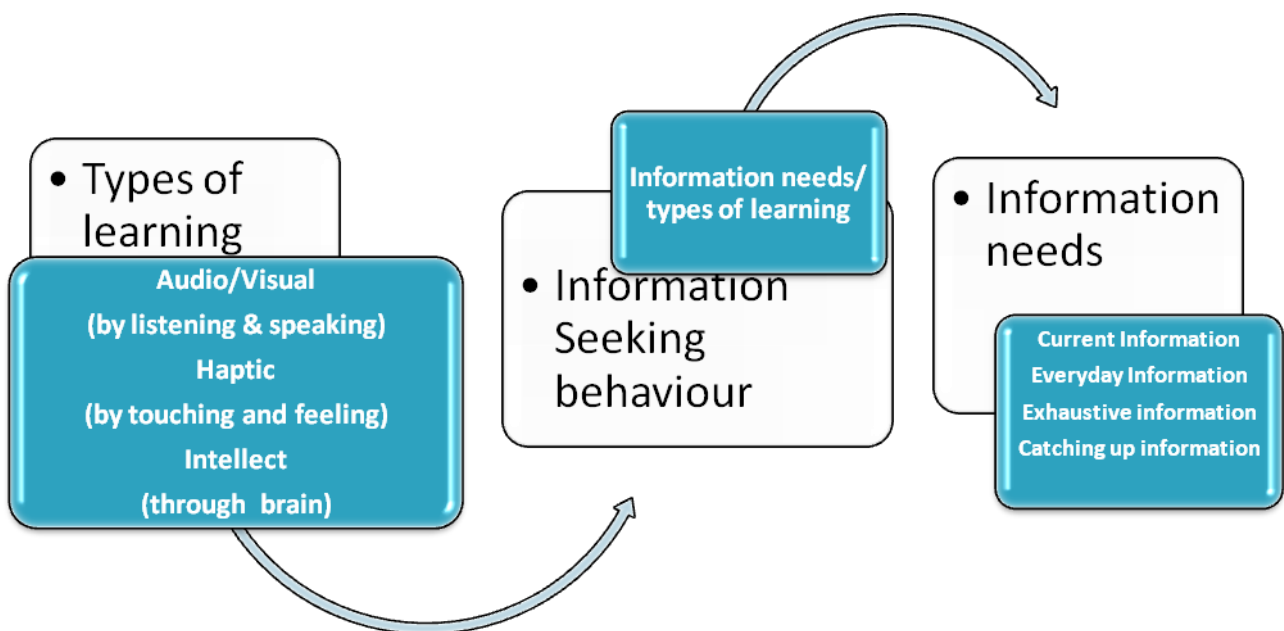
Fig 1: Cycle of Information seeking behaviour of CIS students

Information seeking behaviour of CIS students in Digital era

There is no doubt that the increase in information available on the Web has greatly affected information seeking behaviour in digital era. Due to the huge explosion of available literature, information provider could not understand what information has to give to the students, but a

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librarian could better correlate the resources and the needs of the students if he/she knows the

nature of learning of a particular student.

Types of Learning: relates to Library Practices in Digital Era

- Auditive learning ("by listening and speaking"),
- Visual learning ("through eyes, by watching"),

- Haptic learning ("by touching and feeling"),
- Learning through intellect.
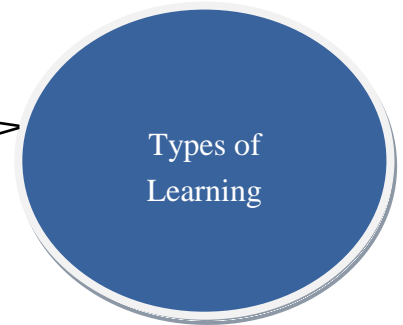
Fig. 2. Types of learning

For example:

Grade 3 to Grade 5 Students	Students Grade 5 onwards
These students are more interested in auditive & visual learning.	These students learn through intellect and are sometimes haptic.
Librarian may present a presentation to make the students understand easily about the library rules, regulations and how to use the library.	Librarian may let the students do at their own by providing the User ID and password to them.

LIBRARIAN

Information needs of CIS students in Digital era

In this digital world CIS students want to learn the things through auditive and haptic way.

Keeping this view in mind, library information centre of CIS provides the following services to

all the students accordingly. It renders circulation of library resources according to the needs of

the students.

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Books

Grade 3 onwards Students (Visual learning)

Reference Material CDs/Dvds
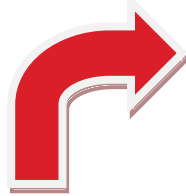
Kindergarten Students (Auditive learning)

Magazines/Newspapers

From Grade 7 to Grade 10 (Learning through intellect)

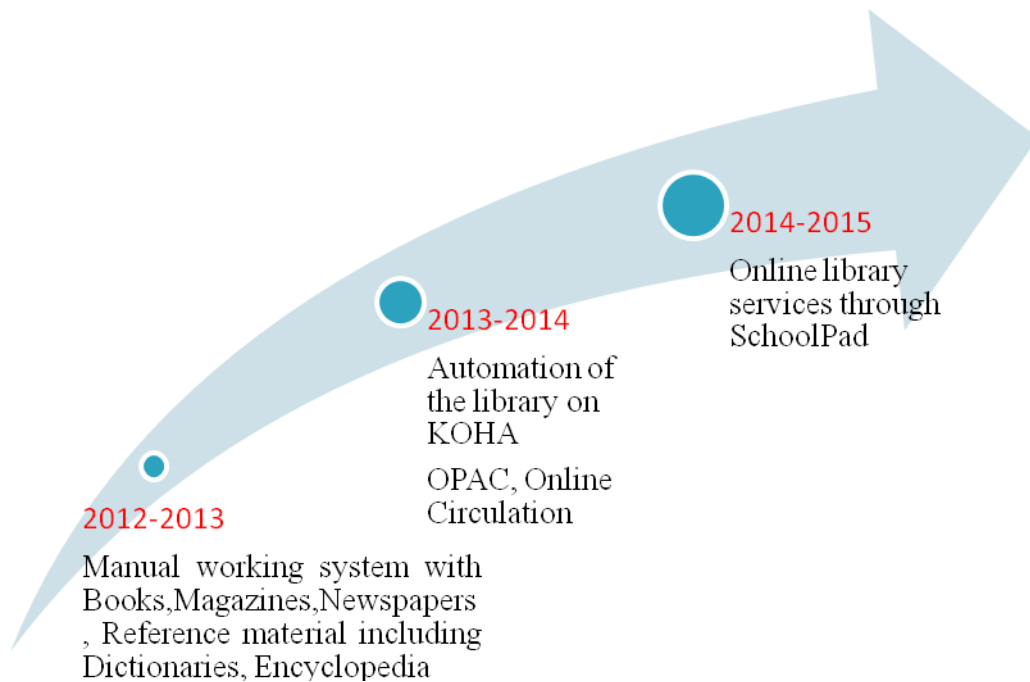Growth of Information resources in CIS Library from 2012 to 2015.

2014-2015
Online library services through SchoolPad

2013-2014
Automation of the library on KOHA

OPAC, Online Circulation

2012-2013
Manual working system with Books,Magazines,Newspapers, Reference material including Dictionaries, Encyclopedia

Fig: 3 Growth of Information resources in CIS library from 2012 to 2015
(Source: Chitkara International School Library)

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CIS Information channel

CIS library's dissemination of its information happens according to the needs of its patrons through a channel named "SchoolPad"

SchoolPad

SchoolPad is all-in-one software which helps in School operations. For example: Online attendance, 24x7 feedback, diagnostic assessments, interactive circulars, resources and planners, collaboration, student management, parent engagement, examination, mobile access etc.

Following information is provided to the patrons of CIS library on monthly basis.

- Author of the month
- Book of the month
- E-links to E books

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(Source: Chitkara International School, SchoolPad)

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Screen shot of Monthly information to the patrons through SchoolPad)
(Source: Chitkara International School, SchoolPad

Other than Information resources in CIS, for special information seekers in digital age

Book bank resources

 A Great source for economic weaker section (EWS) information seekers who are facilitated with the donation of set of books from CIS library at free of cost.

Mobile Racks

Mobile racks render efficient ways to divert the mind of hyper active children in the form of popup books or animated sticker books after they have completed their assignments. In this way, the slow learners are able to complete their work smoothly and in a well organized way.

School Tours: Outsider guests/delegates

This is a great source for outsider information seekers or guests, which enables us to showcase our school's curriculum, information and activities in front of them. Through School tour, delegates visit every part of the school and get informed about each area. It results in a very positive way; the suggestions and remarks matter to us for more learning as well as improving in the times to come.

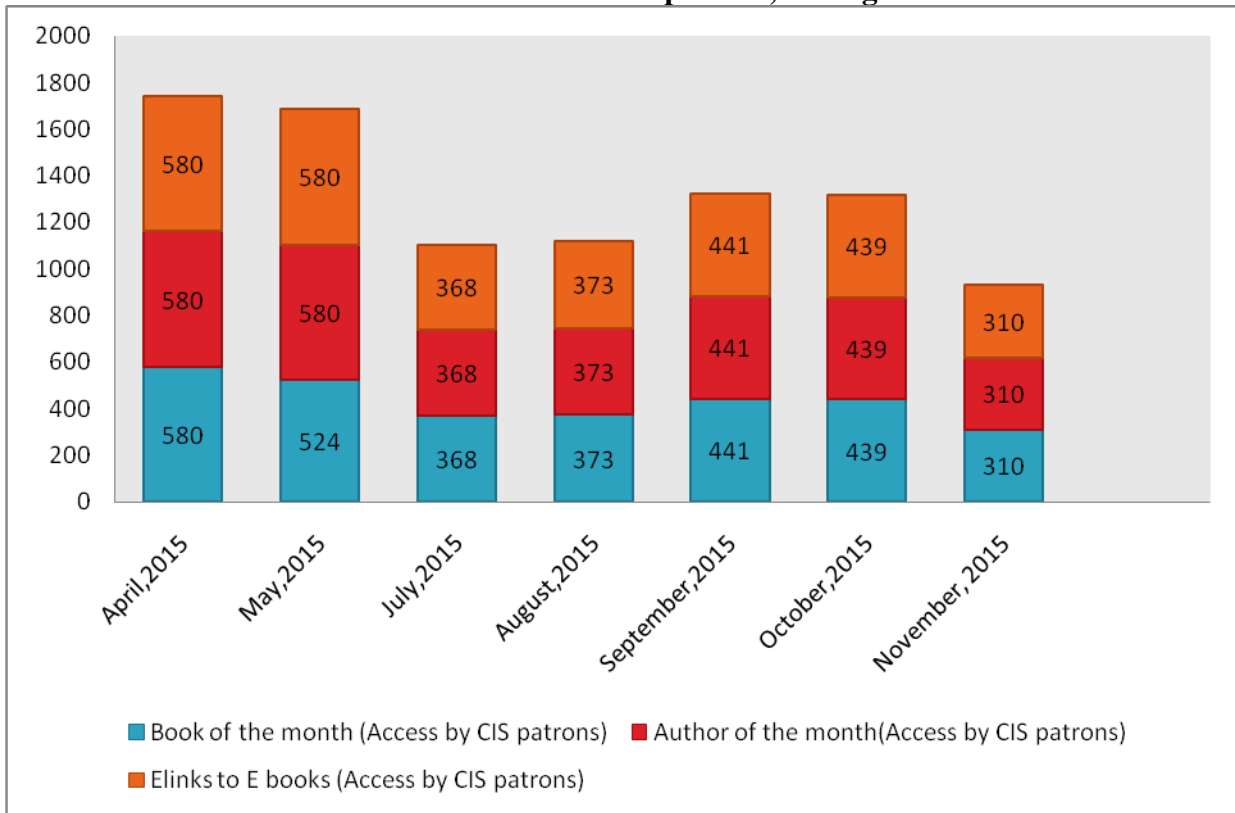**Newspaper stands at CIS walkways and Hall Ways**

Newspaper stands are available at CIS walkways and hallways which are beneficial for the daily reference seekers walking around.

Tea Quotient

This is a very essential resource of CIS and is equally beneficial for every information seeker, as it allows a place to sit, share thoughts and information with a cup of tea, coffee or snacks. We can share our experiences, information and set our future plans in a refreshing environment.

Month wise- data of Information seekers of CIS patrons, through SchoolPad

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Usage of information by the patrons of CIS through SchoolPad
From April 2015 to November 2015
(Source: Chitkara International School, SchoolPad)

CIS Future Plans

IPads

This practice is under process through which one can login their library accounts and get updates of the library with a unique user id and password, so that it becomes easier to access KOHA at any time by the students or teachers.

Problems in Information Seeking

- Communication gap with the students,
- Lack of knowledge at Librarian's end;
- Lack of resources or no funds available with the library;
- No decision making.

Findings

From the above study it may be said that on an average of 600 patrons (approx.) accessing the information on monthly basis through SchoolPad in CIS proves beneficial for the patrons to keep themselves up to date with the current information. With tremendous explosion of information and knowledge one must upgrade their school libraries to get the optimum usage of library resources which help the information seekers in providing up to date information and avoid any wastage of time.

Suggestions

To overcome the above mentioned problems one should follow the followings:

- Time management;
- Keep the patrons posted with reminders and new arrivals etc.
- Orientation programs should be conducted on time to time basis;
- Decision making skills for the library staff;
- Personal Development programs for the library staff.

Conclusion

To conclude it is evident that if we want to provide good education to our children and build their career, a good library can prove an asset to the school. From the findings it may be said that library staff, class teachers, parents and grandparents are mentors to their students and children. They can make them more efficient by guiding them for the right information at the right time. Studying the mind of the children is very essential in this concern. According to the fifth law of library science "Library is a growing organism", one should grow the school libraries keeping all the above suggestions in mind and steps forward.

Acknowledgements

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