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This presentation attempts only a wish list for libraries of 2020 and does not attempt to predict as even the technology forecasting groups often fail to predict. The caveat is that both wish lists and predictions are limited by the present scenario (“Being determines Consciousness”). Again, our wishes keep changing with the changing environment, more so with the fast changes in the last 50 years.

The Indian library scenario typically focuses some of the issues faced by libraries across the world. The funding to the research labs is less, consequently the funding to the library. All heads of the institutes claim that library is one the most important organs of the institute, but in case of budget crunch, library budget would be the first to get the axe. Other problems are related to power (electricity), low bandwidth (though cell phone costs have come down drastically, Internet access costs are still costlier even to the institutions).

It is difficult to predict, nevertheless, we can always identify, however skewed it is, some of the problems of the present and can always wish to have a better world. It goes without proving that there is a global inequality, hence the euphemism like underdeveloped countries, third world countries, developing countries. There exists inequality in scientific research and libraries in research labs, universities and institutions. Though it would be a far cry to bring in the slippery equality, one can at least wish lessening the gap in inequality.

History of the modern democracies shows that one of the important issues that was emphasized was the Universal Education. However, to realize such an ideal, at least to a great extent, there should be Universal Access to Information across the political boundaries which are called nations. The Internet is one of the tools to achieve this wish, as it facilitates publishing and sharing information in various forms as research articles, tutorials, course ware, etc. and in various formats of multimedia.

Internet has opened up more opportunities to publish information and more challenges to access information. In the past researchers had to restrict the size of their publications due to print space restrictions. Peer reviewing is undoubtedly valuable, but it is not without pitfalls and at times filters new ideas as against the established ones. The Internet overcomes both the restrictions and of course, brings in more challenges.

The challenges to the libraries are:

- 1) How do we measure the quantity of information available on the Net and the amount of information the library is providing to its clientele (traditionally covered under called information sources)
- 2) How do we identify relevant information in the vastness of information. (traditionally called reference services)
- 3) How do we describe information objects on the Net (traditionally called cataloging. The challenge is how do we automatically generate metadata as much of the information on the Net does not have metadata)
- 4) How do we find relations between information objects (traditionally called classification)
- 5) Copyright laws are huge stumbling blocks in accessing information. Unless copyright laws are more author and user friendly and lesser publisher friendly, information cannot be liberated from legal issues)

It is heartening to see some of the traditional librarians tools in handling information are sensitizing the web, whether it is cataloging transformed to metadata or library classification transformed to web ontologies. Library and information Science professionals have a lot to contribute in developing effective web (semantic web).

Presently, we are using OAI-PMH and Z39.50 protocols to harvest metadata, but again the question is how much information on the Net is compliant to these protocols. The challenge is to develop automatic metadata generation and categorization using ontologies/ folksonomies. Definitely, we do require more efficient information mining techniques. We do require effective open source software in Semantic Web, OpenURL, Intelligent agents in filtering information, and good search engines!!

The progress in the advocacy of Open Access to Information, Open Source Software, Open Courseware and Open Standards, which I prefer to call "Open Mantra" will usher in an era of less inequality.

Inequality is intertwined with many other issues. Issues like technological issues, infrastructural issues, legal issues, economic issues and political issues (incorrigible!, though not completely irreparable). Some of the issues are beyond the libraries, however they are prerequisites for better libraries -- power (electricity) problems, poor laboratory facilities, low bandwidth etc. Though open courseware facilitates information to all, the laboratory facilities are something of a different kind. Perhaps, web-based simulated laboratory environment ('simlabs') to some extent will answer this problem.

The oft-asked question is the future of library and information science profession. As long as humanity exists there will need for information more so with the ever increasing information and we do require library and information professionals to handle vast quantities of information. The form of their work and the methodologies may change. (The classical "Form Vs. Content" problem).

Let us hope information will be liberated and will in turn liberate the research and the research libraries and the people at large.