

GOOGLE AN OPPORTUNITY OR THREAT FOR LIBRARIES

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Abstract *Information and Communication Technologies are being used in every profession and every sphere of life. So the Libraries are not untouched from this revolution. Libraries users are increasingly depending upon internet for their information needs. Google with its products has emerged as a first choice of users for information needs. Libraries fears that the growth of Google may pose a threat to their existence. This paper highlights the concern of libraries and discusses how growth of Google may benefit Libraries.*

Keywords: *Library, Google, Library Databases, Search Engines*

INTRODUCTION

Libraries have come a long way from being a store house of knowledge with Books locked in Almirah for preservation or accessible only to a select elite class to today's Information Age with Open Access Environment i.e. free for all. In this journey of traditional libraries to modern libraries the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has played a great role. The Internet being the backbone of the whole ICT has become an integral part of every library operation and service. In today's world it is difficult to imagine a library without ICT tools or an Internet Connection.

When we talk about ICT and Internet tools and applications it is inevitable to mention the Google and its Services. Google command approximately 70% of search market share worldwide (Sharma, Gupta, Marteen & Pratap, 2018). The Google as we all know as a popular search engine is not just a search engine; it is an Internet firm with a variety of application to make our life and business easier.

HISTORY OF GOOGLE

Google or Google LLC which derived its name from a misspelling of Page's original planned name, googol (a mathematical term for the number one followed by 100 zeroes) is an American Company formed by Sergey Brin and Larry Page as a subsidiary of the holding company Alphabet Inc. with its headquarter at Mountain View, California. It controls over 70% of worldwide online search request. As popularly known as a search engine its business is not limited to it. Today it offers more than 50 internet services

and products. With the acquisition of Motorola Mobility in 2012 it also entered into hardware market to sell mobiles. Today it is a reputed company like Apple, IBM or Microsoft. ("Other services." (n.d.))

WHAT MAKES USERS TO CHOOSE GOOGLE OVER OTHER SEARCH ENGINES OR LIBRARY DATABASES

Today the Internet is full of search of engines like yahoo, alltheweb, altavista, Mozilla firefox etc. and there are varieties of library databases but still the Google is first choice of the library users. The following features of Google make it popular amongst the users over Library Databases (Brophy & Bawden, 2005).

Google

- Its Applications are free for everyone.
- Its Applications are cloud based thus no need of storage device.
- You do not need to have an account to access its services (except in case of some products).
- Can be access anytime and anywhere.
- Its being superior in terms of coverage and accessibility.
- Its ability to retrieve fairly precise set of documents.
- Its ability to retrieve unique documents.
- Easy to Access.
- High proportion of adequate or good quality results.

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- Little or no training required to use Google and its applications.
- Quick Access to searched content and full text material.
- Free text search.

Library Databases

- Moderate proportion of relevant documents retrieved.
- Retrieve fairly precise set of documents.
- High proportion of good quality results.
- High proportion of unique documents, and,
- Some problem with accessibility.

The main discrimination factors seem to be quality (favouring library system) and accessibility (favouring Google). Coverage also favours Google, although both system are needed to achieve anything approaching comprehensive recall.

Cathcart and Robets (2005, pp. 167-176) while evaluating Google Scholar has voice similar concerns. They went on to say that it being easy to use and monetarily free research tool could lure students away from library resources. It is especially troubling because Google Scholar did not provide their indexing methodology.

GOOGLE PRODUCTS WHICH LIBRARIES CAN USE: (“BROWSE ALL OF GOOGLE’S PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.” (N.D.))

Google Book: It is an ambitious project of the Google where it is digitally scanning the collection of the libraries and providing its access all over the world. But this project is also surrounded by controversies as well for infringement of copyright laws of different countries and a number of suits are also filed against the Google for this (Bottando, 2012). The Libraries can use this product to provide access to books particular foreign books and books of rare nature to its users.

Google Scholar: This search engine allow users to search the scholarly article, Books or research papers, reports and thesis etc. The libraries could check the author’s profile, citation, h Index, i 10 index etc. We can even follow this author and get information of article by a particular author, or new citation to his article or new article related to author’s research. It also provide alerts related to new article on area of interest of users. We can also check h5 index and h5 median of journals indexed in Google Scholar. Using Google Scholar library link the use can access the libraries subscription resources even off campus using library’s Open Uniform Resource Locator link (Order, 2005).

- *Google Search:* It is the main product of the Google which almost every computer or mobile users uses to make search for information of his interest. It is easy to use and does not require any specialized training or knowledge to use it.
- *Gmail:* Gmail is one of the most popular service of the Google. Started on 1st April, 2004 with limited beta release, by 2018 it has 1.5 billion users. With Gmail the libraries can create their free email address to send and received message or documents. Here you can chat with other persons. Gmail offers 15 GB of free storage space to its users. In Gmail you can sort, search and delete multiple emails.
- *Google Maps:* This product of Google is nowadays being widely used for finding or locating the places and distance and also informs about expected time of travel through walking, cycle, car, train or aeroplane etc. It uses GPS Navigation and also gives traffic alerts.
- *Google Duo:* It is the video calling service of the Google which the Library can use to organize talk with the experts through video conferencing for its native and distance users.
- *Google Sites:* This application of google allows creating simple website. For this you do not need to have the knowledge of any computer language. The libraries can simply organize their content and build websites like any other Content Management Software. The Librarian can provide access to library e-resources, and course materials besides making available the links to other online resources to the users. Besides these sites can be used to upload course material.
- *Google Drive:* Google Drive is another service of Google. It is basically a cloud storage service which contains Spreadsheet, Slides, Doc and forms. The Libraries could use this to create various reports, presentations and data just like as is done through Microsoft Office. Google forms could be used by the Libraries to gather information for users like feedback about the library and its services or starting of new services or on collection development policy etc. Libraries could also organize quiz and online competition using Google Forms. Google Drive helps to easily share these documents and also collaborate with others in real time.
- *Google Hangout:* Hangout is another service of google where people could meet for group conversation through video or without video conferencing. Where without video it allow 100 participants to join with video only 10 participants and with google educational account 15 participants can join for video conversation. The Libraries could use this tool to organize lectures of experts or share educational video or audio with users.

- *Google Image*: Google Image is used to search images on google. This is just like google search, here we upload the image that we have with us on Google image and search for information related to that image viz from where this particular image is originated, who created it, where it is copyright protected or for general use. The Libraries could use this services to inform and educate the users about various images related information or checking fake news on social media.
- *YouTube*: It is another service of the Google which allow the user to host and share their videos. There are educational, recreational, movie trailer, songs videos etc. available on YouTube. Libraries could use the educational and instructional videos and could also run their YouTube Channels hosting educational course videos and lectures for users. Google entered into video hosting service with the launch of Google Videos in 2005. As Google Video was not much popular among users, so the Google acquire Youtube after one year in 2006.
- *Google Analytics*: It is the free web analytical service of the Google which allows to analyze in depth about users who visited your website, which page they visited and how long they stay visiting your website. You can create customized reports and also assess them.

GOOGLE VS LIBRARIES

There are different views on Google's relations with Libraries. Some feel that Google through its product, as mentioned above, would benefit the Libraries and other feel that it is a threat to the Libraries. We need to examine both opinions before reaching out to any conclusion.

How Google Benefits the Libraries

- Google has made the Library's Collection Accessible 24x7.
- Google has ensued optimum use of Library resources, which otherwise confined to the four walls of the Library.
- Libraries are not confined to any particular institute/organization, region or country but searchable worldwide.
- Google has increased the outreach of the Libraries.
- Google has increased the libraries users.
- Google has solved the space problem of the Libraries.
- Google products being free have helped the Libraries to overcome financial church to some extent.

- Google offers additional resources (Google Books, Google Scholar and YouTube etc.) to the Libraries and their users.
- Google has made libraries and users more connected.

Why Google a Threat to Libraries?

- Users prefer Google Search over Library products and Databases.
- All Libraries OPAC is not searchable through Google. Thus Google search become limited.
- Google is in controversies over Copyright infringements particularly in the case of Google Book Project.
- Google products are free to some extent/limit i.e. in case of Gmail and Google Drive initially some space is offered for free beyond that user have to pay.
- All resources searched on the Google are not freely available, some are subscription based also.
- Google offers quantity in place of quality, as it lack precision as compared to Library Databases.
- If all the library products are offered for free the libraries, already facing financial crunch, may loose their revenue.
- Google is responsible for decreased footfall in the Library.
- Material searched on Internet is not always authentic.
- Not all the collection of the Libraries are available on the Google due to various reasons viz. Copyright restrictions, material being of rare and fragile nature and being in local language etc.
- The Content available is not properly indexed in case of Search engines as compared to Library Databases which uses some authoritative system and indexing schemes taking services of experts.

CONCLUSION

From the above arguments we can say that Libraries can use the Google for enhancing its reach. It could use it for meeting out the growing needs of the Users rather than seeing it as a threat. The importance of how free Services of Google could benefit the libraries was highlighted during this New Normal of COVID-19 Pandemic. It is the time for the Libraries to gear up their operations and educate the users about the libraries products and services. Users continue education programme should be organized to highlight the importance and superiority of Library products over unauthenticated and unreliable material available on the Internet. Once the

users understand this difference we can surely say that be it Google or any other search engine it cannot take the place of libraries.

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