Instructing users on library use and promoting information literacy have become a major responsibility of university library staff due to changes in teaching and learning processes in the higher education and more so with the advent of digital libraries. Library orientation and library tour introduce the user to the university library, its collection and services. The university librarians create printed manuals to impart knowledge of library use along with the web-based instruction. It is also intended to introduce a credit course on the library use and information literacy in the university curricula. The paper deliberates on these facets as is found in Thailand.

INTRODUCTION

No other changes in the higher education of Thailand have offered greater challenges than the emergence of the digital era. The development of global networking has influenced directly the human way of lives worldwide. The phenomenal growth of information and communication technologies in recent years and the emergence of information economy has engaged a number of personnel in production and consumption of information. The digital information over open networks has also created an impact on the functions and roles of the universities. The purpose of higher education is to inspire learners to develop their abilities to the highest potential for personal growth, for effective participation in workforce and for constructive contributions to society.

According to the report of World Institute for Development Economics Research entitled “ICT Production and Diffusion in Asia: Digital Dividends or Digital Divide”, Thailand is listed of information and communication particularly, the rise of Internet and its applications in the field of education. In response to changing circumstances, individual universities have to evaluate and measure the present conditions in order to adapt to the changing scenario. Initially, the universities offered various curricula and programs related to student and social demands. In the changing circumstances the number of new universities, new campuses and distant learning centres has increased to cater to the needs of the student communities. Simultaneously, the universities have to maintain the educational quality in order to sustain and also to match with international standards. It was proposed that the Ministry of University Affairs should establish a central body to perform according to the international standards. In the meantime, each institution should establish their own internal quality assurance units, which develop internal auditing system in line with the central body's criteria.

In the light of the above developments, the universities in Thailand are required to develop the learning and teaching programs suiting to these norms. The self-learning systems, particularly, based upon the demands and abilities of students and communities have come as the prominent policy of all universities in
Thailand. Various educational facilities and infrastructure have been established to promote the self-learning. For instance, the university computer centres have offered the Internet and related services to support learning processes. In this case, flexible approaches have involved initiatives such as online delivery through 'web' and Intranet learning systems (both on- and off-campus). Universities are developing distant learning networks to deliver high performance, high quality, reliable and cost effective online services through a number of urban and rural regions, and also on national and international sites. Undoubtedly, information and communications technologies are being used to enhance the delivery of services to students, such as dissemination of university news, enrolment, course material, evaluation and declaration of results and other related academic matters. They are emphasizing on more responsive and interactive styles of learning. Learning via remote systems eliminates the problems of space and time. While listening to lectures, students can make interactive enquiries with their teachers located at different places. The E-mail is also being used in distant learning systems more prolifically than for personal communication.

Responding to the changing situations and demands, the universities have enhanced various facilities to support the latest learning and teaching systems. Electronic books are being procured along with hard copies to create more options for learners. They can study from books, CD-ROMs as well as web-based books depending on their capacities, abilities and demands. Meanwhile, university libraries are also gradually transforming to digital form.

Libraries have been amongst the first department of universities in Thailand to automate housekeeping activities and are able to see the potential of information and communication technologies to provide new services. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the learning process and the student output of the universities both in quality and quantity, the digital library was recognized by the university academic committees as a significant tool to support the self-learning process. Financial support and other means were granted for developing the digital libraries. Customer services and teaching library use and information literacy are considered as the major services of university libraries along with the development of digitized materials and other facilities.

The instruction on library use to users is not new for the university libraries in Thailand which was recognized as a significant task of the libraries. As a result of the important change in university libraries, the customers can access both secondary and primary information from the university libraries and any other networked libraries, without visiting that library, from their desktop computer at office or at home. Hence the traditional user education is being adjusted with the complexity of information services. The range of information products and services potentially available from the networked library differs significantly, both qualitatively and quantitatively, from those offered in the past. Previously, the quality of the university libraries was measured according to the size of their collection of books and journals, services and efficient delivery of information to users irrespective of its origin. The university libraries have to provide full support for seamless access to digitized information. Accordingly, various instruction methods, both traditional and latest are offered to users in the university library. The learner support is recognized as a significant role and responsibility of university librarians. The type of learner support services are briefly described in the following sections.

LIBRARY ORIENTATION AND LIBRARY TOUR

Library orientation is the first of the user education programs adopted by the university libraries. Some university libraries have organized the library orientation for freshmen in the early academic semester, along with the university orientation. With limited time and a large number of students, the orientation has only introductory emphasis on university library covering aspects such as the location of the library, library administration, organisation and library layout. New students with different educational backgrounds are given this orientation on how to use the library in an hour. The library tours are undertaken to expand the
scope by adding further information based on the demands of the users. Usually the university libraries organize programs during the first or second week for university students to introduce library services, library layout, library staff and so on. The central library of each university organizes library tour programs for all the students while the faculty libraries offer specific program for their own students. However, university libraries have library tours throughout the academic year because of the changes in higher education. The universities were also intending to liberate students from textbooks and lectures to assigned paper topics. The university libraries thus must give students the specific skills for effective use of libraries and enable them to prepare their term papers and educate the students on specific types of resources that they might need in this context. Library tours are to be conducted based on the demands of students and specific topics such as reference services, research collection, audiovisual material and so on. Apart from this, library tours were also organized for the teaching staff.

CREDIT COURSE ON THE LIBRARY USE AND INFORMATION LITERACY

To meet the changing demands, the university through its library science or through other departments may offer a credit or non-credit course in their curriculum. In this case, the university library and the Library Science Department of the University may actively participate in this program along with library orientation on use of library for the freshers, and the special credit course would be directed to the students as a specific research assignment. The instruction librarians here have better opportunities to give more information, both on theory and practice of using libraries. The close relationship between instruction librarians and students has influenced both positive and negative image of university libraries depending upon the preparation of instruction and lecturer personality. However the libraries have more understanding of user needs and problems in accessing information.

It is no longer sufficient to educate students on how to use the library. As a result of the proliferation of digitized information that has increased the amount of information available to students, librarians must teach students not only how to access this information but also how to evaluate it critically. Moreover, students must be able to identify that they have an information need, understand what information resources exist to meet that need, and understand how to handle that information. In other words, students must be taught library use and information literacy simultaneously. However the topic on the library use and information literacy is being discussed among the library professionals in various ways such as the content, number of credits, name of the course and so on.

COLLOQUIA METHOD

It is easy and inexpensive to organize and meet the particular learning needs of students. However, it reaches relatively a small number of students. The vast increase in the amount of information, which confronts students of today, has been labelled by the phrases such as information society, information communications technologies and so on, where information storage, access and dissemination methods use a variety of media. The university libraries have to offer advanced techniques of learning and this can be extended through a colloquia method like program on specific topics. For instance the discussion on the OPAC could be held to introduce the services and educate various searching methods such as by authors, titles, subjects, keywords, descriptors, Boolean search, as well as Web-based searching.

COURSE-RELATED INSTRUCTION

The instruction related to particular courses is the method most commonly used in the university libraries in order to help students to find information associated with those courses. In the increasingly complex world, the collaborative learning and teaching process have been recognized as the most significant instruction method for higher education. It has the potential to transfer learners', teaching staffs' and librarians' view of learning, knowing, and understanding as it acquaints students with the skills needed to co-operate, negotiate, and formulate knowledge. The collaborative learning occurs when students and instructors work...
together to create knowledge. Students have more opportunities to involve in learning processes that they can learn from various sources. The key to developing a collaborative learning and teaching process is effective liaison of teaching staff and university librarians. The course-related instruction is example of relationships between librarians and teaching staff. The changes in teaching and learning in the universities, combined with rapid developments in digital libraries, point to a new role of the university librarians. Open learning is widely considered to hold major potential for teaching in the universities both for effective resource utilization and for enhancing students' independence in learning. Accordingly, the emphasis is placed on self-paced, teacher-supported individual learning and resource-based learning.

In the learning process, it is widely acknowledged that the university librarians are becoming increasingly involved in facilitating, designing, navigation and problem-solving activities of educational programs in the universities. The various activities provided to support the course-related instructions are:

a) offering the special collection and reserved collection depending upon the demands of each teaching staff,

b) helping academics to understand the physical and electronic resources available to them, and advising on teaching/learning approaches to make best use of such resources,

c) providing tuition on information/study skills to students both by individual and group instruction,

d) assisting students faced with the problems of accessing information, and

e) producing open learning materials, which inform students about digitized and networked information.

**INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA**

The advancement of information and communication technologies has given more choice to university libraries to produce instructional media and disseminate knowledge on library use and information literacy. The traditional media such as films, videotapes, slides and transparencies are less used than the digitized media. However the printed materials are still used along with other teaching media.

Many libraries provide printed guides on the use of the library and specific library collections and services. They are used as part of the library orientation. The printed guides covering the introductory library, library layout, collection, services and so on are distributed to students during their first week in the universities. The printed guides on specific topic such as the use of audiovisual materials, OPAC searching, etc is given at the proper time. The university libraries continue to disseminate the information on library activities, newsletters, collection and services and promote the relationship between users and librarians.

Various university libraries use the university television and radio for teaching library use. They are used for teaching large groups of students both on- and off-campus, especially during the library orientation.

**WEB-BASED INSTRUCTION**

The recent changes in networking technology have shifted focus to Internet and Intranet to teach library use and information literacy in university libraries in Thailand. The purposes of teaching over the web-site are to supplement library instruction and not as replacement of the traditional instruction. Websites help in maximizing the instruction programs to reach a large number of students with a limited instruction staff. Because of the Internet, which is the common media for students, it is desired to educate students on the library use and information literacy through the web-sites.
As the number of universities and their students grow, university libraries are implementing various library use programs. Because these initiatives are inevitably influenced by the characteristics of each university, implementation may look quite different from one university to another. Some university libraries divide the programs into different modules depending upon the demands of students. They can learn how to identity, access, evaluate, and use a number of information resources in print and digital formats. In other words, they can learn every thing by web-based learning. In addition, inquiry via email and chat room is the tool most commonly used to communicate between users and library staff. Each division of university library will give their email addresses to collect the users' questions of library use and comments of library services.

User education skills are requisite skills for library instruction staff. These skills consist of teaching skills, course design, and development of teaching materials and self-learning packages. The university libraries co-operate with the various departments and associations for training their instruction librarians.

These are:

i) The faculty of the various departments of the university provided programs and courses for training instructional methods and for producing instructional media for instruction librarians.

ii) The university computer centres offer training courses/programs on creation of homepages for the teaching staff and librarians.

iii) The library science department provides various continuing education programs for library staff including the context of library use and information literacy programs.

iv) The Thai Library Association acknowledges the importance of user education as a part of user services and allocates the teaching of library use and information literacy to be a part of requisite skills for library professionals.

The advances in information and communication technologies combined with the changes of universities have influenced the roles of library staff especially in the context of library use and information literacy. To deal with the present conditions, various instruction programs have to be offered to the students both through traditional and modern methods depending on the students' interests and abilities, and the characteristics of individual university and its library. Most importantly the library professionals have to continue to study the terms that libraries use and information literacy by support of library associations and universities.

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