

Accessing Digital News Archives: A Case Study among Journalists

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Abstract - Newspapers play a vital role in the dissemination of information. A newspaper library is a repository of information required by the journalists, administrative and management staffs. The newspaper libraries are in the process of digital archiving in order to preserve the news and views for future. The article highlights the study conducted among journalists working with leading Malayalam newspapers in Kozhikode /district, Kerala. The study reveals the need and importance of digital archiving of newspapers and also the utilisation of library sources and services.

Keywords: Newspaper Libraries, Digital Archiving, Digital News Archives, Journalists

I. INTRODUCTION

Every day begins to the lattice of knowledge. Newspapers are an important media of information. Newspapers bring out information on various aspects and thus it plays a crucial role in our daily life. Newspapers are among the most important social publications. These documents contain cultural data and news about social events, national and international, economic and political developments and the world's circumstances of the time. Journalists work behind each and every news item. Journalists are informants and storytellers. They are far more than merely fact reporters. The role of journalists is to present various news and events to the society through newspapers, magazines, radio, television or internet. Newspaper libraries have a leading role in providing valuable information to journalists. They are the significant providers of various sources and ideas. It's the challenge of the news librarians to keep pace with changing scenario and to provide access to end users. The rapid development of electronic imaging and storage technologies paved the way for enhancing access to all types of research resources, including newspapers. Digital archiving is the only solution to preserve yesterday's news.

A. Digital Archiving and Preservation of Newspaper

In order to satisfy the information needs of editorial and other staff working with newspaper media we can see the paradigm shift of news paper libraries from traditional to modern, print to electronic and so on. The perception that "yesterday's news is no news to all" is really a challenge for librarians. Each and every journalist is in need of news that has already happened. Yesterday's news is so important to them. Here comes the responsibility of librarians or information providers in print media to preserve news. The

increasing volume of newspapers and decreasing amount of space are the main confronts to the information officers. Digital preservation is the only way to provide quick and easy access for future reference.

Digital archiving and preservation is highly beneficial as it helps to preserve valuable documents such as study materials, archives and newspapers thereby enhancing researchers and other users. Digital preservation of newspapers has more advantages when compared to traditional means since it provide easy access and retrieval and saving of space. Increased accessibility and functionality are the two main benefits of digital preservation.

B. Kerala Scenario

There are 11 Malayalam and 8 English newspapers published from Kerala. The few leading Malayalam newspapers considering their circulation and quality, published from Kerala include Mathrubhumi, Malayala Manorama, Madhyamam and Dweepika. The circulation of leading newspapers also increased tremendously over the years. The newspaper libraries play a leading role in the dissemination of information to its users. Journalists are the target group of library resources and services. As the years passed by the manual preservation of newspapers became a difficulty and thus the newspaper libraries have moved on to the process of digital archiving and opened a gateway of information to their user community.

Considering the great demand and expectations of users all newspaper libraries have undertaken steps for digitizing their newspaper archives. At present they are in a position for providing access to their internal users only including journalists and other staffs. But in future all the libraries are planning to provide access to public with certain terms and conditions.

News archives and print media libraries hold a very important place in the routine work of journalist community. They are of prime importance to media professionals since it help them to keep in touch with the news events. Journalists are always in need of current as well as past events to write featured articles and editorial column. The work of journalists has become more competitive and complex. They depend more on libraries

for accessing information and here comes the importance of digital archiving of newspapers.

In this situation it's more significant to conduct a study among journalists on their information needs, accessibility and opinion about the library sources and services including digital news archives.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies and conceptual papers have been published by researchers about the information needs and the influence of digital archiving of newspapers among journalists.

Gurudev and Mionika (2013) determined the information seeking behaviour of newspaper journalists working in Delhi. Journalists depend upon various types of sources for acquiring information. The lack of modern communication gadgets, information scattered in many sources, lack of time, information not readily available and inadequate library services and sources were the difficulties faced by the journalists. A study based on information seeking and use by journalists at National British Newspaper by Attfield & Dowell (2003) described the work activity in the context of a series of behaviour shaping constraints and cognitive and external resources. A good library collection can be developed only through sufficient knowledge about the information needs and their preference of accessibility methods. Garrison (2000) in his paper reported the findings of a longitudinal study of the leading problems identified by journalists using the World Wide Web for newsgathering. The study found a growing need for ongoing newsroom training and development of online research skills among reporters and their editors. A study was conducted by Hansen and McLeod (1987) about the role of newspaper library in the production of news. The study examined the variety of roles that a well-established news library plays in news making protocols.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are

1. To identify the types of information sources accessed by journalists.
2. To understand the purpose of collecting information from the library.
3. To look at various views about the library resources.
4. To assess their opinion about the digital archiving of newspapers.
5. To rate the level of satisfaction with the present status of newspaper archives.
6. To understand the problems encountered while accessing news archives.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study covers only the journalists working with three leading Malayalam newspapers in Kozhikode District, Kerala. Data collection was completed with distributing

questionnaires and conducting phone in interviews among randomly selected 20 journalists (Total 60) each working with Mathrubhumi, Malayala Manorama and Madyamam.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected was classified and analysed for interpretation and for further suggestions.

TABLE I FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO THE LIBRARY

Opinion	No. of responses					
	Mathrubhumi		Malayala Manorama		Madyamam	
	N= 20	%	N=20	%	N=20	%
Daily	5	25	2	10	8	40
Once in a week	13	65	10	50	7	35
Once in a month						
Rarely	2	10	8	40	5	25

From the table I it is clear that majority of the users of Mathrubhumi (65%), Malayala Manorama (50%) and Madhyamam (35%) use library once in a week. The users in Madhyamam (40%) utilise their library services daily whereas 25% and 10% of users in Mathrubhumi and Malayala Manorama use library daily.

The main information sources accessed by journalists are shown in the table II below.

TABLE II TYPES OF INFORMATION SOURCES ACCESSED

Information Sources	No. of responses					
	Mathrubhumi		Malayala Manorama		Madyamam	
	N= 20	%	N=20	%	N=20	%
Books/Reference books	10	50	18	90	8	40
Newspaper clippings	5	25	10	50	2	10
Back/current issues of newspapers	20	100	18	90	18	90
Magazines	17	85	15	75	10	50
Photographs	12	60	12	60	11	55
Digital archives of newspapers	18	90	20	100	16	80
Media reports	5	25	-		-	

(Multiple responses permitted)

Here in the study it is found from Table II that 50 % of journalists in Mathrubhumi, 90 % of Malayala Manorama and 40% of Madhyamam use Books for reference. Among the journalists in Mathrubhumi 25% use newspaper clippings. In the case of Malayala Manorama 50% use newspaper clippings for their routine work. It is clear from the table that Back issues of the newspapers are very useful to majority of users for their professional work. Almost all

the users opined that digital archives of newspapers are accessed by them. Media reports were accessed by only 25% of editorial staffs working in Mathrubhumi.

The table III given below shows the purpose of using information resources by the journalists.

TABLE III PURPOSE OF COLLECTING INFORMATION FROM THE LIBRARY

Purpose	No. of responses					
	Mathrubhumi		Malayala Manorama		Madyamam	
	N= 20	%	N=20	%	N=20	%
For writing an article	15	75	18	90	18	90
For general information	18	90	20	100	18	90
Writing an editorial	5	25	7	35	2	10
For preparing news item	20	100	20	100	20	100
Photograph	12	60	12	60	9	45

(Multiple responses permitted)

From table III the data it is clear that around 75% of journalists in Mathrubhumi are using information sources for writing an article, 90% for attaining general information and all working with three newspapers responded that they are using library resources for preparing a news item.

TABLE IV OPINION ON AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY RESOURCES

Opinion	No. of responses					
	Mathrubhumi		Malayala Manorama		Madyamam	
	N= 20	%	N=20	%	N=20	%
Excellent	9	45	8	40	7	35
Good	11	55	12	60	10	50
Average					3	15
Below Average						
Poor						

The table IV shows that 45% of journalists working with mathrubhumi, 40% in Malayala Manorama and 35% in Madhyamam opined that they have excellent library resources which are helpful for their professional work. Among the journalists 55% from Mathrubhumi, 60% from Malayala Manorama and 50% from Madhyamam were of the opinion that they have good collection of library resources.

Digital archives of newspapers are highly essential for media people. Therefore the opinion of journalists about the need for digital archiving is also needed for the study. The table V depicts that all the journalists working with Mathrubhumi were of the opinion that digital news archives are useful to them. The table also represents that 95% of journalists working with Malayala Manorama and 90% in

Madhyamam also expressed the usefulness of digital archives for their routine work.

TABLE V OPINION ABOUT THE NEED FOR DIGITAL ARCHIVES OF NEWSPAPERS

Opinion	No. of responses					
	Mathrubhumi		Malayala Manorama		Madyamam	
	N= 20	%	N=20	%	N=20	%
Useful	20	100	19	95	18	90
Very useful			1	5		
To a certain extend					2	10
Not useful						

To understand the level of satisfaction is very necessary for a new initiative such as digital archiving of newspapers.

TABLE VI LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH DIGITAL NEWS ARCHIVES

Opinion	No. of responses					
	Mathrubhumi		Malayala Manorama		Madyamam	
	N= 20	%	N=20	%	N=20	%
Satisfied Large Extent	5	25	4	20	2	10
Satisfied Some Extent	15	75	16	80	18	90
Satisfied Less Extent						
Satisfied Very Large Extent						

The study shows that 75% of journalists working with Mathrubhumi, 80% and 90% working with Malayala Manorama and Madhyamam respectively are satisfied with the digital archiving of newspapers in their organisation. The table VI shows that 25 and 20 percentage of journalists working with Mathrubhumi and Malayala Manorama are very much satisfied with news archives.

The study tried to understand the problems encountered while using the digital archives.

TABLE VII PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WHILE USING DIGITAL ARCHIVES

Reasons	No. of responses					
	Mathrubhumi		Malayala Manorama		Madyamam	
	N= 20	%	N=20	%	N=20	%
Takes time to download						
Information overload	2	10				
Broken links						
Improper Indexing						
Lack of skill on search	5	25	3	15	6	30
Problem with file formats.	2	10			3	15

(Multiple responses permitted)

In Table VII, efforts were made to understand the problems encountered while using the digital archives of newspapers. From the table it is clear that few responded to this question and no clear opinions or results were identified.

VI. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The study mainly focused on newspaper journalists who are in need of information for their routine work. Newspaper libraries create and maintain resources which can be easily available to journalists. The study revealed that the users are satisfied with the library sources and services. It also highlights the need and importance of digital archiving of newspapers for their professional excellence. All the journalists are highly aware about the information sources and they are highly utilising these resources including digital archives to a great extent. The mostly used information sources include Reference books, back/ current issues of newspapers and Digital News archives.

The library and information centres in newspaper organizations must aim to provide best services to their journalist community keeping in mind that they are not only the news providers but also meticulous users of information. Journalists mostly depend on modern information and communication technologies for seeking information. It the

duty of the library professionals to conduct training and awareness programs to their users to keep them abreast of the latest developments and use pattern of electronic resources and services. Digital archiving and preservation of newspapers is an essential and challenging work in this modern era. Journalists are in need of information at their fingertips in order to update and provide news within seconds and thus digital journalism is going to have significant effect on newspaper industry.

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