

Discussion on Reader Service Concept in Cataloging under Network Environment

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Abstract

This paper discusses the relationship among the construction of book storing, literature cataloging and reader service in libraries, and points out that only if the reader service awareness were set up can we do well the cataloging under network environment and improve the use rate of literature information in libraries.

Keywords: Network environment, Literature cataloging, Reader service, Makings of library staff.

With the rapid development of information technology, the working environment of libraries has been greatly improved. Under network environment formed by the interlacing of local network of libraries, campus network, China educational research and science network and internet, the jobs of libraries have undergoing great changes. The demand of readers on literature information has new changes. Readers lay higher and higher requirement as to the service of libraries, therefore, traditional service cannot meet the demands of readers any more and the requirements on reader service become higher and higher. Then, how can we perform well reader service in cataloging under network environment? Usually, when reader service of libraries is mentioned, many craft brothers engaged in cataloging will take for grant that it is the word of circulation and literature reference consultants. Actually, it is a wrong understanding. Cataloging is subject to basic business department of library and has no direct contact with readers; however, it does not mean that cataloging has nothing to do with reader service. The ultimate aim of literature cataloging and the construction of book storing is to “help readers find proper books and help books find their readers”. In cataloging, how to “help readers find proper books and help books find their readers”?

1. Problems of cataloging personnel

1.1 *Erroneous opinions of the society*

In China, library staff generally cannot obtain the recognizing of the public. Many people think that libratory work is rather simple and comfortable and anybody can qualify. Consequently, people will assume that cataloging personnel in libraries are not important either, whose specialty requirement is weak and who have nothing to do all day long. Under this kind of social opinions, cataloging personnel of libraries will generally lose their confidence in their work, further be suspicious about their posts, and be influenced by opinions of the outside world, which will be detrimental to the improvement of their business capacities. Even, many will give up their posts and turn to other occupations.

1.2 *Weak psychological makings*

Cataloging personnel of libraries are engaged in behind-scene work, whose existence will generally be neglected and whose work achievement is hard to be seen. Cataloging is a repetitive, dull and fussy job. Long term engagement in this job will lead workers generate weary psychology and years of silent work will easily lead people to trap in listless mood, which will severely influence the speed and quality of work. Some cataloging personnel cannot adjust their work mood and are weak in psychological makings.

1.3 *Knowledge not extensive*

At present, cataloging personnel in libraries in common are old in knowledge, narrow in knowledge scale and single in skill structure. Those who are specialized in library major know little about relevant specialty knowledge and those who have specialty knowledge background lack systematic library knowledge. Cataloging personnel lack knowledge on computer science, foreign languages and ancient Chinese and are low in education level. There are only a few high class talents who are expert in cataloging.

2. Basic makings for cataloging personnel

Under present network condition, with the increasing development of cataloging, the work of cataloging personnel of libraries is not restricted to their traditional roles any more, such as classification, cataloging, assigning book number and standard management. The work of cataloging refers more to the search and selection of network information sources and order arrangement, which lays higher requirements on the makings of cataloging personnel.

2.1 Ideology making

Cataloging personnel of libraries are engaged in behind-scene work. They will deliver the scattered literature information to readers after getting those information in order. Each worker shall apply the opinions of Marxism to understand the world, set up correct world view, life view and value view, love library career, treat readers with ardent and responsible spirit, be positive and enterprising, be willing to devote selflessly to library career, have strong career and responsibility sense, and endeavor to perform well service for readers. Besides, a significant content in the ideology and politics makings under network environment is to resist information garbage. Network is an open system with large amount of information, both good and bad; Therefore, cataloging personnel will meet some pseudo-scientific and unhealthy information garbage when randomly searching the internet, which requires that cataloging personnel have rather high politics and ideology makings and strong identification capacity.

2.2 Specialty making

Network environment lays new requirement on the specialty making of cataloging personnel. Besides to master traditional library science, classification, cataloging and informatics, cataloging personnel should also possess the following makings:

2.2.1 Cataloging personnel should have acute information awareness and rather strong information capacity. Information awareness refers to acute sense of cataloging personnel towards information and consciousness extent of cataloging personnel in catching, analyzing, judging and absorbing information. Information capacity includes information gaining capacity, information processing capacity and information transferring capacity. As for the changing information network, cataloging personnel shall understand the contents and characteristics of information websites, be able to manipulate network terminals, and improve information decision-making and judgment capacity.

2.2.2 Cataloging personnel must have strict criterion awareness. The criterion and standardization of cataloging data is the base for data exchange and the realization of resource share. If the cataloging data is not standard, the search fullness rate, search correctness rate and resource use rate in literature search will be harmed and information communication and resource share will be blocked. Therefore, it is necessary to regulate and control the cataloging data and to require that in cataloging, unified recording rules and criterions be adopted. The criterions include, literature recording criterion, namely China Literature Cataloging Rules and Foreign Language Literature Recording Regulations, literature machine reading format criterion, namely, China Machine Reading Catalogues Formats and DC element data format of recording network information and digital information, Chinese literature subject word marking and citation criterion, namely, Chinese Subject Word Table, western literature subject word marking and citation criterion, namely, Subject Words Table of Library of Congress of America, and literature classification criterion, namely, Methods of Chinese Library Classification. Cataloging personnel engaged in foreign language cataloging shall also master Dewey Classification, Cataloging personnel must set up criterion awareness, strictly perform the afore mentioned rules and criterions, and carry out standard treatment and control as of search points, such as the titles, authors, subjects and classification. Consequently, the consistency of literature marks will be achieved through the criterions on titles, authors, subjects, classifications and formats.

2.2.3 Cataloging personnel must have strong innovation awareness. Cataloging now is totally different from the former hand labor cataloging. But what does not comply with reality is that the thoughts of librarians does not keep pace with the rapid change of information eras. Many cataloging workers cannot discard the limitation of hand labor cataloging; therefore, their old fashioned thoughts on cataloging influence the development of today's cataloging, which is a problem deserving the emphasis of the field of libraries. Cataloging personnel must change their concepts and establish new concepts in order to adapt to the rapidly changing and developing network environment. Under knowledge economy condition, the demand on information of users increasingly grows and changes. But the users' capacity in using modern methods to search for useful information cannot be improved in a short time. The search fullness rare and correctness rate of information demanded are both rather low, which requires the libraries to provide information service of a higher class to the users. The libraries shall carefully select and process information of various carriers in great amount so as to meet various information demands of users of different types. In a rather long time, printed literature and electronic literature will co-exist. Therefore, the functions of purchasing and editing department lie more on the collecting and order arrangement of digital information stored in disks, CDs, and

networks. With regard to disks and CDs, the work is not restricted to the initial processing of the information carrier, but also the work involves the work to arrange the order of the contents of the digital information according to the classification requirements of libraries and to set up indexes and relevant data bases, aiming at providing more and more convenient information service to users.

3. Methods for improving cataloging work

The value of cataloging is realized through the use rate of the catalogue by readers. Cataloging workers shall set up the concept of “cataloging for use”, endeavor to improve work and raise the applicable effect of catalogues.

3.1 To deepen the depth of cataloging

The contents of literature science are all-embracing and complex. When inputting the data of names of books, cataloging workers should try their best to completely reflect the conditions of literatures. After computers are used to manage cataloging, the cataloging quality is improved. Compared with traditional cataloging, the modern cataloging makes great improvement in reader service. Therefore, in the cataloging process with computers, cataloging workers shall make deep, profound, outer to inner, multi-aspect and multi-level analysis on the contents of the literatures so as to fully exhibit the valuable information of literatures. The correctness and fullness of the quoted mark of the cataloging workers determines the search correctness and fullness of readers.

Nowadays, the more evident trend in information field is that the work key point is transferred from storing to gaining and from the description of literature to the transfer of literatures. The center of the work is transferred from book title gaining to information gaining. Information service is to provide information and is not just to provide information about information any more. All the library work aims at providing the service of “gaining”, which is not just the responsibility of a certain functional department. Therefore, cataloging work shall overcome being simply restricted to the process of book title information and shall quote and mark some important literature information and internet information so that readers can directly gain the needed information.

3.2 To extend the cataloging range

With the increasingly enriching and deepening of the contents of literature information, the cataloging work now is not restricted to the catalogue making for paper literature. The development of machine reading catalogue and metadata raises the extent and depth of cataloging work. The range of literature cataloging extends from books and periodicals to non book material, such as multi-media, network resources and CD data base. Through the relevant link by 856 filed provided by machine read catalogues, readers can through the OPAC of library log on relevant websites and databases to search relevant information.

The tenet of cataloging work is to provide first class service for readers. Then how to offer readers with more good information? Machine read catalogues can be used to realize it. Intecat and Netfirst is two network resource data base of demonstration meanings. The two apply the selection, description, quotation and mark in traditional literature information in network information, which is the extension of machine-linked unified catalogue to network information field. The CORC system developed by OOLC provides a cataloging function where DC metadata is used to describe internet resource. Libraries can convert the cataloging data of internet resources from the DC format to USMARC format and then store it into the local system to provide readers with relevant catalogues for the internet resources. By this way, the catalogue resource of libraries have the multi-search function.

3.3 To improve the quality of cataloging data

The cataloging work of libraries is an inner business work with strong technological demand, including to effectively classify books, periodicals, and electric resources and quote and mark theme and to catalog using MARC format. The quality of cataloging exerts direct influence on reader service. Proofreading is also an important method to ensure the quality of cataloging data. In the process of cataloging, sometimes it is hard for cataloging workers themselves to find mistakes, such as the wrongly written character in titles, book number, bar code and library storing wording, which will directly influence the circulation and data quality of books. Proofreading can find out these mistakes. Therefore, besides self-proofreading of cataloging workers, full time proofreaders with the spirit of contribution, carefulness and responsibility and familiar with machine read catalogue format shall be appointed or cataloging workers can proofread each other's catalogue. Proofreaders shall carefully check each data, in pursuit of accuracy and quality.

3.4 To set up a cataloging team of high quality

Only cataloging team of high quality can edit catalogues of high quality. At present, the publications are abundant, whose contents and forms are various and complex, raising a higher requirement on cataloging personnel. Besides solid specialty knowledge, cataloging personnel shall also have extensive knowledge, high vocabulary level, certain computer knowledge, the awareness for serving readers and career sense, which is the premise and basis for doing a

good job and is also a primary way to improve the makings of cataloging personnel. Cataloging personnel shall study hard, continually innovate, supplement knowledge, emphasize practices, combine theories closely with practices and accumulate experience in practices. At the same time, libraries shall try their best to provide cataloging personnel with the opportunities to gain further education so as to improve the overall level of the cataloging team.

4. Cataloging personnel shall keep studying

The profession knowledge in book information is the most basic requirement of librarians. Only a person lays solid foundation on the theories of book information, be familiar with basic work procedures of this specialty, and master basic work methods and basic skills, can the person realize the transfer from with printed literature material as processing materials to with modernized and electronic information resources as the processing materials, from single hand search to computer search, and realize the rapid development of information management and service of libraries under network information environment.

The work of high school libraries under internet environment must be done by professional and technical talents or special librarians. 10% of workers in American libraries have double master degrees. Some even have there degrees. Near 1/3 managers have doctor degrees. The reason for the need of high standard managers is that in information era, the dependence of readers on literature and librarians has undergone fundamental change. They have urgent demand towards special librarians. The internet service requires librarians, especially cataloging personnel, to have the following makings: high responsibility sense and career sense, specialty knowledge, knowing well more than on other specialty knowledge, and being capable of developing specialty knowledge information and collecting the newest science and research achievement in their disciplines through internet. In addition, if the librarians can master network management skill, the data processing software development skill, network information development and application skill, and the operation skill of outer equipments and sound and image information processing equipments of computers, they will be able to do a better job in serving readers.

5.1 Management concept innovation

The innovation of management concept is the premise to manage all innovation activities. The managers of books must set up innovation awareness, according to the development rule of libraries and the demands of professions in economy and knowledge era on libraries, set down correct development strategy and management mode, use modernized innovation methods to scientifically manage libraries, and create good environment for the training of the innovation making and the improvement of innovation capacity of librarians.

5.2 Technology innovation

The resources of libraries under network environment extends from limited resources to unlimited. The resources stored by libraries now include the books stored by the libraries and network resources. A most important criterions to evaluate a library is not the number of books stored by the library, but is the capacity to obtain network resources. Therefore, the work of librarians is certainly to carry put technology innovation and to apply computer network technology, multimedia technology and information technology to the library work in order to diversify and modernize the service methods of libraries. Since cataloging personnel are members of librarians, they should also do alike.

5.3 Service innovation

Service is the ultimate aim of the work of libraries and is the basic tenet of the libraries. With the development of science and technology and the rapid growth of information transferring amount, the work of libraries is forced to rapidly change from traditional service ways to information service mode. Libraries are in urgent need to optimize resource structure, enrich network information and establish electronic, digital and mutual active information communication platform so that users can obtain the needed literature without going to the libraries and a innovative, multi-modal, personalized and active service centering the users is formed.

In a word, book cataloging personnel under network information environment shall keep pace with the era, systematically and comprehensively study knowledge and innovate, arm their minds with knowledge and comprehensively improve general capacities and makings, and become librarians of a new generation with innovative awareness specializing in one field and good at many aspects. Cataloging personnel shall create new phase for the development of libraries in th 21st century with newest spiritual status and further do well the job of "help readers find proper books and help books find their readers".

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