

Editorial Commentary

Kerala Library Association (KLA), one of the most active regional associations of library and information professionals in India, has been contemplating on the launch of a journal in the field for a long time. Though starting a journal is fulfilling, it requires passion and time commitment on the part of the professionals behind it. Of course, you have to cogitate on its success also. Then, we have the umpteen examples of taking over of even the most established journals brought out by the learned bodies and professional associations by commercial publishers. However, the dedicated team behind Kerala Library Association and the enthusiastic members constituted the main sources of inspiration. Also, the experts we approached seeking consent to serve in the Editorial Advisory Committee were also zealous about it and promised all help. All were in favour of launching it as a half-yearly journal. Once the decision was taken, the question was whether to bring it out in the print format or make it available in the open access platform. The final decision was to resort to both the formats. Thus, KLA is bringing out the KLA Journal of Information Science & Technology (KJIST) as a biannual journal in print and open access modes.

We do not make tall claims about the uniqueness of the journal. Borrowing the words of Terheggen (2012), Managing Director of journals at Elsevier, we can only say that we will work hard to ensure that the journal is a well-considered and hopefully balanced one that strives to meet the needs of the professional community. We assure that in addition to the research, review and conceptual papers, the journal will focus on areas like public libraries and school libraries which are not given adequate coverage and emphasis in professional journals. Efforts will also be made to bring new pastures to the attention of the LIS professionals so as to make the libraries socially relevant while striving to attain the goals set by them.

While speaking about new pastures, one area that comes to my mind is Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs, established in the UN 2030 Agenda, provide a comprehensive list of the issues that governments and others in the development sectors care about. The seventeen goals of SDG were set forth in 2015 prompted by the success achieved by its predecessor programme Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs cover social and economic development issues including poverty, hunger, health, quality education, gender equality, sanitation, clean energy, economic growth, innovation and infrastructure, inequalities, urbanization, responsible consumption, climate action, underwater life, life on land, social justice, and partnership for the goals. The details of the goals can be had from the UNDP document accessible from http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/brochure/SDGs_Booklet_Web_En.pdf.

IFLA Statement on *Libraries and Development* (August 2013) calls upon all stakeholders to recognize that libraries, in every part of the world, can be reliable mechanisms for underpinning the delivery of sustainable development programmes. The IFLA booklet

Access and Opportunity for All: How Libraries contribute to the United Nations 2030 Agenda includes stories from all types of libraries in many countries around the world. Prima facie, it may appear that in the achievement of the SDGs, only public libraries need to play a proactive role. The reality is that all types of libraries – national, public, academic or special – have their own contributions to make. In order to achieve these lofty goals, libraries around the world offer a wide range of products and services that promote the achievement of each and every goal. The work of libraries can be seen threaded throughout the goals — including public access to information, access to technology, and lifelong learning.

In an era of increasing choices, libraries all over the world are faced with finding the best way to add value to their services so as to attract customers (users) and remain in business. Adding value implies that a customer got more than what they expected. Management literature is replete with studies related to customer satisfaction. It has its repercussions in LIS literature also. But the modern thrust is on customer delight. Customer delight happens when you surprise a customer by exceeding their expectations. When expectations are met, you have customer satisfaction, but when expectations are exceeded, you achieve customer delight (Willis, 2015). Therefore, in the changing circumstances, libraries are expected to surprise users with additional services which they never expected. Studies have shown that in business, it costs six to seven times more to acquire new customers than to retain an existing one. It is, therefore, imperative that retention of users is easier than expanding the user base. Librarians have to work out ways and means to use their creativity and invent ways to enthrall their users with new and new surprises.

It is also equally important to share the success stories with fellow professionals. I wish to remember the services rendered by Meredith Farkas who maintained the 'Library Success Wiki' for more than 12 years (from 2005 – 2018) to bring out success stories in the LIS field to the entire professional fraternity. She started using Wiki for the purpose when Facebook, Twitter or Google Docs were not there. Now that she bid goodbye to her efforts mainly due to the vulnerability of Mediawiki software, it is time for us to make use of more stable platforms for the dissemination of innovative strategies. Blogs are there but there is a dearth of regular bloggers in the library field in India. However, journals with a provision for short communication can be effectively used for the purpose.

Coming back to the journal, we exhort the professionals to come out with innovative and creative ideas and make their intellectual contributions to the profession by sending papers falling within the purview of the journal. It is our expectation that authors will surprise us with articles describing good work in areas we had not even anticipated and we promise to be open to such works.

References

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