International Conference on Digital Libraries 2006
Theme: Information Management for Global Access
Draft Recommendations for Consideration in the Valedictory Session
8th December 2006

Preamble

The Conference recognizes that global access to information is essential for economic, cultural, social, scientific and technological development.

The Conference recognizes that universal access to information is essential to freedom, equality, global understanding, peace, poverty alleviation, economic growth, education, health, sanitation, global e-commerce, and transparency in governance.

The Conference recognizes that the 21st century is the era of knowledge economy wherein technology and knowledge are prime factors of production and services, wherein business activities, products and services as well as management and decision making are knowledge and technology driven. In the knowledge-based economy information and knowledge are corporate assets.

The Conference recognizes that digital libraries are the tools to facilitate global access to information, and a positive force to advance learning, scholarship, and knowledge innovation.

The Conference recognizes that world over several initiatives have been undertaken to promote and advance global access to information. However barriers such as copyright issues, economic issues, rapid changes in technology, band-width limitations, lack of trained manpower, and multilingual contents continue to hamper progress in this regard.

The Conference recognizes that information decays rapidly in the digital age and as such majority of publictions lose their commerial value long before the expiry of the mandated copyright period under the Law.

The Conference recognizes that factors to promote global access are content creation; Web based dissemination; information literacy; network connectivity, reliability, capacity and performance; and technical, telecommunications and bibliographic standards.

Recommendations

Having regard to the strengths and potentials of digital libraries, and their role in economic, cultural, social, and technological development and having regard to the barriers to global access to information, the Conference recommends as follows:

Enact Digital Library Act

Countries should endeavour to enact Digital Library Act aimed at facilitating digitization and content creation for universal access to information. This is a new concept and India should provide the leadership by enacting first Digital Library Act which provides for

- Differential reduction in copyright period for all kinds of publications
- Vesting copyright to the authors
- Publicly funded materials should be freely accessible
- Build in clear and extensive provisions for fair use of copyrighted material
- Develop new models of stated-funded compensation to the authors
- Compulsory deposit of digital copy of new publications in addition to printed copy

Establish Consortia for Content Creation

Countries should strengthen content creation activity by establishing consortia for content creation aimed at

- Capturing traditional knowledge that still has not been recorded but resides within the communities
- Archiving cultural assets of the country like songs, music, folklore, speeches, etc
- Archiving scholarly publications
- Building repositories of scholarly publications, government publications and reports, institutional reports, etc

Certain percentage of budget meant for education sector must be earmarked exclusively for content creation.

Democratization of information

Countries should aim at democratization of information so that the information at the point of use is available for free. In this regard following measures are important

- Place all contents on the Internet
- Make provision for Internet access for through public library system
- Establish network of community knowledge centres
- Make access user friendly, tailoring it to the needs of individuals
- Promote information literacy in accordance with UNESCO declaration
- Use open access and open source technologies for information dissemination

Capacity & Capability Building in Digital Library

To meet the manpower demand for establishing, developing, and expanding digital library activities, there is an urgent need to build new capacities and capabilities. In this regard, the countries need to set up institutions of excellence. Such institutions can take up following different approaches to curriculum development, education, research and training in digital library field

- Create a new discipline labeled 'digital library studies' which would be a symbiosis of knowledge components from the fields such as library science, knowledge management, scientometrics, management, and computer science.

- Create programmes under the Ministry of Culture for education and training of in-service staff in digital library
- Introduce specialization in digital library studies for teaching in universities
- New models of teaching such as e-learning, virtual classrooms, virtual reality may be exploited for building capacity and capability building
- Sufficient funding may be provided for such programmes

National Digital Library Policy

Developing countries need to formulate national digital library policy as well as establish an apex national body to provide leadership in digital library development, and to coordinate, direct and oversee disparate efforts in content creation, and catalyze digital library activities within the country

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India in particular should launch 'Digital India Initiative', dii2006, for undertaking the following programmes in collaboration with leading countries in digital library world

- Enactment of Indian Digital Library Act
- Establish Consortia for Content Creation
- Democratization of Information
- Build Capacity and Capability in Digital Library
- Formulate National Digital Library Policy
- Set up an Apex National Body for Digital Library Development in the country and create a separate 'Fund' for the purpose.

Please provide your comments/suggestions by December 30, 2006 at icdl@teri.res.in