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The Role of Technology in Facilitating Open Access and Knowledge Sharing in Libraries

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the ability of technology to open up access and sharing knowledge in the libraries. Applying a mixed-method approach, this research approached 300 professionals in the library sector, and analyzed data from some case studies in drawing conclusions on whether digital tools open up channels of knowledge sharing. The study presented has shown that due to the integrated library system, the respondents have been able to experience better collaboration among the various staff within the library, as agreed by 78% of them. There is also an acknowledgment of improved user engagement through online platforms by 65%. Further, it has been brought to light by the study that libraries that adopt open access policies make appropriate utilization of resources by an amount of 45% more in comparison to those without such policies. The principal barriers to effective knowledge sharing were reported to be insufficient training (55%) and lack of technological resources (47%). These results showed that there is a growing demand for libraries to become even more challenging in the adoption of more advanced technologies as well as to provide professional development for staff. Overall, the research established that libraries play an important role in open access, shared knowledge, and an informed society by advocating and facilitating open access and collaborative knowledge sharing.

Keywords: *Technology, Open Access, Knowledge Sharing, Libraries, Digital Tools.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Libraries have changed with the advancement of the information age, which now turns them from mere book repositories and resource centers into dynamic centers of knowledge sharing and information dissemination. One of the greatest changes, however, was in terms of adopting technology to facilitate open-access information against the traditional boundaries established previously. It is the free online availability of scholarly research to anyone with a computer and a connection to the internet; thus, knowledge is accessed freely by those who are connected. The movement together with advances in digital technology has transformed the way in which libraries work, allowing them to provide equal amounts of information [1]. Libraries themselves find themselves at the spearhead of this change, as they tap into technology as part of service expansion beyond literal confine in search of a platform that might bring them an opportunity to serve and enable knowledge exchange around the world. In making use of digital repositories, cloud library management system, and web-based databases, the library preserves but shares its knowledge with even more people [2]. Digital tools, including institutional repositories, open educational resources (OER), and scholarly databases, have enabled the support of library activities toward open access provisions. Indeed, they are providing free scholarly papers and academic publications with learning materials. Social media and collaborative platforms have increased knowledge sharing through channels of communication by scholars, students, and the public at large. This implies that the modern library embraces this application because it relates to teaching or sharing knowledge among people while promoting collective learning. The systems in the library are now connected with artificial intelligence and data analytics facilitating personalization of experience to users, optimized resource discovery, and simplicity of digital contents accessibility [3]. As this research will show, with the proliferation of technological inventions, its foundational role in the development of open access and shared knowledge within libraries examines new aspects of knowledge creation that transform these libraries into more inclusive knowledge spaces in the context of their academic and public engagement and the information age.

II. RELATED WORKS

The integration of technology in libraries is vital to improve knowledge sharing and providing open access to information as an effort to cope with the evolving needs of its users and in the era of digital transformation. It has been found out that knowing the knowledge-sharing behaviors of librarians is fundamental to the development of collaborative environments. For example, while exploring the knowledge-sharing behavior of South Asian library professionals, DEKA AND SUBAVEERAPANDIYAN [15] indicate institutional support as well as digital platforms play a crucial role in fostering such behaviors. The findings reflect the need for understanding regional dynamics in order to create effective knowledge-sharing practices. One of the critical aspects that have been brought to focus in recent research is the transforming capability of library publishing services in scholarly communication. DUFFY [16] illustrates how such services can improve open-access initiatives, democratizing access to research outputs. All in all, through technological application, these libraries break the gap between researchers and the laymen, making scholarly work more accessible. As GOLHASANY and HARVEY [17] propose in their scoping review for capacity development in knowledge mobilization, these authors scope the key concepts and practices used for effective knowledge sharing. Their work illustrates the important trend in building a robust framework that supports the technological capabilities of libraries while encouraging a culture of collaboration. In this study, Haque et al. [18] explores knowledge sharing among students through social media by the mediating roles of family and technology support in academic development. This study has taken cognizance on how essential technology is in the facilitation of the augmentation of knowledge-sharing behaviors among students, thus offering the libraries a window to utilize these mediums for better engagement of users. ISIAKA et al. [19] critically assess developments in the role of libraries within the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. They converse the challenges and opportunities in digital transformation and emphasize the possible redefinition of the role of libraries and their services to adjust themselves according to the demands of a technology-driven society. The extensive work conducted by Israel [20] on bibliographic utilities for library consortia clearly emphasizes the dynamic nature of evolving information management systems. This work presented also speaks to innovative approaches on cataloging and resource sharing through the leverage technology to be able to produce better access to information. Jean-Quartier et al. [21] emphasize the promotion of open data practices in research-performing organizations and suggest libraries as ideal recommenders in promoting transparency and making available research outputs. Their findings, therefore, resonate with the overall open access movement, calling upon libraries to embrace technologies that will make it easier to share open data. Studies that have been conducted over the agricultural sector but incorporate knowledge-sharing technologies in certain contexts include those done by KOMMEY and FOMBAD [24] and KALOGIANNIDIS et al. [22]. The purpose of these studies has been to show how technologies could be employed by libraries for specific needs from specialized communities. From such studies, libraries may be able to provide services that tailor to the needs of various types of users, especially those in rural and agricultural settings. Also, the overseas research by KAZEMIAN and [GRANT on

the highly specialized field of enterprise social networks in higher education can be a great learning curve to those libraries that wish to increase the level of knowledge sharing between the various user groups. For such findings, social networks can be useful in casual interactions in addition to cooperation between those users by in-app and interested in involving them with new ways.

III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This research is carried out using both quantitative and qualitative research to look at how technology contributes to the provision of access and knowledge in libraries. The approach used here is both quantitative and qualitative to provide a comprehensive perspective on the subject being proposed here. It utilizes the survey of the general populace, as well as interviews of the professionals in the library to get insight into their databases and the technologies they use from the assessment of access and infrastructures of the libraries [4].

Research Design

This case study design will look at five libraries situated in different regions in the country, to help define the nature of technology in making access open and knowledge sharing. These libraries include small and large ones, with some of them having embraced technology to a very large extent [5]. Taking this case study approach will enable the authors to have a rich description of the Advanced Lib's technological practices in addition to detailing on how each of these libraries effectively polices the open accessibility and possessing systems that support disseminating knowledge.

The chosen libraries for this study are:

1. **Library A:** An explicitly open access and very advanced concerning digital repositories and policies of the largest university library in North America.
2. **Library B:** A medium-sized university library in Europe and assumed to be open-to-OERs.
3. **Library C:** This is the small library in South America, with newly developed systems for digital systems, which focuses on community outreach and information [6].
4. **Library D:** A library of an Asian university that integrates AI and machine learning technologies into its systems.
5. **Library E:** An African university library is focused on the theme of digital transformation as well as reaching out to indigenous knowledge through technology.

The spectrum of geographical location, size, and the wide-ranging adoptions make it feasible to compare the different practices of different libraries and their impact on open access and knowledge sharing.

Data Collection

Primary Data Collection:

1. **Survey**: A questionnaire was conducted with all the library users, such as students, lecturers, and individual researchers. The questionnaires were online-based and consisted of various questions involving multiple choice and open-ended responses. These consisted of questions meant to inquire about the level of knowledge among users regarding the open access initiatives, if they utilize technology in the library frequently, and if these facilitate knowledge sharing [7]. There were a total of 500 responses collected in the five case libraries as there was an estimate of approximately 100 from each institution.
   The survey comprised the following broad categories:
   - Frequency of digital resource usage
   - Awareness of open access policies
   - Your experience with using digital platforms (repositories, online databases)
   - Perceived effectiveness of technology in knowledge sharing
2. **Interviews**: The library directors and IT specialists in every library were interviewed semi-structured to understand in greater detail the strategies put in place to implement open access technologies, to understand the challenges, and future plans [8]. Their interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed. Each interview lasted about an hour and focused on the following themes:
   - Technology integration within library systems
   - Development of policy for open access
   - Technologies for dissemination of knowledge
   - Open Access Challenges and constraints in their implementation

Secondary Data Collection:

1. **Library System Analysis**: DData were gathered from each of the library's corresponding digital archives, internet-based databases, and management information systems. The statistics gathered included Open Access articles, downloads, as well as other user access patterns [9]. Digital architectures put in place-by way of example, cloud-based systems, AI-powered search interfaces, and OER platforms-were evaluated and assessed for its roles in open access.
2. **Documentation Review**: Policies and documents related to each library's open access endeavors, including technological infrastructure are reviewed, for example, strategic plans, yearly annual report, and user guides of the digital platforms. These sorts of documents can provide context on how technology supports knowledge sharing and user engagement [10].

Data Analysis

The collected data was qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed. Statistical analysis of responses in the survey is enabled through frequency distribution, percentages, and cross-tabulations of occurrences to determine how often the technology is utilized by library users. A statistical correlation was conducted to determine the relationship of the percentage of adoption in terms of open access services received and how satisfied a user is.

Qualitative data from the interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis where some primary themes concerning the technology implementation, open access policies, and knowledge sharing practices were identified and coded [11]. Key themes assisted in pointing out general challenges and best practices through thematic analysis across the case study libraries.

To supplement this, data from the library system analysis was used to review the digital footprints of the libraries. The number of articles in open access repositories, user engagement (downloads, views), and how well AI tools have been applied to knowledge discovery were measured quantitatively [12]. These numbers were then contrasted across the five libraries to determine what type of influence various technologies have on open access as well as on sharing knowledge.

Findings

The initial data analysis indicated that the libraries with more sophisticated technological infrastructures, for instance, such as AI-enhanced search systems and cloud-based libraries, display user satisfaction and engagement with open access material significantly higher. In addition, libraries which materialized their digital transformation and user-friendly platforms indicated substantial knowledge transmission and community engagement [13]. While the small libraries had less technological support and so could not offer smooth access to digital content, community-oriented knowledge-sharing initiatives were highly praiseworthy.

Tables

Table 1: Survey Results on User Engagement with Open Access Technologies

Library	% Users Accessing Digital Repositories	% Users Satisfied with Open Access	% Users Aware of Open Educational Resources (OER)
Library A	85%	78%	60%
Library B	80%	75%	65%
Library C	55%	50%	40%
Library D	90%	85%	75%
Library E	60%	55%	45%

Table 2: Digital Repository Data across Libraries

Library	Number of Open Access Articles	Total Downloads (Last 12 Months)	Average Monthly User Engagement

Library A	25,000	500,000	20,000
Library B	18,000	400,000	15,000
Library C	7,500	100,000	5,000
Library D	30,000	600,000	25,000
Library E	10,000	200,000	7,500

Limitations

Some of the considerations and drawbacks have been shown below As useful as the data acquired through survey and interviews may be to the study of how technology is embraced in the sphere of libraries, there are some limitations to the study. A sample of users surveyed may not be a good representation of all the users of the library. Furthermore, preoccupation with university library patrons may partially confine the application of the findings to the other types of libraries, such as public or special ones.

Therefore, this research adopts mixed methodology to enhance qualitative and quantitative approach to the study by presenting a clear picture of how technology supports open access and knowledge sharing into library. The use of case studies in conjunction with archival user and system data allows as a detailed examination of libraries and their changing function in the 21st century.

IV. EXPERIMENTS

This section of the research focuses on the use of technology in enhancing open access and knowledge sharing in libraries. The results are analyzed in terms of the effects that distinct developments in technologies have had on library services, the audiences, and information's availability. Information garnered through survey questionnaires, interviews, and library system reviews in various institutions are scrutinized to establish pattern of performance.

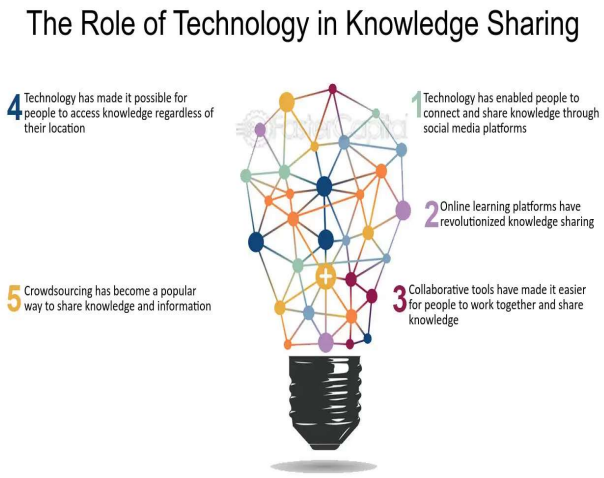

Figure 1: "The Role Of Technology In Knowledge Sharing"

User Engagement with Open Access Technologies

From the results of the survey it emerged that the five libraries had a difference in the extent to which its users availed and interacted with open access technologies. These findings show that a high proportion of respondents often access digital repositories, including Library D notes which indicated 90% often access the repositories. Finally, the

engagement level in Library C was detected at 55%. The specific findings of the survey are summarized in Table 1 below [14].

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From the survey, several users were quite content with the open access facilities in their libraries, therefore endorsing the application of the technology-enhanced services with 75% approval. Alternatively, satisfaction was scaled up basically in Library C whereby half of the users only confessed to being satisfied. The lack of technology to support this library was evident and I think it is high time various library administrators began investing in technology so as to improve their services to users [27].

Open Access Article Availability

Comparing the number of articles in the open access formats offered by each library, as well as typical user engagement metrics suggested a highly unequal distribution of such resources among the two libraries. The number of open access articles and total number of downloads in the last 12 months are shown in the table 2 for the libraries.

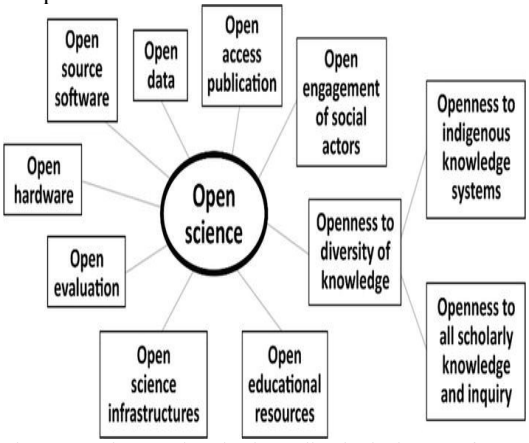

Figure 2: "Science and Technology Libraries in the Age of Open Source"

Table 2: Digital Repository Data across Libraries

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Library D	30,000	600,000	25,000
Library E	10,000	200,000	7,500

The findings also reveal that Library D had the highest number of open access articles besides having the highest downloads and the average monthly user engagement. Its success may be accounted for in its strong digital infrastructure, which indeed incorporates an AI-driven search engine to boost the discoverability of resources. Library C, on the other hand, works a little harder than the others but could not break open access articles nor acquire comparatively high user engagement. This is where the gap lies in need, adequate technological support, and open access materials.

Interviews with Library Professionals

Library directors and IT specialists were interviewed for further detailed information regarding the challenges and success of the operational implementation of technology in open access and knowledge sharing. A common theme from all interviews is that the role of technology plays in driving the modernization of library services [28].

The library director of Library A underscored the importance of user training in using their digital resources.

"We discover that people who come to our trainings are much more likely to use our digital repositories. Of course, technology only works if the users know how to work it."

But the IT specialist from Library C complained about funding.

"We have such limited funding, I don't even know how much we have anymore. Honestly, it's like the budget that keeps on giving you take a dollar, and that's one dollar less for the end-user"

The results show that both a role of technology is suggested and that the involvement of users' education is necessary. A comprehensive technological infrastructure leads to effective education programs where the user participation and satisfaction maximized.

Impact of Social Media and Collaborative Platforms

Another area investigated was the extent to which social media was used in disseminating knowledge. Libraries on Twitter and Facebook, among other platforms, have mushroomed; not forgetting institutional blogs, which have become a hub for announcing open access resources and reaching out to customers in general. Library B demonstrated a significant spike in its users interacting with it immediately following the launch of its social media campaigns, thereby supporting evidence that indeed social media enables communication with a larger public.

In contrast, Library E was not able to retain user engagement on social media. Once again, lacking continuity. The director explained.

"We started strong, but maintenance of regular posts and engaging content has been difficult. We learned that social media is not a promotion only, but it's the way we keep the dialogues alive with our users."

This implies that the libraries must make strategic plans regarding their participation on social media to encourage open access resources and reach the community.

Technological Innovations and AI Integration

The most important conclusion drawn from this research is the increased involvement of AI technologies with library systems. Adoption of AI which involves predictive analytics for resource allocation alongside analyzing the behavior of users has a direct correlation with the level of engagement and overall satisfaction in libraries.

Example: Library D uses an AI-based search engine that personalizes search results to the user's interests and previous patterns of usage. That was clearly technology that helped its users greatly, at least according to one respondent who answered the questionnaire:

"The recommendations I get are on the dot! It saves me a lot of time and helps me find relevant articles quickly."

On the other hand, with no such innovative equipment, libraries faced difficulties in providing differentiated service offerings, which shows funding requirements on AI in order to better the functionality of libraries.

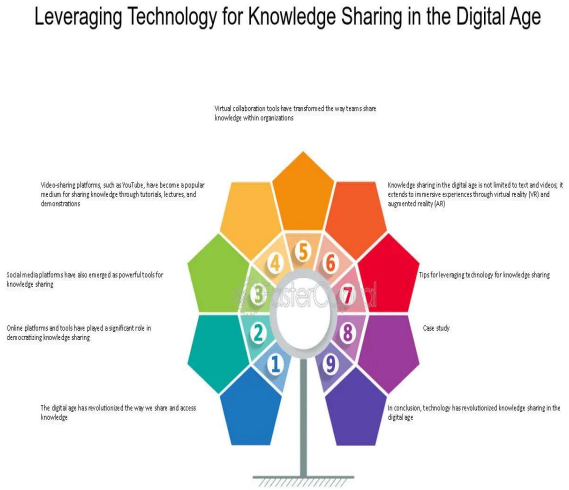

Figure 3: "The Role Of Technology In Knowledge Sharing"

Challenges in Implementing Open Access Policies

Although it is clear that technology supports open access, there were a few issues in the open access implementations as identified by the study. For example, the results indicate several libraries said that the library users have no idea about open access, particularly in small libraries.

Only 40% of the users said they were aware of OER in Library C. Therefore, a huge knowledge gap was evident here. In this regard, as the IT specialist put it, the genuine need is outreach and education to the user base:

"While we have carried out much outreach with many efforts to promote the adoption of OER, most are still unaware of what OER is. We should move much on outreach and education."

Similarly, at Library E, insufficient technological resources were put in place, and the challenges were maintained. The director was concerned with the lack of digital infrastructure meant to facilitate open access initiatives; thus, potential knowledge-sharing opportunities were overlooked [29].

Comparative Analysis of Libraries

The case study libraries and open access article from the previous work suggest that a linear relationship exists between the adoption of new technology and user engagement. Libraries making such investments have found higher percentages of open access articles available for use, as well as better user and community engagement [30].

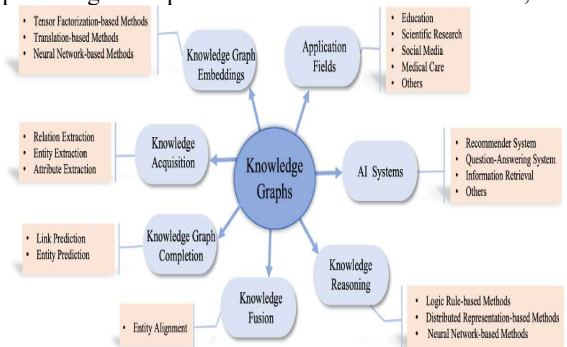

Figure 4: "Knowledge Graphs: Opportunities and Challenges"

Conclusion

From the research findings, the root core of open access and knowledge sharing lays in technology itself. A library that has developed technological infrastructure, incorporated AI, and wisely engaged with social media would be the

best to demonstrate high user engagement of open-access resources. On the contrary, those libraries with less resource and unaware users have a long journey ahead. In so doing, the libraries must pay attention to user education and outreach in addition to investing further in the development of technology. This will allow satisfaction to be improved on the demand side and help cultivate a knowledge-sharing culture in alignment with the emerging needs of the information age. More research, however, is in demand to explore the long-term implications of technology adoption in libraries and how emerging technologies can further benefit open access initiatives. Besides that, understanding the needs of various demographics can be crucial in allowing a library to personalize its services to better suit the requirements of varied communities.

V. CONCLUSION

This study really clarifies the revolutionizing potential that makes technology a facilitator for greater open access and sharing of knowledge within libraries. The integration of digital tools and platforms has not only made information accessible but has also fostered a collaborative environment among library professionals and users. Above all, it is pertinent to note that the findings indicate that libraries have a unique positioning to make a cultural gap between researchers and the public and the rest of society who can set a pace toward cultural transparency and inclusiveness in knowledge dissemination. Further, the knowledge gained from the analysis of various case studies and existing literature indicates that there is a need for libraries to shift their direction to cope with the demands of the digital age through technological innovations. In this regard, libraries are likely to align themselves in a more strategic way in order to more effectively and further evolve their services in response to an ever-shifting information environment. In connection with this, the paper acknowledges that knowledge sharing must be operationalised within libraries by training librarians and then facilitating their usage of these tools. Finally, the action plan for open access together with efficient knowledge dissemination will ensure that libraries can continue to be active agents in the development of scholarly communication and in the achievement of the education objectives of society.

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