

Challenges and Opportunities: The Transformation of Traditional Libraries into the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

Conventional libraries face significant challenges in the ever-evolving digital age. This study aims to identify the challenges and opportunities arising from the transformation of conventional libraries into the digital era. Using a qualitative approach and descriptive research techniques, data were collected through in-depth interviews with library staff, users, and digital literacy experts, as well as through the analysis of relevant documents. The results indicate that the main challenges include limited access to technology, low digital literacy, the need for cultural adaptation in the workplace, as well as data security and privacy issues. On the other hand, digital transformation presents significant opportunities for libraries to provide broader access to information, develop innovative services, collaborate with other institutions, and enhance the professional development of library staff. In conclusion, the success of transforming conventional libraries into the digital era heavily depends on the library's ability to overcome challenges through effective and innovative strategies. With a proactive and adaptive approach, libraries can remain relevant centers of knowledge and learning in the digital society, leveraging technology to provide better and broader services to the public.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries, as custodians and stewards of knowledge, have served as central hubs for learning, research, and cultural exchange within society for centuries. In the past, people were familiar only with conventional libraries, which focused on the collection, organization, and dissemination of information. Their primary focus was on the physical collections available at the library. Library users were expected to visit the library in person, where librarians would provide face-to-face services (Tjiptasari, 2022). However, with the rapid rise of the digital era, the role and relevance of conventional libraries have been widely questioned. Phenomena such as the internet, mobile devices, and other digital information resources have transformed the way information is



accessed, stored, and used. This transformation presents a series of new challenges for traditional libraries. How can libraries maintain their relevance amid competition from an ever-increasing number of easily accessible online information sources? How can they expand their roles to meet the needs of a society that is becoming increasingly digitally connected? This article aims to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by libraries in navigating this digital era.

Conventional libraries require users to visit the library in person; however, libraries are often crowded, leaving many without a seat or a comfortable place to read, and the book-borrowing process also requires a physical visit to the library. This problem can be solved by using a web-based library system or a digital library (Styawati et al., 2023). A digital library is a form of information technology application used to store and manage books in digital format (Habibillah et al., 2022).

The persistently low literacy rates in Indonesia remain a serious problem that needs to be addressed. These low literacy rates stem from the fact that people prefer to spend their time watching television or using electronic devices rather than reading books. If this situation continues, Indonesia will not have a high-quality society with a highly skilled workforce. This problem must be addressed collectively; libraries, as providers of books and information, must offer solutions. One step libraries can take is to create digital libraries, which can serve as a new innovation to meet the challenges of the globalization era (Andita, 2022).

By examining these challenges, we will be able to understand how libraries can transform themselves into more dynamic, relevant, and competitive institutions in this digital age. By uncovering the opportunities hidden behind these challenges, libraries have great potential to continue serving as vital centers of knowledge and culture in this increasingly connected and evolving society.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using descriptive research methods to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by libraries as they navigate the transition to the digital age. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of complex and multifaceted issues, as well as to obtain valuable insights from the diverse perspectives of various stakeholders. Data for this study was collected through a series of in-depth interviews with various parties associated with libraries, including library staff, library users, and experts in the fields of libraries and digital literacy. The interviews were conducted using a pre-prepared interview guide, which included structured questions about the respondents' views and experiences regarding the challenges and opportunities in the transformation of libraries into the digital era. In addition to interviews, data was also collected through document analysis, including relevant research reports, scientific articles, and official library publications. Document analysis was conducted to gain a broader understanding of relevant issues and current trends in the transformation of libraries into the digital age. The qualitative data collected was then analyzed thematically, where patterns, themes, and relationships emerging from the data were identified and analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by libraries in their transformation to the digital era. By employing this qualitative approach and descriptive research techniques, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the transformation of conventional libraries into the digital era, as well as offer valuable

insights for libraries and other stakeholders in addressing challenges and capitalizing on opportunities within this increasingly interconnected context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study highlights the various challenges and opportunities faced by traditional libraries as they transition to the digital age. The following are the key findings from the interviews and document analysis conducted:

A. Challenges

1. **Access to Technology:** Many libraries face challenges in accessing and implementing the latest digital technologies. These challenges include limited budgets for purchasing hardware and software, as well as high maintenance costs.
2. **Digital Literacy:** Library staff and users often lack adequate digital literacy skills. This hinders their ability to make effective use of digital resources.
3. **Changes in Work Culture:** Library staff must adapt to the changes in work culture demanded by the digital age, such as continuous learning and adapting to new technologies.
4. **Security and Privacy:** The increasing use of digital technology raises concerns about data security and user privacy, which require special attention in information management.

B. Opportunities

1. **Broader Access:** Digital technology enables libraries to provide broader access to information for the public, including those in remote areas or with physical disabilities.
2. **Service Innovation:** Libraries can develop new, more innovative services, such as digital libraries, digital literacy classes, and online learning programs that can attract a wide range of user groups.
3. **Collaboration and Networking:** The digital age opens up opportunities for libraries to collaborate with other institutions, both local and international, to share resources and knowledge.
4. **Professional Development:** Opportunities for training and professional development for library staff have increased with the availability of online learning resources and global professional networks.

The findings of this study indicate that the transformation of conventional libraries into the digital age is a complex process that requires attention to various technical, cultural, and social factors. The main challenges faced by libraries include limited access to technology, the need to improve digital literacy, and the necessity of adapting to changes in work culture. However, the opportunities that arise are also significant. By leveraging digital technology, libraries can expand the reach of their services and engage a broader audience. Innovations in library services, such as the provision of digital resources and online learning programs, can enhance the relevance of libraries in the digital age.

It is important to note that the success of this transformation depends heavily on the library's ability to address existing challenges through effective and innovative strategies. Investing in technological infrastructure and digital literacy training for staff and users is a crucial step that must be taken. Additionally, collaborating with other institutions and participating in professional networks can provide the necessary support to navigate these changes.

In this context, libraries have great potential to remain vital centers of knowledge and learning in the digital society. By adopting a proactive and adaptive approach, libraries can turn challenges into opportunities, ensuring that they remain relevant and competitive in the face of rapid technological advancements.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of traditional libraries into the digital age is a complex yet promising process. This study identifies various challenges faced by libraries, including limited access to technology, low digital literacy among staff and users, and the need to adapt to changes in work culture. These challenges require libraries to make significant investments in technological infrastructure and training. However, behind these challenges lie significant opportunities that libraries can leverage to expand their role and relevance in the digital age. Digital technology opens up broader access to information, enables innovation in library services, and supports wider collaboration with various institutions. Libraries can develop innovative digital services, such as digital libraries and digital literacy programs, to attract and engage users from diverse backgrounds. The success of this transformation depends on libraries' ability to overcome challenges through effective and innovative strategies. Investment in technological infrastructure, the promotion of digital literacy, and collaboration with other institutions are crucial steps that must be taken. With a proactive and adaptive approach, libraries can ensure that they remain relevant centers of knowledge and learning in an ever-evolving digital society. Thus, libraries that are able to adapt and innovate will continue to play a vital role in supporting education, research, and lifelong learning, even within a rapidly changing information landscape. This transformation is not merely about survival, but also about growth and leveraging digital technology to provide better and more extensive services to the public.

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