


Subject: Library and Information Science

Production of Courseware

 -Content for Post Graduate Courses



Paper No: 04 Information Sources, Systems and Services

Module : 12 Sources for Current Information: An Overview



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Module 12: Sources for Current Information: an Overview

I. Objectives

The objective of this module is:

- To learn the various information sources of current information
- Impart knowledge on various current information sources in WWW, etc

II. Learning Outcomes

After reading this Module, you will be able to:

- Get acquainted with need for current information,
- Differentiate between current information and current awareness,
- List various information sources for current information,
- Understand the importance of web as a source of information,
- Explain the use of various e-resources as sources of current information, and
- Describe and give examples of sources for current information.

III. Module Structure

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1. Introduction

Each query or research question or project requires different types of information sources. For example, if a research question asked is about the popular opinion regarding a current event, newspaper articles and web sites may be the best sources of information. On the other hand, if scholarly information is needed on the history of a social movement, we may want to find articles published in scholarly journals, books or dissertations. Information has become a critical asset for all organizations (including information organisations) owing to their rapid adoption of information technologies in the entirety of the organisational activities. This has arisen from the need for keeping pace with the growing developments in each subject area.

There are different types of information sources that may be useful when we are researching for information for some activities or assignments. It is important to understand the difference between these and how they can best be used and accessed. Information required may be current, background, general, detailed, research, statistics or opinion, suitable sources can be consulted. Current refers to most recent or published within the past one year or so. When we begin the research process, a variety of sources are explored to discover the most useful information. Usually for the most current information about a topic, we normally look for periodical articles.

Library/information science professionals have to find out ways to make modern libraries relevant in today's fast-changing environment. One method to do this is to acquire or have access to information sources that satisfy the current information requirements of their users. This Module identifies potential sources of information for societal and library trends so that current information requirements of the users are taken care of by library/information organizations.

2. Information Sources

Changes in information are taking place all the time. This is basically due to increase in quantity and modes of availability. Besides this, speed of information availability too is increasing as internet connections are instantaneous. As information is growing rapidly, our ability to access, use, and interact with information is changing as users require more information and current information all the time. For this information availability is increasingly enhanced and linked in a range of ways. Also the social nature of information has enabled stronger and more integrated ties between people, communities, information sources and information providers.

The sources of information are broadly classified into documentary sources and non-documentary sources. All recorded sources of information irrespective of their contents and form come under documentary sources. These may be published or unpublished, in print or in electronic form. Documentary sources can be categorized as primary, secondary and tertiary sources on the basis of appearance of information. In primary sources, information appears first, a secondary source comes out next and tertiary sources are the last to appear. The non-documentary sources of information can be defined as those sources and resources of information that are not contained in any document. The non-documentary sources comprise of formal and informal sources. These have already been discussed in detail in Module 2 and Module 3 of this paper. In this Module, a brief overview of various sources of current information has been provided.

3. Current Information

Current Information can come virtually from anywhere - books, journal articles, expert opinions, encyclopaedias, patents, standards, media, blogs, personal experiences and web pages. The type of information a user needs will change depending on the question asked and efforts to answer these questions. In the context of current information, when we talk about information sources, it refers to any publication, website, or other item that can make available desired information. The information sources discussed in this Module include periodical articles, newspapers, books, websites, reference sources, etc.

3.1 Difference between Current Information and Current Awareness

Current awareness is commonly used to describe the process of keeping up to date with information. It is also defined as 'a system, and often a publication, for notifying current documents to users of libraries and information services. 'So current awareness is referred to as the process of keeping up to date and current awareness services are systems for notifying users about the current documents or information. Current awareness, therefore, is knowledge of recent developments in a field. Generally, the knowledge is of developments which relate to an individual's profession. Kemp has listed four types of knowledge involved in the current awareness process: "new theoretical ideas and hypotheses; new problems to be solved; new methods and techniques for solving old and new problems; and new circumstances affecting what people do and how they may do it."In many respects the current awareness is the opposite of the retrospective search. The retrospective search begins with the need to locate information on a specific topic for a specific purpose. The goal of current awareness on the other hand is less specific. It is the need to understand current developments in order to do one's work more effectively. The assumption that information can be applied on the job is what motivates a professional to maintain current awareness.

Sources for current information on the other hand are contemporary resources that have been created, published or updated recently enough to be considered up-to-date. For current information needs, one may not require latest information always as many times, information users may require retrospective resources. This is due to the reason that in some areas of study, such as philosophy, history, etc. historical resources are more valuable than the current ones. When doing science, technology or medical research, we use the most current resources available (except researching a historical scientific discovery, invention or medical technique). As discoveries are made, previously accepted hypotheses are disproven and old schools of thought are abandoned or altered. In many such researches, even the current scientific literature is of no use and only the patents, standards or trademarks are of use. Similarly, when doing research in the humanities and social sciences, a mix of current and retrospective resources is found to be used by researchers.

4. Sources For Current Information

The purpose of an information source is to fulfill some needs for documents and information for users or potential users. Such needs may, for example, be related to educational activities, to research activities, to professional activities, to recreation activities, to cultural activities or to personal development. The current information here is usually available from information sources that may not be recently published. Information sources are also required to be used for participation in on-going academic activities. To ensure that the academic discussions are

engaging, relevant, and reliable, there is need for various information sources that need not necessarily be recently brought out.

It has to be remembered that one needs information not just for study purposes, but for most decisions in everyday life. We make decisions every day, whether it is to buy a cell phone, an appliance, a house or do a project or assignment. For this one needs information to make good decisions. Every information literate person recognises when he/she needs information.

For example, when writing a research report, after choosing a topic, we need to locate introductory sources that give basic background information about the subject. Finding background information at the beginning of the research is especially important if one is unfamiliar with the subject area or not sure from what angle to approach the topic. Some of the information that a background search can provide includes:

- Broad overview of the subject
- Definitions of the topic
- Introduction to key issues
- Names of people who are authorities in the subject field
- Major dates and events
- Keywords and subject-specific vocabulary terms that can be used for database searches
- Bibliographies that lead to additional resources

In the above example, current sources are usually not of much help even though the research work involved some current problems or issues. Some of the information sources that help most of the users for their current information approach are:

- Encyclopaedias, Dictionaries, Directories
- Books
- Periodicals
- Conference proceedings
- Standards, Patents, Trade catalogues
- Databases
- Newspapers
- Government publications
- Dissertations and theses
- The Library Catalogue
- The Web
- Humans as sources of information

In the subsequent sections, information sources that provide us with current information for various activities are described.

5. Encyclopaedias, Dictionaries, Directories

Encyclopaedias traditionally provide comprehensive coverage of an entire area of knowledge. Encyclopaedias are good for fact-finding, getting general background information about a subject or starting a research project. There are general encyclopaedias and subject encyclopaedias, and they differ as to the level of detail provided and the complexity of the writing. Encyclopaedias are important sources to consider when initially researching a topic.

General encyclopaedias provide basic information on a wide range of subjects in an easily readable and understandable format. If one is certain about what topic from which subject is to be chosen from, a specialized or subject encyclopaedia can be used. Subject encyclopaedias limit their scope to one particular field of study, offering more detailed information about the subject.

Examples:

World Book (general encyclopaedia found online)

McGraw-Hill Encyclopaedia of Science and Technology (subject encyclopaedia)

Standard dictionaries give an alphabetical list of words and their definitions, but there are several useful variations also classified as dictionaries. Thesauri contain synonyms and antonyms (opposites) but usually do not define the words. Dialect and slang dictionaries present words and definitions not necessarily found in standard dictionaries. There are also dictionaries of abbreviations and acronyms and dictionaries of quotations.

Example: Merriam-Webster online dictionary (a general dictionary), A Dictionary of Physics (6thed.)

A directory is a list of names and addresses of people and organizations. Directories are ready reference tools in the libraries that provide information related to individuals, organisations, institutions, etc. Entries in the directories are arranged in the alphabetic or classified order. Directories of persons cover name, address, status, experience, etc. of individuals. The directories of organisations or institutions contain name of the organisation, address, functions, objectives, activities and names, addresses, phone numbers, email id, etc. of the officials of the organisation. Directories are broadly categorized as General Directories and Special Directories. An example of General Directories is the telephone directory and examples of Special directories are professional, trade and business directories.

6. Books

Books are usually most authoritative sources of information, providing in-depth coverage of a subject. Books cover virtually any topic, fact or fiction. Books are the best sources when looking for lots of information on a topic, for broad overview, for historical perspective on a topic or to put the topic in context with other important related issues. As they contain lots of information, can provide an in-depth treatment of a topic or aspect of a topic. But the information contained in books may not be as timely as in periodicals as they are not as current as journal articles. They usually contain citations and a bibliography which can be used to identify other useful references. Most books have index at the end of the book to find pages that deal specifically with a desired topic. Libraries organize and store their book collections on shelves called "stacks."

Examples: G. Edward Evans and Patricia Layzell Ward: Management Basics for Information Professionals. Neal Schuman Publishers, 2007.

Arlene G. Taylor: Introduction to Cataloging and Classification (Library and Information Science Text Series). Libraries Unlimited, 2006.

7. Periodicals

Periodicals are published regularly and cover very topical issues, the latest research, reviews of current literature. Other names for periodicals include "serials", "journals", and "magazines". Periodical articles are useful for very recent information or for information on a very specific and specialised topic. They are the best source for new or current information as they provide more current information and are published more frequently than books.

In specific subject, periodicals are also known as scholarly, research, peer-reviewed, or refereed journals as they are written to present results of research or thorough study of a topic.

- Usually contain fewer advertisements than popular magazines.
- Articles tend to be lengthy (7-10 pages or more) and usually written by the person(s) conducting the research.
- Articles published have been evaluated by an editorial board of other experts before they appear in print.
- Sources of information are always indicated in some manner, whether it be footnotes, endnotes, works cited, or a bibliography.
- May contain charts, tables
- Published monthly or quarterly.

Periodicals are publications used by scholars to communicate the results of recent research in a certain field (e.g., Microbiology, Psychology, and Photography). Journal articles may also discuss theory, or offer a "review" of the important articles published on a specific topic within a field. Depending on the field of study, journals may convey different types of research. For example, an article in a literary journal might offer a scholar's educated opinion/analysis about a piece of literature, whereas an article in a sociology journal might communicate the results of a recent research study.

Due to the amount of time it takes for research to enter book form, journals tend to contain the most current scholarly information regarding a topic. Journal articles are considered authoritative for a number of reasons. First, journals publish articles written by subject experts, many of whom have already published a great deal of research in their field. Journal articles, moreover, contain a list of references or works cited, so that other researchers can see which sources the author(s) used to support their analysis, or place their study in context. Additionally, many journal articles are edited by a panel of subject experts for accuracy and completeness before being accepted for publication. This is a process called peer-review.

Examples: Indian Journal of History of Science, INSA; Journal of Organic Chemistry, ACS; International Journal of Research in Social Sciences, IJMRA

8. Conference Proceedings

A conference is a meeting where people in specific subject fields get together and share information by having discussions, presenting papers, posters, etc. There are thousands of different conferences held every year all over the world. Reports/proceedings of a conference provide information about a conference and are also the published form of the papers that were presented at the conference. Conference papers and proceedings can provide very useful

information. They usually contain the latest and newest research and findings by specialists in a particular field.

Papers from conferences organised by learned societies or associations (sometimes called symposia, workshops) are often published as 'Proceedings of ... conference'. They are usually published in book format, sometimes in a number of volumes depending on how many papers were presented or submitted. They are useful sources of current information, as they present research at an early stage, before journal articles have been published.

Examples:

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, India Section A: Physical Sciences. Springer India, New Delhi. 2014.

Proceedings of 8th International Convention CALIBER-2011, Goa University, Goa, 2-4 March, 2011.

9. Standards, Patents, Trade Catalogues

A patent is defined as 'a government authority or licence conferring a right or title for a set period, especially the sole right to exclude others from making, using, or selling an invention.' It is an exclusive right granted for an invention, which is a product or a process that provides, in general, a new way of doing something, or offers a new technical solution to a problem. It is meant to protect intellectual property rights. Patents are considered a unique source of information for scientific and technical information because a granted patent gives the patentee exclusive rights over his/her invention and he/she is able to try to stop anyone who uses it without permission.

Example: A K Singh, N K Pandey, A K Gupta: A composition of insulating fluid and process for the preparation thereof. Granted in India on 15/06/2012.

A standard is a document that provides rules or guidelines to achieve order in a given context. Standards thus are documents prepared by an authority to specify a product, material, process, quality, etc. Initially used first for industrial products, these later began being used by services sector. The purpose of these documents is to maintain quality control and efficiency. They provide guidelines for standardization in products and activities. Standards enable us to exchange products or services with other organizations.

Example: IS 4579:1968 Methods of measurements on television picture tubes, 2013.

ISO 2709: Standard for Bibliographic Record Formats. 2008.

Trade catalogues are lists or catalogues brought out by the publishers, manufacturers and distributors of various types of materials, products or services. These cover every kind of material, product or service ranging from books, drugs, chemicals, household goods to complex machinery and equipment used in research and industry. The basic purpose of this type of trade literature is to describe various attributes of the product, material or service and promote its sale to the potential customers. They are usually only source of information that is reported about specific commercial products and is not likely to be published in any other form of literature.

Example: Foreign Trade Enquiries Bulletin, Spice Board of India

10. Databases

A database contains citations of articles in magazines, journals, and newspapers. They may also contain citations to podcasts, blogs, videos, and other media types. Some databases contain abstracts or brief summaries of the articles, while other databases contain complete, full-text articles. Many of the periodicals (magazines, newspapers, journals) that used to be on the library's physical shelves can now be found in library's in-house databases. These databases are organized specifically for researchers to enable quick retrieval of books or journal articles that are required by a user. Also, some library databases contain electronic books. Some periodical databases contain abstracts or brief summaries of the articles. Many contain the full text (entire content) of articles as they originally appeared in the periodical. Online periodical databases, purchased by the library, are accessible from the library homepage.

Research databases allow us to search for high quality materials that are carefully selected and organized in a way that makes it easy for you to find exactly what you need. The best way to find articles from journals, magazines and newspapers is to search research databases.

Examples: Academic Search Premier (a general periodical database); JSTOR (a humanities and social sciences periodical database); ABI/Inform (a business database); Proquest; EBSCO Host.

11. Newspapers

A newspaper is a collection of articles about current events usually published daily. As these are published daily and in almost every major city, these are a great source for local information. Newspapers are a useful information source to find current information about local, national and international events. They also contain editorials, commentaries, expert or popular opinions. The articles are usually topical and current, written by journalists for the general public. They might be useful for discussion of current trends and issues. Presently most of the newspapers are also accessible online too.

Examples: The Times of India; New York Times; Business Standard

12. Government Publications

A Government publication is defined as an item published under the authority of a governmental agency. These publications are issued by local, state, national, or international governments. Government information includes annual reports, plan documents, budget documents, laws, regulations, statistics, census reports, directories, consumer information, and much more. Government information is generally considered to be reliable, only source of a particular information and usually are issued by a government agency. For example, Indian government publications are available from Government of India's Publications portal. (<http://india.gov.in/my-government/publications>)

Examples: Right to Information Act, 2005; Annual Report 2006, Department of Agriculture and Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India; National Food Security Act 2013

13. Dissertations and Theses

A dissertation or thesis is a document submitted in support of an academic degree presenting the author's research and findings. Its purpose is to inform and present scholarly information. These categories of documents are usually collected by academic or special libraries as they contain results of original research. In present times, besides a printed copy, most of the dissertation are also submitted in electronic form. A thesis/dissertation can be new data on an important issue; an innovative data collection method; an analysis of existing data sets in new ways to answer new and important questions; or a derivation of new research methods and a demonstration of their usefulness. The objective is to help the student learn how to think through and investigate a research question. The thesis/dissertation should show competence in the development, implementation and reporting of a research project.

Examples:

Murali D.: Studies on p53 and its Role in Cell Proliferation, a thesis submitted to the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, JawaharLal Nehru University, New Delhi for award of doctorate degree. 2014.

Khurana, Poonam: Role of Ethics in Personal, Team and Organisational Effectiveness, a thesis submitted to Department of Management Studies, University of Delhi, Delhi for award of doctorate degree. 2013.

14. The Library Catalogue

A library catalogue is a listing of all the items held by a particular library. It is an organized and searchable collection of records of every item in a library and can be found on the library premises or on the library home page. The catalogue enables users to find out what items the library owns on a given topic. It also points to the location of a particular source, or group of sources, that the library owns on the required topic(s).

Most of the modern libraries have computerised catalogues. A cataloguer examines the items (books, videos, maps, audio tapes, CDs, etc.) and decides how they will be described in the library's catalogue and under what subject they will be classified. When the item is entered into the library's online catalogue database, information is entered into different fields, which are then searchable by users. In the library premises, the computerised catalogue is referred to OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue). When a user is on the library's premises or has access to the library's website hosting the library catalogue, information sources on the desired topic(s) are accessible. The library catalogue thus is a useful source of current information.

Examples:

OPAC, Central Library, IIT Delhi, New Delhi (<http://library.iitd.ac.in/>)

OPAC, National Science Library, NISCAIR, New Delhi (<http://nsl.niscair.res.in/>)

15. The Web

The Web allows us to access information on the Internet through a browser, for example, Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome. One of the main features of the Web

is the ability to link quickly to other related information or materials. Websites can be a useful source of current information, particularly those, for example, associated with current and well-known people, places and events. The Web offers a variety of information, including that found in other information sources such as directories or magazines, as well as for different information needs (current, historical, research, secondary or primary sources). There are no standards or expertise required for publishing on the web so information found there needs to be evaluated carefully. The currency of information depends upon the author of the page or site, some sites are updated daily or more frequently, while others are not kept up-to-date. Also accuracy/authority of websites, if not by reputed organisations are always in question.

15.1 Internet

The Internet is essentially made up of millions of computers all over the world that are linked together in a network that allows people to exchange information. Internet has complete books; scholarly journal articles; newspaper articles; video; feature length movies; music; games; software that can be downloaded; self-help; shopping; opportunities to interact with others using email, chat, and live voice and video; and lots of other information. Most of the material that has been digitized, can be found on the Internet.

i. Advantages

With all the information available on the Internet, it is considered one of the best sources of information in the present times. Benefits of using the Internet as an information source include:

- Lots of information available from all over the world
- Access to the “invisible web”, which includes peer-reviewed scholarly articles from experts, newspaper articles, and other data.
- Live and recorded audio and video can actually enable users to hear or see what happened from a primary source.
- Provides more recent, up to date information, including up to the minute updates.

ii. Disadvantages

There are also some disadvantages of using the Internet as a source of information:

- Lots of information from all over the world is also a disadvantage as there is a lot of information to sift through, making it difficult and time consuming to find what is actually needed by a user.
- Anyone with a computer and Internet access can put information on the Internet. Just because information is on the Internet does not make it true. At times, it is difficult to make sure the information is from a reputable, qualified source before it can be used for some purpose.
- The Internet primarily contains relatively recent information. If one needs more historical information, it is likely to be found in print resources and from specialized library databases that provide access to digitized historical information.

However, there are places on the Internet that will give references that may be tracked down through the libraries.

a. Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>)

Wikipedia are places where people work together to write encyclopaedias in different languages. We use Simple English words and grammar here. The Simple English Wikipedia is for everyone! That includes children and adults who are learning English. There are 112,249 articles on the Simple English Wikipedia. All of the pages are free to use.

b. Google Books (<http://books.google.com/>)

When we enter the search terms in Google books, digitized holdings of some of the world's greatest academic libraries will appear. Google collaborated with some of the finest research libraries in the world to digitize items found in the "public domain". They also provide access to chapters within contemporary books. This usually gives enough background information to get started without coming in to the library to borrow a book.

c. Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com/>)

Here we can find scholarly research, but from a limited number of journals.

15.2 Electronic Material

Books and articles are traditionally thought of as print sources, but now with the Internet access, many printed resources are available electronically. Regardless of whether content appears in print or electronic format, it is important that we are able to assess whether it is reliable and authoritative. Electronic materials in the libraries have several advantages over print media:

- Information may be updated easily
- Often up-to-the-minute information
- May be keyword searchable
- May be accessed outside of the library
- Multiple users can look at the same information at the same time
- Easily printed, downloaded, or manipulated information

Managing a collection of electronic information resources is quite different from managing a collection of non-electronic information resources. Unlike a book, computer equipment and networks are needed to access electronic information. Digital format of traditional information sources is available as:

Print Format	Digital Format
Books	eBooks
Periodical articles	Online journals, e-journals
Pamphlets	Web pages
Dissertations and Theses	Full text Databases
Maps	CD-ROMs
Government documents, etc.	DVDs, etc.
Printed Reference Sources	Online in Full text
Library Catalogues	Online Public Access Catalogues

15.2.1 E-Resources

An e-resource is material which requires computer mediation in order to access its content and make it useful. Both online and offline resources such as online material and CD-ROMs fall within the scope of e-resources. The term e-resource refers to all the products which a library provides through a computer network. The electronic resources are also known as online information resources covering bibliographic databases, electronic reference books, search engines for full text books, and digital collections of data. They include both “born digital” materials which have been produced directly online. For example, e-journals, databases, and print resources which have been scanned and digitized. The electronic resources, e-journals, online databases are not “owned” by the libraries as they own the print material. Ownership of electronic resources lies with the providers of these resources. Access to the electronic resources may be free via Internet or may be available against a fee.

Some of the examples of e-resources are magazines, encyclopaedia, newspapers, journals or articles published in them. These may be accessed on Internet connected devices such as computers, tablets, smart phones, etc.

15.2.1.1 E- journals

An e-journal has been defined as a periodical publication which is published in electronic format usually on the Internet. It is a periodical publication means that it has some periodicity. It may be published weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, annually, etc. The term electronic journal refers to:

- An electronic version of an established print journal like Current Science Online, Journal of Chemical Sciences, Scientific American, etc.
- An electric version only, for example, Electronic Journal of Plant Breeding, Ariadne, Web Magazine for Information Professionals, D-Lib magazine, etc.
- A journal changes to electronic format and stop its print version.
- An electronic journal can be free or fee-based through annual subscription, licensing or pay per use.

15.2.1.2 E-books

An electronic or digital book, also known as e-book is a text and image based publication in digital form. It is produced or published to be read on computer or other digital devices. E-books are the digital equivalent of standard printed books and are available in a wide variety of formats. Some may be downloaded in full to be read offline, whereas others may only be read online while connected to the Internet.

Examples:

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson, a free e-book can be downloaded from <http://www.feedbooks.com>

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, e-book edition is the popular e-book edition of the Oxford Dictionary available at <http://www.mobipocket.com>

15.2.1.3 Electronic Databases

An electronic database is a collection of records which may have numeric, textual or image based data. If it is accessible via WWW, it is known as an online database. Before the advent of Internet, these online databases were available as CD-ROM databases. For example, a journal database is a collection of journal articles arranged in individual records which can be searched. The databases can be bibliographic or full text ones.

A bibliographic database consists of bibliographic records and is an organized digital collection of references to published literature. It may be general in nature or may be in a particular subject area. The majority of the databases which provide citations also have abstracts, which are brief summaries of the article or resource. The users and researchers can learn a lot about an article just by carefully reading the citation and the abstract; this in turn will help them decide whether they want to read the full article or not. Examples of this type of databases are SCOPUS, EMBASE.

On the other hand, the databases which provide full text of journal articles, book chapters, conference papers, etc. are known as full text databases. Examples are Science Direct, JSTOR and PROQUEST. Full text access means that the users can view, save or print the full text article. Another kind is Meta-databases that allow one to search for content that is indexed by other databases.

15.2.1.4 Other Electronic Material

In additions to the above electronic material, other e-materials are e-newsletters, e-reports; e-theses and dissertations; and institutional repositories. All the electronic materials are useful sources of current information.

15.3 Social Media

Social media is defined as 'forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and micro-blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos). Social media have become increasingly popular among different user groups. Although used for social

purposes, some social media platforms (e.g., Wikipedia) have been emerging as important information sources of current information.

Regular media is a one-way process, where we can read a newspaper or listen to a report on television, but have very limited ability to convey our thoughts on the matter. Social media, on the other hand, is a two-way process that gives us the ability to communicate too.

Examples:

- **Social Bookmarking.** (del.icio.us, Blinklist, Simpy) Interact by tagging websites and searching through websites bookmarked by other people.
- **Social News.** (Digg, Mixx, Reddit) Interact by voting for articles and commenting on them.
- **Social Networking.** (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) Interact by adding friends, commenting on profiles, joining groups and having discussions.
- **Social Photo and Video Sharing.** (YouTube, Flickr) Interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions.
- **Wikis.** (Wikipedia, Wikia) Interact by adding articles and editing existing articles.

And these websites are not the only social media websites. Any website that invites a user to interact with the site and with other visitors falls into the definition of social media.

16. Humans as Sources of Information

Human beings are considered an important non-documentary source of information as the educational background, knowledge, experience, maturity and exposure to various situations makes certain categories of individuals an authority on certain topics. Thus it has been established that in many situations, only human beings can make available certain information for use by various categories of users. There are several categories where people serve as information sources, for example, peers, consultants, technological gatekeepers, invisible colleges, common people, etc. For further details on this topic, Module 3 of this paper may be referred to wherein various categories of humans as sources of information have been discussed.

17. Summary

In the above sections, we have discussed the need for information sources to satisfy the current information requirements of users. The library and information specialists offer these sources for use by their users to keep them informed and up-to-date with the latest news, developments and publications related to fields of their interests. Need for current information is different from the current awareness services offered by the libraries. Current awareness is referred to as the process of keeping up to date with the latest or the current information/documents that are published or made available. But need for current information refers to satisfying immediate information requirement of a user which not always for latest information, as many times users may require retrospective resources.

The current sources of information include the documentary sources and non-documentary sources. All recorded sources of information irrespective of their contents and form come under documentary sources. These may be published or unpublished, in print or in electronic form. Needs for current information may, for example, be related to educational activities, to research activities, to professional activities, to recreation activities, to cultural activities or to personal development. The current information here is usually available from information sources that may not be recently published. Information sources are also required to be used for participation in on-going academic activities. The current sources of information include the documentary sources and non-documentary sources. All recorded sources of information irrespective of their contents and form come under documentary sources. These may be published or unpublished, in print or in electronic form.

In this Module, an overview of various information sources has been given. These sources range from the reference sources to the latest published materials like periodicals and databases to the electronic materials. Electronic material includes e-journals, e-books, e-databases and other electronically published material.

18. References

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