Digital library education in Iran: Perspectives of Library & Information Science educators and academic librarians

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ABSTRACT

This study explores Iranian Library and Information Science (LIS) educators' and academic librarians' viewpoints about a dedicated digital library education programme, as well as solicits proposed models and courses on digital libraries. A survey was administered on a sample of 45 LIS educators and66 academic librarians via an online questionnaire. Responses were analyzed by descriptive statistics (for closed questions) and content analysis (for open-ended questions). Results show that the current LIS education curriculum in Iran does not sufficiently teach LIS students and librarians digital library principles and concepts; in addition, a high majority of LIS educators and academic librarians are in favour of a dedicated digital library education programme. This study provides the empirical data for the design and delivery of a dedicated programme or relevant courses on digital libraries at Iranian library schools, especially at the newly established LIS departments in Iran. Digital librarymanagement, digital preservation, digitization, digital library architecture, and metadata would be the key components in a digital library education programme. Research on digital library education has not been carried out before in Iran. As such, this paper may fill the research gap between theory and practice of Iranian digital librarianship, as well as facilitates LIS departments to design digital library programme and implement the courses in their curriculum.

Keywords: Digital libraries; Digital library education; Library and Information Science curriculum; Iran.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries have been functioning to preserve, organize, and disseminate information and knowledge, and the importance of these institutions increased with the invention of printing and the increase of publications. The famous German librarian, Walter Schuermeyer (at the 13th Documentation Conference, Copenhagen, 1935) once stated that:"Perhaps one day we will see our reading rooms deserted and in their place a room