



LIBRARY ALERTING SERVICES: CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE (CAS)

Gurpreet Kaur

Librarian, Trai Shatabdi Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College, Amritsar

ABSTRACT Information is very important for students, teachers and research scholar. Due to expansion of number of Document being published the users is unable to track what is coming up in his area of interest .To overcome this problem all types of Libraries/Information Centre's are organized to provide some basic services which are rendered either in anticipation or a demand from the users. This Information services provided in anticipation are termed as alerting services. In this paper we will discuss about Library Alerting Services, its types, Current Awareness Service, Characteristics of CAS, Need of CAS and Mode of presentation in CAS.

KEYWORDS : Library Services, Alerting Service, Current Awareness Service.

INTRODUCTION-

The Primary aim of any Library is to provide timely and quality service to its users. Libraries are organized to provide some basic services which are rendered either in anticipation or on demand from the users. Alerting Services provide current information in areas of research or interest. This is an excellent way to keep informed of the latest research information without spending too much time searching for it. Alerting Services utilized different methods of delivery

Types of alerting services in Libraries

- Current Awareness Service (CAS)
- Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)
- Electronic Clipping Services (ECS)

Alerting Service usually referred to as Current Awareness Service have been important means for keeping the users up to date in their area of Interest.

Current Awareness Service (CAS)–

Due to expansion of number of the number of documents being published, not only in print media but in electronic media as well, the reader is unable to keep track of what is coming up in his area of interest. Current Awareness Service is a system to inform the users about new acquisition in their Libraries. CAS aims to keep the clientele informed of all the recent thoughts created in their field of work and in all other related areas. It involves a combination of process including the selection of information from various sources like periodicals, books, pamphlets, patents, reports, etc.

According to S.R.Ranganathan—

“It refers to Documentation periodical listing the documents appearing during the period covered and without being selected to suit the requirements of particular reader or of a specific topic under investigation.”

According to Satyanarayana and Rayadaja--

“It is a service that provides all the information affecting the progress of the researcher's work at the right time and convenience.”

Current Awareness involves knowledge of

- New theoretical ideas and Hypotheses
- New Problems to be solved
- New methods and techniques for solving old and new problems.
- New circumstances affecting what people do and how they may do it.

A Current Awareness Service is a device of the Information System through which the users can be informed promptly of the current literature on a broad subject field as soon as possible after the publication. These are two aspects of Information service:

1. Provision of Information on demand.
2. Provision of information in anticipation.

A user feels the need for Information. He approaches the reference/information desk and gets answer to his particular query. This is the instance of the first aspect of it. The second aspect of it aims to keep the users well informed and up- to-date in the field of specialization and also in related subjects. This is referred as CAS. It includes reviewing newly available documents selecting items relevant to the need of an individual or group and recording them so

that notification may be sent to those individuals or groups to whose need they are related.

Characteristics of Current Awareness Services

1. Current Awareness Service is an announcement mechanism usually in documentary form.
2. It is designed to meet or help cultivate the current approach to information.
3. Such a service is not usually intended to answer any specific query as the current approach to the information is only for obtaining a view of the recent development.
4. Recent developments in a subject are shown in a current awareness list, through a judicious selection and featuring of current literature in the field.
5. Such a service is usually on a broader subject area so that a user gets a view of not only his own subject of research, which is included in it.
6. It is addressed to those workers who cannot depend entirely on their own information channels.
7. Compared to all other formal channels.
8. Speed or timeliness is the essence of CAS
9. Scanning of current literature is ensured.
10. Mechanism in documentary form. But also of related subjects, developments in which areas may influence his own field or otherwise.

Need of Current Awareness Service (CAS)

1. Due to the enormous growth of scientific and technical literature, scientists find it difficult to cope with literature. It is becoming more and more difficult for them to keep themselves up-to-date and well informed in the fields of their specialization.
2. CAS aim to serve the needs of the users.
3. A user may try to keep himself abreast of the recent developments on his own. But CAS offer additional advantages to the users. Its coverage may be wider and hopefully it would come out regularly. On the other hand, a user would not be able to scan literature as widely and regularly as could be done by CAS.
4. CAS can lead to the saving the time. AN individual or group of Library/Information Centre professionals can scan sources of information and notify the members of the institution or community being served, thus saving their valuable time.
5. During the period of scarcity of financial sources, it is essential to promote and market library services. CAS is one of the best ways to bring the resources of the Library/ information Centre to the notice of the users.

Mode of Presentation in Current Awareness Service (CAS)

Mode of presentation of CAS list is the most controversial point in the whole business because an appropriate balance has to be ensured between the characteristics of current approach and a minimum of expenditure in time. As a result different modes of Presentation are to be seen in practice. These are -



1. Contents –by- Journal - Out of five methods this is the easiest one. This requires only reproduction of the contents pages of selected periodical. The content page themselves may be arranged in some broad grouping. Reproduction of the table of contents may be done in two ways

- Facsimile reproduction
- Recomposed Reproduction

The advantages of this method are that it is quick cheap and demands little intellectual effort.

2. Broad Subject heading -

Second method is the use of broad subject heading for the presentation of Information. In the previous method, the entire contents page of a periodical was taken as a unit. But here each items or article is taken as a unit lists. Classification of documents in to such broad subject headings is neither so difficult nor time consuming. Difficulties may arise, in cases where the subject does not fit in to such headings. Difficulties may arise while assigning correct headings at the time of compiling but point of the users, this method is more beneficial than the earlier one.

3. Under the headings of names of division of the institution-

This method is actually a modification of the second one. Instead of trying to classify the items under broad subject headings, items are featured here under the names of divisions of institution. This method immediately attracts the attention of a worker or a group this is said to be the most effective method of presentation of a list.

4. Classified Arrangement-

It presupposes that the classification would be coextensive with the thought content of each item; otherwise there is hardly any distinction between this method and the second one. It is claimed that it is the only method that helps to overcome the difficulties of seepage.

5. Combination of Methods-

The last method of presentation in CA list is a combination of any two or more of the earlier methods. In this method items are mainly featured under broad subject headings. Under the selected headings, Listing is by the titles of the periodicals and issue number under any title of periodical, the sequence of the articles in it, is the source as it found on the contents page of that issue, of Course they come under the same heading.

CONCLUSION -

The study of this paper concludes that CAS is a service that plays significant role in promoting the quality of research. It Keeps the users alert every time for new information of their field of their interest. Librarians have been providing the CAS Service on manual basis for a long time. But nowadays computers are used to mechanize the procedure. Now a day this service is providing via mail, SMS, chat etc.

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