

B-108 – INFORMATION SOURCES AND SERVICES

Unit- IV: Types of Information Services

TOPIC

Current Awareness Service



Information Services

- Current Awareness Service
- Selective Dissemination of Information
- Bibliographic Services
- Abstracting and Indexing Services
- News paper clipping
- Translation
- Document Delivery Service
- Reprography

Current Awareness Service: Need

- Proliferation of knowledge
- Interdisciplinary nature of research
- Current approach
- Interdisciplinary nature of research
- Volume and variety of publication media
- Users' demand and their varied needs

Growth of literature

The published scientific and technical information has grown rapidly on account of large expenditures on research and developments (R&D) by the government. The enormous growth of scientific information has caused serious problems of accessibility, storage, retrieval and dissemination for the researchers, scientists, etc. This results in many problems in accessing the information and keeping the researchers up-to-date in their areas of interest. CAS enables the researchers, scientists, etc. to keep themselves up-to-date and well informed in their field of specialization. Thus, CAS aims to serve the current information needs of the users.

Interdisciplinary Nature of Research

- The interdisciplinary nature of research, nowadays, results in the scattering of information in different sources. Same type of information is available in different journals. Further, the information relevant to a given discipline may also be found in journals of other related disciplines. For example, information relevant to the Biochemistry may appear in the Journal of Scientific and Industrial Research, or Indian Journal of Chemistry, etc. It is very difficult for user to find relevant information and hence there is a need of CAS.

Types and Forms of Documents

- Although the journals are the main source of current information, useful information for researchers may appear in various types of documents such as journals, reports, seminar papers, etc. Documentation and information centers are providing a variety of information services in order to solve this problem. Providing CAS service is one of the important services which alerts the users about the current developments in their area of interest.

Users Need and Demand

- A user himself may not be able to scan literature as widely, timely and regularly as could be done by CAS, because its coverage may be wider. Also, there may be some users who do not possess the ability or willingness to do scanning of sources. In this case, CAS will help the users to keep them abreast with the latest documents on the subject of their interest. It also helps to bridge the time interval between the publication of an article and the inclusion of an abstract. Ultimately, the function of CAS is to reduce the time taken by the specialists to scan the documents in periodicals.



Current Awareness Service

- Any service rendered to bring to the notice of information users on current literature published in their pertinent field may be CAS i.e. a service which alert users to information that is current or new or recent in origin.
- CAS is that part of information service which keeps the information users abreast with the latest development in their respective field. It is a general & quick service for community or group users.

Definitions

- Acc to D A Camp CAS is “a system for reviewing newly available documents, selecting items relevant to the needs of an individual or group and recording them so that notification may be sent to those individuals or groups to whose needs they are related.
- Acc to Dr Ranganathan CAS is “listing the documents appearing during the period covered and without being selective to suit the requirement of a particular user on a specific topic under investigation. This is of the nature of general appetizer. It tries to keep the users informed promptly of all the nascent thought generated in their field of work & related field.


Definitions

- Hamilton defines CAS as a service which provides the recipient with information on the latest developments within the subject areas in which he or she has a specific interest or need to know.

Definitions

Lucille J, Strauss and others have defined it as "the establishment of a system for reviewing publications immediately upon receipt, selecting information pertinent to the programme of the organisation served, and recording individual items to be brought to the attention of those persons whose work they are related. It involves a combination of processes including the selection of pertinent information from periodicals, books pamphlets, patents and reports, in fact, anything of serious content that is received

○ .



Alasdair Kemp defines CAS as ‘a system for reviewing newly available documents, selecting items relevant to the needs of an individual or group, and recording them, so that notifications may be sent to those individuals or group to whose needs they are related.’ According to him, CAS is "*a system of informing the users as soon as possible after publication.*’

- From the above definitions, it can be seen that CAS is the process of reviewing selected items according to the information needs of the users, selecting the relevant items according to the information needs of the users’ recording the items systematically, and sending the notifications to the users who need it



CAS: Character

1. It is a technique in form of a publication communicating current information
2. It satisfies the current approach of information need
3. It gives a bird's eye view of the latest development in a field
4. Usually confined to a well defined topic but do not provide information about development in related field
5. It is bibliographic in nature
6. It supplements the users own channels or media of obtaining information.
7. It is timeless or speedy

Factors

According to Whitehall, Rowley and Blick

- (1) Detailed knowledge of the client's interest;
- (2) Appropriate coverage of sources;
- (3) Timeliness of delivery;
- (4) Good selectivity techniques so that relevant material is retrieved;
- (5) Ease of use and access to the information;
- (6) Cost;
- (7) Customer interaction and feedback;
- (8) Presentation of output in a readable manner.

Factors

- Additional research by Rowley concluded that the critical success factors for an effective service are that it should:
 - (1) Keep the information user up to date;
 - (2) Save project time of reader;
 - (3) Aid in the creation of new ideas;
 - (4) Save time and money spent on journals;
 - (5) Reduce the paper flow in the organisation.



CAS Forms/Methods

- Displays
- Routing of Periodicals
- CAS List
- Contents by Journal
- Research in progress bulletin
- Notification of forthcoming meeting
- Newspaper clippings

Display

- Display is considered as an important method of offering CAS. It is a general practice of a library to display either all or selective items of recent acquisitions as part of their publicity programme. The item may be a book or periodical. It may be the jacket of a new book. This enables users to be aware of recent developments in their field of interest or related areas.

Routing of Journals

- Routing or circulating the journals is an important means of dissemination of information. Generally in special libraries/information centers, the bound volumes of journals are circulated, but the current issues are also routed. Before the current issues of periodicals are issued, the library/information professional can scan these current issues and mark certain articles to draw the attention of individuals.
- In this method the library sends the current issues to the first person on the list, who passes it on to the next name in the list, ultimately the last person returns it to the library.



Routing of Periodicals

- **Radial and**
- **Circular routing**

Factors

1. Determination of the subject
2. Preparation of priority list
3. Specific period to be allowed

Current Awareness Bulletin/List

This is one of the most popular form of current awareness service provided by libraries. In this type of service, the library or documentation center scans primary journals and other sources of current information received in the library. It may be provided in the form of library bulletin. It consists of a list of recent additions or a list of periodicals or indexing periodical (a list of articles from periodicals). The typical bulletin may contain all or some of the items which are given below:

- • Library publicity and announcements in general
- • News items (selected from news in the form of clippings)
- • Announcements of forthcoming conferences/seminars and meetings
- • List of current acquisitions (such as books, periodicals)
- • Details of contents of recent periodicals
- • Publication details from the secondary sources in original or as the reproduced one

Current Awareness List/Title Announcement Service

- Chemical Titles of Chemical Abstract Service
- Current Chemical Papers of the Chemical Society
- CBRI Documentation List (1965)
- Highway Documentation (1964 CRRI)
- Chetna (Q 1981 NML)
- Library Bulletin (Bimonthly, NML)
- Book Alert Service (M), Periodical Alert Service (Fortnightly) & Medical Education (M) AIIMS
- Current Literature in Toxicology Bulletin Q ITRC
- Industrial Toxicology Bulletin Q ITRC, Lucknow
- Current Awareness Bulletin (M,Goa University)

Contents – By - Journals

- This service can be provided in-house or by commercial publishers. In this service, the library or documentation centers or commercial publishers distribute a publication which consists of content pages of the journals in various subject areas. In this service, photocopies of the content page of the selected journals can be circulated to the users.

Contents – By - Journals

The main idea behind publishing the content pages of journals is that journals are important medium for communicating new information. If the users can be regularly informed of articles appearing in current journals in broader or narrow areas, they would come to know of recent developments that are taking place in their fields of interest.

- The simplest way is the duplication of the content pages of the journals and sending to the users. Another reason of providing this type of service is that this service enables the users to quickly know the titles of the articles which they value very high. Once they identify useful papers relating to their field of interest, they can then go to the library and read the papers.

Current Contents – By - Journals

- 1) Current Contents –Life sciences (ISI Philadelphia), Engineering Physical Sciences, Humanities and Social Sci.
- 2) Labour Titles (CLRI, Madras)
- 3) Soya Index (National Research Centre for Soyabean, Indore)
- 4) Contents Pages of Science & Technology (COPSAT)(UGC, INFLIBNET)
- 5) Current Contents in Agriculture (ARI Library Fortnightly)

RESEARCH – In –PROGRESS BULLETIN

- It is an alerting service which alerts the users about the new research projects and the progress made in the projects already in progress. This type of service generally requires joint efforts of more than one organisation or institution working in similar or closely related research areas. A parent body which funds or controls a group of research organisations could also bring out research-in-progress bulletin.

Research in progress

- Research in progress contains information about the organization/laboratory at which the project is being carried out, name of the researchers, sources of funds, duration of the project, etc. It also includes information about the status of the research in terms of the progress achieved and thereby keeps the interested researcher up-to-date.

RESEARCH – In –PROGRESS BULLETIN includes

- *Title of Research project*
- *Brief account of scope*
- *Name of the scholar*
- *Organization/funding institute*
- *Period*
- *Published /Reported to be published*

This kind of bulletins helps in

- Planning of new research project
- Avoids duplication of research
- Anticipate birth of new information

Examples

- Information can be culled out from leading periodicals and newsletters and distributed in the form of a newsletter. Examples:
 - NCL - Pune
 - Current Research Project in CSIR Laboratories (NISCAIR)
 - R & D Projects in Documentation and Librarianship (FID)
 - Current Agricultural Research Information System of FAO

Notification of Forth Coming Events / Meetings examples

- Chetna NML
- DESISOC Bulletin of Information Technology (Bimonthly)
- Forthcoming International Scientific & Technical Conferences (ASLIB Q)

Newspaper Clipping Service

Newspapers are considered as a valuable source of current information as these are the current awareness media. They publish news of recent happenings in various fields such as in politics, health, sports, business, etc. Newspapers carry useful information for everyone from housewives to top management. They are of various kinds such as regional, national or international. Some newspapers specialize in particular subjects such as in Economics and allied fields, for example, Economic Times, Financial Express. They contain an in-depth knowledge of industry, trade, banking, etc. Important information available in the newspapers may be useful to the users. Newspaper clipping covers the clippings of daily newspapers, weeklies, current magazines, etc. Clippings may pertain to different languages.



Newspaper Clipping

- Agricultural Press Bulletin (M IARI)
- News Paper Clipping Index (Trimonthly, National Institute of Family & Health Welfare)

CAS in ICT Era: Methods and Tools for Application

(read details from articles of **Uzohue and Yaya**)

- Internet and Web 2.0 Technologies
- E-mail Alert
- Use of Social Networking
- Databases
- Mobile Phones Services
- RSS Feeds and E-alerts
- Packaging of Information to Meet Specific Demands
- Analysis and Interpretation of Information

Assessment of CAS

Timeliness: In some organization there is a need for immediate notification of relevant items in the literature, in other organizations, timeliness is not so important.

- Source coverage: It is generally desirable to be as comprehensive as possible in coverage of the subjects, literature and databases for Current Awareness item selection.
- Selectivity: In some situations it may be desirable for the Current Awareness Service to select only substantial item and to ignore micro or trivial items.
- Readability: Some computer output is unsympathetically arranged for readers, some is excellent.
- Cost: The cost of the provision of Current Awareness Service, should include labor, materials, equipment's, computing and subscription costs, plus any ancillary cost. The librarian should compare the cost with the output of the service.

Evaluation criteria for current awareness Service

- 1.Speed of delivery
- 2.Resources required
3. Relevance of data
- 4.User requirements
- 5.Support
- 6.Software Costs
- 7.Ease of Maintenance
- 8.Service Costs
- 9.Technical Constraints
- 10.Source Coverage
- 11.Flexibility of profile

Advantage

- Keeping users better informed • Providing access to needed information/documents
- Supporting academic, professional and managerial tasks
- Automating the process of searching for retrieving relevant information
- Providing information in a preferred format

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