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September 22, 2008

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S.R. Ranganathan (1892-1972) was a leading individual in the world of library and information science because he constructed the five laws of library science. Today his laws remain true and provide us with the central values necessary for librarians to supply service to patrons. These laws provide classic principles that reflect a librarian's objectives within the roles of their librarianship even in today's technology driven world. Therefore, a modern interpretation of Ranganathan's fifth law of library science, which is "[a] library is a growing organism", would focus on the changes happening within libraries such as providing information access to larger communities via the internet, adapting libraries to be useful to patrons of the digital age, and providing support for new services.

Libraries in today's modern society focus on the interests of the community it is serving. With technology becoming more and more prevalent, it is important for libraries to remain current and should focus on delivering vital knowledge to its patrons. Patrons are now using the library in different ways from when Ranganathan was developing his theories but the library as an organism has begun to adapt to these new features. As Rubin (2004) states, "theorists perceived the library as a dynamic institution constantly subject to changes" (p. 309). One example of this is the World Wide Web (WWW), which is now supported in classrooms and homes around the world. Libraries have had to change, and in doing so, have incorporated the WWW into the collection and catalog. Now someone a world away can see exactly what a library has to offer through its online catalog and can see what other valuable resources are available.

Another modern approach to Ranganathan's fifth law would be to look at how the actual physical library space is changing to incorporate this growth in technology. Many libraries are

changing to include digital work stations accessible by all patrons, group study rooms complete with wireless internet, and reference librarians available continuously to answer questions via the internet. With these changes, libraries can continue to be current in the lives of all patrons, and offer advantages some might not have at home.

Training librarians to provide technological support for patrons needing help is another example of how Ranganathan's fifth law is still important. With technology taking hold in every aspect of daily life, librarian's roles have grown to include not just working with books, but with every kind of new information portals. As Rimland (2007) explains, "For librarians, Ranganathan's five laws of library science are timeless objectives that put our profession's goals in perspective" (p. 24). Because libraries are constantly changing, especially now with technology changing at such a rapid rate, it is important for librarians to accept this change and use it to promote new services offered by libraries.

Ranganathan's five laws of library science are just as important today as they were when he first thought of them. Libraries are truly growing organisms in all areas because access to the collections, online resources, the physical building and the staff are constantly changing to fit the needs of the community. Without this change, libraries would cease to be relevant in today's society and knowledge access would fall behind.

References

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