Re-Looking at S. R. Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science

Sigy George

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S. R. Ranganathan's work *Five Laws of Library Science* published in 1931 shaped library science and has served as a foundation for the profession of librarianship. The five laws of librarianship need to be revised as technology progressed in society. With the rise of digital libraries, however, it is essential to take a second look at these laws and see how they've held up in the face of new technologies. This study tries to explain how the theory is put into practice and to identify areas where it needs to be reformulated for the benefit of libraries. *The Five Laws of Library Science* by S. R. Ranganathan was reviewed for this research's literature study, and the five rules were combined with the traits of Generation Z to create new laws that are appropriate for this period. The research's primary conclusions are (1) Information: Emphasize Content Over Container; (2) User Engagement; (3) Quantitative Information Analysis; and (4) Common Learning (Online and Offline).

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ABSTRACT

S. R. Ranganathan's work *Five Laws of Library Science* published in 1931 shaped library science and has served as a foundation for the profession of librarianship. The five laws of librarianship need to be revised as technology progressed in society. With the rise of digital libraries, however, it is essential to take a second look at these laws and see how they've held up in the face of new technologies. This study tries to explain how the theory is put into practice and to identify areas where it needs to be reformulated for the benefit of libraries. *The Five Laws of Library Science* by S. R. Ranganathan was reviewed for this research's literature study, and the five rules were combined with the traits of Generation Z to create new laws that are appropriate for this period. The research's primary conclusions are (1) Information: Emphasize Content Over Container; (2) User Engagement; (3) Quantitative Information Analysis; and (4) Common Learning (Online and Offline).

Keywords: Information Science, Library Science, Librarianship, S. R. Ranganathan, Libraries, User Needs, Information

INTRODUCTION

The five rules of library science were first introduced by S. R. Ranganathan, also known as the father of library science in India. His contributions have had a global impact and are often covered at the beginning of the course in library and information science. The law was published in 1931 in *The Five Laws of Library Science*.

S. R. Ranganathan was a librarian and mathematician who formulated the five laws of library science. These laws are still used today as a framework for thinking about library services and operations. Let's take a closer look at each of these laws.

The first law is "books are for use." This means that the library should provide materials that meet the needs of its users. The second law is "every reader his or her book." This means that every user should be able to find the materials they need and that the library should be organized in a way that makes this possible.

The third law is "every book its reader." This means that every book in the library should be read by someone. The fourth law is "save the time of the reader." This means the library should provide services that save users time, such as providing information electronically or delivering materials to users' homes.

The fifth and final law is "the library is a growing organism." This means that the library should always be improving and evolving to meet the needs of its users.

The five laws were created to enhance the library's position in the learning community. Reading was considered an activity that would broaden one's horizons and open one's intellect under the circumstances of the period. Since not everyone could afford books during that period, the library institution took over the book's role. In his book, SR Ranganathan explained how to get as many people as possible into the library, how to use all the facilities there, how the books there could satisfy their needs and curiosities, and how libraries as organizations carried out their responsibilities and tasks.

Reading was an activity to raise people's quality of life and combat illiteracy when *The Five Laws of Library Science* first came into existence. Consequently, the library's functions were necessary to be better. The area of library science, where books are the focus of all studies and libraries are seen as a physical location, is greatly influenced by Ranganathan's five rules of library science.

According to earlier studies, the field of library science study is periodically sequential and uses newspapers, electronic resources, archive materials, and repositories (Kawalec, 2013). The area of research into libraries as structures and as collections of books is still attractive.

Generation Z is known as the digital generation. Of course, given their different traits, the five laws of library science need to be understood & applied with the same attitude while redefining library science. The five laws will be elucidated in this article in library science, in light of technological advancement in the digital age, making the findings of this research apply to the emphasis of the library.

METHODS

The literature review was employed as the methodology for this study. The literature review has several goals, including demonstrating to the reader the relevance of the research to the present and bridging the gap between earlier and more recent studies. The utilization of literature studies strengthens researchers' opinions; it has no bearing on how other investigations turn out. The author read S. R. Ranganathan's, *The Five Laws of Library Science*, who then combined the five laws with the traits of Generation Z to create new laws appropriate for this period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following information was analyzed from S. R. Ranganathan's original work, *The Five Laws of Library Science*, and is detailed inside each law (Ranganathan, 1931):

1. Books are for use: This is the basis for our work as librarians. Books should be used. Users did not have access to books for many centuries. They were typically tied in chains and locked down due to their importance and price. Only certain people were given access to them. Then, when they multiplied, they were still hidden away since it was believed that the common person should not have unrestricted access to them. You would "call" for a book at the circulation desk if you wanted one by noting its location from a catalog. This is how the term "Call number" was formed. The founding fathers of America, led by Benjamin Franklin, adopted a more egalitarian mindset. Users would have easy access to books through an "open access" collection. The names "closed stacks" and "open stacks" were derived from this. The idea that everyone in a democracy should have access to books was one that Thomas Jefferson firmly believed in.

2. Every user his or her book: By extending the notion that books are for use, this second law builds upon the first. It asserts that everyone has a need or desire for books. It is vital to keep in mind that not everyone will want the same book at the same time; rather, it is assumed that different novels will appeal to different people at different periods. Very similar persons can occasionally have diverse tastes in books. Here, we agree that everyone has a right to read the books they want when they want them and a desire to do so.

3. Every book its reader: This law examines the opposing side, presuming that every book has a reader, in contrast to the first two laws, which assumed that books are an intrinsic good and that everyone should have access to them. Some novels, such as those in the "Harry Potter" series, are well-read and successful in terms of sales. Others have a considerably smaller audience, especially technical or research literature. Having said that, this law is predicated on the idea that if a book is published, a reader will exist for it someplace, at some point. According to this rule, there is a reader for each book. There is a reason that book exists, even though they may not be prevalent or current today.

4. Save the time of the reader: The first law that specifically mentions librarians is this one. The first three examined the consumers and objects (or "things") that are the basis of our existence. We are now examining our goal. What we do as librarians, in both public and technical services, for our users is covered in a wide range of books, articles, and classes. But this guideline makes it very clear: We have a responsibility to respect the time of our users since it is valuable. They could spend hours trawling through directories, databases, finding aids, thesauri, etc., or we could step in and assist them—or, to put it another way, disambiguate their search. To assist readers in finding what they are seeking as quickly as possible, we have acquired specialized knowledge and training. Our mission is to make it easier for each reader to locate their ideal book and for each book to be discovered by a reader interested in its contents.

5. The library is a growing organism: This final guideline serves as a reminder that our business is dynamic. We must evolve along with our users as they develop and change, just like books do. Keep in mind that the legislation declares "the library" to be a living thing. It assumes that the library is a real, live object. It implies that it develops and transforms over time. The books we buy and keep in our libraries will alter as time and our target audience do. A shift in the demography of a region's libraries may prompt changes in collection development to reflect the change. Like an overgrown garden, our collections become out of date and many of the contents become irrelevant. To weed our collections, we delete any outdated articles with few readers.

The patron, library, and book are the three entities that the author uses to describe each of the five laws mentioned above. Interaction between the three entities is taking place. The book's exposition of the Five Laws of Library Science and S. R. Ranganathan's perspective on them were written in the 1930s.

The Five Laws and the Digital Age

Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science were written in the 1930s when colonialism and the Second World War were still active, and merely existing was still a goal. Therefore, it is essential to examine the five laws' adoption in the contemporary digital era.

1. User: In the ever-changing landscape of the digital age, anyone can access and use library services, not just those who register as members and present proof of membership cards. This is because there is a distinction between the physical world and the digital world, both must be seen as providing the same services. When patrons read in the library, they should also

be permitted to access the web library and browse digital collections. People who open library repositories online can also read full-text, similar to scientific work services in libraries where students can read full-text theses. The user-entered library is a notion that needs to be integrated with the digital age. This idea encourages interaction in the library.

The library requirement is significant for the more users who utilize it. Examples of user participation in the library include:

a) Collection organization (Kawalec, 2013): full patron participation and input.

b) Support the internet (full wifi access): which includes giving students more great room (Sanevely, 2012) to close gaps and correct misconceptions. Not all users of library services come from the same economical background. The Library provides a platform to bring services like internet and wifi access to those less privileged, thereby closing the gap in educational opportunities and economic status.

c) Provide real-time communication tools for customers, such as live chat for references. (Rendina,2017) The fundamental principle of involving users forces libraries to "co-create, rather than impose value to users" (Miller, 2018). User studies, user needs (information needs), and information-seeking behavior can be used to study how users conceptually engage with the library (information behavior).

2. Book: Books are considered information products since they provide the reader with information, which is then transformed into knowledge (Seemiller,2016). Of course, when the aforementioned *Five Laws of Library Science* was written in 1930, there was no such thing as an eBook, DVD, or CD. Indestructibility, transmutability, and repeatability are traits of digital information products. The idea of a book in the digital age places more emphasis on content than form (container). Because information goods are not only books, the word "information" is the appropriate term to describe a library in the digital age instead of "book."

3. The library: Technology disruption into libraries in the modern era has changed people's perceptions of physical libraries, where everything can be accessed digitally. As a result, the focus of library management is not on how to grow libraries but on making them as user-friendly as possible for people who come in person. The way people acquire information has changed as libraries adapt to the digital age. They used to borrow books they could read in the library or take home, but they can now access everything digitally. Therefore, for clients to feel comfortable accessing library collections, a space must be provided in the library. For patrons to feel comfortable accessing library materials or even engaging in peer conversation, a space must be provided in the library; this is known as the Learning Common.

To encourage user engagement through collaboration, experimentation, and exploration between users and librarians, the Learning Common is a physical space that is a part of the library building and is purposefully made available to users only for the needs of research and work activities for college assignments (Schader, 2008)(Sykes, 2016).

One of the best strategies for promoting libraries is the benefits of knowing the standard (Lackie, 2015). There should be no distinction between physical and digital libraries in the context of library development. There should be librarians who can be invited to communicate online if they can be invited to communicate in person at the library.

The same thing, for instance, should apply if students are given learning materials prevalent in libraries; learning materials should also be provided digitally.

The Digital Age's Five Laws of Library Science

Following an explanation of the modifications to *The Five Laws of Library Science* and 21st-century traits, the following are the outcomes of the revision:

1. Information: Put Content First, Not the Container vs Books are for Use: Power comes from knowledge (Ranganathan, 1931). Anyone with informational access and the capacity to turn it into knowledge is considered powerful. Users in the digital age do not care about the structure of the information; what matters is the content itself. Because much significant information is not formally disseminated through the internet in the digital age, the material's format need not be as necessary to be highlighted. People's attitudes toward libraries still have a solid connection to the books, which will only use up library resources. Not everyone enjoys reading physical books, but many people also enjoy reading in digital form. Multitasking, or the desire to perform multiple tasks at once, is one of the traits of generation Z. Examples of such behaviors include reading online (Rendina, 2017).

2. & 3. User Participation vs Every person his/her Book/ Every book its Reader: Libraries must first assess user satisfaction to create user engagement. If the library complies with the needs of its users, user happiness will be highly valued. The library faces expectations since it caters to user needs. Therefore, fully realizing it requires a user-centered analysis of how people use all of the library's services and materials. It is required to conduct a prior investigation into (Snavely, 2012) before doing so:

a) Using an information retrieval system to meet user needs increases system effectiveness.

b) User effectiveness: How closely the system's output matches the user's expectations regarding accuracy and completeness.

c) User effort: User engagement with information retrieval system methodology in the context of information search behavior.

d) User characteristic: To involve themselves in the process, librarians undertake user research.

4. Information quantitative analysis vs Saves the time of the Reader: A quantifiable evaluation is crucial in the digital age since Generation Z tends to think all the time logically. Knowing that they are concentrating on statistics and figures will strengthen the information. Quantitative analysis can take the shape of bibliometric, altimetric, or scientometric methods in studying libraries and information science.

5. The Common Learning (Online and Offline) vs Library is a growing organism: Another trait of Generation Z is their preference for teamwork and interactions and learning methods that suit their tastes. The library must assume this role to transform the library into a place to find information. A library is where they go to study for exams. They conduct research for college assignments in libraries. A digital library must provide the same purpose on the digital side. Therefore, when a user visits the library online, they receive the same level of service.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science provide a helpful framework for understanding the role of libraries in society. They also offer a useful set of guidelines for library professionals who wish to improve the quality of their services. While some of the laws

may seem outdated in today's digital world, they nonetheless provide an important foundation for understanding the importance of libraries and their place in our culture. Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science were created following the circumstances of the time they were created. The absence of technology undoubtedly results in various patron characteristics. In the present digital age the findings of this study demonstrate that Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science have been reduced to four concepts: (1) information: concentrate on the content rather than the container; (2) user engagement; (3) quantitative analysis of information; and (4) everyday learning (online and offline).

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