Expanding Reference Services in University Libraries under COVID-19 －From the University of Mumbai Library

By

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Abstract

With the spread of COVID-19, many academic libraries in Maharashtra have had to suspend or limit on-site library services. The purpose of this paper is to consider how to enhance reference and information services under such unusual circumstances based on the practice at University of Mumbai. In collaboration with Library Technical Assistants (TA), University of Mumbai library has expanded its services by evolving existing question-and-answer services, web-based study guides, and workshops for first-year undergraduate students, and events planned by library TA into remote library services. Considering the insights gained from these practices, this paper shows that future academic library needs to integrate new remote services with traditional on-site services to develop hybrid reference and information services.

Keywords: COVID-19, non-visiting service, question-and-answer service, pathfinder, information literacy education, peer support, library.

Introduction

Since April 2020, many large academic libraries have suspended or limited visiting-type services, mainly providing non-visiting services that can be used without visiting the library in this paper, we examine how a university library can be used in such a specific situation. Regarding how to expand the reference service, based on the practical example of the University of Mumbai at that time, the reference service is not limited to passive question-answering services, but includes active services such as education and information literacy education. In a broad sense, we focus on learning supporting activities in collaboration with students. These reports on the efforts and achievements of the University of Mumbai library. Below, we first describe the University of Mumbai library's response and characteristics to COVID-19. This is followed by a report on non-visiting Q&A services, web learning guides, IDs, online classes, and events for first-year undergraduates, and finally a summary.

Literature review

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) [1]. Its basic symptoms are fever, cough and shortness of breath or shortness of breath, and the virus is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. The first patient of Covid-19 was found in the Chinese city of Wuhan. It has spread to 210 countries with more than 2,571,515 cases and 7, 01,070 recovered

cases in the first week of April [2]. Muhammad Yusuf Ali and Peter Gatiti (2020) have raised awareness through public health education, providing help and links to useful resources to their users, including medical staff and researchers during the lockdown period. And they suggested that WhatsApp is a reliable source of current information during the time of Covid-19 and shared the WhatsApp link with their library users to check rumours and fake news [3]. Ken Cai, Jiana He and Peter Keke Wong et al. (2020) found that teaching and research was a challenging task for all university faculties and that the COVID-19 pandemic created difficulties for MD research projects. Also, professors have used ICT tools to teach students online, provide tutorials, lectures, and provide updates regarding their academic curriculum through email, websites, and webinars [4]. Crawford Joseph, Butler-Henderson Kerryn and Rudolph Jurgen et.al (2020) have highlighted in their research that the Covid-19 pandemic has created challenges in higher education worldwide [5]. Pradeep Sahu (2020) found that universities have made decisions to protect their students and staff from the infectious disease Covid-19, and faculty members choose online platforms to deliver lectures and deliver notes. Studies have highlighted the impact of Covid-19 particularly on education as well as on the health of students and staff [6]. Khan, Naushad et al. (2020) studied the impact of Corona on the global economy. It has been noted that the pandemic situation has affected the US economy, created unemployment and the global economy has affected colleges, universities, and schools [7].

Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to explore the facilities and services provided by the University of Mumbai Library during the Covid-19 pandemic through several lenses:

➢ Types of facilities and services provided to users, Mode of spread of services during this period.
➢ Preventive measures to combat the coronavirus
➢ To review the way library professionals faced the challenges and difficulties and responded to the situation

COVID-19 response and characteristics of University of Mumbai Library

3.1 Corona Behaviour

The prevalence of pandemic corona infection was spreading at the faster rate during 16 March, 2020 there for government of Maharashtra had declared the state of emergency in the state stating the universities among the Maharashtra to shut down there regular working.

1) Mean while the University of Mumbai had postponed the academic schedule till the spring semester. Consequently, the University of Mumbai had started the academic schedule in the online mode (distance learning). The University of Mumbai has five libraries, and 65 affiliated libraries.[8]

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According to the academic action guidelines, four libraries of Central, Science, Arts and Engineering were temporarily closed from April 11, after which the remaining medical libraries opened regularly. Limited to counters for serving healthcare professionals. Before closing, check

the status of the service and use at home "The new coronavirus" which summarizes information on possible electronic content Ruth English versions of a special page for infectious diseases were prepared and published on the top page of the library website on April 10.

2) Additionally, from the same day all employees will start working from home sequentially. During the temporary closure, which lasted until the end of May, a free mail service was provided for senior graduate students and graduate students and faculty, during which time 406 items (1,870 volumes) and 207 photocopies were sent. June 1 Advance reservations are available from the day of the event at the Art Library, Science Library and Engineering Library. Only loan servicing was resumed under regulation. Face-to-face classes started All five libraries started on June 25, the start of the summer session. Entry to the museum is possible without reservation. Partial use of reading seats from mid-September followed by frequent increases and decreases in reading and opening hours and expansion of use of private rooms while responding to the corona virus. The concept of subject textbooks is common for traditional courses in the science, commerce, and arts stream. However, students of unaided or self-financed courses heavily depend on reference books as study material. Most colleges follow the University of Mumbai prescribed curriculum and reference books mentioned by the Board of Studies (BoS), making it convenient for students to find study material in libraries. That year, most librarians ensured the reference material is posted in virtual classrooms, so that students do not struggle for notes before exams," [9]

3) In University of Mumbai, due to TA system reform in October 2019, TA was divided into 3 levels (BTA (Basic Technical Assistant), ATA (Advanced Technical Assistant), TF (Technical Assistant) Fellow) There was a category wise TA training program and each level function The content was explained simultaneously.

3.2 Learning support activities through student collaboration

The characteristics of the reference services of the University of Mumbai Library were: Graduate Student Library Aimed to enhance service through collaborative learning support activities with TAs (Technical Assistants) and provided learning support through systematic collaboration between library staff and students.

In March 2019, "Library TA (cuter) is the middle grade between the three levels defined by the new TA system. As an ATA they provide education support services. Library TAs should maintain close collaboration, respond to learning consultations, and provide online learning guides. It was used as a training opportunity in addition to interdisciplinary exchange programs in activities such as preparation of IDs, teaching materials for seminars and training of trainers, planning and management. In 2020, due to the impact of Covid-19, there were irregular activities and spring semester classes were postponed, the appointment period for TA was changed from April to May every year and at the same time he had an arrangement that allowed him to work from home. TAs who began working at the library from October to November will continue to work at each library until December, when the education advice desks reopen. As of September 2021, 19 people worked in her office library, including 2 international student TAs in the Central Library (7 in Humanities and Social Sciences), the Science Library (10 in Science and Engineering and Agriculture) and the Medical Library. (2 from medical school).[10]

Non-Visiting Q&A Service

The core business of passive reference services is the Q&A service that starts after receiving a question from a user. He was consulting with the library staff at the Mumbai University library. In addition, the Library TA provides study advice.

4.1 Web Reception for Study Consultation

For Library TA's -Library TA's usually meet centrally and consult with students face-to-face at dedicated desks in the science library. However, in 2020, due to infection prevention, they suspended the learning consultation desk from April until November. As an alternative to face-to-face learning counselling, April used a web conferencing service (Zoom for Business) to examine synchronous online learning counselling. As a result, it will be difficult to provide consulting work online that meets the consultant's expectations through education consulting. On the other hand, they also considered an asynchronous web-based study consultation system. They have set up a new query form on the library website to decide whether to accept the call.

The response process for web reception is as follows. It is defined as follows.

(1) Users can post and answer questions on the Exchange chat tool by learning from the library website and submitting a consultation question form, (2) submitting submissions to library TA staff received through the mailing list, (3) exchanging staff information with library TA's. (4) If it is impossible to answer, the employee informs the questioner that it is impossible to answer, (5) in this case it is possible to answer, the TA in charge prepares and answers the answer during working hours, (6) the employee sends the answer to the questioner, (7) the employee's response Her web-based work is recorded in a diary. And the summer session started from May 6, they started accepting online requests for study counselling and on 4th December or till reopening of the education counselling desk after they fully implemented measures against infectious diseases. Since then, users were responding to learning consultations face-to-face and on the web reception. He had conducted 285 face-to-face educational consultations in 2019 before Corona. In response, the desk was closed for more than half a year. In 2020, the number of consultations was 16 face-to-face (47%) and online reception. A total of 34 cases (18 cases (53%) decreased significantly. However, the number of consultations in the first half of 2021 totalled 144 in which pre-corona recovery was expected. Face-to-face 129 cases (90%), web reception 15 cases (was 10%). Although face-to-face consultation was mainly provided at the Learning Consultation Desk, the number of applications received had already reached the same level as last year. Consultation cases are face-to-face by the library TA at the online reception. According to the operation of the Learning Consultation Desk, how the library is used How to do, how to write a port, study method, solution method, student life is taken for granted on the web, how to write a report, how to express English/Hindi/Marathi in a paper, how to study for exams, how to read books, university life and career path one point is and they prefer to correct reports and documents. The percentage increased after face-to-face meetings. Separately, they have a line and email on line class support office (Microsoft Teams) because they were doing some consulting on distance learning.

The advantages of online reception of education consultation are: (1) the location and time of the questioner (2) academic students who are reluctant to meet face-to-face can feel free to ask questions. (3) Selecting the most suitable respondent and giving appropriate advice before answering. (4) For one consultation, more than one library TAs together (5) To record and share consultation content in detail e.g., which library TAs can refer to each other.

Division The problems are as follows:

(1) unable to respond while looking at the person's reaction; (2) answers There was no feedback from the consulter afterward, and the degree of satisfaction was unknown. (3) In order to make answers for both face-to-face consultations and online consultations compatible, for example, the working hours of the library TA tend to exceed the working hours.

4.2 Remote consultation service for library staff

The question-answer service provided by library staff under Covid-19 was a remote consultation service for library staff, in principle, to receive web forms and e-mail queries. If users have any questions, please contact the entire building's service staff by mail. Is the person in charge most closely related to the content of the question? With those visions, he took steps to respond to them. In addition, the project management tool used backlog, communication, and coordination between the persons in charge to share and accumulate case studies and consulting cases. From October 2020, as an alternative to face-to-face consultations, these reservations are used as needed for the service, newly using its web conferencing service (Microsoft Teams) and users can apply on the library's website. After making the reservation through the form and the library staff will prepare the conference room online. They adopted a method in which participants were instructed on how to participate. The purpose of the remote online consultation was to explore ways to find text-only information. If the questions cannot be communicated effectively or are unclear, it becomes difficult to conduct appropriate surveys/answers.

Home study support with web study guide

This was to compensate for the weakness of question reception through the form. The numbers of remote consultations since the launch of the service were 5 in 2020 out of 8 cases in total and 3 cases in first half of 2021, all from central library. A reference researcher was in charge. Half of the eight cases were lists that could more appropriately respond to inquiries received via e-mail, web, and telephone. This is what led to remote consultation. All advisory students were 2 undergraduate students, 4 master's students, 2 doctoral students), and all masters and doctoral students. Seven advisors were humanities. One chapter was on science and the main content of the consultation was remote access questions about how to find content, database, and reference management tools, how to use them, copyright, citation rules, etc. Consultation time averaged 37.5 minutes, with a maximum of 60 minutes and a minimum of 10 minutes.

The advantages of distance counselling compared to face-to-face counselling are that it asks users to enter their counselling details in advance through the appointment. Hence, adequate advance preparation is possible and follow-up after the event is relatively easy. In addition, while sharing each other's screen, the details of the operation can be confirmed and clarified, and it becomes easier to build a relationship of trust as communication etc. takes place. The problem is that the number of consultations was small. Although there was an issue of insufficient awareness, some users hesitated to communicate with each other online, there was also concern that each response, preparation, and production would take a long time. Those four web study guides are home study supports with active references that capture user needs and provide information Pathfinder is a monitoring service.

A framework is an excellent way to promote the use of reference services. For example, for the 6th Library Reference Awards, Library Promotion received high praise, with guidelines stating that library TAs are central to the production of articles as they are playing an important role. Of the 203 open guideline articles published at the end of September 2021, 151 (74%) were created by TAs based on their own expertise and experience. Under Covid-19 from FY 2020 to the first half of FY 2021, 15 library TAs and 10 library staff, a total of 25 IDs were prepared and issued. In the following, the characteristics of children during this period are described.

To support the use of e-books in the four areas of education, humanities, science, medicine/medical care and student life, recommended e-books selected by TAs and library

staff are presented. that library staff collect information on as an e-book version of the "Bookshelf". Each page in the four fields provides direct access to the featured e-book at home. Do not display accessible remote access links this way, users can instantly read the e-books they are interested in. In addition to those created, four field pages are linked to relevant existing guides. Also added to "How to Find eBooks" here. "Let's make the most of the library!" Guide B, written by library staff, presents library introduction videos and online courses that can be used to access university library services at the University of Mumbai. The telecommuting ring produced 6 of his short films, which he created using the environment, how to use libraries, how to find materials, how to use databases, etc. Edited into short videos of 5 minutes each and published as official videos. Mumbai University is published on YouTube. From its publication on November 13, 2020 to the end of September 2021, the 4 videos will receive a total of 2.4k views. Library Overview" (12k times), "2. Collection (for books)" (362 times). Even the shortest videos with the most views have over 12k views. It is believed to be useful in promoting the pattern of use. First-year undergraduate reading samples were sent to the Online Learning Consultation Desk. These guidelines were developed in response to inquiries from library TAs soliciting papers and essays. 11 Library TAs provided explanations and reference materials on how to read specialized books efficiently. Prepare a summary of the introductions and obtain prior consent of the advisor to be published. In addition to the new guides, existing guides published before Corona can be found at "Accessing e-journals and databases from campus: Remote access services," "How to search for e-books." The library's special COVID-19 response page.
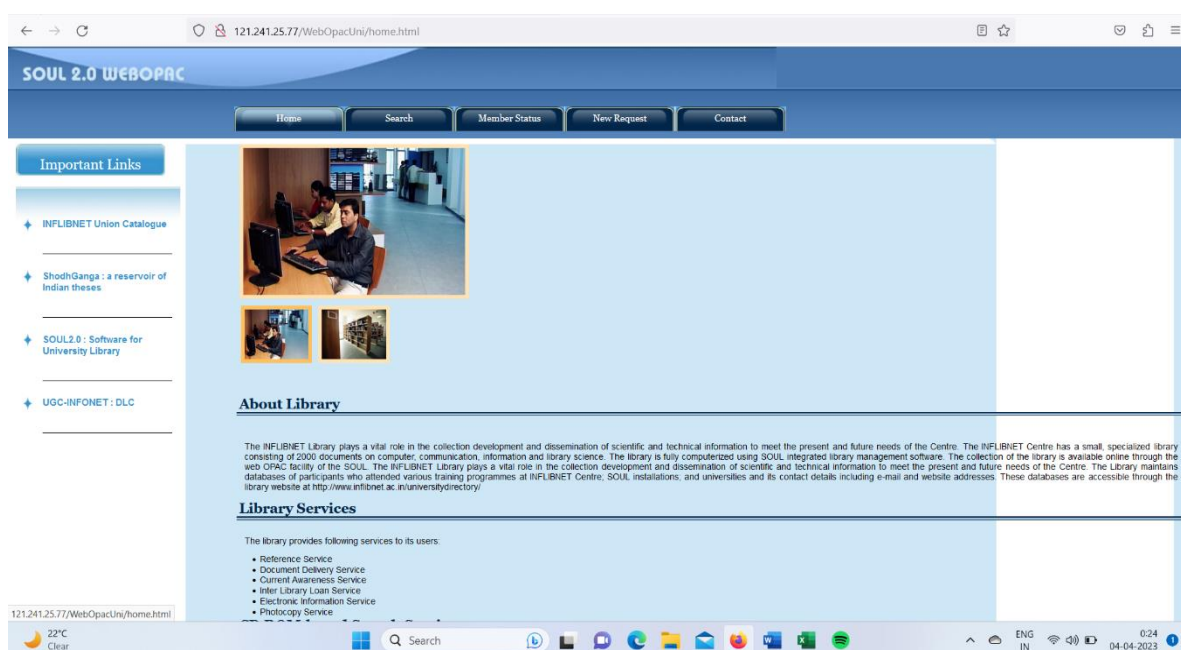

Fig. 1 *Soul 2.0 web OPAC recommended e-book*

Guides (number of page views) were about 1.21 million in 2020, which was about eight times that of FY2014. In the first half of FY2021, 2019 recorded a record high of 2.46k accesses, close to the previous year's 1.6k cases. Looking at the trends in the top 10 admissions cases, we can see that medical professional mentors occupy the highest position for educational tests and experiments with no change in the general trend. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the University of Mumbai Library emphasized the urgency of disseminating information from a special page on the library's website, adding to the wealth of information created by pre-corona e-resources. they can provide information and guidance.

E-learning and Online Courses

Also, library staff and library TAs can work together to rapidly create new guides for distance learning and distance learning. It is positioned as an active reference service for conducting e-learning and seminars to enhance the information literacy of users of online courses. Distant classes were supported by "on demand" workshops. In 2021, they mainly conducted synchronous online seminars. These seminars included library planning, workshop reports for students.

6.1 Overview of Seminars for First Year Undergraduates

Mumbai University Library mainly had approximately 2,700 first year undergraduate students. These subjects were three types of subjects, the library TA supervised the preparation of teaching materials and acted as a trainer. Classes were held outside the classroom. "Report Writing Course for First Year Students" was mainly a debate class. How to write a port, report structure, discussion methods, and strategies for writing easy-to-understand and persuasive sentences were developed. This is a workshop where librarians explain the TA process. The "Experiment Reporting Course for First-Year Students" was a required course for completing "natural science experiments," designing study reports, and supporting the process of scientific inquiry. A "Presentation course for First year students" was compulsory to support oral presentations. The staff explained the basics of the presentation and explained the drawing. Report course and Presentation course started in the first half of 2014. From the second half of 2017, the test report syllabus was revised annually. In 2019, before Covid-19, the report was conducted face-to-face. 539 students, about 20% of all first-year students, attended eight lectures.

It was a popular seminar with 157 students in all 11 report courses, 5 presentation courses with 97 participants.

6.2 Creation and provision of e-learning materials

Face-to-face lectures will be cancelled in 2020 due to Covid-19 and a library learning support system (M2B system) has been created. The content of face-to-face lectures is the learning material for e-learning. Therefore, from 2016, the report course was changed to experiment report course. Started in 2017, and presentation course has started in 2018. The course was made public on the e-learning system Moodle in the university library. Among these, the course material is presented in slide show format with narration. was there. Therefore, in April 2020, Mumbai University Library in collaboration with the affiliated Teaching Materials Development Centre filmed in a dedicated studio. Library TAs' lecture videos used by Library TAs will be used as teaching materials. "Lectures on How to Write a Report" republished. As a result, 5 or 6 short lecture videos were produced for all three courses. And by combining slide materials with supplemental materials and questionnaires, she was able to standardize the format of the learning materials. Also, ask questions at the end of each lecture. Link to the form and used as education consultation for web reception provided. The status of e-learning in 2020 can be checked using the same account. Examining the number of admissions excluding duplication by number of participants, there were 863 for the report course, 260 for the experiment report course, 172 presentation lectures, all of which were face-to-face lectures in 2019. Participants greatly exceeded the number of seats.
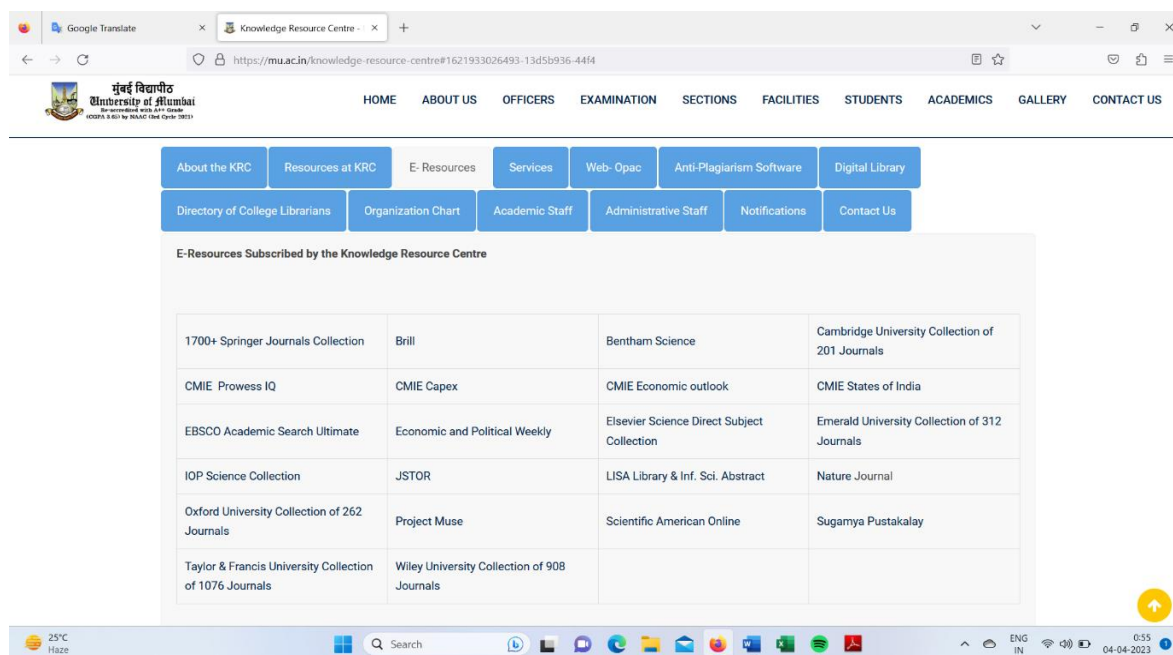
Fig 2 "*New report writing course" e-learning materials*

6.3 Implementation of synchronous online seminars

During first semester of 2021, three lectures were conducted in synchronous online format. At that time e-learning materials were provided last year. To expressly include second-year undergraduates who were only, the beginning of each course name was changed to "for 1st and 2nd class". All three courses use its web conferencing service (Zoom) and provide central or administrative support to library staff and library Tas. Also, to ensure interactivity in a typical online training session that was undirected, participants were allowed to ask questions anonymously after the session, using a quality question posting tool. 406 students in all 5 reporting courses held in April 2021; There were 120 participants in all five experimental reporting courses conducted. The number of participants per session was 81 for the report course and 81 for the actual course. The test report course had 24 participants and both were the highest ever. There were 82 competitors in all 5 presentation courses held in June. A record number of participants compared to 2019's face-to-face course held five times, which saw a drop in numbers. Please note that the initial number of participants in e-learning in the first semester of 2021 was 239 for the report course and 55 for the experiment report course. 27 people in the presentation course. Then again adding the number of online and future e-learning course participants, an increase in the number of participants was expected for the three courses. Questionnaires were administered before and after attending each of the three courses, like the face-to-face courses. Provided. Are you satisfied with the course content? Was the course content useful? When answering questions about 10 items from the perspective of all cases, the average value of the 5-point evaluation was 4.0 or higher, and face-to-face 2019 received the same or higher high evaluation of the year. 30 hours for library Tas After each course, questions were asked about the reports and presentations, followed by about one minute to answer in the slides. Additionally, everyone also received several questions about general student life such as visiting labs, studying abroad, part-time jobs, etc. In addition, the written independence of the questionnaire, the convenience of Slides, which allows them to ask questions face-to-face and two-way exchange was also confirmed by the fact that there were many responses that were evaluated. Noticed. For face-to-face courses, secure a venue and set an upper limit on the number of participants. In addition to the lecturer, at least three library Tas are required to assist the lecturer. They need to be taken care of. On the other hand, online lectures can be operated efficiently with fewer people.

Library TA Planned Events Online

At the University of Mumbai Library, library TAs are interested in each person. A science cafe-style seminar planned and implemented based on the heart. Providing useful information for study and research in addition to regular seminars This event is also an active reference service event. be categorized. Table 1 shows his services held under Corona. 2020 Face-to-face meetings will be postponed this fiscal year, and a web conferencing service will be launched for the first time. It was held using Zoom. In principle, the first half of 2021 will be open.

Table 1 *2020-2021 list of services under corona period*

Date	Number of times	Theme	Place	Number of people
2020/12/21	13	talks, listen, discuss Communication learned from Debate session	Zoom	8
2021/1/13	14	Introduction to English Presentation & Essay Lecture	Zoom	47
2021/3/10	15	Master's and Doctor's talks by prospective seniors Job hunting experience at	Zoom	38
2021/6/12, 19	16	How is student life at University of Mumbai? Join or	Zoom	92
2021/7/21	17	First R Course Science	Chart	19
2021/7/26	18	For those who want to speak better	Zoom	37
2021/9/24	19	First R Course <revival> Science	Chart	17

It is conducted face-to-face with a small number of people only when it is an online method and involves practical training using a personal computer. was the topic of discussion. English presentations and essays, how to speak, statistical analysis software R, job search for graduate students, how to approach university life, etc. Basically, library TAs supervise lecturers and lecturer assistants. Museum staff supported the operation. The number of participants for the 2020 online format was 93. 129 people, 2 online methods in the first half of 2021 there were 36 people with face type all two times. The number of participants per session is doubling year-over-year, compared to 42 people for all three face-to-face meetings in 2019: 14 people in 2019, 31 people in 2020, 65 people in the first half of 2021. Adoption of online mode increased the number of participants and operations. It can be said that this has increased operational efficiency. Additionally, in the first half of 2021, they held this face-to-face event with a capacity of 15 people. On both occasions the first R course was filled soon after the publicity had begun. Indeed, there were many people who wanted to participate. If the restrictions remain in place, it is necessary to expand participation opportunities by combining online methods, to meet the needs of users, the number of people for in-person events.

Conclusion

The spread of corona infection also had a major impact on the reference service of the university library. LIBRARY CLOSURE, USE RESTRICTIONS, REMOTE ACCESS In special circumstances such as substitute classes and telecommuting, University of Mumbai

requires your library to review existing questions and answers with your library TA. Service, web study guide, workshops for first year undergraduates, figure library TA planning events evolved into non-visiting type, service expanded. The knowledge gained from these methods is summarized below. Students helping colleagues in collaboration with library staff are important ports for improving reference services. Method In question-answer services, asynchronous learning consultation web reception not only expands the tools and opportunities to ask questions, but also to enable respondent selection and correspondence by multiple respondents, students who are hesitant to ask questions or face-to-face. Face consultations are an effective method when the consultation desk is closed. Additionally, synchronous remote consultation means that if a reservation system is used, it is possible to respond after advance preparation. Visiting the museum is difficult because it is suitable for explaining the operation by sharing the screen. This is an effective method for young students. However, it is possible to supplement visit-type services, given that both are academically short. There will be a way. Pathfinders on the web are e-books, e-learning is a rich system that combines various electronic materials such as educational materials and videos. It is useful for continuous accumulation and providing rich information. Support for home study and distance learning can be strengthened when used in conjunction with the rapid dissemination of information from library websites. A non-visit information literacy seminar was held on a specific date and time. Is there a way to provide asynchronous e-learning materials that make it possible to host events in a synchronous online format and attend at any time? Having an online method guarantees the same or better quality than the face-to-face method. It is possible that we can also expect an increase in the satisfaction of our customers. Online methods and e-learning if the training materials are provided together, the opportunities to take classes will increase and the management will be more efficient. It can be said that this method is more suitable for seminars than face-to-face meetings as it can be used to facilitate communication. Events planned by the students will also include information literacy workshops. It can also be a method of qualitative expansion. As with regular workshops, adopting a synchronous online approach will expand opportunities for participation. It is possible to increase the efficiency of operations. Even under special circumstances under Corona, libraries should replace traditional academic services with new non-visiting services. Services need to be extended to create hybrid reference services.

Special feature:

Looking into the future of digital reference service. Enhancing reference and information services in academic library during the COVID-19 pandemic: Based on the practice at University of Mumbai Library.

Keywords:

COVID-19 / remote library services / question-and-answer services / pathfinder / information literacy education / peer support / library Technical Assistant

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