DIGITAL LIBRARIES: MOST EFFECTIVE WEAPON FOR E-LEARNING

K. Perera¹, D. Chandra²

¹ Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (SRI LANKA)
² Ministry of Defence (INDIA)

k_vithana@yahoo.com, dinesh.conf@gmail.com

Rapid development of information communication technologies (ICTs) has made an environment globally to the growth of e-learning in scholarly community. Digital libraries are facilitating researchers, scholars, learners, information professionals to access their information in variety of formats and learning support at their desktops without any geographical barrier. It provides electronic based (e-based) information delivery to its users crossing the boundaries of time, space and location. Digital library users can be reached remotest corners of the world to fill their thrust of information. It makes a gateway to the e-learning users for retrieving and browsing of desired information from its huge resources like one stop shopping of big shopping mall. It provides extra services of 24X7 hour uninterrupted access through Internet to the users at their desktop.

Digital libraries play an important role and offer the other side of the coin to e-learning. Through digital libraries, e-learners do facilitate for teaching, learning and research. Digital librarians act as a right arm of the e-learning. E-learning is fruitful when it facilitates easy access, well designed, user-centered, affordable, efficient and flexible. Informal learning can be defined as self-directed learning in e-society. Informal learning activities are related to employment, housework, community work and general interests of users.

Internet is the most crucial component for e-learning. To access World Wide Web (WWW) users need Internet facilities without any interruption. Technology is must in e-learning. Fast obsolescence of technology has become a major factor, which need more attention to provide dynamic service to the scholarly community.

The advent of WWW raises interesting issues and challenging responsibilities for digital libraries globally, including improving access to e-resources such as e-books, e-journals, e-databases, e-theses etc. while maintaining archives. Digital libraries can provide more timely access to e-generated ocean of information. Digital libraries are giving paramount importance to the e-learners while saving shelf space and also serving more users at the same time.

E-learning resources are delivered to users in digital formats and available over the Internet. These
resources can be accessed using different technologies such as WWW, Gopher, telnet, e-mail. These resources are portable hardware and software system that can display an ocean of readable information to the user while facilitating to navigate. HTML is the most widely used Web programming language to build up e-learning resources. XML is making headway allowing publishers to create content and data that is portable to other devices.

Keywords: e-learning requirements, advantages, disadvantages, file formats