Full Length Research Article

VIETNAMESE DIGITAL LIBRARIES: CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS (Part 2)

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the reasons for limiting the development of digital libraries and proposing appropriate solutions for the development of digital libraries in Vietnam in the current period.

INTRODUCTION

Developing digital library in Vietnam plays especially important role. Because digital library is now a trend that fits the realities of information technology development, information explosion and satisfy the increasingly complex needs of information users. Digital library is considered as a place to provide modern library services, solve problems of improving the quality of learning, teaching and people's knowledge. Therefore, the development of digital libray in Vietnam could not be out of the development trend of the world and integrate with the development of many countries at the moment. The Vietnamese digital libraries have undergone nearly three decades of construction and development. This activity has achieved certain accomplishments in the operations of digital library to provide useful services to the users. However, Vietnamese digital libraries also have certain limitations. Therefore, finding appropriate and synchronous solutions for developing Vietnamese digital libraries is an important factor and decides the quality of digital library activities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The development situation of Vietnamese digital libraries

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"The development situation of Vietnamese digital libraries". The research results in this article shows that digital library in Vietnam have achieved the achievements, but there is still limited. Therefore, this article does not mention the achievements in building digital libraries, only focuses on analyzing the causes of limitations and proposing specific solutions for the development of digital library in Vietnam (Lan, 2017).

Causes of restrictions for building digital library in Vietnam

The development of Vietnamese digital libraries still has limitations due to the following reasons:

Training digital library

Training digital library has been developed in many countries around the world. However, up to now, Vietnam has not had a standardized, systematic, comprehensive and up-to-date curriculum on digital library. Meanwhile, training at Vietnamese universities only limits in some subjects such as digital library, network management, information retrieval, information searching system, website design, integrated library system, application of information technology and communication in library and information activities. These subjects are mainly taught by lecturers of library and information field, not connected with information technology lecturers (Son, 2011).

In addition, the situation of Vietnamese digital libraries mainly restricted at short courses trained by foreign experts or participated in some digital library projects funded by foreign organizations (Son, 2011).

Researching digital library:

Son, N. H. (2011) noted that researching Vietnamese digital library is still limited because:

- Researching digital library is limited to library and information field, and there is no research collaboration between library and information science and information technology. The basic research on digital library is still lacking, not a solid foundation for applied research.
- The research works of Vietnamese authors only focus on the level of articles and lack of intensive scientific research. These works mention a number of issues such as digital library concept, digital library development policy, planning project building digital library, digital source development, digital information organization, metadata, information retrieval, data standards, using software, figure out digital library models around the world and digital library projects in Vietnam. In addition, the works also focus on sharing the experience of building and developing digital library in many countries around the world, digital librarians, etc.
- Digital library research works are often in the context of Vietnam, lacking basic research that could international links and does not still keep pace with digital library science in the world.
- Digital library studies primarily focused on the development of digital library software to meet the needs of the market. These software development studies are not commonly published in the major journals in the library and information field, only are represented via finished products.
- Some digital library deployment projects in Vietnam are only limited to the transfer of technology, training and using of digital library software for libraries.
- Digital library conferences are often held, but there is limited to describing and sharing digital library development experiences in many countries around the world. Basic research and implementation of digital library lack depth and systematic.

Expenses and information technology infrastructure

Limiting expenses is also one of the important factors that greatly affects the development of Vietnamese digital library. Many libraries do not have the capacity to invest in information technology infrastructure for developing digital library. Vietnamese libraries often use domestic commercial software or open source software, software written by its library. This has led to the lack of uniformity of software, limits the information sharing between libraries not only domestic but also in abroad. Especially, for small and medium libraries that do not have the budget to invest in integrated library system for library operations. In addition, many libraries could not buy foreign databases, or invest in modern equipments to digitize documents.

Digital library staffs

Starting from the reason that there has not had intensive training program on digital library in Vietnam, digital library staffs have not been trained in this field.

In addition, the number of trained librarians in the digital library field in abroad also account for low rate. The information technology staff team does not have an understanding of library and information field. There is no close link between librarians and IT engineers in the development of digital library (Hiep, 2014).

Digital sources

Vietnamese libraries have limited cost for buying digital sources and equipment to digitizing documents. Therefore, the digital resources at Vietnamese libraries are still limited in quantity and quality. Digitized resources are not commensurate with the library's resources and acquisition policies (Son, 2011). In addition to the above factors, the incomplete legal system to create a legal corridor for the construction of digital library is also a cause leading to the slow and inconsistent development of digital library in Vietnam (Son, 2011).

Some solutions for developing digital library in Vietnam

From analysing the reasons for limiting digital library development, the article proposes some solutions to develop this activity in Vietnam as follows:

Researching and training digital librarians

First of all, in order to develop digital library in Vietnam, it is necessary to plan a researching and training policy by document concretization and specific policies and guidelines to create a legal framework for researching and training digital library (Son, 2011). Additionally, investing state budget, funding of domestic and foreign projects for researching and training of digital library must be given special priority. If investing in digital library researching and training is strong and effective, this will attract many digital library researchers in internal and external. Building centers researching and training digital library plays a pivotal role in researching, training, developing standards and curricula, and initiating digital library development projects. Organizing seminars, sharing forums, exchanging experiences on digital library development and cooperating with foreign partners to learn experiences, seeking professional support from them (Son, 2011). Moreover, the Vietnamese government should have policies to assist librarians studying in abroad by short or long term courses, training courses to exchange and learn experience of foreign about developing digital library.

Strengthening expenses for digital library development

Expenses have a great impact on the digital library development in Vietnam. Hence, increasing expenses is essential to develop digital library. The Vietnamese libraries could increase funding through planning projects to look for investment from domestic and foreign agencies and organizations. In addition, the leadership team should pay attention to increasing investment funding for developing information technology infrastructure, buying modern equipments to operate digital library. Besides, when expenses is available, Vietnamese libraries could invest to develop integrated library system, or some small libraries with limited expenses could use open source software such as Dspace, Koha, Greenstone, so forth (Chuong, 2014).

Developing digital sources

Vietnamese libraries could expose appropriate policies to develop digital resources. First and foremost, libraries need to prioritize the digitization of existing library materials such as endogenous, multi-user materials such as theses, dissertations and research works, scientific journals published by its organizations; developing subject collections, lectures, conference materials, etc. (Chuong, 2015), (Dung, 2014), (Lien, 2011). Sharing and exchanging digital documents: In order to save expenses and diversify digital resources, Vietnamese libraries could collaborate to sharing and exchanging resources and databases purchased abroad. In addition, Vietnamese libraries need to develop a clear, systematic, and reasonable digital information sharing policy to maximize digital resources (Dung, 2014). Developing open educational resources: This is also an effective solution to enhance and diversify digital resources for libraries. Vietnamese libraries could connect with domestic and foreign organizations to access and use this resource. Additionally, open information sources on the internet are also useful digital information sources that libraries could use to meet the needs of their users (Dung, 2014).

Conclusion

Digital library development in Vietnam is still limited due to many different reasons. Therefore, in order to make this activity in Vietnam more increasingly developing and high quality, it is required that Vietnamese libraries should focus on carrying out uniform solutions. Therein, investing in funding sources, enhancing information technology infrastructure, developing quantity and quality of digital resources as well as conducting researching and training digital library are important solutions and improving the effectiveness of Vietnamese digital library in the coming time.

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