

Dropbox: A new virtual space for Library and Information Services

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Abstract: “Space” plays crucial role for keeping the records in library and developments in Information Communication Technology (ICT) has brought many storage devices such as magnetic, optical, and Internet site for storing the information for present as well as future. Dropbox is one of the storage software is latest ICT oriented service, which offers virtual space for storing the digital content. It is a tool for storing all the files such as doc, photos, videos etc. and can be accessed and shared among the users form any part of the world using computers, tablets and smart phones. This paper is an attempt to discuss about Dropbox and its usefulness in library services.

Keyword: Dropbox, Institutional Repository, Virtual Space, Cloud Computing, resource Sharing

1. Introduction:

Library construction in the present situation should be as per Dr. S.R. Rabganathan’s fifth law ‘library is a growing organism’. The library building should be well planned by keeping the growth of literature in future. Technological developments such as Compact Disk-Read Only Memory, Pendrive, Hard Disk, Dropbox have helped to store large amount of information for present as well as future use. Dropbox is a latest development helps to store the information in file such as docs, photos, videos and so on and allows users to access and share the information from any part of the world using computers, tablets, smart phones. Without any financial commitment, libraries can use the Dropbox services as an institutional repository by sharing the institutionally generated information among the users or the group of libraries by making dropbox as a common platform. Some of the important library services such as Document Delivery Service (DDS), Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), Current Awareness Service (CAS), Newspaper Clippings etc can be provided effectively using dropbox technology. The contents stored or available on dropbox are highly safe and accessible anytime globally. The dropbox also has built-in search engine, which helps to identify the required information. When comparing the some of the institutional repositories such as Dspace, Greenstone and other institutional repository software, dropbox is safe and access is so easy, whereas other IRs needs

well maintenance, public IP address, server for 24 hours to make the content accessible around the clock.

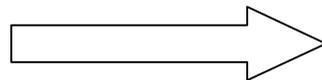
2. About the Dropbox

Dropbox is a personal cloud storage device (sometimes called as online backup service), which is frequently used for file sharing and collaboration. It was founded in 2007 by Drew Houston and Arash Ferdowsi, two MIT students, who have tired of emailing files to themselves to work from more than one computer. It is home for storing all the files, is safest place for keeping the information. All the files stored in Dropbox as online information are encrypted and kept in secure storage servers. Storage servers are provided by a managed service provider, and the infrastructure is located in data centers across the United States. The Dropbox application is available for Windows, Macintosh and Linux desktop operating systems. There are also apps for iPhone, iPad, Android, and BlackBerry devices^[1].

The service provides 2 Gigabytes (GB) free storage space and up to 100 GB on various fee plans. Dropbox for Teams, which is another option, provides 350 GB storage. After installation of the associated application, a Dropbox folder appears with the user's other folders. In the folder, users can save files, add new folders, and can drag and drop files among the folders just like working with the local computers. Files in the Dropbox folder can be accessed and shared by users from anywhere if they have Internet connection by simply logging in to his/her account^[2].



Post box

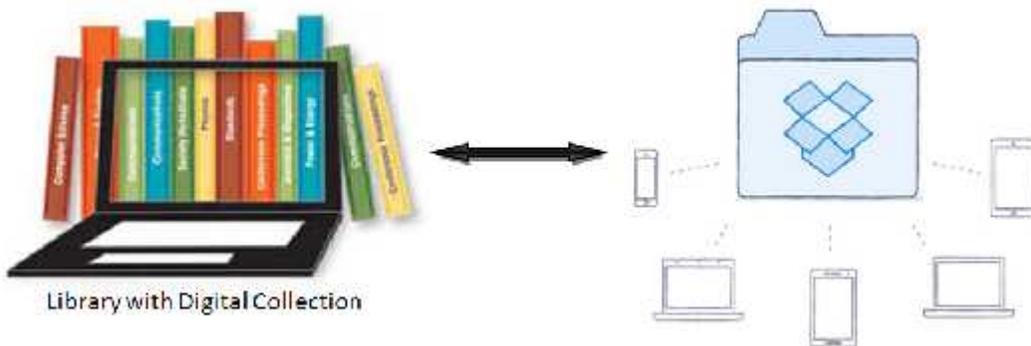


Dropbox

For sharing the file in Dropbox, the user can generate URL from the Dropbox web site and send it out so that others can view it. Folders can be shared by sending an invitation from the Dropbox website and for viewing the folder the recipients will have sign up. The beauty of the tool is, once the folder is shared, it will appear in the folder system for everyone who has access to it and all members will be able to make changes to files.

Dropbox is usually considered as a consumer market service and increasingly being used in the enterprise and example is the IT consumerization trend^[3]. The service is named for the repositories used by banks, post offices, video stores and libraries to allow people to drop items off securely.

3. Dropbox at Library Services:



Digital to Virtual Library Using Dropbox

3.1 Inter Library Loan (ILL): ILL is a kind of library service, used for procuring the document, which is not available with the local library. This is one of the best services invented by libraries to overcome the financial crunch. Through this, by receiving a request for an e-Book/audio book / audio recording / video recording on ILL from a library, the owning library can place the requested document (s) on the dropbox site or folder to provide access for the requesting library and its users instantly^[4].

3.2 Newspaper Clippings: In this service, the service offering library uploads the newspaper clippings on dropbox so that the content can be accessed by the users instantly and later-days it becomes an archive of newspaper clippings. The news papers clippings can be arranged based on the interests of the patrons by segregating contents by their area of interest (s).

3.3 Current Awareness Service (CAS): This service one of the important service since long it is being practiced in the library. In the dropbox method, the scanned copy of the content pages of the Journals or new arrived books/documents on the dedicated folder for the purpose of dropbox and sending the links /URLs to library patrons will execute the CAS of the library. In this service, the Dropbox facility is highly useful when the number of new arrived journals / documents is large.

3.4 Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI): This service regarded as a by-product of CAS, which not only serves current information but also totally is user-oriented. SDI is an idea to make the current awareness service a user oriented one by offering it at individual level of selected items and is restricted to every user's area of interest. The initial stage of DSI service is creation of user profile which can be done very easy in case of student users. Whereas in an academic library setup all the student user's requirement is almost same. By uploading the highly matching document into the dropbox folder will serve the purpose of SDI service.

3.5 Electronic Document Delivery Service (EDDS): EDDS is one of the best service meets the user demands quickly. The present generation users are expecting the information to be at their doorsteps for which EDDS was the best option. The serving

library can utilize the dropbox for this purpose. By depositing the e-Document in the dropbox, the library can provide the access to the e-Book / digital content to the patron or among the participating library.

3.6 User as a Depositor: Every human being has knowledge, which has to be properly gathered. A user can contribute the library in many ways in which one such great contribution is donating/ depositing his/her knowledge to the library for want of others. A user of the library can become a donor for the library by depositing his belonging e-Contents directly in to the library account of Dropbox.

3.7 Hub of Translated Documents: The documents available in different languages can be translated to some common language and such translated documents can be deposited at a central place to provide easy access to them. Dropbox can be utilized as a centralized platform for translated documents to the participating libraries^[5].

3.8 Personalized Library: Instant Mobile viewing apps of dropbox facilitates lot a mobile device can do, and storing a massive amount of files is not one of them. The users can read the documents, whenever they need to view them on the go. They can use the Dropbox App to download them only when they need to view them.

4 Conclusions:

Storage and archiving of knowledge arises along with the birth of human being. Space and security for the information has become a crucial issue for the present society. The expectation of library users and shrinking of library budget is another major issue for dropbox. The Dropbox technology is successfully useful in rendering the traditional and value added services of the library effectively. Though the Information Technology provides more opportunities for sharing the information, the library should share the documents, which are free from copyright issues.

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