ADINET e-News Digest

No. 43   April 2018

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Robotics Age @ AI & Machine-Learning Technology

With the advancement of robotics & machine-learning technology there is a need of re-skilling of the professionals. But India is still far away in terms of Re-skill the population. Enter the robotics age

But India is yet to come to grips with the situation

Despite the muted and hazy outlook for the $167-billion Indian IT industry in the 2019 fiscal, a coordinated push into automation, robotics and so on could help recapture its glory days. But that's a big 'if'.

Industry body Nasscom has downplayed the real factors behind its guarded outlook for the industry, which employs 3.8 million engineers, in addition to many indirect jobs. It has cited the usual suspects — protectionism (H1-B), Brexit, US tax reforms and global stock market volatility.

The real problem is the struggle to adapt to not just the changing economic environment, but also the advance of robotics. Nasscom's roadmap is far from convincing. While at the outset, noises have been made about skilling programmes' such as setting up of a training web portal for re-skilling to cope with AI and the like, the ability to execute this plan from schools or colleges to the workforce level is a big question.

The Government has repeatedly said that it is putting its weight behind these skilling or re-skilling initiatives and seeks the help of bodies like Nasscom. With as many as a million people entering the workforce every month, the Government needs to figure out the extent to which it will subsidise the skilling programme.

Meanwhile, robotics and machine-learning technology will continue to make advances — regardless of whether people re-skill or not. China has already stolen the lead with tech giants like Alibaba, Baidu and others building open source-based alogrithms. China's first publicly available machine-learning platform, PAI, is a suite of tools and AI software algorithms that allows businesses without an AI background to make practical use of Alibaba Cloud's programme. This can solve complex problems such as ways to ease traffic congestion in Chinese cities. These solutions would require fewer workers, and differently skilled ones. Is India ready?

Venkatesh Ganesh Senior Assistant Editor

Source | Business Line | 7th March 2018

Universities as a Tool for Economic Development

It can act as an important tool for Economic Development, & it can contribute in many ways for local growth.

Universities should stop seeing themselves only as educators, and start seeing themselves as platforms for local economic activity.

How Universities Make Cities Great. It's not just about education.

When thinking about how to revive economically lagging regions, especially in the Rust Belt, I often talk about the importance of universities. Big, high-

quality research universities have been essential for creating technology clusters in Austin, Raleigh and San Diego. But even small colleges in rural areas can have big benefits for the surrounding area.

Why are colleges so great? To use universities as a tool for economic development, it's important to think about the many ways they contribute to local growth -- and some ways they don't.

Most people think of colleges mainly as educational institutions. Economists argue about whether education improves people's skills or is just a fancy form of time-wasting credentialism. But most people seem to believe that higher education is important and useful. This naturally leads them to think of colleges as places that educate the local populace.

Link
| **https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2018-03-06/how-universities-make-cities-great**

Print Media @ Growth

Sometime back someone had quoted that there will be paperless society, but latest India Readership Survey proved it wrong according to survey total readership (print) increase 40% in last three years.

There is still scope of growth for the print media with it creating market-specific strategies and also new revenue streams, panellists at the Ficci Frames conference concurred.

"According to the latest Indian Readership Survey (IRS), just 4% readers of the overall readership base read news online. This proves that there is still scope of growth," said NP Sathyamurthy, executive director, DDB Mudra Group, and chairman of the technical committee at the Readership Studies Council of India.

As per IRS 2017, newspapers added more than 110 million new readers since the last survey conducted in 2014. The total

readership in the last three years grew 40% to reach 407 million in 2017. The total readership base stood at 295 million in 2014.

Talking at a session, 'Past perfect future tense, catalysts and pointers for the print industry', Sanjay Gupta, CEO, Jagran Group said to drive further growth, a newspaper needs to have different strategies for separate markets. "For example, in case of a market where a newspaper has just been launched, the focus has to be on increasing circulation compared with an existing market where a newspaper needs to concentrate on retaining readers," he said.

Gupta went on to say that one of the reasons brands still prefer to advertise in newspapers is because unlike TV, where a viewer/reader can change the channel when an ad is shown, in print she reads the ad, along with rest of the content.

"Brands use digital news platforms to advertise under two circumstances. Under the first scenario a brand advertises on digital news platform, when its TV ad fails to deliver an impact on viewers. Secondly, brands use digital as lead generation platform to push sales. For example, we have used online news sites to sell Intex mobile handsets," he added.

Source | Financial Express | 8th March 2018

Demand for Good Schools is very high as education

Education has got lot of importance in our nation and parents try to give best education to their children. So there is big challenges and good opportunities in school education.

"Creativity is as important as literacy" - Ken Robinson

True Education has a lot to do with creativity and not just literacy. Gone are the days when education was all about rote learning and this is where the

opportunity lies. Business in the education sector is a great responsibility, as we are dealing with children and working towards building a future for them. The demand for good schools is very high as education is given a lot of importance in our country and parents have aspirations of sending their children to the best of schools.

A recent study by The US department of labour states that '65 percent of children entering grade school this year are likely to encounter work profiles that are not even in existence by the time they graduate.'

The only thing we are certain of is that creativity, imagination and entrepreneurship is going to be absolutely important if we want our children to not just survive in this new millennium but to TRULY THRIVE. This is why it is necessary that we put creativity at the centre of children's learning. We know that 20 years from now success will hinge not on how much we know, but on our ability to think and act creatively. Creativity is the driving force of economic progress and the decisive source of competitive advantage.

The crux of the matter is to focus on the core essential of Education – its effect and affect on a student, which should be from a long-term perspective and not a short one.

Only by encouraging investments and entrepreneurship in education does this country have a hope of increasing schools that focus on creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Source | Afternoon | 7th March 2018

Seeking Outside Help: Tips for Knowledge Managers

You don't have to go it alone to sell KM to others in your organization. Take advantage of outside help by scheduling visits with others who are doing KM well, joining and participating in KM communities, using industry analyst reports, or using an outside consultant.

If you decide to seek outside help (and I believe you should), and you plan to schedule visits with other knowledge managers who are "doing KM well", it's important to prepare. First, identify people to visit by attending conferences, listening to webinars, participating in communities, and reading publications, blogs, and books. Good advisor candidates are people who make a major impression, are engaged in similar efforts, or are in the same industry. Of course, as you are seeking out these advisor candidates, you are continually learning!

Once you've identified and approached a group of potential advisors, prepare as you would for any informational interview. Below is a list of questions that should lead to a rich conversation about promoting knowledge management to leaders and end users. Be prepared to share your own experiences in these areas; peer mentoring is bidirectional.

- To whom have you had to sell KM within your organization?
- How did you go about it?
- What obstacles did you encounter, and how did you overcome them?
- How do you educate stakeholders and users?
- How do you communicate with stakeholders and users?
- How do you motivate people to demonstrate the desired behaviors?
- How do you work with IT?
- What other functions do you work with, and how do you work with them?
- What are your top three tips for selling KM?

Link | https://blog.lucidea.com/seeking-outside-help-tips-for-knowledge-managers

Cloud File Sharing Services @ Keep all your stuff within reach

Using the cloud means always being able to access your most important digital

assets, whether they are Word Documents, spreadsheets, or photos.

Here are some of the best cloud storage services based on their feature sets, ease of use, stability.

World's biggest library can house 1.2 million books

The building was completed in three years and includes a reading area on the ground floor, lounge areas in the middle sections and offices, meeting spaces, and computer/audio rooms at the top.

There's also a children's play area in one of the lower levels.

A stunning new library that opened in China around three months ago is a majestic creation. Located in the Binhai Cultural District in Tianjin, the library was designed by Dutch design firm MVRDV in collaboration with the Tianjin Urban Planning and Design Institute (TUPDI). Dubbed as the Eye of Binhai, the Tianjin Binhai Library covers over 34,000 square metres and can hold up to 1.2 million books. The five-storey library features a dazzling futuristic interior with rippling shelves and layered terraces that double as steps and seats.

The structure was completed in three years and includes a reading area on the ground floor, lounge areas in the middle sections and offices, meeting spaces, and computer/audio rooms at the top. There's also a children's play area in one of the lower levels.

Those who are wondering how one can access books on the higher shelves, the designers have used aluminium plates instead of actual literature on the elevated terraces in order to keep up with the library's aesthetic. While it does house a lot of books, some of the covers in the hall are printed images. Books are housed in various rooms in the building. The library

is a part of the city's effort to improve the region's cultural infrastructure.

Future of Work @ Huge Upskilling and Quality Higher Education for Middle Skilled Professional

Impact of artificial intelligence and automation, there is no doubt that advances in these areas will affect deep changes in our world.As per the report suggest middle skills will more suffer as compared to low skills and high skills jobs, so there is a need of huge upskilling and quality higher education for middle skilled professional to cope up with this Robotic challenge.

Are we prepared for the future of work?

Rising to the challenge of new job demands requires skilling at all levels. Besides, who can tell what the future holds?

When we talk about the impact of artificial intelligence and automation, there is no debate that advances in these areas will effect profound changes in our world. Rather the debate centres around what these changes might look like in the years to come. There are growing concerns, or more specifically outright fears, amongst the working age population regarding the effect of technologies like AI on jobs in future, and with good reason.

A recent study reported that the Indian IT industry alone is expected to see a loss of 6.4 lakh jobs (low and medium-skilled) by 2020 owing to the technology revolution and automation. Moreover, around 46 per cent of India's population below 25 years of age can be seen entering the job market with skills that will become obsolete at the time of their entry.

This excludes 40 per cent of those in the age group of 26-55 years who are already

employed in occupations which may be outmoded soon.

Old fears

Today, as we stand on the edge of a technological transformation which is evolving at an exponential speed, the same lookout seems quite natural although despite these concerns and fears history has demonstrated that every technological shift, while eliminating certain types of jobs, has ultimately ended up creating more. Besides, at a broader level, these technologies always have had the power to solve some of the great problems of mankind. For instance, AI is already driving great advances in medicine and healthcare with perfectly accurate diagnosis and far better disease prevention.

The skill factor

Reports suggest that anything that requires middle skills will be made redundant first; low skilled and highly skilled jobs are comparatively less vulnerable. Without massive upskilling and quality higher education, it will not be possible for the middle skilled to move into jobs requiring a high level of skill. Moving into less-skilled jobs makes no sense either and therefore the transition will be painful. An economic scenario where there is high unemployment consisting of individuals incapable of getting a job simply because they do not possess the required skills can become a reality if India doesn't prepare adequately for the future of jobs.

The next logical question is: How do we prepare ourselves? At the minimum level, by reinventing our higher education system and by providing the means for people to re-skill themselves significantly. What that means is that a shift to lifelong learning is essential. As the pace of technological change quickens, we need to be sure that our youth keep up with the right skills to thrive in the ever-changing world of work.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been voicing his optimistic views on AI with respect to the road ahead. It is heartening to see that our government is working towards supporting a technology-driven future.

The writer is Chair, Institute for Competitiveness, India. Bhawna Kakkar, researcher, Institute for Competitiveness, has contributed to the article

Libraries @ Are libraries even relevant anymore? Make libraries great again

In areas with little infrastructure in schools and no access to computers and the internet, libraries can act as important safe spaces that provide that much-needed infrastructure and access.With the help good public library, we can fill gaps which is left by the education system.

In a country such as India, where not everyone has huge spending power, libraries can be much-needed hubs of information and access. Well-maintained public libraries – well stocked with books, freely accessible computers, and good reading spaces — could help attract curious young people and allow them to fill in gaps left by the education system

 Libraries need not be dusty repositories of outdated tomes. They can be vibrant, exciting, open institutions that can become spaces of discovery and learning, allowing people to discover – at their own pace – everything from the mysteries of the universe to fictional exploits of superheroes. In areas with little infrastructure in schools and no access to computers and the internet, libraries can act as important safe spaces that provide that much-needed infrastructure and access.

Libraries shouldn't just be old buildings filled with old books. They are hubs of history and literature, culture and art. With

a little effort (and some generous funding), India's libraries can be made relevant to the contemporary era – even if only as spaces in which to take a breath, pause, and enjoy that glorious smell of old books for a little while.

Source| https://www.hindustantimes.com/editorials/make-libraries-great-again/story-0zl3AVzEhzwbaGtmALIOjJ.html

Race to Knowledge @ Access & Precision are Difficult

By 2020 it is predicted that more than 40 trillion gigabytes of digital data will be generated.

The community of publishers, librarians, technology companies and research professionals has already raised their voice to have cost-effective solution to knowledge management and data analysis for a long time.

Smartest Information Management Technologists (SIMT) @ Artificial intelligence, Machine Learning, Augmented Reality, and Voice Search are just a few of the concepts that are being talked about as game changing.

https://www.rdmag.com/article/2018/03/race-knowledge-how-researchers-benefit-new-scientific-literature-access-acquisition-and-analysis

How digitization is disrupting libraries

There is gloom in almost all the industries facing the blunt force of disruptive technologies. Disruption is the reality of our time, and we should accept it rather than fighting the truth. Hence, we need to prepare for it and better still, evolve with it. In the library and information science landscape these days, the community is abuzz with terms like digital libraries, electronic libraries, and hybrid libraries. At a time when information is just a click away, the library reference desk has been rendered obsolete

As a result, the way we access and consume information is morphing dramatically, even when it comes to learning and skilling. This might be the defining problem of our generation. Is content too democratized in terms of who can create it? In a world full of content creators, do we not need the gatekeepers of knowledge, who give some semblance of quality control through peer-review and consensus?

As digital libraries combine technology and information resources to allow remote access, they enable teachers and students to take advantage of a wider range of reading material and communicate information easily outside the formal learning environment. Furthermore, as long as students have an Internet connection, digital libraries are accessible anywhere and at any moment. Apart from these, digitised libraries will also allow integration of different types of learning to take place.

Advantages and disadvantages

To stay relevant and battle this challenge, public library systems across the world should reinvent themselves by digitising their collection, and create a virtual library that can be accessible from any computer. In fact, many libraries have already started this activity. Similar to every new technological disruption, there seem to be some great advantages of the system. Some of the positive outcomes of digitising libraries include:

Storing content physically has always been a challenge. With ever-shrinking space for archiving, digitisation offers a handy solution. Information retrieval becomes easier for the readers as they can search for a particular information through the entire collection immediately. Content, old and new, can quickly reach the masses. Therefore, many public libraries are rushing to push as much content as they can onto online so that readers can read genealogical records, historical maps or rare volumes without leaving their home.

However, there are some adverse effects as well. They include the problem that most people are accessing these materials online and do not visit the library physically. Perhaps, the biggest challenge that libraries face, in terms of digitization of content, is that of piracy. This is one of the key reasons for the limited inflow of popular new titles.

Publishers and authors are concerned that books, once online, can easily be copied and shared without authorization or permission. Hence, libraries have been building their digital collections with the electronic versions of century-old classics not covered under copyright or the so-called back-catalogue books that are unlikely to appeal those who pirate books.

Apart from piracy, another challenge of digitising libraries is that of maintaining library-users' right to privacy. The information sought, received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted must remain confidential. The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) views privacy as integral to Freedom of Expression, as stated in its Internet Manifesto. This includes:

The role of libraries and librarians is evolving. In this connected world, enabling readers to find new content is no longer their core competency. Neither it is clerical nor administrative in nature; rather the role of a librarian is that of a person who establishes relevance. Librarians tell us what's relevant, what's peer-reviewed, and what source of knowledge we can trust.

The future of libraries, as an institute, is in our hands - authors, publishers, and readers. Disruptive technologies will continue to emerge and change our behavior. However, the role of a library is much bigger. Libraries will continue to absorb new technologies in the way they function. Certainly, there are challenges ahead, but I am hopeful they can be met and overcome.

Source
| **http://www.deccanherald.com/content/ 665683/how-digitisation-disrupting-libraries.html**

Digital education and literacy initiatives

Ministry of Human Resource Development has some major key initiatives to promote Digital Education, which are as follow:

1. SWAYAM: SWAYAM will provide one integrated platform and portal for online courses, using information and communication technology (ICT) and covering all higher education subjects and skill sector courses. As on date, more than 28 Lakhs learners have been enrolled in 1000+ MOOCs courses that have been run through SWAYAM.

2. SWAYAM Prabha: SWAYAM Prabha is an initiative to provide 32 high quality educational channels through DTH (Direct to Home) across the length and breadth of the country on 24X7 basis.

3. National Digital Library (NDL): The National Digital Library of India (NDL India) project is to develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility. As on date about 1.5 Crore e-books and documents are available on NDL contributed by 160 Content contributor and 30 lakh users from 9 thousand educational institutions were registered on NDL

4. e-Shodh Sindhu: The main objective of the e-ShodhSindu: Consortia for Higher Education E-Resources is to provide access to quality electronic resources including full-text, bibliographic and factual databases to academic institutions at a lower rates of subscription.

5. The Free and Open Source Software for Education (FOSSEE): FOSSEE project has been promoting use of open source software in educational institutions.

6. Virtual Lab: The project aims to provide remote-access to virtual laboratories in

various disciplines of science and engineering for students at all levels from under-graduate to research.

Foreign Universities are welcome to offer their courses on SWAYAM Platform and the examinations shall be done through SWAYAM following SWAYAM Guidelines.

Source | http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/digital-education-and-literacy-initiatives-118030900491_1.html

Does writing by hand still matter in the digital age?

Technology is having an impact on children's handwriting ability. But what does this mean for learning and development?

Cast your mind back to the most recent thing you've written. Maybe it was a document for work, a message to a friend, or a simple shopping list. Did you use a pen? Or did you type it?

The decline of writing by hand – particularly among young people and children – has been in the news. Last month, paediatric doctors warned that children were finding it difficult to hold pencils due to excessive use of technology. Letters to Santa are increasingly sent by email, and Cambridge University is piloting the use of laptops instead of pen and paper for selected exams after requests from students. Some academics have noted the "downward trend" in students' handwriting.

Link | https://pralhad-fyilibrarian.blogspot.in/2018/03/does-writing-by-hand-still-matter-in.html

What your phone is doing to your brain — and it isn't good

Scientists aren't sure if technology is destroying our brains, but they're pretty confident it's addictive, and can lead to depression. Excessive use is also slowing down our thinking processes, researchers have found

All day long, we are inundated by interruptions and alerts from our devices. Smart phones buzz to wake us up, emails stream into our inboxes, notifications from co-workers and far away friends bubble up on our screens, and 'assistants' chime in with their own soulless voices. Such interruptions seem logical to our minds — we want technology to help with our busy lives, ensuring we don't miss important appointments and communications. But our bodies have a different view: These constant alerts jolt our stress hormones into action, igniting our fight or flight response; our heartbeats quicken, our breathing tightens, our sweat glands burst open, and our muscles contract. That response is intended to help us outrun danger, not answer a call or text from a colleague.

More phone time, lazier brain

Our brains can only process so much information at a time, about 60 bits per second. The more tasks we have to do, the more we have to choose how we want to use our precious brain power. So it's understandable that we might want to pass some of our extra workload to our phones or digital assistants. But there is some evidence that delegating thinking tasks to our devices could not only be making our brains sicker, but lazier too.

The combination of socialising and using our smart phones could be putting a huge tax on our brains. Researchers have found smarter, more analytical thinkers are less active on their smart phone search engines than other people. That doesn't mean that using your phone for searching causes you to be 'dumber.' It could just be that these smarties are searching less because they know more. But the link between less analytical thinking and more smart phone scrolling is there. We also know that reading up on new information on your phone can be a terrible way to learn. Researchers have shown that people who take in complex information

from a book, instead of on a screen, develop deeper comprehension, and engage in more conceptual thinking, too.

It makes you jittery

Brand new research on dozens of smart phone users in Switzerland also suggests that staring at our screens could be making both our brains and our fingers more jittery. In research published in March, psychologists and computer scientists have found an unusual and potentially troubling connection: the more tapping, clicking and social media posting and scrolling people do, the 'noisier' their brain signals become.

Source | Times of India | 25th March 2018

City college libraries that are still in demand

The library is the temple of learning, and learning has liberated more people than all the wars in history" once said the famous American journalist Carl Thomas Rowan. In an era of social media and e-books, something that we have forgotten is the fragrance of books, both old and new. And what can be a better place than a college library to get a whiff of this memory. Though most college libraries have been digitised in today's world, they have still maintained their legacy by preserving old and rare books. CT visits six such libraries of city colleges which have a huge collection of new, old, rare and even e-books.

Fr Verstraeten Central Library, St Xavier's College

Number of books: 77,215+

Process of maintenance: The authorities have completely digitised the library, so that students can access any hard or soft copy of books. Well-trained librarians are appointed to look after the books. An online renewing process has been introduced, which makes the process of

lending and returning much more hassle-free.

Speciality of the library: The library provides services to its users digitally by using open source ILMS Koha software. All hard copies of books have a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag. E-books can be accessed using college Wi-Fi from any device. The library also maintains a book bank facility for rural and financially challenged students. Apart from the Central Library, St Xavier's College has another library called the Goethals Indian Library and Research Society. This library has various old books that date back to the 1800s.

Librarian's take: "St Xavier's College had five different libraries before January 2009. These five libraries were merged into one integrated corpus and started functioning as a centralised system from January 16, 2009," said Fr Xavier Savarimuthu, editor and assistant director of one of the libraries.

Students speak: "The central library is a storehouse of very valuable works which are unavailable elsewhere. There's no dearth of misleading information on the internet, so the material accessed from a relevant scholarly work is invaluable for us students. The library provides students a friendly, yet disciplined environment," said Koyena Ghosh, a sociology student.

Bethune College Library

Number of books: 1,10,000+

Process of maintenance: Every year, the college gets funds from the government for dusting and pest control. The authorities make sure that the library is properly maintained and the books are preserved with utmost care. The library began with a collection of books donated by friends of Mon Mohan Ghosh, who was a member of the Bethune School Committee. After his death in 1898, some of his friends from England donated his collection of books to the college.

Speciality of the library: This library is the first among all government colleges of West Bengal to be computerised. It is a hub of rare books. Some of the rare books have been digitised and laminated. The library has well-preserved editions of old newspapers and periodicals like Bangadarshan, Probasi, MasikBasumati and Calcutta Gazette, among others. It also houses the collected works of William Shakespeare gifted to ChandramukhiBasu, one of the first female graduates of the British Empire, by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar on clearing her graduation examination.

Librarian's take: "To get access to various e-books and e-journals, teachers and other members of the library are registered to INFLIBNET-N-List programme of the University Grants Commission. Through this platform, students can access more than 5,000 journals and books," said librarian Anjali Maisal.

Students speak: "We get almost all the important books from the library. I'm in my second year of college, and till date, I haven't had to buy any books. I have relied completely on the collection of our library for my studies," said RashniPodder, a BA student.

Lady Brabourne College Library

Number of books: 1,00,000+

Process of maintenance: The books are classified following the Dewey Decimal Classification System. Under this system, books are broadly divided into 10 groups and each book is assigned a call number. This way, it becomes easier for the librarians to maintain the collection.

Speciality of the library: There are books of six different languages — Bengali, English, Hindi, Urdu, Persian and Sanskrit. Old editions of books, which include the first and second editions of various novels by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, have been preserved in the library. Moreover, the library welcomes various research

scholars who are working on topics like history of language and literature, women empowerment and many more. The library has a rich collection of rare books too. It has preserved original editions of Shakespeare's novels that date back to the 16th century.

Librarian's take: "The college was established in 1939 for educating Muslim girls. We not only have books related to the college curriculum, but also several important reference books for the enrichment of both students and teachers. Old and rare magazines of the pre-Independence era, like Tatwabodhoni and Bichitra, have been preserved carefully and have been digitised," said librarians Mitali Bhattacharya and Abira Chakraborty.

Students speak: "I really like the environment of the library. Our professors often take classes here. We can access various rare online journals for free, as the college has subscribed for it. It helps us a lot as these journals are otherwise not available easily," said Snehanjana Chatterjee, a botany student.

Techno India University Library

Number of books: 55,000+

Process of maintenance: The authority uses a database system called LibSys to ensure books don't get displaced. Library space has been increased and the book-lending process has been upgraded as per modern requirements. Acquisitions, ordering and returns are done through LibSys. There is another software used called Opac through which both students and teachers can find the exact book they are looking for.

Speciality of the library: One can avail nearly 2,500 e-books from this library. Access is given to the teachers and research scholars too. With the credentials, anyone can access e-books from any corner of the world. e-journals

are available not only in readable format, but individuals can download them too.

Librarian's take: "The university was established in 2012, but the library started functioning from 2013. The library has been upgraded as per the requirements of the students and faculty. Most students here are from an engineering background. We provide them hard copies of books to study from, so students need not rely only on digital versions," said librarian Mousumi Patra.

Students speak: "The library is a special space for us to sit, read and borrow books. We hardly need to buy any books. We get various books from this library. Apart from academic books, there are some really good novels too. So, if a student wants, he/she can enjoy reading books in this peaceful place with a cup of coffee," said Akash Chakraborty.

Loreto College Central Library

Number of books: 65,000+

Process of maintenance: To maintain the library, the authorities have introduced a computerised catalogue and issue-return system. It also features a biometric attendance system. Old books, that have a certain value, have been kept separately and are not in circulation. Those books have been there since the foundation of the college in 1912.

Speciality of the library: The college has a dedicated library society, which was started to encourage the use of the library and promote reading among students. The members of the society organise and participate in various activities related to books, community, culture and communication. The society also organises a treasure hunt where students have to retrieve information from various resources in the library. The library has books in English, Bengali, Hindi as well as various foreign languages like French and German.

Librarian's take: "It is not merely a storehouse — there is a lot of footfall. It is the hub of the college. I consider it a very active library. Every year, nearly 500-600 new books are purchased. There are numerous e-books and e-journals, which can be accessed by the students and faculty through computers in the library and at home as well," said librarian PapiaMukherji.

Students speak: "The library is well stocked with a lot of resources for us to use. We have various books and journals from quite a number of sources. I'm from the English department and find this place well equipped for our academic purposes. We have a number of books in foreign languages too," said Mohini Pradhan.

Asutosh College Library

Number of books: 50,000+

Process of maintenance: The existing collection of books is cleaned regularly throughout the year. Along with manual sweeping, the entire library has been air-conditioned so that books can be kept in a controlled environment. Apart from this, the authorities also do pest controlling regularly.

Speciality of the library: The library has a separate section of audio and Braille titles. Along with that, they have a collection of rare books that date back to the 19th century. The college has its own magazine, where both the faculties and the students write. They have preserved most editions of that magazine since 1924. They have been digitised and uploaded on an online platform, so that anyone can access them from any corner of the world.

Librarian's take: "On an average, we buy nearly 2,000 books every year. We have adopted a unique method to buy the books. We send invites to a number of publications and organise a book exhibition on our campus every year. From there we get to select a huge number of books. We also have a

separate section completely dedicated to Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee," said librarians Gouranga Charan Jana and Amitabha Pramanik.

Students speak: "The library has plenty of books. Moreover, the facilities are very student-friendly. We can borrow books without any complications and take them home for our studies," said Rohan Bera, an electronics student. — PushpitaDey

Source | Times of India | 21st March 2018

Digital library copyright issues under NDLI scanner

Kolkata: The National Digital Library of India (NDLI) developed by IIT Kharagpur is deeply exploring the copyright issues at Digital Libraries.

"Access to quality academic content is still challenging. NDLI through its interfacing in most popular Indian languages covering about 85 percent population of India is bringing high quality content at the fingertips of common Indians. However, such an open access to content is not without peril," a senior IIT professor associated with NDLI project said

Full Details @ http://www.millenniumpost.in/kolkata/digital-library-copyright-issues-under-ndli-scanner-291240

Machine Learning can transform education

India needs a massification and vocationalization of higher education at a cost that only online learning can do. This needs machine learning

Futurist Arthur C. Clarke wrote, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." The magic of software (giving data and rules to get answers) is often confused with the magic of machine learning (giving data and answers to get rules) but it is machine learning not software that is transforming the world of computer chess.

Before diving into online education, let's reflect on challenges in education. Knowing must shift to learning because Google knows everything. Metrics need shifting from inputs to outcomes because only money is not working. Differentiation and personalization are not about making things easier for children but making learning accessible by tapping into motivations and abilities. Assessment needs to shift from annual exams to regular feedback. Teachers knowing content is not the same as their ability to create learning.

Many educators agree online learning can transform education, but they don't know how. Textbook and PowerPoint repackaged e-learning—the digital equivalent of paving the cow path rather than building a highway—mean that, so far, online offerings have not been able to blunt the obvious downsides of physical classrooms (one size fits all, huge costs, uneven teacher quality, etc.) despite obvious advantages (teaching with different speeds to people with different backgrounds and different starting points, class of one, cost, on-the-go, on-demand, crowd sourced, gamified, etc.).

However, Indian online education is held back by regulatory cholesterol that distinguishes between distance and online education. E-commerce would never have happened if financial regulators had insisted on separating the offline and online. UPI/BHIM have gone from 0.1 million transactions in the month before demonetization to 140 million last month; they will reach a billion in a year. Payments for Indian consumers are almost free (marginal cost), while in the US regulations have protected margins for private platforms.

India's regulatory issues include hubris (the ability of regulators to anticipate all situations), micromanaging (including defining the type of web links on your

website) and continuous lobbying because of poor state capacity to effectively regulate, supervise and enforce. It is too late for evolution; we need a revolution under which universities do not require permission to launch any online courses.

Regulators can prescribe broad guidelines with a policy objective of creating biodiversity and innovation in business and operating models that would tackle the difficult trade-off between cost, quality and scale. Like with most treatment of regulatory cholesterol, this revamped regulation would be accompanied by improved supervision and strengthened consumer protection. But drunk-driving is not an argument against cars and regulations that ban or make online education difficult are silly.

Einstein once said that if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid. Physical classrooms—because of the limitations of time and space—often make this error. India needs a massification and vocationalization of higher education at a cost that only online learning can do. This needs machine learning. But before that we need changes to our regulatory cholesterol.

Source | Mint | 26th March 2018

UGC has asked all universities and colleges to consider offering academic credits to students for participating in the government's much touted Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has asked all universities and colleges to consider offering academic credits to students for participating in the government's much touted Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

The commission in its meeting earlier this month had approved providing of two credits like any other 'Elective' under Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) to students in higher educational institutions undertaking 15 days (100 hours) summer internships under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan activities.

"In this summer internship, it is expected that students will not only participate in overall cleanliness in villages or slums but would also help in setting up systems for sustaining cleanliness and sanitation efforts under the campaign. These efforts are expected to provide a great learning experience in Indian context to students across the country and would help in improving overall quality of education," a UGC communication to varsities read.

The commission has asked varsities and their affiliated colleges to consider implementation of this elective course from the forthcoming summer session and give wide publicity so that vast majority of students opt for this elective course.

"It is informed that UGC guidelines for Swachh Bharat - Swastha Bharat Scheme have enabling provisions for universities and colleges to collaborate and to come out with ways to make the Mission possible," the UGC letter read.

UGC Letter | https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/811880 9_UGC-Letter-reg-Swachcha-Bharat-Abhiyan-.pdf

Source | Hindustan Times | 26th March 2018

Maharashtra Govt @ Launched a novel programme called "Avirata - 21st Century 'Life Skills"

'Avirata' launched to help teachers understand their students better

Amid rising number of student suicides in the state, the Maharashtra government has launched a novel program called 'Avirata' for teachers with the objective to provide them with in-service online training for increasing their level of motivation, thereby using the potential to transform the lives of students.

The program emphasizes that teachers have a significant impact on their students and have the potential to build a generation. The program introduces the teachers to the 21st Century 'Life Skills' and familiarises them with the techniques to identify the unique identity of each student. Further, the teachers are trained to determine a student's strengths and the areas which require development in order to facilitate an appropriate career road map for the student.

A state education department officer said, "As on date, 14,786 schools from 408 talukas are covered with the participation of 41,607 secondary school teachers and head teachers. There are 816 master trainers. Avirata aims to orient the teachers to change their mindset and attitude to ensure 100% children can learn. Further, this is an attempt for teachers to connect with the teenage students and address their problems more effectively for enhanced academic performance. A mind map is revealed to the teachers that summarizes the neurological developments during adolescence and factors that contribute to stress and how to tackle them.''

He informed that the Avirata focuses on deepening the understanding of students' psychology and application of the learning in the classrooms. Besides, it lays emphasis on understanding the impact of the environment in the decision making of students, parents and schools.

Source | Daily News Analysis | 26th March 2018

Listening, a vital managerial skill -The deepest listening often occurs in total silence, and with an open mind

We don't listen well enough. Many managers like me speak well, read well, make grand presentations, try hard to lead from the front, and we also attempt a host of other good official deeds, for which we deserve due commendation. But sadly, we are poor listeners. Often, we may hear, but we don't listen.

Here are some simple suggestions on how we can listen better.

KEEP QUIET

We love hearing the sound of our own voice, so we don't keep shut often enough. But if you have to listen carefully to someone else, you have to shut up. The deepest listening often occurs in total silence, where what you are hearing can be absorbed beautifully into your mind.

OPEN YOUR MIND

To listen, you need an open mind. Often, when we hear something that goes against the grain of our existing belief, we tend not to listen any more, simply because we don't wish to hear that we are wrong. Defenses build up immediately in our mind, and then we are done.

WAIT, THEN ASK

Once you have listened well, and there is a natural pause in the speaker's flow of conversation, it is a good idea then to ask questions that help bring clarity to your own thinking. Don't hesitate to do this, because productive listening requires clarity.

LISTEN WITH ALL SENSES

If you need to listen really well, then non-verbal cues are as important as what is said. The best listeners carefully observe the speaker's face and body language to understand what is really meant, including the subtext.

LEAVE USELESS MEETINGS

There is no documented research yet on the number of totally useless meetings that each of us attends and listens in to. But the results of such a study would be quite revealing. **Source | Mint | 26 3. 2018**

Information for this issue has been provided by Mr. Pralhad Jadhav, Senior Librarian, Khaitan & Co. Mumbai