

BLIS semester II
(paper – 5)
Reference Sources & Services
Topic – **Selective Dissemination Of Information**
e-content

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SDI (Selective Dissemination Of Information)

INTRODUCTION:

SDI is a type of current awareness service meant to keep the user abreast with the latest developments in the field of his interest. It is a personalized service meant for the individual or a group of users having identical information needs. It is a quick service which provides the pinpointed and exhaustive information to the users. SDI involves the screening of the document and selecting the information according to the specific information needs of each user or group of users (homogeneous). The main objective is to keep the user well-informed and up-to date in his area of interest.

MEANING:

Hans Peter Luhn advanced the idea of selective dissemination of information (SDI) in 1958 which in due course formed the basis for planning a number of SDI systems by various bodies. The mechanized SDI system based on Luhn's design was first implemented in 1959 at the Advanced Systems Development Division of IBM Corporation at

York town Heights, New York. In SDI, an institution does the job and makes the user aware of the literature, may be free of charge or at a cost. We have seen above that an individual is to scan the entire Current Awareness Bulletin on Library and Information Science, vol. 1, no.1 to locate the literature on user studies. In the case of SDI, the individual will not have to do anything, the entire list of articles will be mailed to her/him. S/he will get the intended information practically without any effort or loss of time. Undeniably, the service is of great help to the researchers and others interested in the latest information.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SDI:

The following are the characteristics of SDI service:

- It is a computerized assisted service.
- SDI is concerned with current published information.
- The source of current information may be available both within the organization and outside it.
- The new / current information should be disseminated to the users such as researchers, scientists, managers, etc. within the organization.
- The channeling or directing of this information depends upon the nature of this interest.

OBJECTIVE OF SDI:

Some of the objectives of selective dissemination of information (SDI) services are as follows:

- To provide current information on a predefined area of interest.
- To receive, scan and provide the literature / information to the right users at the right time.
- All the current information which is relevant to the interest of the user must be brought to the notice of the user (notification).

- All the relevant information which is published elsewhere in the world (in English or other languages) should be located through various sources.
- To achieve current requirements through the scan of current material such as journals, current awareness bulletins and other important resources.
- To save the time of the user.
- No irrelevant documents should be brought to the notice of the user. Only the selective and relevant documents should be brought to the notice of the user.

ADVANTAGE OF SDI:

- It helps to keep users better informed.
- It provides access to needed documents.
- It supports Academic, Professionals and Management skills.
- It provides information in a preferred format.
- It brings the right information closer to the user.
- The information user will have time to concentrate on other matters instead of
- Searching and sourcing for information resources by him.
- The medical librarian provides information to the users at their convenient time.
- It creates a good relationship between the librarian and information users.
- The users will have access to the right information at the right time and place.

SDI SYSTEM COMPONENT:

An SDI system, may be said to comprise of the following components:

1) Document database: A file containing document description and terms representing the subject content of the documents being described. Since SDI is a computer based service, the document

database is in computer-readable form. The document database used in SDI is for recent or current literature. The terms chosen to describe document content are usually drawn with the help of a thesaurus.

2) Subject interests: The user profiles file is again a computer-readable file. The building of - user profiles is an important activity and is described in create detail below. The terms to describe user interests are also drawn from the same indexing vocabulary (thesaurus) used to index the items going into the document database. The use of the same terminology to describe document content and user interests ensures good matching of user interests with document content.

3) mechanism to match document descriptions with user descriptions: The mechanism used to match documents with users is the computer. In fact, a computer program running inside the computer does the matching of user interests with documents.

4) A User-SDI system interface: An interface is a common boundary that permits useful interaction or Communication.

The SDI service interface may be said to comprise of the following:

- The users of the SDI service.
- SDI notifications of recent literature that match given users' interests.
- Request to users to provide feedback on the notifications sent to them. The feed- back provided by the user is about the usefulness or otherwise of the notifications sent to him.
- Intermediaries in the SDI system operation, These are the information scientists within the organization of the interact with the user and are knowledge- able about the document database characteristics, and in the creation of user profiles.

STEPS OF SDI:

1. PREPARATION OF USER'S PROFILE:

Discovering, documenting or recording the information needs of a user is an essential part of the current awareness service. This is because current awareness service has to be closely tailored to the needs and interests of the users. The research needs and interests of users have to be properly recorded and this recording of users' needs and interests is known as user profiling. The user profiling is the very foundation on which the current awareness services are provided. Concerted efforts need to be taken for finding out the users' needs. The library staff may frame a questionnaire and ask the potential users to fill in the same; interviews might be conducted with the potential users to know their needs and expectations from the service.

2. PREPARATION OF DOCUMENT PROFILE:

As the documents are coming, their profiles are also created side by side. In the document profile complete bibliographical details of the documents are provided along with the keywords that represent the subject/s of the document. In the document profile you may use any number of keywords as the document demands. Moreover, it is not necessary to prepare an entry as per AACR 2R or any other cataloguing code for document profile. Bibliographical details may be retained as they are in the original. This is because nowadays there are many open sources available in the Web wherefrom data can be downloaded freely to the document profile file. Converting the data in the AACR 2R or any other format will unnecessarily lead to wastage of labour and time. Elements that are missing such as inclusive pages, keywords, etc. should be added. In the document profiles given below, you may note that the title and the author appear in the same order as they occur in the original title page. Adding an abstract in the document profile is optional. If the abstract

is readily available that may be added if time permits. Otherwise, it may be supplied on demand.

3. MATCHING OF DOCUMENT:

In this process user profile file is matched with the document profile file. Usually the matching is done by using a computer. Whenever the computer finds a match, it indicates either giving the serial number of the document or any other code that has been used to uniquely identify the document. While matching The Head's user profile file, the computer will pick up the keyword 'Internet Use' and match this with every document profile file. If it will find a match in document profile 4. The computer will indicate the same

4. NOTIFICATION:

The Head will now be notified by e-mail, or any other communication means about the document that has matched her/his profile.

5. FEEDBACK OF RESPONSE:

Along with the document, a feedback card will also be sent. The user is supposed to fill in the card and send it back to the agency providing the service.

6. READJUSTMENT OF PROFILE:

When a user indicates through his feedback that the output was not Useful, the SDI system operators begin to modify his profile. The SDI system personnel analyse the reasons for the dissemination of the items that were not found useful. This could result in the revision or modification of the user's profile or search expression for the user. Meaningful interaction between the user and the SDI system for profile refinement begins after he has been provided SDI notifications. i.e. citations and abstracts of documents that match his profile. The provision of feedback on the usefulness of the documents disseminated enables a better understanding of the

user's needs Sometimes, however, modification of the user's profile may be initiated by the user telling the SDI personnel about a change in his interests. For instance, if the user takes up a new, research project, then his interests may change and he may inform the SDI system personnel to modify his profile suitably.

7. RESPONDING THE REQUEST OF USER'S:

The functional aspects of an SDI System, viz. Selection. Notification, Feedback, and Modification

9. SDI IN RECENT YEARS

The concept of SDI as enunciated by Luhn meant a service that required each organization to develop its own computer-readable document database or document profile against which the user profiles were to be matched. This arrangement was suitable during the time when Luhn first thought of SDI. It is no longer necessary today for each organization to build its own database, since databases are now available in computer-readable form in almost all areas of science, technology, social sciences, and humanities.

In view of the high costs involved, and the difficulty for each organization to acquire databases, a number of Information Dissemination Centres were established in several countries in the 1960s to provide SDI service from a centralized location. These information dissemination centres, generally established by the government, obtained one or more databases, built profiles for users in R&D and academic institutions, and in industry, and provided SDI outputs periodically to the users all over the country.

In India, INSDOC operated such an information dissemination centre at IIT, Madras, in 1975. This centre acquired Chemical Abstracts, Physics Abstracts, and Engineering Index databases, and provided SDI service to a number of scientists and academicians in different institutions in the country. The UGC Centre

for Science information (Bangalore) also provides SDI services from a number of databases.

SUMMARY:

The SDI, which is geared to specific user information needs, is based on the construction of user profiles. The user profiles are matched against document profiles to obtain current references that are of interest to the users. Notifications of these current references are sent to the users regularly and feedback is obtained from them. This feedback helps to modify the user profiles to tune the system to meet users' needs with greater precision.

Computer and telecommunication technologies have made it possible to offer these services centrally by online vendors at cheaper prices with easier accessibility to the world's information output with speed and efficiency.