

BLIS semester II
(paper – 5)
Reference Sources & Services
Topic – Current Awareness Service (CAS)
e-content

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Current Awareness Service (CAS)

INTRODUCTION:

Current awareness service provides current information to the right user at right time on their time of need. It keeps the user up to date with up to date information. On receiving the document in library, it is immediately reviewed and abstracted with the pinpointed information as per programme of the users immediately. The information is also recoding individual item to brought it to the notice of the needy user. Who are related to such information. Current Awareness service has many special characteristics to be noticed to bring the new and up to date information before the scientists.

It involves various techniques –
(i) Landline service (Telephone)
(ii) Current periodicals

(iii) Card files or profiles for reference of information by man and machine methods.

(iv) Audio-visual methods, i.e. recording one's information and forwarding to other.

(v) By publishing current Awareness Bulletin i.e. content page service.

Definition of CAS:

According to S.R. Ranganathan: CAS as "Documentation periodical listing the documents appearing during the period covered, and without being selected to suit the requirements of a particular reader or of a specific topic under investigation. It endeavours to keep the clientele informed promptly of all the nascent thought created in their fields of work and related fields."

According to B.C. Vickery: "CAS is more frequently and more adequately met by circulation than by retrieval, current journals, newly received book and report, abstract bulletins and the like being fed to and scanned by users."

So, we can define CAS as- "The establishment of a system for reviewing/scanning, publications immediately upon receipt, selecting information pertinent to the needs of the organization served, and recording/notifying individual items of interest to be brought to the attention of those persons to whose work they are related."

Need:

The Current Awareness Service (CAS) helps the user by keeping him up-to-date & well informed with the latest information on a particular field and also in the related field. It indicates what one

should read and thereby it saves the time of the reader. It also serves as a rapid survey of retrospective literature.

a) Promotes and Supports Library Service:

All services of the library are not free nowadays. So, in this context, it is essential to promote and market library services. CAS is one of the ways to bring the resources of the library / information centre to the notice of the users. This will in turn lead to greater demand for the library service, giving opportunity to the library to prove its value and justification for the money spent on it.

b) Keeps Well Informed:

Due to great advances made in the field of knowledge, it is becoming more and more difficult for the users to keep themselves up-to-date and well informed in their field of specialization. CAS meets this end for the researcher and others. Otherwise, too much of information would make it difficult for them to use information effectively.

c) Saves Time:

The Library and Information Centres by scanning the sources of information and notifying the members of the community, saves their valuable time. Again, in case each user scans literature individually then this will lead to unnecessary duplication of effort. So, the CAS can help the user avoid this duplication.

d) Helps the User in Scanning the Literature:

There may be users who do not possess the ability or willingness to do the literature scanning regularly on their own. CAS provides aid in

such situation by widely and regularly scanning the literature and sending to the user the relevant topic of interest.

Type of Current Awareness Service:

Having understood the need for current awareness services and main characteristics of such service, we may now proceed to examine the different types of such services.

Current Awareness Bulletin:

It is also known as Information Bulletin/Library Bulletin. It may cover the following information:

- General information about the library e.g. new members of the library staff, new telephone numbers, new services, etc.
- General news items (items culled out from newspapers relating to libraries)
- Announcements of forthcoming meetings and conferences.

Table of Contents (TOC) List Service:

In this service, the contents pages of journals are photocopied and sent to the users according to their areas of interest. Content pages can be sent when the material arrives, but more often they are cumulated into a weekly or monthly bulletin. A table of contents (TOC) usually called "contents" is a list of the chapters or articles of a book or journal organized in the order in which the chapters or articles appear inside the book or journal.

Table of Contents (TOC) Alerts:

The TOCs Journal Table of Contents Service can be used by the library staff for providing awareness services. The free registration of the site allows the staff to create a customized list of important and favourite journals of the users. This helps the users or staff to store,

combine and reuse thousands of journal tables of contents from multiple publishers.

List of New Arrivals:

The list of new books acquired by the library can be prepared either through the software which is being used by the library or manually. The list is sent to the various clients of the library to browse.

Routing of Periodicals:

In this service, the issues of periodicals are routed or circulated or sent to the individual clients for perusal. The issues pass from one user to another and finally it is returned to the library. A list of those who have asked to see a periodical is attached to the current issue and this is sent to the first person on the list with an instruction to pass it on when the issue has been read. This method is no longer popular in the library, because of the delay involved when an item is circulated or routed among the users.

E-mail Alerts from Databases Subscribed by the Libraries:

The users may also be taught how to get Rich Site Summary (RSS) feeds or e-mail alerts from publishers by signing TOC alerts sent directly from the publishers. Mostly, the users are to register at the publisher's website for getting information regarding publication of a new journal. Registration is always free.

Display of Current Issues of Journals:

The current issues of journals may be displayed as a regular activity in the library. The clients can browse the issue to keep themselves abreast with the latest developments. The libraries generally display the current issues as a regular activity.

Newspaper Clipping Service:

The libraries may also provide newspaper clipping service to the users. Newspapers are current awareness media and they carry useful information for the readers. Each of the newspapers is scanned and items considered to be of interest are clipped and pasted on a sheet of paper. The clippings are then assigned one or more subject headings. This service is entirely based on the newspapers subscribed by the library.

Objective Of CAS:

- To aware the scientists/users with latest developments in there subject fields.
- To keep the clientele well-informed and up-to-date knowledge of latest development in their fields of research.
- To fulfill the current demand of the users.

Characteristics:

Characteristics of CAS are enumerated as follows:

- ♣ Information obtained orally from colleagues.
- ♣ Information received/gathered through the receipt of pre-prints, reprints.
- ♣ Information gathered through attending meeting and conferences and getting information in both formal and informal way.
- ♣ Scanning of current issues of periodicals.
- ♣ Regular perusal of abstracting and indexing periodicals in one's subject fields.
- ♣ In some cases reviews and monographs are also consulted.
- ♣ A CAS is an announcement mechanism usually in documentary form.
- ♣ It is designed to meet or help cultivate the current approach to information.

♣ Record of answer of any specific query as current approach to information like a panoramic view of current development.

Steps In CAS:

The steps in the provision of CAS are given bellow:

- ♣ Review or scan documents (some time records of documents) immediately upon receipt.
- ♣ Select information and record individual documents pertinent to the programme of the individuals or groups of the organization being served. This may be done by comparing the documents/information with the needs of users being served.
- ♣ Send notification to the users about items or information of interest to them.

SUMMARY:

Librarians have been providing the CAS service on manual basis for a long time. But nowadays computers are used to mechanize the procedure. The current awareness service through computer may be provided through E-List (a Web-enabled contemporary reference service offered to the registered members), online groups, blogs, RSS, E-Mail, Bulk SMS services, Community Opt SMS services, etc.