IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARY RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES IN TOP ARWU RANKING UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Naina S. Peters, Librarian
Hislop College, Nagpur
Email ID: nainapeters1977@gmail.com

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Abstract :

Library Research Support Services (LRSS) is an emerging and popular area in Higher education university libraries, whose increasing importance has been well documented since the early 2010's, this paper aims to identify the status of LRSS provided in the top ARWU ranking university libraries. The present paper is discussing the importance of library research support services to help meet a university's strategic research goal. The suggested recommendations highlight those service areas which are most in need of improvement.

Key words *: Library research support, Academic Libraries, University rankings, Higher Education Institutions*

Introduction :

Research and publishing have become strategic priorities in Higher Education Institutions because of the pressure on universities to improve their ranking through research and educational excellence (Riera Quintero et al., 2012: Si et al., 2019; Weaver and Richardson, 2021). As a result, research support services (RSS) emerged throughout the world. Library and Information Support referred to the range of resources, services, and technological tools provided by academic libraries to enhance research productivity and dissemination. RSS can be defined as "Specific information services to promote research by meeting the unique information needs of the researchers within a particular institution". Tang and Zhang (2019), have specifically link such services with a researcher's information needs based on the research lifecycle, i.e. from the inception of a research problem to its completion. Library research support services play a pivotal role in enhancing the global ranking performance of universities by directly contributing to their research visibility, academic reputation and productivity. The Ranking System referred to internationally recognized frameworks that evaluate and rank higher education institutions based on various performance indicators, example includes Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) and other recognized ranking system in the world.

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) :

The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), also known as the Shanghai Ranking, was the first global university ranking system to gain wide international recognition. It was originally developed in 2003 by the Institute of Higher Education at Shanghai Jiao Tong University (China), with the initial aim of benchmarking Chinese universities against leading world institutions (Liu & Cheng, 2005). Over time, it evolved into an independent and influential system now managed by Shanghai Ranking Consultancy. ARWU is widely considered to have initiated the global "ranking movement" in higher education (Hazelkorn, 2015).

Review of Literature :

- Osadebe, NgoziEunice and Okwor, Roseline N. (2021) conducted a study to aims to bring to the attention of women researchers in Africa the vast resources in academic libraries to aid research and also to close the gap in knowledge between resources available in academic libraries for research in developed and developing nations. Various methods are used to access research support services.
- Padhan, Dhirendra Kumar and Naidu, G. Heasundar (2021) explores the research support provision in India's Higher Educational Institution (HEI) libraries. Library websites of the top 25 ranked HEI's in the research domain of NIRF-2021, were investigated to know the status, provision, strength and weakness of research support services in academic libraries. Research related visibility, resources, and services. Findings of the study reveal that HEI libraries are substantially well placed in institutional repositories, e-database of Theses and dissertations and faculty research profiles
- Si, L., Zeng, Y.,Guo, S., and Zhuang, X. (2019) conducted a study to aims to understand the current situation of research support services offered by academic libraries in world leading universities and providing useful implications and insights for other academic libraries. This paper makes a comprehensive investigation of research support services in academic libraries of top –ranking universities worldwide. The findings will help academic libraries improve research support services thus advancing the work of researchers and promoting scientific discovery.
- Keller, A. (2015) examined, the ongoing changes within Australian university libraries to support research. This study gives an overview of the adjustments made to libraries service portfolios and the changes in the roles and responsibilities of subject or liaison librarians. This study discusses five research support services: institutional repositories, open access, bibliometrics and enhancement of research impact, support for research students and research data management. The study reveals three measures or approaches that were taken by senior management to build up and sustain efficient and effective research support services:
- Kehms, B (2014) critically examined the impact of global University Rankings on European and National higher Education system. The study highlighted the unintended effects on the organizational behavior of universities and argues that ranking offers a narrow and sometimes distorted view of institutional quality. The study found that highly ranked universities attract more resources, talent and

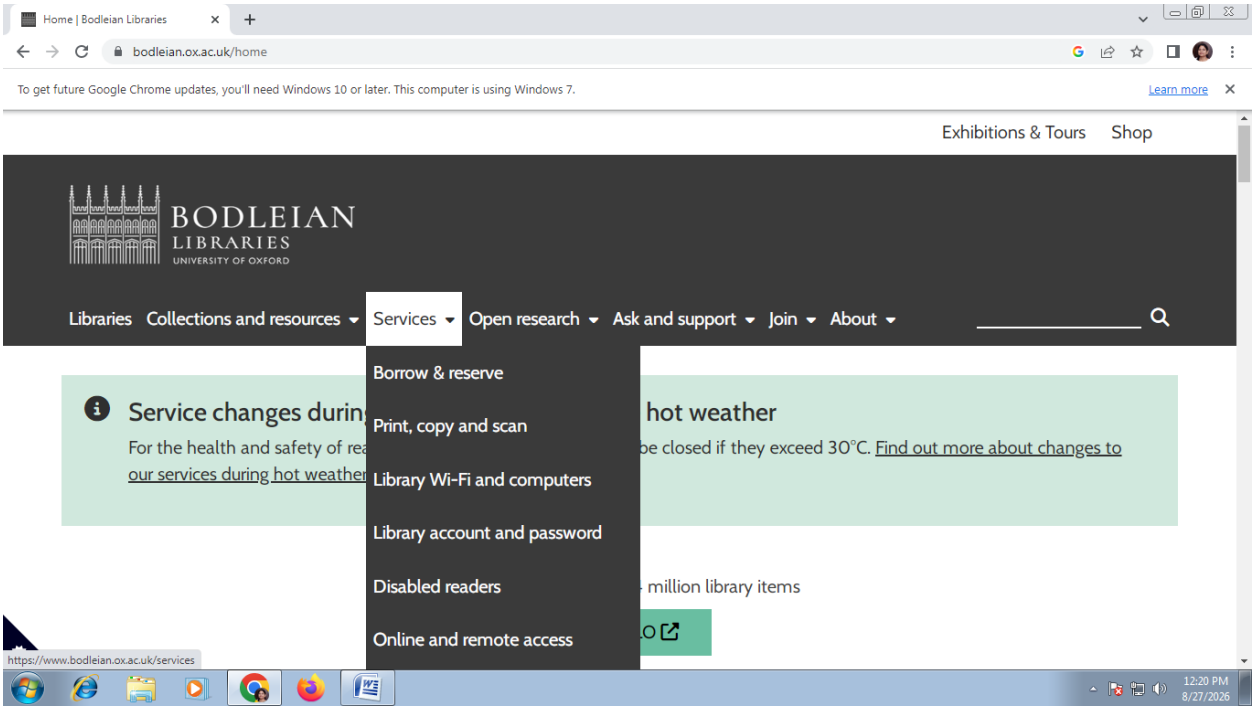
partnership reinforcing their position and suggests adoption of reforms that promote more balanced and meaningful assessment of university quality.

Objectives of the Study :

1. To understand the academic library research support services being provided by HEI libraries
2. To present the best practices of academic libraries in research support services.
3. To Know the visibility of research support services being provided by Higher Education institutions libraries

Library Research support services in Top ARWU Ranking University Libraries :

1. University of Oxford, U.K :



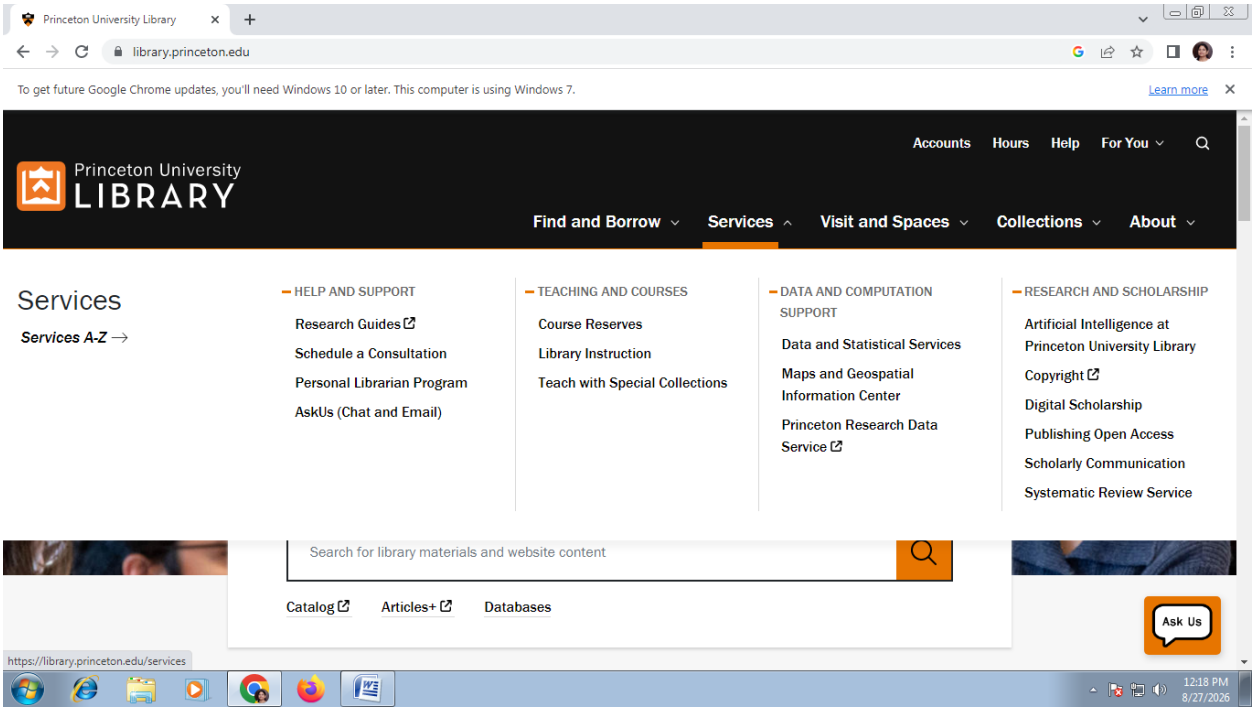
https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/home

The University of Oxford's Bodleian libraries present a multifaceted suite of library research support services (LRSS) aimed at meeting the comprehensive academic and research needs of its users. The services are broadly structured under collections and resources, general services, remote access, accounts, facilities, support for disabled readers, user guidance tools and researcher services. Under the collections and resource category, the library offers access to a vast array of scholarly materials, including books, Journals, databases, reading lists, the examination paper archive, subject and research guides, thesis, dissertations and special collections. The services section includes core functionalities such as borrowing and reserving items, printing and scanning facilities, and online and remote access to materials. Library users can request inter-library loans or items stored off-site, thereby

extending access beyond the physical premises. Users can also manage their library accounts and passwords through a streamlined digital interface.

The library provides facilities including high-speed Wi-Fi, access to computers, self service scanners and printers, and group study rooms. For remote access services such as "Scan and Deliver" allow users to request digital copies of book chapters and journal articles. The library also offers special collections mediated copying and imaging services to provide high-resolution digital copies of archival materials. The Bodleian libraries also offer extensive researcher services, including research data management, reproducible research, open access research support, and deposition of scholarly outputs in the Oxford Research Archive (ORA). The help section encompasses guides for getting started, workshops for scholarly skill development and direct communication tools for assistance.

2. Princeton University, U.S :



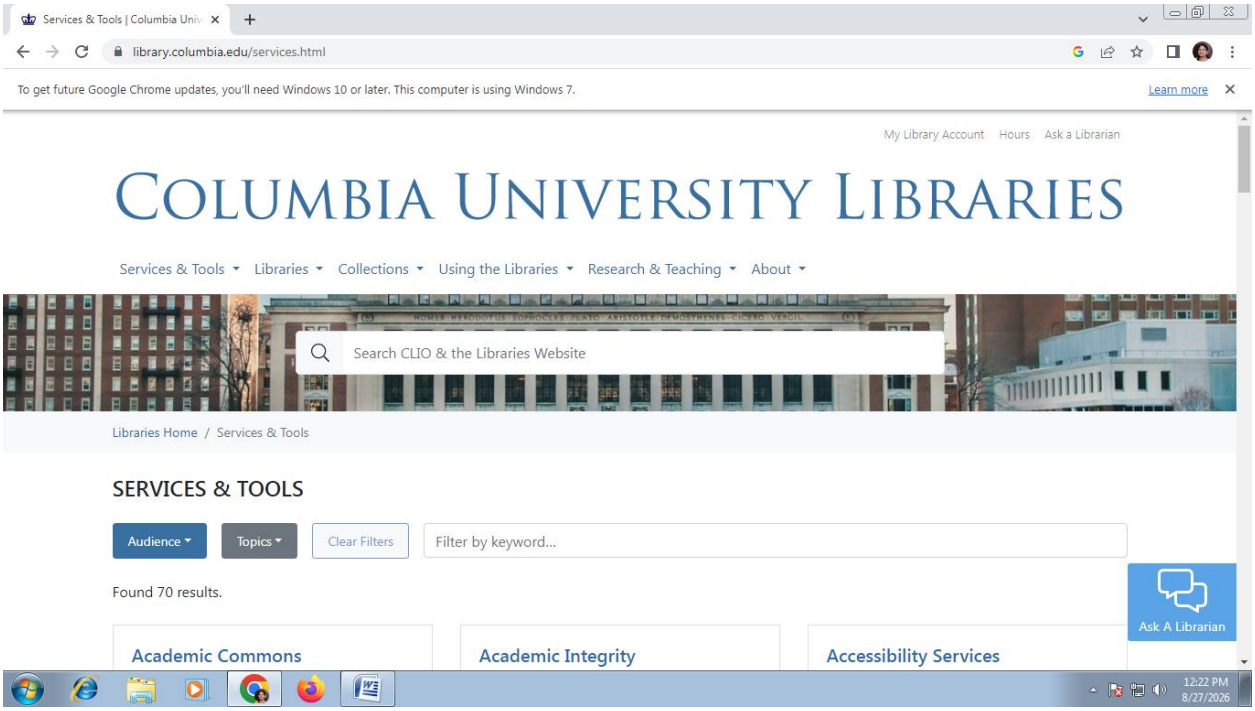
https://library.princeton.edu/

Princeton University library offers a rich and highly structured range of library research support services (LRSS) that cater to academic, research, and scholarly needs. Under the "Find and Borrow" section, users are provided with robust tools for resource discovery and access. The services include catalogue searches, access to journal articles and comprehensive databases. The library provides essential services such as circulation services, equipment and technology support and off campus access provisions, which are vital for uninterrupted scholarly engagement. The library also facilitates various modes of material requests through interlibrary loans, Borrow Direct and Article express.

The Services section is divided into four major categories. First, under Help and

Support, Princeton offers detailed research guides, one-on-one consultation appointments, a personal librarian programme and live chat/email support through "AskUs". Second, Teaching and courses support is delivered through course reserves, instructional sessions and collaborative teaching with special collections. The Data and computation support division is a key highlight, featuring services such as Data and Statistical services, the maps and geospatial information center, and the Princeton Research Data Service, thereby offering comprehensive support for empirical and geospatial research. Research and Scholarship services encompass areas such as copyright advisory, digital scholarship, scholarly communication and systematic review services, which are crucial for ensuring the integrity and impact of academic outputs.

3. Columbia University, U.S :



https://library.columbia.edu/services.html

Columbia University libraries present one of the most comprehensive and integrated academic library systems in the United States. The university's library research support services (LRSS) are structured under key navigational categories such as "Services and Tools", "Libraries", "Collections", "Using the Libraries", and "Research and Teaching" as seen from the homepage interface. Under "Services and Tools" section, a diverse array of offerings is provided. These include traditional library functions such as borrowing, requesting, renewing materials and interlibrary loans (ILL). Users may utilize services like Borrow direct to access resources from partner institutions within a short time. The scan and deliver service allows users to request scanned copies of book chapters or journal articles via email, reflecting the university's commitment to remote accessibility.

Digital research infrastructure is a core feature of Columbia's library ecosystem. The

university facilitates access to CLIO, the online library catalogue that enables searching for articles books and more. Additional tools such as citation finder, citation management and proxy bookmark let support scholarly writing and remote database access. Services like the Digital humanities centre, Digital music lab, Streaming video and Digital collections and exhibitions highlight the library's support for multimedia and interdisciplinary research. A distinctive feature is Columbia's strong support for open scholarship and data management. The library provides specialized services in research data management, Research data services and Unique data grants offering structured guidance and resources for data collection, preservation and funding support. Electronic lab notebooks and foundations for research computing are available to streamline research workflows and promote reproducibility. Additional features such as the writing center, workshops and consultation services extend academic and technical support to a wide user base. Furthermore, the libraries actively promote academic integrity and ethical use of resources through services like academic integrity, copyright advisory and collection development policies.

Conclusion :

The University of Oxford's Bodleian libraries exemplify a holistic and inclusive academic support ecosystem. By integrating traditional resources with digital access, personalized research services and infrastructural support for diverse user groups, the library upholds its status as a globally leading academic resource hub. The breadth and depth of services offered confirm its alignment with the standards expected of a top ranking university under the ARWU framework. Princeton University library demonstrates a well structured and multidimensional service model that supports the entire academic lifecycle from research discovery and data management to scholarly publishing and teaching integration. The availability of personalized support systems, robust data services and proactive borrowing mechanisms reflects a user-centric philosophy aligned with the highest standards of academic excellence. The library services at Columbia University are characterized by their breadth, inclusiveness and integration of physical and digital resources. By offering extensive tools for research, teaching, data management, accessibility and scholarly communication, Columbia university libraries demonstrate a deep commitment to academic excellence and user centric services.

Suggestions :

1. Higher Education Institutions, University administrators, Policy makers should prioritize research data management services by redirecting existing resources (financial and human) and by seeking collaboration with other organizational units to obtain relevant resources and support.
2. Indian Policymakers, library consortia and academic administrators should focus more on acquiring research related digital resources so as to enhance institutional competitiveness and researcher support through targeted investments in digital infrastructure
3. National higher Institutions/Universities should focus not only on research

productivity but also focus on the academic staff, funding and collaboration structures and offering a holistic picture of global research dynamics.

4. Higher Education Institutions/University libraries should offer online tutorials regarding library research support services (LRSS) on the university's webpage.
5. The Higher Education Institution's library should establish research support services section and librarians having research skills should be appointed for the guidance of the researchers
6. Considering the limited budget of libraries, public-private partnerships can be the best option for incorporating technology into libraries of higher education institutions to improve research support services
7. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) should be framed with the help of liaison librarians and researchers for establishing library research support services in the university libraries.

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