Classics in Library and Information Science

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We are starting a new regular feature with this issue, introducing classics in LIS to the young professionals. Many of these are forgotten with the flow of time. If one wishes to be known as an expert in LIS, he/she must be aware of these standard works or classics. Can we think of a doctor without *Gray's Anatomy*, or an expert in Organic Chemistry without Finar's volumes or an economist without Samuelson's *Economics*. We wish to introduce you to this treasure of forgotten classicsin LIS through these pages. It is proposed to introduce one classic along with each issue of *JLD*.

We wish to use this feature as an appetizer before a great dinner. We request readers to go through these books appearing in these pages.Each of these books is a classic. Read and enjoy. I am sure youngsters will get many time-tested ideas and seniors will feel nostalgic.

The first in the series is Donald Urquhart's*The Principles of Librarianship*. Scarecrow Press, 1981.P.98.

Donald Urquhart, in his introduction to this title says that these principles were written in response to a then new book claiming to present the principles of Librarianship. He does not reveal which book was it. Given below are twelve of 18 Urquhart's principles.

- Libraries are for users.
- Users must be provided with guides so that they can select the records which may interest them.
- Libraries must be paid for.
- Libraries, both individually and collectively, must have regard to cost-effectiveness.
- No library is an island.
- The failures of an information supply system to satisfy its users are, as a rule, not obvious (to its planners and operators of the system.
- Libraries must have regard to the law of diminishing returns.

- Information cannot be valued as a rule in monetary terms.
- The best is the enemy of the good.
- Librarianship is an experimental science.
- Libraries can be valuable to society.
- Supply creates demand

Some of these principles are too obvious, and others are subtle.Certain amount of explanation and interpretation of each principle is givenin the book.

While reading Donald Urquhart's*Principles of Librarianship*, it is natural that there is a tendency to compare itwith Prof. S R Ranganathan's*Five Laws of Library Science*. Some principles sound similar. But there is substantial difference.

Prof. Ranganathan's*Five Laws* were published decades before Urquhart's *Princ*iples. Therefore, some influence is possible. Prof. Ranganathan refers to books, readers, staff and time required for service provision.

On the other hand, Urquhart says that libraries are for users. Please note, he says 'Users' and not 'Readers'. He also points at the management of libraries. He says that libraries should be paid for. He also refers to cost-effectiveness.

Regarding the quality of services, Urquhart says that 'The best is the enemy of good.'What he means is that there is always a room for improvement in quality of service.He says that supply of relevant and quality information service leads to more demand. According to this principle, one satisfied user speaks for the quality of library's services. Thus, through a word of mouth more demand is generated.Note, in economics demand creates supply, but in information services, supply creates demand.

Urquhart's *Principles* and Ranganathan's*Laws* will remain classics, no matter which enabling technology is in vogue.