

MLIS/1/CT/03 Unit-2

Technical Digests

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- Definition :

According to Webster's Dictionary a digest is defined as to compress a piece of literature or a body of information into a short summary form, containing essential core of the matter.

Meaning :

A digest is a systematic condensation of a written work, often prepared by someone other than the author of the original. It is generally larger than the synopsis and sometimes with headings and subheadings to facilitate quick reference. According to Guha "digest is actually a fuller representation of a document, rewritten for a purpose or to suit the requirements of different group of people, but intended to serve as a complete substitute for the original document." Digests are generally periodical publications containing condensation of works, gathered from many sources and arranged in a systematic order. A digest may be prepared ad hoc on request on a particular subject, or it may be issued frequently at regular intervals or in anticipation of demand.

Need and Functions:

Technical digests are useful sources of information for managerial and technical workers in the industry. Through technical digests the managers and technical workers in industries obtain information on technical know-how and other technical data helpful in their work.

Different categories of workers in industry require different types of information. Managerial personnel require product-oriented information such as technical, commercial and marketing information. An effective technical digest not only saves the time of the manager but also helps him/her in decision-making.

Technical workers/operators require information on solving technical problems, new ideas and processes, which can help them in day-to-day working. Technical digests oriented towards this group of users to meet their information requirements effectively

Technical digests serve following functions: (i) Keep different levels of workers in the industry abreast of latest developments in their respective fields. (ii) Provide timely dependable information to keep them equipped with new developments taking place in their areas of specialisation. (iii) Disseminate latest technical know-how. (iv) Serve as an effective channel between research and production centres.

Categories:

Different types of digests are prepared keeping in view the following levels of workers in the industry:

- ❖ Top Management
- ❖ Middle/Supervisory Management
- ❖ Operator Level Personnel

The digest for top management should cover information on the following topics:

- ❖ Corporate Management/Planning
- ❖ Finance Production
- ❖ Research and Development
- ❖ Personnel Sales
- ❖ Public Relations
- ❖ External Regulations

Digests for middle/supervisory management should contain information, which can help them in:

- ❖ enhancing utilisation of installed capacity;
- ❖ new production processes/techniques which can result in increase in use of labour force and production facilities to maximise production; and
- ❖ problem solving and decision making.

Digests for workers/operators should contain information, which they can easily understand and put to use. Digests for workers/operators should help them in:

- ❖ Solving day-to-day technical problems;
- ❖ Simulating the modernisation of existing production methods and techniques.
- ❖ Small improvements in manufacturing/ process techniques which lead to major saving in an industry.
- ❖ Mechanisation of existing work.

Planning and Preparation :

Systematic planning is the foremost step in the preparation of any information service. Same holds true for the preparation of a technical digest. The planning and preparation of a technical digest involves the following steps:

- ❖ Identification of users and their information requirements.
- ❖ Sources of information and its collection.
- ❖ Information Analysis and Consolidation.
- ❖ Evaluation.
- ❖ Presentation and Layout.
- ❖ Dissemination.

Examples

Management Digest: Published bimonthly by SENDOC (Small Enterprises National Documentation Centre), provides digests of journal articles on human resource, employment potential, entrepreneurial skills and managerial issues.

Innovative Technology: Published bimonthly by SENDOC, provides digests of new processes and products, and new equipment using local resources aiming at cost reduction, import substitution, and export promotion.

Techman: Published bimonthly by SENDOC, provides digests of processes and products, and equipment covering wide spectrum of technologies and abstracts of technical articles.

TERI Information Digest on Energy and Environment: Published quarterly by TERI (Tata Energy Research Institute).

incorporates: a) TIDE – TERI Information Digest on Energy.

b) TIMES – TERI Information Monitor on Environmental Science.

c) GER- Global Environmental Review.

Reference:

1. Borowick, J. N. (1996). Technical Communication and Its Applications. 2nd ed. New Jersey, Ohio: Prentice Hall.
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3. Seetharama, S. (1997). Information Consolidation and Repackaging. New Delhi: Ess Ess Publication.
4. Subramanyam, K. (1979). Review Literature. In: Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Science. NY: Marcel Dekker, Inc. Vol. 26. pp. 461-74.

THANK YOU