

## Research on the Innovative Development of Basic Library Services during the 14th Five-Year Plan Period: Postprint

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### Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] Currently, management and service innovation in the library industry are primarily focused on digitalization and intelligence; however, the development of fundamental library services must not be neglected amid the rapid advancement of these initiatives. [Method/Process] Based on extensive research and an analysis of current fundamental services in public and academic libraries against the backdrop of information technology development trends, this study identifies several issues: non-uniform digital resource download methods, siloed services for print and electronic materials, lack of necessary performance evaluation mechanisms for fundamental services, and relatively “weak intelligence” of smart devices. [Results/Conclusion] Recommendations for the innovative development of library fundamental services during the 14th Five-Year Plan period are proposed to provide guidance for libraries in formulating their 14th Five-Year Plans and to promote the advancement of the library industry over the next five years.

### Full Text

## Research on the Innovation and Development of Library Basic Services During the 14th Five-Year Plan

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**Abstract:** [Purpose/Significance] Currently, management and service innovation in the library industry primarily focus on digitalization and intelligence. However, as these initiatives develop rapidly, the advancement of basic library services must not be overlooked. [Method/Process] Based on extensive research and an analysis of current public and academic library basic services in light

of information technology trends, this study identifies several key issues: inconsistent methods for downloading digital resources, separate services for print and electronic materials, lack of necessary performance evaluation mechanisms for basic services, and relatively “weak intelligence” in smart devices. [Result/Conclusion] The paper proposes recommendations for the innovative development of library basic services during the 14th Five-Year Plan period, providing ideas for libraries’ plan formulation and promoting progress in the library sector over the next five years.

**Keywords:** borrowing service; space service; smart library; 14th Five-Year Plan

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As libraries transition from the 13th to the 14th Five-Year Plan period, they face both challenges and opportunities. Changes in the external environment, the need to support higher education, and the post-pandemic context present new challenges for library planning and development [1]. Simultaneously, the rapid advancement of information technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and cloud computing offers technological dividends for enhancing library services. Libraries must seize this development opportunity, actively embrace new challenges, strengthen basic service construction, and move toward deeper, integrated service models.

Libraries are tasked with collecting, organizing, preserving, and protecting documents as important carriers of human culture and civilization, a mission that is ultimately embodied in basic library services. Scholars have thus argued that basic service work is the foundation upon which libraries are built [2], underscoring its importance. However, the reality is that as the library industry develops and transforms, some basic services have gradually weakened. The advent of smart libraries and the emergence of massive information demands have permeated the fabric of basic services, becoming endogenous drivers for their development and transformation while creating new spaces for information technology application. Therefore, the author believes that while focusing on network services and emerging technologies, libraries should also emphasize the inheritance of basic services, avoiding neglect and abandonment, and utilize information technology scientifically and rationally to deepen basic service content and enhance service capabilities.

Based on investigation, this study first defines the boundaries of library basic services before elaborating on innovation and development recommendations for the next five years, aiming to improve service levels, increase reader satisfaction, and solidly ensure stable library development.

## 2 Definition of Library Basic Services

Wang Yinghua categorizes library services into basic and advanced services: basic services primarily include general information services and public services,

characterized by informatization and popularization, while advanced services mainly comprise knowledge services and professional services, marked by intellectualization and specialization [3]. Jing Xianghu, Special Advisor of City University of Hong Kong Library, considers basic services as traditional library departments such as acquisition and cataloging, administrative offices, and circulation [4]. Pan Wei et al. conclude that the key to improving service effectiveness in libraries both domestically and internationally lies in upgrading and transforming traditional basic services such as reference consultation and book borrowing [5]. Regarding basic service enhancement, Sun Lulu argues that the current focus should be on building network service platforms and expanding network service terminals to provide readers with convenient digital resource borrowing and downloading services [6].

As readers' needs have changed, their expectations for the boundaries of library basic services have expanded. For instance, driven by readers' demand for knowledge sharing and exchange, library space has become another important guarantee for realizing readers' right to read, prompting libraries to create space services that support humanistic care, information literacy, and innovation capabilities [7]. Based on the above analysis of basic service connotations and boundaries in the new era, we can conclude that: (1) Library basic services revolve around document resources and library space, providing not only access to print and digital documents but also emphasizing library space reengineering, functional innovation, and service enrichment, endowing library spaces with multiple cultural attributes such as cultural exchange, scientific experimentation, information sharing, and innovative experiences; (2) Basic service content focused primarily on collection, organization, and preservation no longer meets contemporary reader needs, and some former online services are gradually transforming into basic services that better align with reader behavior habits.

Accordingly, the author defines the scope of library basic services as: document resource borrowing services, digital resource downloading services, and group-oriented space services. As the "foundation of libraries" and a solid base for higher-level services [8], basic services should be reader-demand-centered, collection-based, and space-extended. Reader demand is the soul of basic services, requiring full integration of resources, space, and staff to form a cohesive force for innovative development. While providing comprehensive and meticulous services that meet reader needs, libraries must also emphasize the rational adoption of information technology to compensate for deficiencies in personalized and humanized services, optimizing the collaborative integration of service processes and promotion to serve as endogenous drivers for basic service transformation and innovation.

### 3 Current Status of Innovative Practices in Basic Services

Literature research reveals that library basic services have gradually moved away from past "passive" service models, focusing instead on more proactive approaches to provide readers with convenient access to libraries. Numerous

innovative cases have emerged that enhance overall service levels and offer important insights for guiding the transformation and upgrading of basic services.

### 3.1 Proactive Document Resource Borrowing Services

**3.1.1 Home Delivery Services.** Early home delivery services primarily served mobility-impaired individuals and special groups. With the development of logistics and nationwide reading campaigns, libraries have begun exploring ubiquitous reading promotion activities that reach grassroots communities. For example, Yantai Library uses mobile service vehicles to deliver books to communities, where readers can borrow materials using their library cards. Foshan Library's "Zhishu Dali" online borrowing service leverages information technology and modern logistics through an online ordering plus offline delivery and return model, playing a significant role during the COVID-19 pandemic by ensuring uninterrupted service despite physical closures. Home delivery services not only revitalize library collections but also bridge the last 100 meters of library outreach through end-stage distribution.

**3.1.2 Integration of Resource Procurement and Borrowing Services.** Traditional resource acquisition faces challenges of information asymmetry with readers and difficulty assessing resource value, affecting the efficiency and quality of collection development. The library community needs to reset key links in this process and introduce new mechanisms. Chongqing University Library has partnered deeply with e-commerce platforms, leveraging JD.com's industry advantages to upgrade resources and subsequently launching a smart procurement platform that enables full reader participation in book selection. This optimizes service workflows by replacing the traditional "procurement, cataloging, borrowing" sequence with "borrowing, procurement, cataloging," effectively integrating resource procurement and borrowing services based on reader demand. Public libraries have also actively explored demand-driven resource procurement and borrowing integration; Inner Mongolia Library pioneered the "Caiyun Service," partnering with physical bookstores to allow readers to complete borrowing procedures for desired books directly in stores, with library staff handling cataloging and payment afterward, establishing a positive interactive relationship among libraries, bookstores, and readers [10].

**3.1.3 Credit-Based Borrowing Services.** Credit scores, based on collected credit information and evaluated through proprietary or third-party mechanisms, reflect citizens' creditworthiness [11]. Hangzhou Library's partnership with Alipay's "Sesame Credit" pioneered the introduction of credit scoring systems into library operations. Readers meeting credit score thresholds can borrow without deposits, while non-local readers can bind their ID cards with Sesame Credit services to enjoy equivalent borrowing privileges, lowering barriers to library resource use. As social credit systems gradually mature, an increasing number of libraries have introduced credit services, including Beijing Haidian District Library, Wuhan Library, and Xi'an Library. Credit evaluation carriers continue to expand beyond Alipay Sesame Credit to include citizen cards and

honor certificates for labor models and military personnel. Using credit scores instead of deposit management lowers or even eliminates borrowing thresholds, uncovers latent reader demand, and makes library services more innovative and reader-centered.

**3.1.4 Active Introduction of Smart Devices.** With rising interest in the AI industry, smart devices have been widely applied in libraries, becoming effective tools for promoting intelligent and refined management and services. Smart devices for basic document services mainly include: (1) digital resource service equipment such as newspaper readers and waterfall-stream e-book borrowing machines; (2) self-service borrowing/returning devices like RFID-based scanning systems and smart bookshelves enabling rapid location and inventory; (3) intelligent inventory and sorting equipment such as the autonomous book inventory robot developed by Nanjing University Library and the smart sorting robot at Bao'an Library; (4) face recognition-based card issuance devices; and (5) smart access control systems, such as those with infrared temperature sensors widely deployed during the pandemic. These applications provide readers with novel library experiences, making basic services smarter and more user-friendly.

### 3.2 Multi-Channel Digital Resource Download Services

Current digital resource access and downloading models in libraries mainly include six types: direct downloading within authorized IP ranges, VPN downloading outside IP ranges, remote access account downloading from database vendors, mobile library services, CARSII 联盟 campus network account downloading, and personal remote desktop “desktop cloud services” [12]. These multiple access methods enable readers to enjoy document resources without geographical constraints, while the profession continuously explores additional access paths to enhance service quality. Notably, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Tsinghua University Library partnered with CNKI to launch Shibboleth remote access, significantly optimizing off-campus access modules and improving system performance and stability to effectively meet readers’ remote document access needs, achieving remarkable results [13].

### 3.3 Group-Oriented Space Services

Space services represent a major development direction for libraries in recent years, forming the foundation for various services. Through network and literature research, this study finds that libraries have created humanized space services for specific groups by addressing reader needs and improving spatial ambiance.

#### 3.3.1 Reading Services Reflecting Information and Service Equity.

Providing flexible, convenient, and professional reading services for diverse groups—including university students, postgraduate entrance exam candidates, minors, people with disabilities, the elderly, and migrant workers—represents an important manifestation of libraries’ social value and social equity. For

instance, some domestic public libraries have purchased special readers and audiobook devices for visually impaired individuals [14], while Chongqing Library, Beijing Daxing Library, and Zhangjiagang Library have launched “24-hour Urban Study Room” projects, where readers can access all-day borrowing, downloading, and returning services through smart access control systems, meeting the reading needs of different groups.

**3.3.2 Cross-Boundary Integrated Reading and Cultural Activity Space Services.** Coordinating various cultural and entertainment resources based on library space has become a powerful tool for attracting reader traffic. Xiamen University Dewang Library’s featured spaces subdivide service themes, offering not only information literacy classrooms supporting teaching and research but also chess rooms, demonstration practice rooms, mathematics and intellectual toy spaces, and exhibition and dining areas, creating unique library experiences [15]. With rising consumer upgrading, libraries have begun integrating with commerce to form new library × shopping formats. Commercial library brands like Yanjiu Youji, Xixifu, and Fangsuo have emerged prominently, featuring physical bookstores, cultural product retail, light meals, and coffee culture, breaking through traditional library atmospheres to provide diversified resources for readers.

**3.3.3 Creative Space Services for Ideational Collision.** Originating from foreign library construction models, creative spaces integrate information commons with maker services to reconfigure library layouts. These spaces focus on discussion areas, incorporating not only multimedia resource services but also design and manufacturing tools and equipment to stimulate readers’ innovative and exploratory spirit. For example, Hunan University Library’s “Learning and Discussion Space” includes 15 discussion rooms of varying sizes accommodating up to 40 people, equipped with projectors, 3D TVs, DVD players, and headphones [16]. Chicago Public Library’s YOUmedia project provides dedicated areas for digital media creation, including recording studios, photography rooms, game design spaces, and producer areas with mentor guidance. The University of Rhode Island Library has opened an AI lab, becoming the first university library with such a facility. Under China’s “mass entrepreneurship and innovation” initiative, domestic libraries have actively explored creative space construction models aligned with international practices.

**3.3.4 Themed Library Services.** Extracting library resource characteristics to match reader needs and constructing themed branch libraries with targeted reading promotion activities has become a marketing approach leveraging resource advantages. Themed libraries generally feature high aesthetic appeal and experiential value. For instance, Chongqing University Library has built a themed library system comprising dormitory area book houses, parent-child reading rooms, 博雅书院, and local chronicle libraries, which not only revitalizes collection resources and forges personalized service content but also increases user stickiness by attracting readers to “check in.” However, not all business models can integrate with library connotations; light meals, supermar-

kets, training centers, and gyms should be attempted cautiously, as libraries are knowledge-based cultural complexes primarily meeting readers' spiritual and cultural needs.

## 4 Main Problems Facing the Innovation and Development of Basic Services

While basic services constitute the core and foundation of libraries' stable and sustainable development, and the library community has achieved certain results in expanding their depth and breadth, problems have become increasingly prominent.

**4.1 Inconsistent Methods for Digital Resource Download.** Despite providing multiple access pathways for digital resources, libraries have not achieved standardization. Scattered multi-point access solutions require readers to remember multiple authentication accounts and master various technical methods, with some not even supporting cross-database one-stop access. This directly degrades user experience and creates obstacles for readers seeking to utilize resources, while also fragmenting reader behavior data and hindering subsequent analysis of reader preferences.

**4.2 Separate Paper and Digital Services Hindering Service Improvement.** As digital library construction progresses, the library community has adapted to the trend, with digital resources gradually replacing traditional print materials as the primary focus of collection development. However, despite substantial financial and human investment in digital resources, the lack of effective integration, organization, and discovery of print and digital resources, combined with the inherently fragmented distribution of digital resources, prevents readers from accurately and efficiently borrowing and downloading target information. Moreover, the extensive resource management model resulting from separate paper and digital services impedes effective resource discovery and refined management.

**4.3 Lack of Necessary Performance Evaluation Mechanisms.** Implementing performance evaluation for library basic services is crucial for integrating service costs and benefits, yet current evaluation systems remain inadequate. Particularly for reading promotion activities, practical implementation often suffers from weak evaluation goal orientation, unscientific evaluation methods [17], unreasonable performance indicators, and lack of in-depth systematic research [18]. It is also difficult to determine whether evaluation should target activity quantity or borrowing performance. Establishing corresponding performance evaluation mechanisms holds important practical significance amid the current transformation of basic services.

**4.4 “Weak Intelligence” of Smart Devices.** As a vast emerging market, libraries have attracted considerable attention from AI equipment manufacturers, with library-branded smart products continuously emerging. However, since AI technology remains in its early development stages with imperfect underlying

technologies, “weak intelligence” phenomena are widespread [19]. Additionally, the lack of objective criteria during AI equipment procurement management, combined with some devices lacking standardized, universal technical systems and the inability to conduct continuous, effective data collection, has prevented smart devices from being fully utilized in libraries.

## 5 Innovation and Development of Library Basic Services During the 14th Five-Year Plan

**5.1 Fully Drawing on Existing Innovative Service Practices.** The arrival of the big data and AI era has placed higher demands on library basic services. During the initial stages of innovative service development, fully learning from existing practices proves effective. Libraries should selectively plan basic service content that aligns with their collection characteristics, disciplinary features, and reader needs, improving process management systems and post-service performance evaluation systems to promote leapfrog development in basic service effectiveness.

**5.2 Reengineering Document Service Processes Integrating Paper and Digital.** Addressing the current practice of fragmented metadata between print and digital resources in library collection management, which leads to extensive management models and inability to meet differentiated, refined information needs, the author believes that fully integrating print and digital resources to achieve unified services represents the future development direction. By signing metadata harvesting agreements with database vendors, establishing standardized management parameters, classifications, and codes for digital resources, and building refined metadata repositories, libraries can break down barriers between print and digital resources and among different data providers. This enables a fine-grained resource management mechanism at the level of “volume,” “article,” or even “paragraph” and “sentence” to replace the coarse-grained “database”-level management [20-21], deeply integrating print and digital resources. Starting from basic services that guarantee document borrowing and downloading is key to ensuring libraries’ progress over the next five years.

**5.3 Establishing a Sound Performance Evaluation Mechanism.** Basic services are crucial engines for activating collection resources and promoting healthy library development. Strengthening post-service effect evaluation and gradually improving key links to form closed-loop management forms the cornerstone for enhancing proactive and intelligent basic services. To address the lack of performance evaluation systems, differentiated evaluation indicators and performance standards should be formulated for different service types and target audiences under the principle of “classified guidance.” For reading promotion activities, a few may be evaluated by quantity and audience size, while most should be assessed by readers’ reading performance. This requires detailed collection of reading promotion data, emphasizing dynamic big data updates and tracking of reading status, utilizing data processing and visualization analysis tools to monitor actual effectiveness, obtain potential transformation informa-

tion and future optimization directions, gradually improve activity quality, and guide extensive and in-depth reading promotion to broaden basic services.

**5.4 Improving Equipment Intelligence Levels.** Rising interest in the information technology industry has drawn high attention from the library community, and introducing smart devices will become an increasingly standard practice for intelligent transformation of basic services. AI devices such as biometric recognition, natural language processing, robotics, and machine learning can restructure business models and processes for document resource classification and space services [22]. Strengthening top-level design in AI equipment procurement management is key to improving intelligence levels. During procurement planning, objective criteria should guide the purchase of smart devices and services that match actual reader needs. Post-procurement evaluation should comprehensively consider price, functionality, maintenance difficulty, and vendor service capabilities through horizontal product comparisons to improve cost-effectiveness, ensure procurement quality, and maximize utility in basic service applications.

**5.5 Strengthening Scenario-Based Information System Construction for Basic Services.** Information technology enables library basic services to move toward precision and personalization, requiring the library community to seize technological dividends and accelerate informatization to improve its depth and breadth. First, by considering various reader application scenarios, the entire basic service workflow should be informatized, potentially developing “micro-services” for different scenarios similar to WeChat mini-programs. Second, systems should enhance personalized and humanized features by profiling readers’ age, gender, research fields, and reading promotion activity tracking, developing analytical modules to intelligently predict document needs and preferences, calculate reading behavior thresholds, and establish critical node trigger feedback mechanisms for proactive services that improve satisfaction and stickiness. Finally, beyond necessary on-site services, libraries should maximize online and contactless basic services to address potential post-pandemic reductions in physical visits.

**5.6 Attaching Great Importance to Research and Practice of Library Big Data.** Big data has become a national strategic resource, influencing global economic operations, national governance capabilities, and social life [23]. For libraries, big data research and practice is imperative. Regarding resource construction, over-reliance on vendors and heterogeneous digital resources have increased reader costs and created the awkward situation of “having resources but no data,” with fragmented metadata between print and digital resources failing to meet refined information needs [24]. Regarding reader services, big data applications provide new thinking and methods for deepening service connotations and extending service reach. By extracting user and behavioral data to create reader profiles, libraries can lay the foundation for personalized precision services. Libraries can also utilize big data for intelligence analysis services to support management decision-making, revealing correlations through data

collection, organization, and deep analysis to achieve value-added services and demonstrate core value.

## 6 Conclusion and Outlook

As libraries embark on the new journey of the 14th Five-Year Plan, the past five years have seen steady development in library management and services. However, the rapid development of information technology and new post-pandemic reader demand patterns have permeated the fabric of library basic services. Seizing technological dividends to achieve deep-level, integrated development of basic services is more urgent and important than ever. Therefore, the library community needs to jointly explore new models and formats for basic services under complex circumstances, further promoting proactive document resource borrowing and downloading services, deepening group-oriented space services, and emphasizing research and practice on library big data to consolidate the foundation of AI applications. By enriching basic service content and enhancing service levels and capabilities, libraries can create new opportunities amidst changes and chart a bright blueprint for the 14th Five-Year Plan.

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### **Research on the Innovation and Development of Library’s Basic Service in the 14th Five-Year Plan**

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**Abstract:** [Purpose/significance] At present, the management and service innovation of the library industry are mainly based on digitalization and intelligence, but while these businesses are developing rapidly, the development of basic library services must not be ignored. [Method/process] On the basis of extensive research, combined with the development trend of information technology, this paper combs the basic services of current public libraries and academic libraries, and believes that there are problems such as inconsistent methods of downloading digital resources, separate services for paper and electricity, lack of necessary performance evaluation mechanisms for basic services, and relatively “weak intelligence” of intelligent devices. [Result/conclusion] The paper puts forward suggestions for the innovation and development of library basic services during the 14th Five-Year Plan period, provides ideas for the formulation of the 14th Five-Year Plan of libraries, and promotes the progress of library undertakings in the next five years.

**Keywords:** borrowing service; space service; smart library; 14th Five-Year Plan

*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

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