University Library Websites of Coimbatore District: A Study on Content Evaluation

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Abstract

Websites of University Libraries play a vital role in providing information to the users about its collection and services. Hence, a survey is conducted to analyze the content, navigational speed, strength and weaknesses of the websites of libraries of the Six Universities of Coimbatore District using 85 check lists. Results revealed that most of the library websites provide information on e-resources where as they lack in providing the basic services offered by the respective libraries. This paper suggests recommendations to improve the website

Keywords

Content Evaluation, Websites, Library, Univer
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INTRODUCTION

Web environment provides quality information to their users in digital format and they play a vital role in providing numerous and enriched library services in case of academic libraries. Content richness of library websites depends on its collection, services, facilities and updating policy, etc. In this paper, a survey is made to evaluate the content of university library websites of Coimbatore District.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following studies are related to the present study. Most of them are related to performance, evaluation and usability with few studies on content analysis of the library website.Coffta and Schoen (2000) examined Web sites of four- and five-year old colleges and universities to find about interlibrary loan policies, contact information and holdings.Brower (2004) analyzed the content and navigational elements of academic health library web sites. These elements included general information about the library, library web site aids and tools, library services, library resources and navigational metrics through many questions. Michalec (2006) conducted a content analysis websites of art library. He analyzed the content, contact details, hours of operations, information about the library collections, the library web page location on the parent organization's web site and number of clicks required to navigate library information. He also analyzed the availability of search engine links, internet subject resources, local resources, electronic databases and links to reference assistance along with other basic library-related information contents. There were also studies by Shukla & Tripathi (2010), Kalra & Verma (2011) on content awareness evaluation & evaluation indicators of academic library websites respectively. Parrek & Gupta (2013) conducted a study for content analysis of academic library websites of Rajasthan.

OBJECTIVES

Following are the objectives of the present study:

- To establish criteria for content analysis for evaluating university library websites;
- To measure the accuracy, navigation, currency, accessibility and user friendliness;
- To evaluate the relevancy and quality of graphics, animations which used in the university libraries;

- To find out the services and facilities provided on the university library websites and;
- To suggest measures for improvement of university library websites.

METHODOLOGY

It was a three phase study and in the first phase, a study was conducted to find out the list of universities in Coimbatore District. There was no directory for collecting information about websites of university libraries of Coimbatore District. Hence, the information was collected through searching the web. This resulted in 6 websites and it is represented along with the corresponding website address in Table 1.

In the second phase, related literatures were reviewed and a check list was prepared for evaluating the contents of University library websites. The check lists were grouped under the following headings:

Third phase consisted of analysis of selected library websites. The population of the study consisted of 6 university libraries of Coimbatore district which comprises of government and private universities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: General Information

Table 1 provides information about the library websites with their website address**.**

S No	Name of the University	Website Address
1	Avinashilingam University	http://www.avinuty.ac.in/library.htm
2	Amrita University	http://www.amrita.edu/campuses/cbr/facilities.html
3	Bharathiar University	http://www.b-u.ac.in/library/index.html
4	Karunya University	http://www.karunya.edu/library/index.html
5	Karpagam University	http://www.karpagamuniv.com/student_life/libraries.php
6	TNAgri. University	http://tnau.ac.in/library.html

Table 2: Accessibility and Speed

It is found from table 2 that only one library website is found under the title "library" and rest of them are found from the link with facilities/academics/infrastructure/student life.

Criteria	Frequency	%
Link on parent organisation website's homepage	6	100%
Information about library can be found from link with "Library" title	1	17%
Information about library can be found from link with facilities/ resources/ infrastructure	5	83%
Not more than three clicks from homepage	6	100%

Table 3: Navigation

It is interesting to know from table 3 that all the library websites use graphics and pictures.

Criteria	Frequency	%
Home link on every page of website	4	66%
Page title appears in the top window bar	6	100%
Use of Graphics/ pictures / charts	6	100%

Table 4: Authority & Accuracy

Table 4 shows that most(83%) of the library websites provide phone number and contact information.

Criteria	Frequency	%
There is a phone number and postal address to contact for further information. (Just an e-mail id is not sufficient)	5	83%
Is the text well written and understandable?	6	100%

Table 5: Currency

It is found from Table 5 that there is an indication on page updation in only one website.

Criteria	Frequency	%
Copyright information	5	83%
The web site is updated frequently	0	-
There is an indication of when the page was last updated/revised?	1	17%

Table 6 : Website aid and tools

Table 6 shows that most of (83%) the websites provide information on the feedback and e-mail link.

Criteria	Frequency	%
Web site index	1	17%
Site map	4	67%
Library web site feedback form or e- mail link	5	83%
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	0	-

Table 7: Library general Information

It is evident from Table 7 that 67% of the websites gives information on library introduction, resources and services and 17% of the website provide information on library location.

Criteria	Frequency	%
Library introduction	4	67%
Information about library resources	4	67%
Information about library services	4	67%
Contact information	3	50%
Library location	1	17%
Staff directory	3	50%
Information about the building	0	-
Annual reports/statistics	0	-
Working hours	4	67%
Statement of library's mission	2	33%
Information about membership	2	33%
Instructions or tutorials about library use	0	-
News and events	0	-
Library policies and procedures	2	33%
Mail facility to librarian/staff	4	67%
Information about the branches of library (if any)	2	33%

Table 8 : Library Collections

It is evident from table 8 that none of the websites gives information on legal deposits and manuscripts while all the websites gives information on CDs/DVDs.

Criteria	Frequency	%
Books (printed/electronic)	5	83%
Journals, newspapers and magazines	5	83%
CDs/DVDs ROMs	6	100%
Audio-video materials	4	67%
Dissertations	2	33%
Project reports	2	33%
Legal deposits	0	-
Manuscripts	0	-
Maps	1	17%
Microfilms	1	17%
Online databases	5	83%
E-journals/E-magazines	4	67%
CD-ROM databases	0	-
Other reference source (dictionaries, encyclopaedias)	1	17%
Bibliographical databases	1	17%
Links to other libraries online catalogues	1	17%

Table 9: Library Services and Technical Services

Table 9 shows that 33% of the websites provide information on photocopying service, reference service circulation and OPAC.

Criteria	Frequency	%
Internet access services	0	-
Photocopying service	2	33%
Reference services	2	33%
Circulation	2	335
Reading room	0	-
Bibliography services	0	-
OPAC	2	33%
Book bank services	1	17%
Inter library loan	0	-

Table 10 : Information on various sections

Table 10 shows that 17% of the websites gives information on various sections of the libraries such

as periodical, circulation, book bank, stack room and acquisition section.

Criteria	Frequency	%
Computer section	0	-
Periodical/ Back volume section	1	17%
Circulation section	1	17%
Book bank section	1	17%
Stack section	1	17%
Micrographic/Photocopy section	0	-
Acquisition section	1	17%

Table 11 : Link to E-resources

Half of the websites gives link to e-journals**.**

Criteria	Frequency	%
Link to internal sources	2	33%
Links to e-journals	3	50%
Links to e-books	2	33%
Reference tools list	2	33%
Links to manuals for e-resources	0	-

Table 12 : Value Added Services

It is evident from table 12 that except image gallery and projects & consultants none of the services were mentioned in the websites.

Criteria	Frequency	%
Job vacancies	0	-
Image gallery of library	1	17%
Web 2.0	0	-
User guidelines	0	-
Library "news alerts"	0	-
Chronology of librarians	0	-
Virtual help desk	0	-
Library events calendar	0	-
Online tutorials	0	-
Library committee	0	-
Information on New-arrivals	0	-
Projects and consultancy	1	17%
RSS feed	0	-
Library archive	0	-

CONCLUSION

This present study was carried out to examine the websites of 6 university libraries in Coimbatore district. It is found from the study that in most of the library websites traditional services given to the users and date of updating the information and various sections of the libraries are not mentioned. Also, value added services such as RSS feed, user guidelines on how to use e-journals and information on new arrivals are not mentioned. But most of the websites provide images of their respective libraries.

Following suggestions can be implemented to improve the contents of university library websites.

1. Professional associations can compile a directory of library web sites.
2. Usability and quality of library web sites may be studied to meet international standards.
3. User-centered studies are the need of the hour to develop more user oriented web sites.
4. Designing library web sites can be included in the curriculum of library and information science schools with an emphasis on the analysis of content.
5. Continuing education programmes can be organized for working professionals on website development and evaluation techniques.

Websites are considered as the means for contacting users with services and facilities of library and it acts as a virtual entrance to the library. It is the prime duty of the library professionals to improve the websites of their respective libraries by following the above mentioned suggestions.

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