

Use of Social Networking Tools by the Libraries of Central Universities of India: A Study

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The present study has been carried out for the purpose of ascertaining the level of usage of social networking tools by the libraries of central universities of India. To conduct this study, self check method is adopted. The findings of this research reveal that 50% of central universities libraries adopt one or more social networking tools. RSS Feeds, Ask the Librarian/Chat with Librarian, Feedback, Suggestions and comments, Contact details/Form/Email/Phones, Library Blog, Instant Messaging are most popular application tools used by at least one or more central universities libraries. It is concluded that adoption of social networking tools by all the central universities libraries would prove to be very strong marketing tool for promoting the usage of their valuable services and untapped resources

Keywords

Central Universities; Social Networking; Library 2.0; Web 2.0; RSS; Blog

1. INTRODUCTION

Advances in the World Wide Web (WWW) have greatly changed the way people access information and communicate with each other. Social Networking Sites are basically those websites which provide social community for people interested in a particular subject or interest together. Social media has become an important tool of self expression and self presentation. Social media is evolving itself into very important and crucial form of ICT through which one can share, connect people and communities with active participation. In the nutshell it is now being transformed into a very active social interaction tool. The younger generation is growing up with the technology. They are living in digital world, using I-Phone, smart phone, computers, and tablets are connected through social media like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, etc. They are becoming irreplaceable source of education and self education and important tools of new literacy. A social network service comprises a representation user's profile, with some additional services. It is a web-based service that permits people to create a public profile, list of users for sharing connection, viewing and crossing the connections in the system. There are various types of social network sites which include new information and communication tools like blogging, picture, video sharing and mobile connectivity.

2. SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOL AND WEB 2.0

Social Networking is an online platform which provide facilities to users for creating their profile and allow interaction with other users on the websites. It has now become the most popular and fashionable among the individuals particularly in the workplace, university and colleges. This has been possible due to the widely spread use of internet services at work places. The individuals share their first hand experience and information among themselves. The term Social Networking Sites has been defined by various intellectuals in different ways. These sites can be broadly defined as Internet-based social spaces which are designed to ensure smooth communication, collaboration, and content sharing among various networks of contacts. These Sites permit users to build, represent and manage their social networks online and usually cover other individuals and may also include profiles of events and companies. Social Networking Sites are used for various activities. Among the most common uses are connecting with existing networks, developing contacts, creating an online presence for their users, viewing content/finding information, creating and customizing profiles and so on. Networking Sites have rapidly gained popularity. Social networking includes all types of collaborative environments which are using Web 2.0 technologies. Web 2.0 provides a new way of using the Internet for interactive purposes thus fostering collaboration among users, which in turn generates new strategies and thinking to meet the increasing demands of ever changing society

There have been a number of research studies on the use of social networking sites. A review of literature reveals that these emerging technologies are increasingly being adopted by students in academic institutions and may have a major effect on existing teaching and learning practices. Keeping this in view, researchers in academic and professional institutions have studied the use of these social media applications

3. OBJECTIVES

This study has been conducted keeping in view the following objectives:

- To find out the central universities libraries' websites which have social networking/web 2.0 application; and
- To identify types of web 2.0 technology that is applied in central universities libraries' websites.

4. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Gichora and Kwanya (2015) find that the use of the Web 2.0 tools in academic libraries in Kenya enhanced the users' interests in the library resources and services and promoted learning skills besides marketing programmes of the libraries. Verma and Verma (2014) while highlighting the use of Web 2.0 technology by the Central Universities in India explain how these Universities implement Web 2.0 technology in their libraries with a view to providing new and better services to their potential users. However, the study further reveal that out of 43 Central Universities only 19 (44.2%) of them were using Web2.0 technology to stay connected with their users. Majumdar (2012) while underlying the importance web 2.0 technologies points out that in West Bengal, out of 18 state universities 5 universities do not have any dedicated library webpage, though these universities maintain and update their official websites regularly. Har Singh and Anil Kumar (2013) reveal that the scholars of Punjab University, Chandigarh, were found to be aware and making use of such applications in their research work and Facebook is their most popular Social Networking Site. Khan and Bhatti (2012) in their study suggests the libraries to develop their library home page incorporating social media page as well. Kindi and Alhashmi (2012) argue that these social networking tools provide an opportunity for students to improve social networking and processes, which promotes knowledge in society. Stuart (2010) indicates a mixed opinion on the uses of Web 2.0 tools in libraries, noting the promising future for certain Web 2.0 tools, like blogs and RSS, but limited uses of other Web 2.0 tools, such as podcasts and Wikis. [From the above literature review, it is observed that though various studies have been conducted on Web 2.0 technologies pertaining to its role, function, and application especially in academic libraries but very few deals with central universities libraries.](#)

5. METHODOLOGY

With a view to analysing library websites, 46 central universities in India have been studied w.r.t selected social networking categories as checkpoints. These are: RSS Feeds, Ask the Librarian/ Chat with Librarian, Feedback, Suggestions and comments, Contact details/Form/Email/Phone, Library Blog, and Instant Messaging. Only those social networking tools/ categories have been taken into account as checkpoints which are implemented in Central Universities libraries. These categories have been taken into account and used as checklist indicating presence or absence of the same. The study focuses on central universities libraries dealing with the collection general in nature, and also includes few universities with specialized subjects. The data were collected from 15 to 25 September 2015. The data for these main categories indicating presence of checkpoints were tabulated.

The details of all the existing central universities are listed in Table 1, which gives a brief sketch of all 46 central universities in India with their year of establishment, website URL and presence/absence of Web 2.0 tool and their details which are implemented and used by the central universities libraries. The present study is confined to all the Central Universities of India as listed in UGC website (<http://www.ugc.ac.in/centraluniversity.aspx>) as on 11.09.2015. The observation method was used to collect data from all central university library websites. The authors personally visited all central universities library websites to collect the data about using Web 2.0 tools & technologies. The collected data were tabulated as Table 1 and analysed by using excel spreadsheet.

Table 1
Central Universities of India along with their Year of Establishment, Specialization, Website URL and Web 2.0 tools

S.No.	University	Established	URL	Web 2.0 Tools used
1	Rajiv Gandhi University	1985(CU wef 2007)	www.rgu.ac.in	Feedback
2	Assam University	1994	www.aus.ac.in	RSS feeds, Feedback
3	Tezpur University	1994	www.tezu.ernet.in	Ask the librarian
4	Central University of South Bihar	2009	www.cub.ac.in	Feedback
5	Mahatma Gandhi Central University North Bihar	2014	www.cub.ac.in	-
6	Nalanda University	2010	www.nalandauniv.edu.in/	-
7	Guru Ghasidas University	1983 (CU 2009)	www.ggu.ac.in	-
8	Indira Gandhi National Open	1985	www.Ignou.ac.in	Feedback, Contact us

S.No.	University	Established	URL	Web 2.0 Tools used
	University			
9	Jamia Millia Islamia	1920 (1988)	www.jmi.ac.in	Feedback, Contact us
10	Jawaharlal Nehru University	1969	ww.jnu.ac.in	RSS feeds, News feeds, Blogs, Instant Messaging (IM)
11	University of Delhi	1922	www.du.ac.in	Ask the librarian
12	Central University of Gujarat	2009	www.cug.ac.in	Library Blog
13	Central University of Haryana	2009	www.cuh.ac.in	Contact us
14	Central University of Himachal Pradesh	2009	www.cuhimachal.ac.in	-
15	Central University of Jammu	2011	www.cujammu.ac.in	-
16	Central University of Kashmir	2009	www.cukashmir.ac.in	Ask the Librarian, Feedback, Suggestions, Comments
17	Central University of Jharkhand	2009	www.cuj.ac.in	-
18	Central University of Karnataka	2009	www.cuk.ac.in	Contact Form
19	Central University of Kerala	2009	www.cukerela.ac.in	Ask the librarian, Blog, Feedback
20	Dr. Hari	1946	www.dhgsu.ac.in	-

S.No.	University	Established	URL	Web 2.0 Tools used
	Singh Gour University			
21	Indira Gandhi National Tribal University	2007	www.igntu.ac.in	-
22	Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya	1997	www.hindivishwa.org	-
23	Central Agricultural University	1993	www.cau.ac.in	-
24	Manipur University	1980 (CU 2005)	www.manipuruniversity.ac.in	-
25	North Eastern Hill University	1973	www.nehu.ac.in	Contact us
26	Mizoram University	2000	www.mzu.edu.in	-
27	Nagaland University	1994	www.nagalanduniversity.ac.in	-
28	Central University of Orissa	2009	www.cuo.ac.in	Contact us
29	Pondicherry University	1985	www.pondiuni.edu.in	Ask the Librarian
30	Central University of Punjab	2009	www.cup.ac.in	Contact us
31	Central University of Rajasthan	2009	www.curaj.ac.in	Feedback, Suggestions and Comments

S.No.	University	Established	URL	Web 2.0 Tools used
32	Sikkim University	2007	www.cus.ac.in	Contact Us
33	Central University of Tamil Nadu	2009	www.cutn.ac.in	-
34	Indian Maritime University	2008	www.imu.nic.in	-
35	English and Foreign Languages University	1958 (CU 2007)	www.efluniversity.ac.in	-
36	Maulana Azad National Urdu University	1998	www.manuu.ac.in	-
37	University of Hyderabad	1974	www.uohyd.ac.in	Contact us
38	Tripura University	1987	www.tripurauniv.in	-
39	Aligarh Muslim University	1920	www.amu.ac.in	Contact us, Feedback
40	Allahabad University	1887	www.allduniv.ac.in	Email
41	Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University	1996	www.bbau.ac.in	-
42	Banaras Hindu University	1916	www.bhu.ac.in	Contact Us
43	Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultura	2014	www.rlbcu.ac.in	-

S.No.	University	Established	URL	Web 2.0 Tools used
	1 University			
44	Rajiv Gandhi National Aviation University	2013	www.rajivgandhiacademyforaviationtechnology.org/	-
45	Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University	1973 (CUwef 2009)	www.hnbgu.ac.in	-
46	Visva-Bharati University	1951	www.vishvabharati.ac.in	-

Above table shows the Web 2.0 technology and its tools used by the libraries of Central Universities in India

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Among the 46 central universities libraries of India, figure 1 shows that only 23 i.e. 50% central universities libraries are using one or more social networking application on its website to interact with their users and provide opportunities to participate in libraries' activities.

Percentage of Central University Libraries using Social Networking Tool/ Application

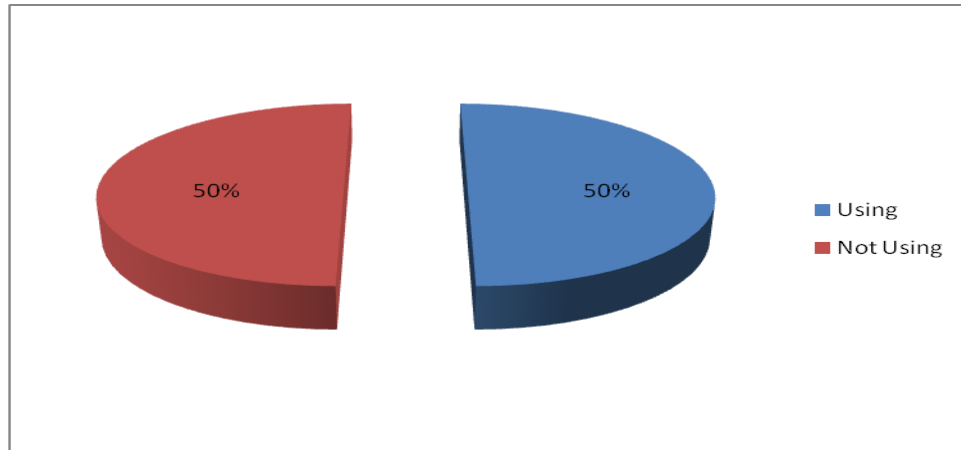


Fig. 1

Social Networking Tools implemented in 46 Central University Libraries

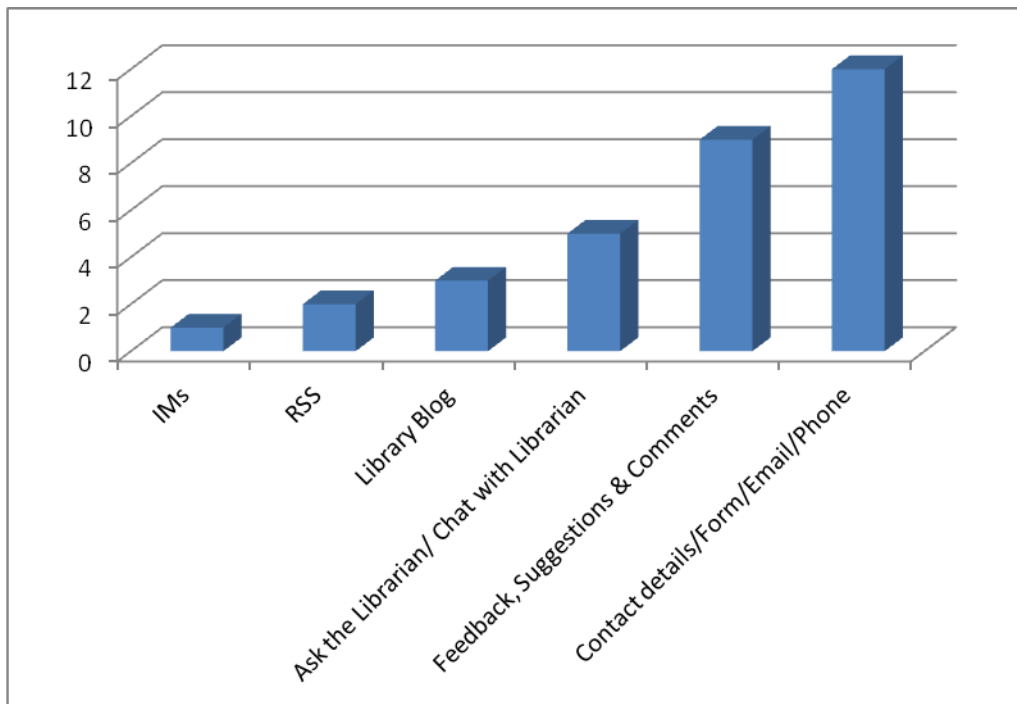


Fig. 2

Figure 2 indicates the popularity of social networking tools amongst 46 Central Universities libraries' websites in which only 1 i.e. Jawaharlal Nehru University (Delhi) is using "*Instant Messaging*" application on its website. *RSS Feed* is being used by only 2 out of 46 i.e. Assam University (Silchar) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi). Other popular social networking tool is "*Library Blog*" which is used by only 3 libraries for communication viz. Central University of Kerala (Kasaragod), Central University of Gujrat (Gandhinagar) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (Delhi). Among the 46 libraries, only 5 are using "*Ask the Librarian/ Chat with Librarian*" to interact with the users viz. Tezpur University (Tezpur), , University of Delhi (New Delhi), Central University of Kashmir (Srinagar), Central University of Kerala (Kasaragod) and Pondicherry University (Pondicherry). For collecting the "*Feedback, Suggestions and Comments*" from the users, only 9 universities libraries are using the same for social networking, viz. Rajiv Gandhi University (Itanagar), Assam University (Silchar), Central University of South Bihar (Gaya), Indira Gandhi National Open University (New Delhi), Jamia Milia Islamia (New Delhi), Central University of Kashmir (Srinagar), Central University of Kerala (Kasaragod), Central University of Rajasthan (Ajmer), and Aligarh Muslim University (Aligarh). Other social networking tool used to interact with the librarian by the users is "*Contact details/Form/Email/Phone*" and only 12 universities provide this information viz. Indira Gandhi National Open University (New Delhi), Jamia Milia Islamia (New Delhi), Central University of Haryana (Mahendragarh), Central University of Karnataka (Gulbarga), North Eastern Hill University (Shillong), Central University of Orissa (Koraput), Central University of Punjab (Bathinda), Sikkim University (Gangtok), University of Hyderabad (Hyderabad), Aligarh Muslim University (Alligarh), Allahabad University (Allahabad), and Banaras Hindu University (Varanasi).

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study covered the libraries of 46 central universities. There is a considerable variation in the use of Web 2.0 tools. It is found that among the five most popular tools of social networking/ Web 2.0 which are selected in this study 23 libraries (50%) have adopted at least one of the Web 2.0 tools, whereas 23 of them (50%) did not use any of the Web 2.0 tools. Table 2 provides a summary of use of these tools by the libraries which is further illustrated in Fig. 3 also.

Table 2
 Summary of Central Universities Libraries' using Social Networking Tools

Social Networking Application Tools	Number of Libraries Using Web 2.0	Percentage (%)
IMs	1	2
RSS	2	4
Library Blog	3	6
Ask the Librarian/ Chat with Librarian	5	11

Feedback, Suggestions & Comments	9	19
Contact details/Form/Email/Phone	12	26

Percentage of Central Universities Libraries' using Social Networking Tools

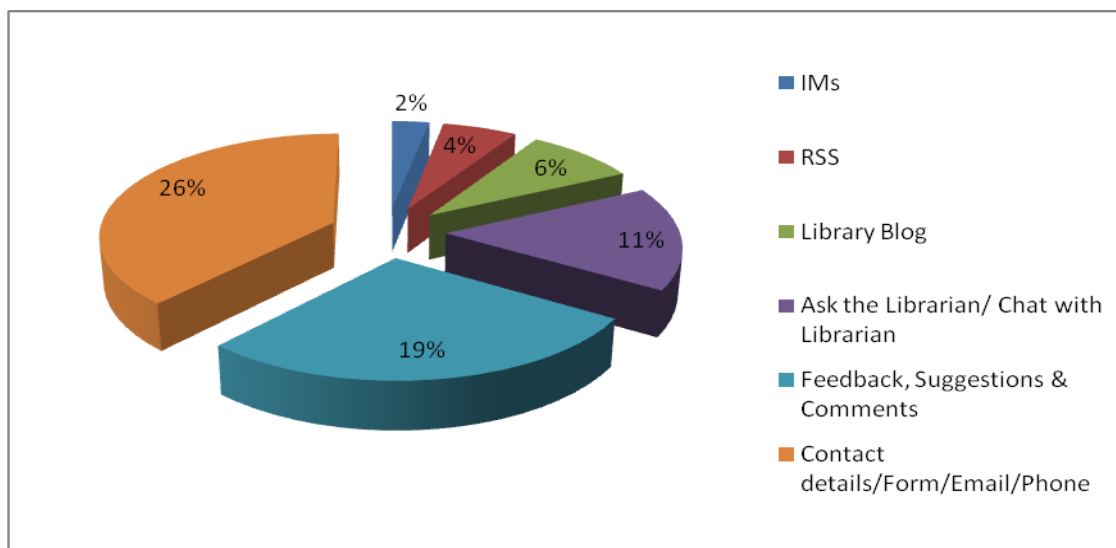


Fig. 3

8. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Though Central universities libraries use some of the web 2.0 tools viz. Instant Messaging, RSS Feeds, Library Blogs, Ask the Librarian/ Chat with Librarian, Feedback, Suggestions & Comments, and Contact details/Form/Email/Phone but still there is lot of scope for enriching the techniques/ tools to connect with the users/ patrons by implementing more Web 2.0 applications in the libraries. These are Facebook and Twitter to stay connect with their users and provide quick information, Google+ for their personalized pages in the form of group services, products and other personalized services, YouTube to share videos, Wikipedia to provide information to user and LinkedIn for professional interaction to their users. Further, Podcasts/Vodcast can be used as promotional tools for the library services and program, for new resources, share information, oral presentations, book reviews, library tour or tour of historical site, overview of library resources and facilities, staff introduction, training on using library resources etc., Tagging may be used by the Library Management System to provide

information to the needy users, enhance indexing, relevancy of searches, and making collection more dynamic, etc.

9. CONCLUSION

Social media is essential for every individual in today's world of technology. People use it not only for information and interaction but also for entertainment. The uses of social networking sites to support educational initiatives have received much attention. Given the wide spread availability and usage of modern technologies, it would not be wrong to state that people who lack adequate ICT skills cannot rise to the challenges of what is usually referred to as the information age. As younger generations use such technology in the classroom, they remake the educational landscape.

With the implementation of Web 2.0 tools, earlier libraries have been transformed into places which can be visited from remote locations with information for not only collecting the same but making contributions also. Web 2.0 tools can lead user to provide services of libraries beyond the physical walls by connecting them to libraries. Academic libraries may reach a new types of users who are not formal teachers and students of the institutions and may bring change in the relationship between users and libraries. The current study leads us to adopt an approach which should reflect a better balancing the relationship between Social Networking Sites and academic studies environment of the Universities. It is concluded that adoption of social networking tools by all the central universities libraries would prove to be very strong marketing tool for promoting the usage of their valuable services and untapped resources

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