Web 2.0 Tools in Library Web Pages: Survey of Universities and Institutes of National Importance of West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

The present article is a web survey of Library web pages of different Universities as well as Institutes of National Importance web sites of the state of West Bengal regarding application of Web 2.0 technology and tools to enhance library services to patrons. Brief introduction to different Web 2.0 tools such as Blog, Wiki, RSS, Podcast, etc. is given. Based on the analysis of collected data, a few questions are raised to be dug deeper into the malady of present condition.

Keywords: Blog, Wiki, RSS, podcast, social bookmarking, myspace, facebook, West Bengal

1. INTRODUCTION

The conventional web or Web 1.0 was a centralised idea in the sense that it was solely one way traffic. There was no scope for seamless user interaction. With the introduction of Web 2.0 democratic decentralisation of web has taken place. The web today in true sense is a people's web. Suddenly user generated contents have taken centre stage. The web no more stands for sites and search engines but now it means a shared network space that drives education, research, work and social activities. The obvious outcome is a 'net generation' or 'millennials' or 'digital natives'[1]. Libraries especially academic libraries need to consider the profile of these digital natives. In order to provide effective services to these new generation of patrons, especially in university libraries, different awareness activities like organising seminars, conducting study circles, publishing journal articles, and annual conferences are being organised regularly in different parts of India. So that library professionals can readily identify that Web 2.0 technology is the next big thing in academic libraries.

Amid these developments, the present article which is basically a web survey has put an effort to understand how far university libraries and libraries of Institutes of higher learning in West Bengal actually implemented Web 2.0 tools to enhance the library services towards Web 2.0 savvy patrons.

2. WEB 2.0

The term Web 2.0 was first conceptualised and coined by Tim O"Reilly in 2004 to give an understanding of the design pattern and business models for the next generation web software[2]. Web 2.0 highlights the value of user generated contents. Wikipedia says, 'the term encapsulates the idea of the proliferation of interconnectivity and interactivity of web delivered contents'[3]. Blog, Wiki, RSS, Podcast, social bookmarking, MySpace or Facebook are very popular Web2.0 technologies. A blog or weblog refers to a webpage where entries are added in chronological order and displayed in reverse chronological order. Librarians can use blogs to inform about ongoing and forthcoming events and also as a form of publication.

A Wiki is an editable webpage and can be edited by anybody who has access. A wiki in a University can support collaborative knowledge creation and sharing[2]. The RSS stands for really simple syndication or rich site summary. It is a Web 2.0 technology which consists of a group of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated content and permits users to check updates without actually visiting a website. Libraries with RSS feed facility can update their new items or collections available for users. The next is podcast, 'a digital media file or a related collection of such files which is distributed over internet using syndication feeds for playback on a portable media player and personal computers'[1].

In an academic library podcast can be used to provide access to lecture videos or audiobooks to those students who could not attend the class. Another Web 2.0

technology i.e, social bookmarking allows users to create common lists of favourites, store them in a remote server in order to access that list anytime from anywhere.

Del.icio.us, a social bookmarking tool that can be used by libraries to enable patrons to share web resources. MySpace and facebook enable a librarian to reach especially to young patrons. So it is clear that these Web 2.0 tools and technologies provide ample scope for a librarian to take library services to a new height.

3. PURPOSE OF SURVEY

The aim of this web survey is to have a clear picture about the extent of implementation of Web 2.0 technologies in university library websites in West Bengal. It also tries to understand how university libraries are responding to the much talked about phenomenon namely social networking.

4. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The survey considered the universities of West Bengal. As National Institute of Technology (NIT) Durgapur, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur, and Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata have similar status, so these institutes of higher learning were also considered. The survey was conducted during the period from 22-07-2010 to 02-08-2010. Since web world is a

dynamic where changes in content of a web page or services may take place at any time, later developments at any site should not be taken as contrary to the information provided in this survey.

5. METHODOLOGY

List of recognised universities and details about them were collected from official website of University Grants Commission[4] as well as from Universities handbook[7]. Existing websites of these universities were visited. In a university website, library homepage was searched for. If available, efforts were made to find out and detect any popular Web 2.0 icon like RSS, blog, twitter, etc. All the available links in the library page were followed and studied and the observations were noted down in tabular form. Data gathered in the tabular form were then carefully analysed to get a clear picture of the use of Web 2.0 tools in library webpage of the universities under consideration.

6. COLLECTION OF DATA

Collection of data for various universities and institutes of National importance in West Bengal is as shown in Table 1. Table 2 shows the library webpage status with link and Table 3 shows the status of application of different Web 2.0 tools in library webpage.

Table 1. Universities and Institutes of National importance in West Bengal

	Name & address of university	Year of estb.	Website
State Universities			
1.	Aliah University, 21, Haji Md. Mohsin Square, Kolkata-700 016	2007	http://www.aliah.ac.in/
2.	Bidhan Chandra Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Mohanpur, Nadia-741 252	1974	http://www.bckv.edu.in/
3.	Burdwan University, Rajbati, Burdwan-713 104	1960	http://www.buruniv.ac.in/
4.	Calcutta University, Senate House, 87/1 College Street, Kolkata-700 073	1857	http://www.caluniv.ac.in/
5.	Gaur Banga University, Rabindra Avenue, Malda College Campus, Malda-732 101	2007	http://www.ugb.ac.in/
6.	Jadavpur University, 188 Raja S.C. Mullik Road, Kolkata-700 032	1955	http://www.jadavpur.edu/
7.	Kalyani University, Kalyani, Nadia-741 235.	1960	http://www.klyuniv.ac.in/
8.	North Bengal University, Raja Ram Mohanpur, Darjeeling-734 430	1962	http://www.nbu.ac.in/
9.	Netaji Subhash Open University, 1, Woodburn Park, Kolkata-700 020	1997	http://www.wbnsou.ac.in:8080/wbnsou/
10.	Rabindra Bharati University, 56A Barrackpore Trunk Road, Kolkata-700 050	1962	http://www.rbu.ac.in/
11.	The Bengal Engineering & Science University, Shibpur, Howrah-711 103	2004	http://www.becs.ac.in/
12.	The West Bengal National University of Juridical Science, NUJS Bhava, 12 LB Block, Sector-III, Salt Lake City, Kolkata	2004	http://www.nujs.edu/
13.	The West Bengal University of Health Sciences, DD-36, Sector-1, Salt Lake,Kolkata-700 064	2002	http://www.thewbuhs.org/
14.	Uttar Banga Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, District-Cooch Behar-736 165	2001	http://www.ubkv.ac.in/
15.	Vidya Sagar University, Midnapore-721 102	1981	http://www.vidyasagar.ac.in/
16.	West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences, Belgachia, Kolkata-700 037	1995	http://wbuafscl.ac.in/
17.	West Bengal University of Technology, BF-142, Salt Lake, Kolkata-700 091	2001	http://www.wbut.net/
18.	West Bengal State University, Barasat Govt. College, Kolkata- 700 124	2007	http://wbsub.org/
Central University			
1.	Visva Bharati, Shantiniketan, Birbhum-731 235.	1951	http://www.visva-bharati.ac.in/
Institutes of National Importance			
1.	Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur-721302	1950	http://www.iitkgp.ac.in/
2.	Indian Statistical Institute. 203 Barrackpore Trunk Road, Kolkata-700108	1931	http://www.isical.ac.in/
3.	National Institute of Technology, Mahatma Gandhi Avenue, Durgapur-713209	1960	http://www.nitdgp.ac.in/

Table 2. Library webpage status with link

	Name of university/institutes	Library webpage present/absent	Library webpage link
State	**Universities**		
1.	Aliah University	Present	http://www.aliah.ac.in/univlib.php
2.	Bidhan Chandra Krishi Vishwavidyalaya	Present	http://www.bckv.edu.in/bckv.php?page=1679091 c5a880faf6fb5e6087eb1b2dc6
3.	Burdwan University	Present	http://www.buruniv.ac.in/
4.	Calcutta University	Present	http://www.caluniv.ac.in/libraries/library.html
5.	Gaur Banga University	Absent	X
6.	Jadavpur University	Present	http://www.jaduniv.edu.in/library.php
7.	Kalyani University	Present	http://www.klyuniv.ac.in/library.html
8.	North Bengal University	Absent	X
9.	Netaji Subhash Open University	Absent	X
10.	Rabindra Bharati University	Present	http://www.rbu.ac.in/facilities.php?id=1
11.	The Bengal Engineering & Science University	Present	http://www.becs.ac.in/library.html
12.	The West Bengal National University of Juridical Science	Present	http://www.nujs.edu/nujs-library.html
13.	The West Bengal University of Health Sciences	Absent	X
14.	Uttar Banga Krishi Vishwavidyalaya	Absent	http://www.ubkv.ac.in/library.htm
15.	Vidya Sagar University	Present	http://vidyasagar.ac.in/library/
16.	West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences	Present	http://wbuafscl.ac.in/library/index.html
17.	West Bengal University of Technology	Absent	X
18.	West Bengal State University	Absent	X
Central	**University**		
1.	Visva Bharati	Present	http://www.visva-bharati.ac.in/Library/Library.htm
Institutes of National Importance			
1.	Indian Institute of Technology	Present	http://www.library.iitkgp.ernet.in/
2.	Indian Statistical Institute	Present	http://www.isical.ac.in/~library/
3.	National Institute of Technology	Present	http://www.nitdgp.ac.in/ Central_ Library170509/ NIT_DGP_ Central_Library_1st_page.htm

Table 3. Status of application of different web 2.0 tools in library webpage

	Name of university/institutes	Application of Web 2.0 tools present/absent	Name of Web 2.0 tools used
State	**Universities**		
1.	Aliah University	Absent	X
2.	Bidhan Chandra Krishi Vishwavidyalaya	Absent	X
3.	Burdwan University	Absent	X
4.	Calcutta University	Absent	X
5.	Jadavpur University	Absent	X
6.	Kalyani University	Absent	X
7.	Rabindra Bharati University	Absent	X
8.	The Bengal Engineering & Science University	Absent	X
9.	The West Bengal National University of Juridical Science	Absent	X
10.	Vidya Sagar University	Absent	X
11.	West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences	Absent	X
Central	**University**		
1.	Visva Bharati	Absent	X
Institutes of National Importance			
1.	Indian Institute of Technology	Present	Blog, RSS
2.	Indian Statistical Institute	Present	RSS feed, iGoogle, MyYahoo
3.	National Institute of Technology	Absent	X

6.1 Web 2.0 Tools Used

The URLs of the blog and RSS used by Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur are as follows:

Blog—http://www.library.iitkgp. ernet.in/?q=blog/1. This blog was last updated on 17/05/2010.

RSS feed to the above blog is http://www.libr ary.iitkgp.ernet.in/?q=blog/ 1/feed

Central library RSS—http://library.iitkgp.ernet.in/ ?q=rss.xml. On clicking the RSS icon 'requested URL could not be retrieved' message was shown.

Indian Statistical Institute has subscribed to RSS feed of the free dictionary with the URL link as follows: http:// www.thefreedictionary.com/_/WoD/rss.aspx. ISI is also using iGoogle widget and link to MyYahoo which is a customisable webpage with multiple features.

7. ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED DATA

- It is clear from table that there are altogether 18 UGC-recognised state universities in West Bengal, of which Calcutta University is the oldest (established in the year 1857). Netaji Subhas Open University is the only open university in the state. There is one central university, namely, Visva Bharati and three other institutes of national importance (Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur; Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata; and National Institute of Technology, Durgapur).

- Out of 18 state universities five universities do not have any dedicated library webpage, though these universities maintain and update their official websites regularly. North Bengal University does not have any dedicated library webpage but very brief information regarding library can be accessed through the 'facility.html' file. Uttar Banga Krishi Vishwavidyalaya has library link but on clicking the link, the URL (http:/ /www.ubkv.ac.in/library.htm) could not be retrieved (404 Not Found error).

- None of the 11 state universities maintaining their library webpage, has so far applied Web 2.0 tools. Visva Bharati, the only Central University in West Bengal, is no different from them. National Institute of Technology, Durgapur, though is an Institute of National Importance specialising in engineering and technology yet has shown indifference to the application of Web 2.0 tools in library webpage.

- Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur and Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, have applied Web 2.0 tools in their corresponding library webpages. Indian Institute of Technology was noticed to be using 'Blog' and 'RSS' whereas Indian Statistical Institute was seen to be using 'RSS feed', 'iGoogle', and 'MyYahoo'. IIT, Kharagpur library blog was last updated on 17/05/2010 and no other further activity till date. Therefore, it is clear that the potentiality of the blog in the library has not been explored in its full extent so far. There was a RSS icon on library homepage but it remained non-functional as clicking the icon could not retrieve the desired URL. On the other, hand ISI appeared to be experimenting with different Web 2.0 tools such as RSS feed from 'the free dictionary' featuring 'word of the day', 'article of the day', 'spelling bee', etc. ISI also at length discussed about utility of various Web 2.0 tools under the link 'Library Widget' for users.

8. CONCLUSIONS

A dismal picture of West Bengal regarding application of Web 2.0 technology and tools in library webpages of universities and institutes of national importance has been revealed. Now is the time to give a, serious thought as to what could have prevented the University libraries to use Web 2.0 tools. Was it due to lack of awareness? Were they much interested to maintain status quo? Whether they were facing shortage of manpower or could not gain proper expertise in due course of time in this particular segment? Did any bureaucratic hurdle hold them back? Are the students and scholarly community of West Bengal not aware of the advantages of Web 2.0 technology?

To answer these queries a survey of much bigger magnitude is required. To keep pace with the citizens of networked environment and to thwart the possibility of social isolation, universities of West Bengal need to gear up to implement those myriad applications of Web 2.0 technologies.

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