

ABSTRACT :

The right career advice can help a person to choose a career to suit individual personality as well as his aspirations. College libraries can contribute much towards providing career information services. Web 2.0 is the best medium to interact with youth and to know their changing expectations from academic libraries. The present case study of Asmita college library highlights the role played by the library in career guidance activities through the use of a blog to provide innovative career information services.

Keywords: Career Blog, Web 2.0, College Libraries, Innovative Practices, Career Information Services

Introduction :

Libraries serve an important role in society – to help people orientate in our modern information society. If people read and seek information, the culture will live on. The purpose of libraries is to help people be informed and thereby better able to manage in their lives. College libraries mainly serve youth. Such youth community needs skills like the ability to communicate and get along with people and the ability to think ahead besides acquiring academic qualifications. The twenty first century dawned with major transformations in the structure of work and careers and the job market. In an academic institution, the library is the focal point where staff and students are energized and empowered with knowledge. Libraries ought to extend their support in all spheres of knowledge and by providing career information in the library it will be helping the users to have an aim in their lives. It is necessary to provide career information literacy to the graduates so that they will be equipped with the knowledge about how to seek, evaluate and select career information and this may lead to better decision making for the quality of their future life.

The right career advice can help a person to choose a career to suit individual personality as well as his aspirations. While doing career search it is imperative to have the correct career information. According to Sinz "It is extremely important for colleges to offer career guidance aimed to help students make more informed and consequently better educational and career choices." College libraries can contribute much towards the career guidance programs as the library is in a unique position to collect, organize, retrieve and disseminate career information material to users.

The advent of the internet has not only revolutionized the way academic libraries collect and disseminate information but also redefine users expectations from the libraries to change the way of providing library services. Web 2.0 is the best medium to interact with youth and to know their changing expectations from academic libraries. The present case study of Asmita college library highlights the role played by the library in career guidance activities using web 2.0 tool. Asmita College is a women's college of arts and commerce faculty till graduation. Asmita college library started providing career information services from the year 2010.

Review of Literature :

The blog has already enjoyed a short but successful history in education. It has been heralded as a transformational tool for teaching and learning (Anderson & Kanuka; Williams & Jacobs, 2004) and as a disruptive technology (Kop, 2007).

Blogs have been used for a variety of purposes in teacher education, as a means of generating elements of work-based electronic portfolios (Chuang, 2008), and as a way of promoting peer support and peer learning (Hall & Davison, 2007). Their use has been evaluated favourably across a diverse range of educational settings, including clinical education (Kamel Boubs, Maramba, & Wheeler, 2006), postsecondary education (Leslie & Murphy, 2008), higher education in general (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006) and in more informal learning settings (Stefanone & Jang, 2008). As an evolving form of social software, the functionality of the blog has gradually extended beyond simple online reflective diaries, offering readers the opportunity to interact with the writer through the posting of comments directly to the blog within a likened community (Luehmann & Tinelli, 2008). Blogs also have an archive feature where a history of posts is presented in reverse chronology, providing users access to a complete record of what has gone before. The hypertextual dimension of the blog should not go unmentioned. The ability to embed hyperlinks, hypemedia (such as video and audio), and images into the blog also serves to enrich the content generation options of the writer. Although blogs are generally used to reflect personal opinions, they have communication with others at the centre of their purpose (Kop, 2007) and are therefore potentially powerful dialogic tools. They promote learning through collaboration, and the sharing of knowledge and best practice (Hramiak, Boulton, & Irwin, 2009; Ojala, 2005). Finally, blogs encourage deep and continuous learning through regular reflection and through knowledge management (O'Donnell, 2006). Reflective journal writing and peer feedback, both of which are achievable through blogging, may also enable teachers to detect barriers to good practice. Reflective writing helps them to change their teaching beliefs and so implement strategies that promote transformative teaching (Sokman & Shama, 2008). Thus, reflection on practice can make change possible, and provides practitioners with the information required to "develop guidelines for setting new needs, goals, and plans" (Yang, 2009, p. 11). Several criticisms have been levelled against blogging as a learning tool, but in comparison to the benefits that are cited these could be considered significantly lower in magnitude. Kerr (2006), for example, suggests that reverse chronological ordering of entries can run counter to good scholarship. Bernan (2006) warns that blogging can become obsessive and addictive for some students, distracting them from the real business of study, while Smith (2006) argues that the brevity of most blog posts precludes any real academic value from being found in their content. From an examination of the preceding review, such objections may appear trivial, and it appears that the benefits of blogging for student teachers outweigh any disadvantages that may be perceived. By far the most serious problem would seem to be the loss of interest and impetus experienced by many bloggers who start off with good intentions of posting regular entries, but whose enthusiasm tails off after a short while (Kamel Boubs et al., 2006). Wolf (2010) reviews the effectiveness of blogs within the context of a compulsory final year placement unit for public relations students. The results of the study indicated that the introduction of the Reflective Blog was a successful, particularly in the context of an individual tuition unit, by effectively shifting the focus away from textbook and teacher-centric education, to interactive peer to peer learning opportunities.

Methodology:

Design thinking is an approach or a mindset which can help us to solve everyday challenges at the library. In case of Amrita College library, we thought about the innovative practices which can be evolved and adopted by the library to provide ground-breaking career information services. The steps we had taken to solve our problem and to provide innovative services unexpectedly fall under design thinking approach.

While planning we thought more about the blog design and how we can make it better on the next iteration. The problem was mostly with executing an image design that will work on all devices and screen resolutions. After several times experimentation, we solved the issue with imagery by fixing a 4:2 ratio and keep the ratio consistent as it scales from the smallest mobile @ media width up to the largest. At the largest resolution sizes, the image height could possibly push the title below the fold but that will be only 1% of the population. It's best to provide the best viewing experience for 99% of the population than to appease the 1%. This would allow us to move the image back above the title and provide a much

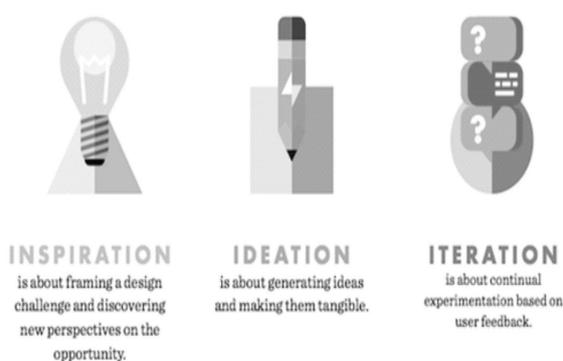
better and more visually appealing experience for the reader.

In case of layout of the blog magazine formats give more emphasis to images, separating individual posts or categories and highlighting interactions, but risk turning a blog into, well, a magazine. In contrast, journal layouts highlight the most recent content and present a more monumental mood. While designing layout of the blog we decided to use the journal layout format.

The quality of the content matters, how frequently you post and update that content is vitally important, too. Balancing the relationship between quality and frequency is critical. After a brainstorming session, we decided to update our blog at least monthly to keep it live and active.

Design Thinking is an innovation methodology – a set of principles, tools and a process for innovating. What's really cool about design, among so many things, are the principles that underpin it – Customer Centricity, Empathy, Curiosity. Design Thinking unleashes creativity in us – it calls upon us to connect deeply with others – our customers – so that we are compelled to create something that will amaze our viewers of blog.

Design Thinking approach mainly focuses on Inspiration, Ideation, and Iteration.



Inspiration :

Many students were used to visiting the library to acquire career information. Librarian used to provide personal guidance to them about different career alternatives available for them and used to inform them about different competitive examinations and campus placement events organized on the college campus. But it was very difficult to be in touch with students regularly on a personal level to inform them about all the events and schedules of competitive examinations and campus placement events. To communicate with a pass out students was much more difficult until the year 2014.

Till 2014 we were providing the career associated information only through the library notice board. Students were used to visiting the library to know about the upcoming career events and schedules of upcoming competitive examinations. It was very difficult for the pass out students to visit the library frequently. We, as a library staff members were thinking about how to approach all the students to provide career-related information.

Following were several questions which described our challenge or objectives:

How might we can approach students immediately to inform them about current activities and notifications regarding career events?

How might we can inform students about schedules of upcoming competitive examinations and career events in the college?

How might we can provide career information service cost effectively?

How might we can approach pass out students to facilitate career information service?

Ideation :

Three members were selected as a group to have a brainstorming session to think about innovative practices to provide career information services. SWOT analysis revealed the following points;

Strengths:

- a) Students eagerness to know different career alternatives.

Opportunities:

- a) Youth's preference for social media.
- b) One of the best things about blogs is that many blogging programs are either free or inexpensive to use.

Weaknesses:

- a) Difficult to organize grooming sessions frequently regarding career awareness during regular lecture schedules.
- b) Difficult to organize grooming sessions for entire student's population together.
- c) Difficult to approach pass out students.

Threats:

- a) Limited budget allocation.
- b) Every notification can't be published on college website as the institutional website is static.

Different ideas were generated through the brainstorming session. All the ideas were jotted down on paper. Through this brainstorming session, an idea of creating a career blog was put forth which was finally accepted by all the members of the group. Following are the reasons behind accepting an idea of creating a career blog:

- 1) Social media more preferred by the young generation.
- 2) Preparing a blog as a social media tool will be cost effective.
- 3) Users can access this blog anytime from remote places.
- 4) We were able to approach and communicate with all our students including pass out students through this blog.
- 5) Updating of the blog is quite simple.

Iteration :

Amrita College career blog provides following services.

- A) **Updating of monthly Job recruitments:** We provide updates of Job recruitments monthly through the career blog.

The information for this is collected from other sites on



- B) **exam inations:** We publish alerts and schedules of different competitive exam inations to update our students about

the schedules of upcoming competitive examinations on the home page of our blog.

C) **Descriptive information about competitive examinations:** We publish detail information about different competitive examinations such as TO FEL, NET/SET,



E)

F)

with public programs and reports about these events.

G) **Page views statistics:** As librarians, we need the statistics

of the visitors. Blogs provide the facility to highlight the total



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librarians have only used a variety of methods for getting

information about the library out to our communities – new newsletters, alerts, emails, posters and flyers and more.

Using a blog offers the opportunity to innovate your communications. Blogging not only gives you a way to push information out but also to gather feedback and build a community without having the very much technical know-how. Librarians have had to learn how to do a lot with just a little in order to promote awareness of their programs and services. They have seized the opportunities to market libraries in the real world via traditional media: newspapers, corporate newsletters, radio, and TV. Many libraries produce brochures, pathfinders, and their own newsletters. So, it is no surprise to see librarians stepping up to the plate and spreading the word online with blogs. Savvy librarians have identified blogs as another means to market libraries and their services. Promoting your library's services, resources, and programs online can be a lot easier with the help of a blog. A great library blog requires three ingredients: inspiration, motivation, and dedication. Inspiration is that moment when your new marketing idea meshes perfectly with a blog as the delivery vehicle. Motivation is the energy to put good ideas into practice and helps launch the new blog. Dedication is what comes next. It's the hard work that keeps the blog updated with pithy, lively posts on a constant basis. Thus, blogs can be very effective tools for reaching online audiences.

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