Use of Online Platforms for Research Visibility amongst Academic Librarians in Maharashtra

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Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of the present research work is to look into how academic library professionals in Maharashtra use online platforms to make their research more visible.

Methodology

The study used an online surveying technique. To gather information from responders using the Google form, a questionnaire was created. Information was gathered from seventy one academic librarians within Maharashtra.

Findings

The results show that the majority of college librarians have an academic network profile, have joined ResearchGate, and have registered on Google Scholar. The platforms with the fewest profiles include Vidwan, Web of Science, ORCID, and Scopus. SSRN has the fewest profiles of any platform. But most librarians use Sci-hub and DOAJ to find papers and read them in full. According to most academic librarians, author profiles on various online platforms have several benefits, including drawing more attention to the author and their work, increasing the number of people who read their papers, expanding the audience for their articles, and even attracting funding for future research. According to the qualitative research, the most common strategies to boost one's exposure among librarians include publishing in open access journals, building a Google Scholar profile, being a member of the ResearchGate and academia networks, and publishing in publications that are indexed and abstracted. It has also come to light that there are a number of obstacles to creating a profile on these platforms, including the following: network issues, a lack of institutional motivation, librarians' lack of interest, and the unavailability of institutional e-mail.Further it was found that very few academic institutions are registered members of IRINS (Indian Research Information Network System) from Maharashtra.

Research Implication

This research will be useful in getting academic library staff to recognise the importance of academics registering their online presence via profile creation and publishing linkages. The significance of publicly available articles throughout the world will rise, and academic grading will undoubtedly improve, thanks to these platforms.

Originality value

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The findings of this study will be useful in persuading university library staff to support researchers in creating an online profile and tying their publications to it. Both the academic grading process and the significance of publicly available papers will undoubtedly be improved by these platforms.

Keywords: Academic Librarians, Citations, Online Platforms, Research Visibility, Research accessibility, Research communities.

1. Introduction

Rapid growth of published information has resulted in information explosion. Hence sheer publication of research is not a last step for any researcher or author. The next step for them is to make easy to find and discoverable. Visibility of a research work is essential to increase citations and for future collaboration opportunities. The way researchers share their work and their results differs across disciplines and across institutions.

Technological advancements resulted in drastic change in the process of information accumulation, storage and dissemination in case of libraries. These differences have a significant impact on the way library professionals, as well as researchers, view the adoption of new ICT technologies to make their work visible.As the knowledge centre of an institution, the academic library assists and fosters the quality of research. According to (Baxter et al.,1998) research has a fundamental academic role in the educational sector. Publication of research has been emphasized in academic norms as of late. Research in any field establishes benchmarks for improvement and boosts the profile and standing of the institution. Individual employees also stand to gain from this in terms of advancing their careers, making a positive impact on society, establishing themselves as authorities in their fields, and gaining a reputation for excellence. An institution's researcher plays a crucial role. An academic's research activities increase the profile of their university and foster cooperation with other organizations. Insights gained from research have an effect far beyond the confines of academic institutions; they permeate whole communities, inspiring fresh perspectives and even new ways of thinking. ICT and advancement in publishing technology is persistent to develop which results in adopting and facilitating new services and capabilities in case of libraries. The purpose of the present research work is to look into how academic library professionals in Maharashtra use online platforms to make their research more visible along with the visibility of their academic institutions.

2. Literature Review

Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID), online research networks, and blogs are just a few of the freelance publishing platforms made available by the internet. Facebook, LinkedIn, Blogs, Kudos, Google Scholar, ORCID, ResearchGate, Academia, and Twitter were

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all recognised by (Tripathy et al., 2017) as key methods for making research discoveries more visible.

The conventional method of determining an author's influence, as stated by (Bar-Ilan et al., 2012), relies on the frequency with which their name appears in the reference lists of scientific papers; this information may be discovered in academic databases. However at present with the availability of Google Scholar and Google Scholar Citations, authors can create their profile along with the bibliographic details of their publications which are accessible in public domains. Google Scholar Citations is another way that Google helps with measurements like h-index and i10 index. According to (Heller, 2015) an open-access journal's higher profile can expedite the process of gaining international recognition and making a scientific effect. Collaboration and citation rates rise when these conditions are met.

In order to address the new demands of researchers and to ensure that research findings are broadly disseminated, libraries play an increasingly important role in supporting research across all disciplines. So, in this technological age, librarians and information science professionals have a lot on their plates. They need to keep up with the times by adopting new services and products and participating in exciting new activities. Researchers can benefit greatly from technology, which allows them to conduct high-quality research that attracts more attention and funding. Therefore, academic information experts in Maharashtra are going to look at how they use internet platforms to make their research visible.

3. Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the strategies employed by academic library staff in Maharashtra to increase the visibility of their research through the usage of various internet platforms. In order to achieve the study's aim, the following objectives have been set.

I.   To explore the qualification and contributions to research work by academic library professionals in Maharashtra
II. To discover the involvement of academic library professionals in Maharashtra in various online platforms
III. To discover the engagement of academic library professionals in Maharashtra in various Online Research Communities
IV. To study the advantages of having a public profile in the online platforms

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V.   To learn the challenges faced library professionals in Maharashtra while creating an online presence.

4.   Data Analysis and interpretation
4.1 Qualification and contributions to research work

An academic library as knowledge provider plays a vital role in promoting research as well as in highlighting the research output of an institution through online platforms. In order to increase the visibility of research of their own as well as of their institution, and at the same time support the quality of research, qualified and learned library professionals are making use of the available technologies, for the distribution of scholarly information.To explore the scenario of Maharashtra, questions were asked to academic library professionals about their highest qualifications and the number of research publications. As compared to undergraduate courses library professionals who have already completed their post graduate as well as M. Phil., Ph D degrees will be apparently involved more in research activities.

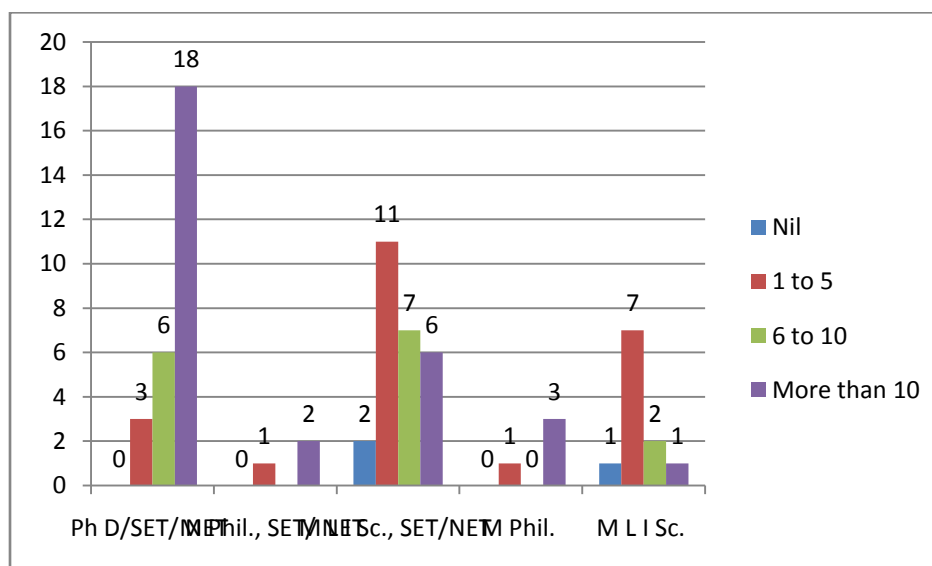**Figure 1: Qualification and the number of published research papers**

Figure 1 highlights library professionals with Ph D degree given highest contribution to the research paper publications as compared to PG and M. Phil degrees.
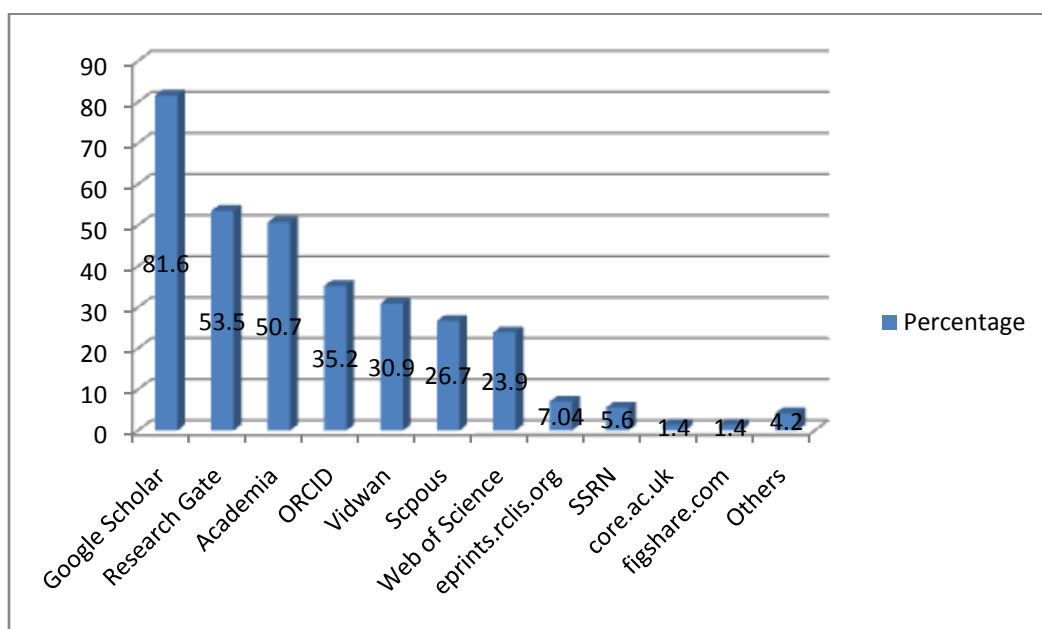
4.2 Profile in various online platforms

Previous work on establishing visibility has focused on web presence, such as having a homepage, a LinkedIn account, a Google scholar citation account, and a twitter account.

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However new social media platforms are cropping up that provide alternate methods to see how influential and visible authors are. (Bar-Ilan, et al. 2012).In order to promote and highlight the research output of the institution, library professionals should be aware and have a profile in various emerging online platforms. Hence the question was raised about having a profile in different online platforms through multiple choice alternatives.

The results showed that 38 respondents (53.5%) had a ResearchGate profile and the majority (58: 81.6% of the total) reported that they had a Google Scholar profile (Figure 2). A total of 36 individuals, or 50.7%, had an academic profile. The online profile with the least profile noted were ORCID 25 (35.2%), Vidwan 22 (30.9%), Scopus 19 (26.7), Web of Science 17 (23.9%), eprints.rclis.org 5 (7.04%) and Social Science Research Network 4 (5.6%). Core and Figshare profile was created only by a single librarian (1.4%).

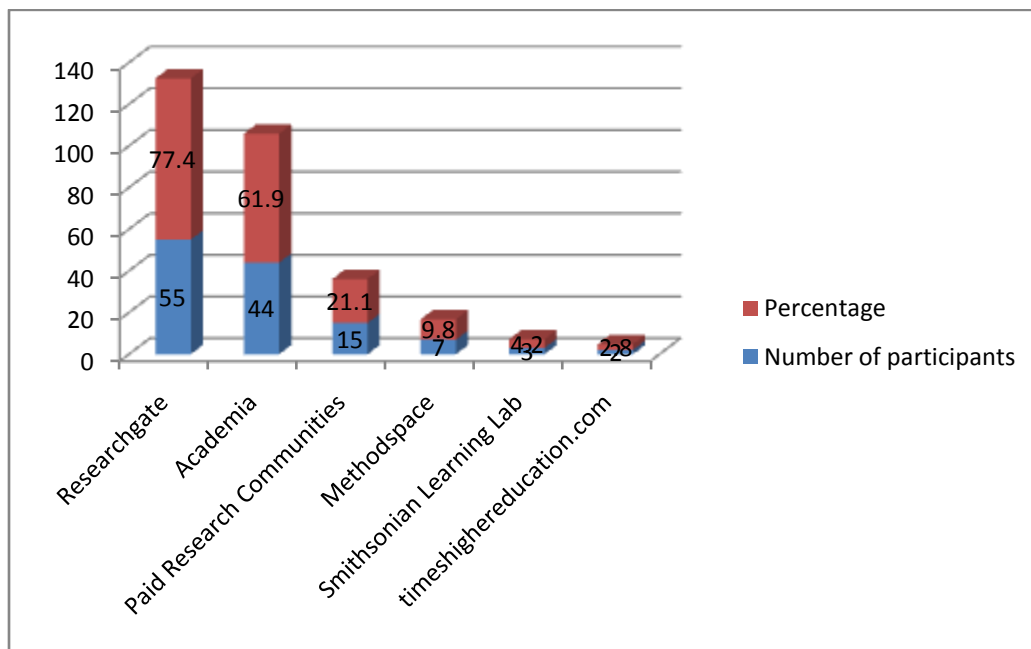**Figure 2: Librarians and profile in online platforms**

Libraries with the goal of sharing knowledge have been replaced by new ways to share scientific research results, like social networks, research social networks, and institutional repositories. Hence it was further asked to the librarians that which are the online platforms they had used to access full-text research papers excluding google scholar, researchgate and academia without creating a profile for browsing and searching. The findings indicated that maximum librarians used Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)

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55 (77.4%), followed by Sci-Hub 30 (42.2%) and Mendeley Research Network 28 (39.4%) for accessing full-text research papers.

4.3 Engagement in Online Research Communities

Online research communities are becoming increasingly useful and popular due to collaborative research. These communities enable researchers to share their ideas, to receive research guidance from the experts and to involve in collaborative research through online forums by creating a profile in such research communities. Hence the engagement of academic library professionals in online research communities was explored.

Figure 3:Engagement in Online Research Communities of academic Library Processionals

Finding from Figure 3 highlights that maximum that is 55(77.4%) library professionals are engaged in accessing and using Researchgate, followed by Academia 44(61.9%). Very few library professionals are using paid research communities. The figure indicates many librarians are not aware about other research communities like Methodspace, Smithsonian Learning Lab and timeshighereducation.com.

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4.4 Benefits of having a public profile in the online platforms

According to Table 1, the vast majority of respondents (70 out of 98.6%) believe that having accounts on different platforms allows them to research and keep up-to-date on the literature. In addition, the vast majority of respondents (67 out of 94.4%), agree or strongly agree, that author recognition is a direct result of having a presence on an online platform. In addition, over 90% of those who took the survey agree or strongly agree that an author's presence on an internet platform affects their position in academic rankings. Creating a profile on an online platform boosts readership and accessibility of the publications, according to the maximum number of respondents (70: 98.6%). An overwhelming majority of respondents (67 out of 94, or 94.4% of the total) believe that increasing one's visibility online increases the likelihood that one's work will be mentioned in subsequent works.

Table 1. Perceived Benefits of having a public profile in the online platforms

Perceived Benefits	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
To explore the literature and update yourself	42(59.2%)	28(39.4%)	1(1.4%)	0	0
Brings recognition to the author	43(60.6%)	24(33.8%)	4(5.6%)	0	0
It influences author's institutional ranking	30(42.2%)	33(46.5%)	7(9.9%)	1(1.4%)	0
It increases readership and accessibility of the papers	43(60.5%)	27(38.1%)	1(1.4%)	0	0
It promotes in getting cited by other authors and researchers	40(56.3%)	27(38.1%)	4(5.6%)	0	0

According to Table 1, most Maharashtra library professionals understand the value of using the internet to disseminate research.

4.5 Difficulties associated with creating a profile on online platforms

Table 2 shows that 54.7% of respondents agree or strongly agree that it is difficult to create a profile on online platforms due to the lack of institutional domain email. That institutional domain e-mail being unavailable was a big obstacle to building a profile on numerous online sites, including Google Scholar, Researchgate, ORCID, and many more.

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The majority of respondents (46 out of 64.8%, or 64.8% of the total) do not know about the many internet platforms that are available to them. Beyond that, 36 out of 100 respondents (or 50.7% of the total) said they were unsure of how to make a profile on these sites. It shows the need of conducting workshops or seminars for the awareness about availability of different online platforms and the need of hands-on training for creating profiles on such online platforms.

Creation and availability of institutional repository to deposit own publications are one of the important ways to increase visibility. The absence of institutional impetus to develop an institutional repository was cited by more than half of the respondents (37: 52.2%).

Sharing our own research papers and articles in full-text form will lead automatically in increasing research visibility and accessibility. The more the research will be visible and accessible the more citations will be gained by the researcher. Hence willingness of library professionals to share self-publications in full-text form was explored. However more than half (38: 53.6%) of the respondents replied their unwillingness to share self-publications in full-text form.

Table 2: Difficulties associated with creating a profile on online platforms

Difficulties associated with creating a profile on online platforms	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Unavailability of institutional domain e-mail	21(29.6%)	32(45.1%)	11(15.5%)	3 (4.2%)	4 (5.6%)
Not aware about availability of different online platforms	16(22.5%)	30(42.3%)	12(16.10%)	4(5.6%)	9(12.6%)
Unaware about how to create profile on these platforms	9(12.6%)	27(38.1%)	16(22.5%)	7(9.9%)	12(16.9%)
Lack of motivation from the institution to create institutional repository	15(21.2%)	22(31%)	17(24%)	9(12.6%)	8(11.2%)
Unwillingness to share self-publications in full-text form	10(14.10%)	28(39.5%)	15(21.1%)	8(11.2%)	10(14.10%)

4.6 Practices and ways implemented to increase the visibility of own and institutional publications by the academic librarians in Maharashtra

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The practices and different ways to increase visibility implemented by some of the respondents (21: 29.5%) as an academic librarians in Maharashtra were preference to publish research papers in an open access and indexed journals by Scopus or Web of Science, creation of institutional repository and publication portal for sharing of knowledge to update their profile on the online platform and updated research tab on college website and use of different social media platforms for sharing publications. Very few of respondents (2: 2.8%) replied that they were associated as a Nodal officer of Vidwan and IRINS to share their institutional publications.

5. Findings and Discussion

The majority of college librarians have signed up for Google Scholar and are active members of networks like ResearchGate and academia network, according to the data. The platforms with the fewest profiles include Vidwan, Web of Science, ORCID, and Scopus. SSRN has the fewest profiles of any platform. But most librarians use Sci-hub and DOAJ to find papers and read them in full. According to most academic librarians, author profiles on various online platforms have several benefits, including drawing more attention to the author and their work, increasing the number of people who read their papers, expanding the audience for their articles, and even attracting funding for future research. According to the qualitative research, the most common strategies to boost one's exposure among librarians include publishing in open access journals, building a Google Scholar profile, being a member of the ResearchGate and academia networks, and publishing in publications that are indexed and abstracted. Also, it became clear that there are a lot of obstacles to creating a profile on these platforms, such as the institution's lack of motivation, network issues, librarians' lack of interest, and the unavailability of institutional e-mail..Further it was found that a very few academic institutions are registered members of Vidwan andIRINS (Indian Research Information Network System) from Maharashtra. Rather majority of respondents were unaware about Vidwan, IRINS, SSRN, Core, Figshare and e-prints. Hence there is a need of conducting workshops or seminars for the awareness about availability of different online platforms and the need of hands-on training for creating profiles on various online platforms like Google Scholar, ResearchGate academia, ORCID, Scopus, Web of Science, Vidwan, IRINS, SSRN, Core, Figshare and eprints.rclis.org.

6. Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the observations analysis and findings followings suggestions and recommendations were provided:

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- Need of conducting workshops or seminars for the awareness about availability of different online platforms.
- Encourage library professionals for the development and updation of institutional repositories.
- **Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre created IRINS, a web-based Research Information Management (RIM) tool. Academic institutions, research and development organizations, faculty members, and scientists can all use the site to build scholarly networks and share and exhibit scholarly communication initiatives. The IRINS may be accessed by research and academic institutions in India using a free SaaS model. In order to consume scholarly publications from a variety of sources, it has merged with academic identities such as ORCID, Scopus, Research ID, Microsoft Academic ID, and Google Scholar ID.**
- **VIDWAN is the most comprehensive database of Indian academic institutions, research institutes, and other organizations that employ scientists, researchers, and faculty members for teaching and research purposes.**
- Strengthening the domestic research community and keeping up with scientific breakthroughs require increased international engagement and collaboration in research.
- College librarians and universities in India should promote registration and use of Vidwan and IRINS for sharing knowledge and research publications.

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