

## **Library Websites as Source of Marketing of Library Resources: An Empirical Study of HEC Recognized Universities of Pakistan**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this paper is to analyze the current status of the university libraries in Pakistan. It is focused particularly on HEC recognized public and private sector universities. This paper will describe that at what extent libraries of the universities are relying on the website for communication with the student and for marketing purpose. For analysis in this study university library websites are extensively reviewed to gather the required information in accordance with the described feature. Total of 148 universities sites are reviewed which were further divided on the basis of direct and indirect link of the web sites. Libraries websites were examined by the authors to gather the information regarding their use as a tool of marketing towards the students. This study identified that universities library websites are not fully developed in terms of using them as a marketing tool. This study also reveals that these websites have lack of information and also don't have collaborative interface with the users so that they can directly communicate with the end users and get the feedback for further enhancement in the technological development of the library. Finding of this study is limited to the universities that were recognized with the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. It is difficult to generalize the result in other regions. This paper will be a step forward for the libraries to use the website as a marketing tool so that the libraries enhance their image by increasing their promotion and advertisement. This study will be helpful for the libraries in Pakistan. Common libraries also use this research finding to increase their users.

**Keywords:** Information Service, Higher Education of Pakistan, Marketing, Library Websites,

### **1. Introduction**

Service provided by the libraries in the educational institutions or for the students is becoming very important in this rapid technological and innovative

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Received: 19.2.2016 Accepted: 21.3.2016

ISSN 2241-1925

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enhancement era. Marketing of these services enhance the awareness of the services provided in the libraries (Kaur, 2009).

Marketing is an essential part of delivering any kind of services because it creates need for the user so that they can avail the product. In this time of digitalization many of the libraries provide very innovative tools to make the education easy for the higher education students. Increasing the awareness of the values and satisfaction provided by the libraries is enhanced by mean of their marketing to the target audience which provides them complete information regarding the technology used in the particular library (Massis, 2014).

On the other hand the competitiveness and acceptance of the technology increase the demand by the user population and also increase the challenges for libraries (Smaly Kim Wu, 2015). Interest of user in information technology services and products has been increased with the passage of time due to the revolution in the globalization prospective of the information system that enhances the capacity of privatization of this industry and also increases the marketing capacity which ultimately increases the awareness of these product and services by the users (Booth, 1993).

Needs and wants of the library user is increase and they also raise the bar of their expectation from the library systems which ultimately transform these users into customer. Library management must keep in view the advertising and promotion prospective of their services. Collection of the books, staff and installed technology is not the bigger challenge for the management of libraries but the main focus is the transformation of the resources into usable services which attract the users (Sootheran, 2014). By the origination of these demands of the users, marketing concept is launched in the libraries.

It is identified by the libraries that by using the marketing principles and techniques libraries can better understand there customer need and wants and also justify the principle funding and the relationship with the external audience is also increased and the delivery of the product and services is also increased (Anwarul Islam & Jaber Hossain, 2014). Electronic journals are the main product provided by the libraries online. Traditionally literature has been searched by hard hand books but with the passage of time technological tools were launched in the libraries. Electronic journals are the main product of the libraries that were used by the consumers very intensively now days. In previous years libraries are tries to become leaders for the open access movements (Steele, 2014).

Free of charge and digital literature available on line is consider being the open access product of the libraries. Copyrights and licensing restriction is the main focus of the libraries that are very highlighted by the libraries as competitive advantage provided to there customers. Being user of open access product line libraries are becoming information creator in digital format that has been used by the consumers and manager of the information. In this era, libraries are highlighted there ability to provide open access to the users (Smaly Kim Wu, 2015). Better coordination and collaboration is required by the libraries in the

university to enhance the ultimate productivity which is increased by the growth of the information and communication technology (Brewerton, 2003).

Needs of the users is fulfilled by the universities by providing them traditional and innovative services which help them to gather all the information in one platform to increase the overall productivity. Libraries of the higher education institutions are not the container for the knowledge but they are the common place of the learning and also a flexible education organization which provide and deliver new services to the users Pinar, Trapp, Girard, & Boyt, 2011).

As the education institute enhance the capability and options in the majors the use of the libraries is also enhanced which increase the use of the libraries. Common libraries in the universities enhance the knowledge delivery by increasing the digital link capacity in the internet site of the library so that the user can access them from anywhere. To fulfill the need of the users, libraries increase the outreach of their digital system by increasing the access point for the users and also increase the information provide on their website(Kaur, 2009). Most of the libraries use their website as a tool of promotion for the users of libraries. By these mean libraries are achieving their goals very easily and this also increasing their performance. These collaboration initiatives play a vital role in providing the information the student, researchers and teachers which maximize their interaction ultimately. In the online environment this collaboration has very big advantages because of the increase in the usage of the website the use of the libraries is increased because the student have access for these libraries even from there home so the collaboration time is increased (Ullah, 2015).

This study is conducted to review the effort govern by the Higher education universities libraries in Pakistan for providing the services to the student through their website and also use websites as a tool for advertising and promoting. This study will also show that how principle of the marketing is used in university library services.

## **2. Research Question**

The objectives of the study are the following.

- RO1: Study the current status of universities library websites in Pakistan for promotion and advertisement activities.
- RO2: Examination and analysis of the library website of the universities in Pakistan.

## **3. Research Objectives**

To achieve the above objectives this study will find the answers of the following questions.

- RQ1: What is the present status of the library websites in Pakistan?
- RQ2: What is the intensity of the utilization of websites for marketing resources and services?
- RQ3: What are the measures used for increase the usability of the websites for marketing purpose?

#### **4. Literature Review**

Efforts in the field of marketing of libraries are from long time ago. Green's in 1876 deliver a speech in library Association Convention in which he argue for the improvement of personal relation between readers and libraries. Major interest of the libraries is to market libraries and create awareness in the mind of users (David Shapiro, 2014). Mostly common and public libraries are the first in the row to originate the concept of marketing for the libraries to develop the need of the libraries in the users so that they could be used by the readers. In initial days of this concept 4 Ps – product, price, place promotion were implemented in the libraries and now a days academic libraries are the leaders in the marketing of their services (Comeaux, Schmetzke, & Comeaux, 2007).

For centuries marketers are using different strategies to satisfy their users and in this era of innovation and digitalization marketing is the main strategy for this purpose. This concept is basically originated from the business and profit sector (Kont & Jantson, 2013). In the previous year's libraries are using much strategy to provide information to the users of the library services. Libraries create attractive posters to display upcoming library events in the universities and these same posters are also used on the web sites. These library events are also advertisements are also published in newspapers and also delivered through personal contact. On one hand Google and Yahoo as popular search engine change the way of working for the libraries in creating ease for the information searching by the students.

Libraries are now providing very easy way of searching the literature (Roknuzzaman & Umemoto, 2009). Students can discover the research material from the internet sites of the libraries that can be access from any where. Librarians are now very much concern with finding new ways of advertisements through the website so that they can promote the services they were providing (Hua, Si, Zhuang, & Xing, 2015). Librarian are very much concern in using websites for promoting their library as the rate of usage is increased. Librarians are also enhancing the visibility of their libraries through internet technology that is ultimately increased in the number of users (Jefcoate, 2007). Many previous studies in the developed countries show that website is highly used for providing information regarding the libraries (Sarrafzadeh, Martin, & Hazeri, 2010). On the other end, in the developing countries use of website is not that much enhanced in this capacity and very few studies have been done in this area (Kavulya, 2004).

Libraries in the universities are at turning point. Previously, students, researchers, teachers and staff of the academic institution seeks all information from the libraries for their knowledge and academia use (Anwarul Islam & Jaber Hossain, 2014). These users visits library in routine. A library in the higher institutions is used as the container of the knowledge as well as the place for bringing international knowledge for the other world. Most of the time it is observed that the using of the marketing concept in the library enhance the user rate and also provide them suitable facilities that is also very important to achieve the organizational goals. Visibility and support is increased by mean of

the marketing efforts govern by the libraries (Moshoeshoe-Chadzingwa, 2010). By mean of the marketing of the services provided by the library user become more successful in using the technology provided in the library to meet the academic and research goals (Chen & Shen, 2006).

In context of libraries, marketing is a dual side process: one side is what library can offer to the researchers and academicians and the other side is what researcher can expect from the library to provide what kind of services that would be helpful for them (Torabi, 2011). By using the marketing strategies library are best suitable for getting achieving the academic goals and also facilitate the researchers. Some marketing activities that are initiate by the libraries are publicizing the resources; provide information to the researchers, publicizing activities, exhibition of faculty ability and service promotion (Yap & Yeo, 2007). Other means that are used for communication with the users of the libraries are press releases, exhibits, suggestion boxes, complaints, library publications, friends group, news letter, and publication outside of the library, receptions, book sales and special events (Berndt-Morris & Chrenka, 2014). Now a days these activities can be incorporated into library websites as the use of website is increased. On the other hand rapid increases in the use of digital technology increase usage of the website by the academic researchers and students and also consider being options in front of library.

Now days, as other nonprofit organization and academic institutions libraries also develop their web pages (Little, 2011). In recent years, libraries prefer to include marketing and other promoting/advertising links on their websites. Librarians are leading the way of transforming the challenges into the opportunities as the increase in the technology development in the libraries and also in the use of technology for communication with the students and researchers (Michnik, 2014). For creating virtual environment libraries use websites and also use this tool for adding value in their product and services and also communicate in two way direction. Websites are also use to collaborate with other libraries to increase the data bases. Incorporation of the technology in the libraries and take initiatives for developing websites is not done without the consent of the users, here libraries add value in their services in accordance with the need of the users( Kont & Jantson, 2013).

They also take feedback from the users for the betterment of the websites. Previously a group of researcher made an attempt by evaluating websites of 69 academic libraries to investigate the key tools and collection which is acceptable by the faculty during the usage of the website(Steele, 2014). Coding and methodology is modified in this study, they conclude that website is an important outreach place which is used by the teachers and researcher for their academic enhancement. In traditional website structure libraries are used lending, reserves, document delivery and catalog accessibility available online, libraries should use communication through open access repository which is used to explore the literature for research purpose. Without providing these services libraries take risk of getting visible to the academic community. Between 2002 and 2004 an effort is made to investigate that there should be a

chatting option on the libraries internet site so that literature services will be enhanced by mean of incorporating the expert opinions.

Previous investigations also revealed the importance of marketing concept in view of libraries and academic services because of the increase in the student population. It is also

studied that by placement of virtual reference icon on the library website can also increase the usability of the library website (Kostagiolas, Banou, & Laskari, 2009).

Many information science professional and scholar analyzed many academic libraries website previously (Ma pulanga, 2015). It is revealed in the previous studies that most of the potential user knows that how to access the library electronic resource. In previous studies it is also revealed that 34 percent of the graduate students know that university library have official websites which can be accessed from there home. Some previous studies revealed that accessing the library web site is a step by step process some websites are access in one step and some are accessed in two or three steps. Some library website have also link on the main official university website which also increase the usability of the library website (Margolis, 2011).

A report published by PEW entitled, "Value of public libraries in their communities by the American" get the data from the respondents shows that 95 percent of the respondent agree that material available in the library is very much essential for every one to succeed. They also reveal that public libraries play a very important role in academic carrier (M assis, 2014).

This study will explore the importance of website for library resources and service in Pakistan. This study will explore the use of marketing through the websites for marketing library resources and services and also discuss key issues in developing websites for effective marketing strategy. Result of this research will trigger more research in Pakistan and beyond.

## **5. Research Methodology & Design**

In the start of this research a considerable amount of literature was reviewed to develop an authentic research design which is also used in the previous studies. This study is focused on the public and private universities that were recognized by the higher education commission of Pakistan and list is given on the official website of HEC.

The first step in this research is to create the list of the features that were used to identify the current status of marketing university library resources. Based on the previous literature review and websites scanning it is decided to adapt the same features that were used by previous studies (Anwarul Islam & Jaber Hossain, 2014). These features are the visibility, general information consultation, online services, online resources and networking items shown on the websites of the library.

### ***Data collection***

Data used in this research study is secondary data gather from the website of Higher Education Commission which provides all authentic information for all

universities in Pakistan. Author of this research paper extensively analyzed all the information and develop all the data by combining the figures available on this internet site. Website of HEC is extensively visited during this study and all the information is verified by the researchers.

**Analysis**

While scanning the website of HEC Pakistan it is found that total universities are 171 in which 99 are public sector universities and 72 are private sector universities. When this list is categorize in accordance with the link availability for the libraries of the particular universities it is found that 19 public universities and 4 private universities don't have any web link for there libraries. So that these universities were omitted from the study analysis as these universities don't have web site they can't able to use this as a tool of promotion and advertisement. These adopted criteria will provide a complete picture of the library technology usage in Pakistan.

Criteria	<b>Public University Library Website (N = 99)</b>		<b>Private University Library Website (N= 72)</b>		<b>Total (171)</b>	
	No:	%	No:	%	No:	%
Direct Link	45	45.4	50	72	95	55.5
Indirect Link	27	27.27	18	25	45	26.31
No Link	19	19.19	4	5.5	23	13
English Lang	99	100	72	100	171	100

**Table 1** *Visibility of the Websites*

**Analysis and findings**

**Visibility of university library websites**

Visibility of the library website means that user access to the library electronically. In this scenario of the study this section is divided into to major category one is direct link and other is indirect link. Analysis of this study shows that 45 public universities have direct link and 27 of the public universities have indirect link on the other end private universities have 50

universities library with direct link and 25 have indirect link. These figure shows that 55.5 % of the universities have direct link and 26 % of the universities have indirect link. It shows that most of the universities are working on developing website but still they have to do lot of work. These figures are shown in Table 1.

Criteria	Public University Library Website (N = 80)		Private university Library Website (N= 68)		Total (148)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Link to newspaper News	40	50	34	50	74	50.6
Policies	35	43.75	28	41.1	63	42.56
Bulletin	80	100	68	100	148	100
Library Hours	30	37.5	20	29.4	50	33.7
New Library Collection	34	42.5	24	35.2	58	39.1
Virtual tour	10	12.5	15	22.05	35	23.64
Site map	3	3.75	5	7.3	8	5.4
Location Map	5	6.25	6	8.8	11	7.4
	2	2.5	4	5.8	6	4.0

**Table 2: General Website Information**

**General information of the university library websites**

This section of the analysis shows that how the university library website provide general information to there users. The criteria use to categorize the information provided to the users is given in Table 2. It is very important for the

libraries to provide sufficient usable amount of the information to there users so that they can use the library website for there academic purpose along with that communication tools library website will also become a tool of promotion and advertisement for the libraries. The categories used for the information analysis are links to library news, bulletin, and policies opening hour, newsletter, location and site map. This information shows that at what extent library is providing information to there users. Analysis of the websites shows that universities provide links to the news papers are 50.6 %, having news on their web site are 42.56 %, 100 % of the libraries website provide information about there polices and regulations, bulletin are provided by 33.7% of the universities provide information on the Bulletin. Information for the library hours are described by 39.1 percent universities. But on the other end virtual tour, site map and location map ratio is very low which is 5.4, 7.4 and 4.0 respectively.

***Consultation features of library website***

Table 3 describes the consultation feature of the library website. This is very important category for the identification of the marketing tool usage of the website. This part of the analysis provide information that at what extent the universities have communicating with the users through there website and what sort of the services they were providing to the users through there websites. This analysis shows that the availability of the help desk is very low on the university websites which is only 5.4 %. Library websites those which are providing links for contact are 58 percent that shows that half of the website did not provide any link for the information. 66.2 percent of the libraries are providing the staff directory and only 1.35 % the library. About 32.43 percent of the universities are providing there mission statement on the website. Only 14 percent of the universities library website provide link to the search engines and no university provide copyright documents on the websites.

Criteria	Public University Library Website (N = 80)		Private university Library Website (N= 68)		Total (148)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Help Desk	3	3.75	5	7.3	8	5.4
Direct links to contact	30	37.5	56	82	86	58
Staff directory	40	50	58	85	98	66.2
Live Support	0	0	2	2.9	2	1.35

Library mission statement	30	37.5	18	26.4	48	32.43
Link to search engine	10	12.5	12	17.6	22	14.86
Copyright document	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 3 Communication Feature for Library Websites****Web-based services**

This part of the analysis refers to the web based services provided by the libraries for the students. Table 4 shows the categories for web based services. This analysis shows that 27.02 % of the website have application form available on there page, 12.16 % of the websites provide information about the reservation of the books, renewal and request. Only 20.03 percent provide the user education on the web site and 11.48 percent of the university library websites provide facility of the user survey.

**Web-based resources**

This part of the analysis shows that how the web based resources are helpful in the academic work of the students that govern through the libraries. It shows that only 77 % of the universities library web sites have facility of OPAC and 81 percent have access to the eBooks. This analysis also shows that about 87 % of the website has the facility to the e- journals and 56 %percent have their link for electronic resources. But on the other end use of multimedia collection is very low with is just 27 % and only 25 % of the library websites have link to internet resources.

Criteria	Public University Library Website (N = 80)		Private University Library Website (N=68)		Total (148)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Application forms	20	25	20	29.41	40	27.02
Reservation/ILL	10	12.5	08	11.7	18	12.16
Renewal	10	12.5	08	11.7	18	12.16
Request	10	12.5	08	11.7	18	12.16
User Education	20	25	10	14.7	30	20.2
User Survey	10	12.5	07	10.2	17	11.48

**Table 4 Web Based Services**

Criteria	Public University Library Website (N = 80)		Private university Library Website (N= 68)		Total (148)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
OPAC	55	68.75	60	88	115	77
e. Books	80	100	40	58	120	81
e. Journals	80	100	50	73	130	87
Link of free electronic resources	40	50	43	63	83	56
Multimedia Collection	27	33.75	14	20.5	41	27
Link to internet resources	20	25	18	26	38	25

**Table 5 Web Based Resources**

### **6. Recommendations and Future Research**

This study reveals huge information after the analysis of the websites of libraries of HEC recognized universities. In this study analysis was don to that extent that the personal/ managers of libraries in Pakistan can utilize these finding and use website as a tool for promotion and advertisements of the library.

This research is based on three research questions which describe the over all working of the paper. The finding show that 13 % of the universities don't have the websites for the libraries and only 55 % of the libraries have direct link for there library websites.

It shows that most of the university did not utilize their library websites as a tool for marketing. This research revealed that public universities have more developed website instead of the private universities but on the other end the interface for the communication is not that much developed due to which the universities don't have the feedback mechanism.

This study also shows that most of the student did not utilize the technology available in the library because they did not know about it because of the lack of promotion and advertisement complains. It also shows that universities library websites don't have help desk facility due to which student don't have any communication portal for interaction.

It is suggested that parent institution should develop the library website at that extent that it could communicate to every student so that they could utilize all the technology that is available on the library website. Some of the libraries have good amount of OPAC and other electronic data available on their websites but due to ignorance of the marketing prospective of the libraries mostly student did not know the procedure of accessing all that data.

Libraries of the HEC recognize universities should take a step to develop their websites so that the entire student gets benefited and there library online access should me promoted at different levels. It is also revealed that all the languages used on the website of libraries are English and all the correspondence made between library and users is in English language. General

Information is also available on the web site but libraries should increase this information so that student or the user of the libraries can easily access all the information which they want to utilize. Correspondence should be made through the internet site so that it is very much easy for the library to develop a data base of the correspondence. In libraries web site live chat rooms and corresponding portals must be developed which also increase the research capability of the students those who are using these website.

This research can be extent further that in future researchers can analyze the web sites and identify tools required to increase the capacity of the websites to communicate with the users. This research can be further enhanced in different ways.

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**Author Note.** This paper is written for the HEC recognize university libraries to incorporate the concept of marketing in the libraries. This will enhance the awareness of the libraries in the students and also let them know about the new technology incorporation in the library services. This study will provide a great insight in the library system of HEC recognize private and public universities. Analysis in this study shows that the there is a communication gap between students and the libraries due to absence of communication portals on the internet site.