Web Marketing and its Applicability in Library and Information Services

Dr. Bedadyuti Sahoo
Dy. Librarian
KIIT Deemed to be University
Bhubaneswar-24, Odisha, India
E-mail: beda_sahoo@yahoo.co.in

Abstract-Web marketing, digital marketing and e-marketing are the recent concepts to the marketing approaches. It has been evolved back of 15 to 20 years in the fields like, teaching, research, service operations, interactions and communications. Web marketing is gaining importance in library and information centres changing traditional marketing concepts. Now-a day, Libraries are most powerful, dynamic where users easily reach out before the library and access the information without any geographical restrictions. Library professionals have to be fit and capable in providing information/digital information to the users' for their day to day usefulness. It is also a medium of approach to the better library marketing. So for this, feeling importance to the concept of web marketing and its applicability in disseminating digital information among the potential users of the library, this paper is going to be established.

Keywords: Marketing, Web Marketing, Library Information Services, Digital India, Online Resources

Introduction

According to American Marketing Associations (2004)[18], "Marketing is an Organisational function and a set of process for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organisation and its stakeholders".

Web has become an essential means in teaching, research, service operations, interactions and communications. The same is being used as a doable tool for business in the form of e-business. Web Marketing has increased the value of digital information. It has helped library professionals to mobilise the resources among the information learners building positive image among the potential users. It creates opportunities and customer focus on available library resources. So, web Marketing is the harbinger of the information seekers in this present digital era regulating traditional library structures and functions for better lucrative attention of the users'.

Literature Review

People face problems in getting all types of resources and services in the library. One of the reasons might be the staff members of the library may not market themselves effectively or it might be the lack of state-of-the-art and ambience. In this point *Shontz & et al. (2004)[21]* stated that, many librarians lack knowledge on marketing and they do not have positive thought on it. At present, the role of the Librarian needs to be increasingly called upon and be a potential researcher feeling importance on organisational resources. *Philip Kotler (2006)[17]* in his writing stated that, marketing is a means of potential exchanges for the purpose of satisfying human need and wants *(https://www.researchgate.net/).[17]*   Furthermore,

Garoufallou & et al (2013)[3] in his paper said that, technological changes have happened concerning their service development and provisions in the library. Authors lay emphasis on digital environment which is a demanding factor for users' across the globe. *Garoufallou & et al. (2013)[2]* adding to the concept of web marketing said that, marketing techniques identifies operational problems which are the key obstacles to the larger points. Majority of the academic Greek librarians realized the importance of library marketing but they have a long way to understand and adopt this concept in their service provisions. *Sumadevi (2014)[22]* stated in this concept that, Librarian should create proper environment for keeping abreast of the latest knowledge from the source to its beneficiaries in a most efficient and effective way. *Ramadevi (2018)[23]* in his study also pointed out that, staff members working in the academic library face challenges in marketing library resources and services. It is because of lack of knowledge on the concept of marketing and lack of support from the library management. Owing to the importance, web marketing methods and its related techniques will be helpful for marketing resources and information services of the library.

So, the above opinion of the diverse managerial scientists on marketing/web marketing clearly stated that, information is an inevitable factor for library users. Web marketing plays vital roles in creating awareness about the usefulness of digital resources in different possible fields like, teaching learning, research and development and other different commercial and communication purposes. So for this, the elaborative aspects of web marketing, its usability and applicability in different aspects have been ornately discussed in the succeeding parts.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are broadly examining the enormity of web marketing concepts and its usefulness in library and information services. Keeping in view, few important selected objectives of this study have been under taken in the following ways.

- To articulate realistic aspects of web marketing and its application in library and information services;
- To explain web marketing principles, techniques, tools, and strategies that would enable library professionals more competent;
- To design effectual strategies in the field of web-based business environment and library services; and
- To elucidate the use of internet and its related techniques in the field of web marketing for enhancing the visibility of library and information centres in providing rationale support to the e-business world.

Web Marketing Concepts and its usefulness in Library Services

Librarians believe on marketing of library resources and services. It is because of necessities of satisfying the needs of the users and makes the society profitable. It is an organisational function for delivering value to the customers signs a good benefit to the stakeholders. Fig.-1 tells about the basic concepts of marketing is a felt of self deprivation (*http://www.pondiuni.edu.in/*)[12] for human needs. In this regard, the following fig.-1 tells about the viable concepts of marketing for better understanding to the library marketing and web marketing for human needs.
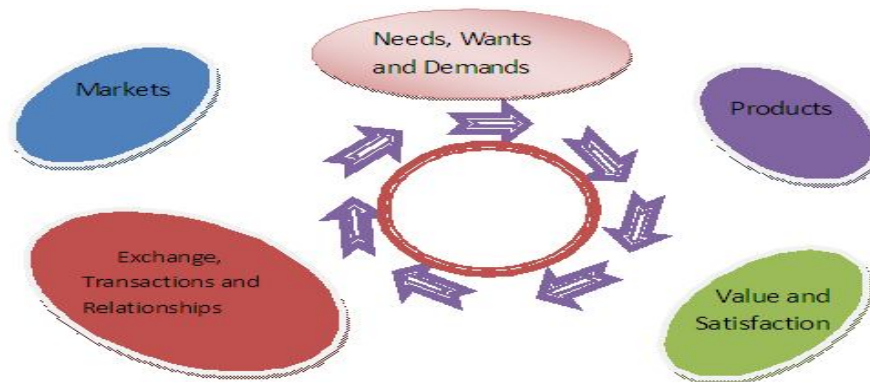
Fig.-1: Marketing Concepts
Source: https://www.google.co.in/[14]

Human Wants can be of both internal and external in terms of objects and other intangible ways. In this regard, *Chandratre & Chandratre (2015)[1]* in his study stated that, the role of the ICT techniques and virtual library are important to overcome the users' expectations. *Okon & et al. (2015)[20]* supplementing this concept, stated that, the development of web-based information resources marketing is of having paramount importance. It is very much useful to access the online catalogue, communicate with the library staff for accessing subscribed electronic resources. Here, some of the technological approaches encourage library professionals for doing better housekeeping operations and better services. Librarians are to be trained and feel competent in handling latest gadgets for up-to-date services. Better information fulfils the needs of the teaching, learning, research, and development for academic excellence as a whole.

Marketing Services: The Role of the 7 P's

Marketing or e-marketing is highly depends upon combination of elements in the digital world. The nature of marketing varies comparing to the past in two ways. Primarily, it increases the efficiency effectively and in second, it transforms the planned strategies into the new business model. It adds value to the customer and gives profit to the company or organisation. The role of the internet helps in making strategies into the reality of anyone in anywhere and anytime. Client centric library marketing depends upon 7P's of marketing *(http://www.lisbdnet.com/marketing-information-products-services-library/)[11]* for better library services. The details of the 7P's are given below.

a) Product: It is offered to the user for satisfaction of the information needs. The Print materials like; books, journals, theses, reports, dissertations, maps, atlases, newspapers, magazines can be considered as the physical resources. Whereas, CD, DVD, NPTEL, Video Lecturer, digital learning materials as digital resources. Both Print and non-print materials can be provided through CAS and SDI through24*7 modes for users' satisfaction.

b) Price: Product and services vary according to the circumstances and the needs of the hours. Price is a factor for procuring online resources and other necessary documents. The support of the internet in disseminating resources to the clients is an inevitable factor. It varies locally because of different strategies of the management and source of income.

c) Place: Reading facility is a benchmark for utilising the library resources. Easy access to the resources (print and non-print materials) creates progressive images of the modern library

system. It should be reflected in the library website where users can locate and access the resources in the institutional repository, digital library and library websites.

d) Promotion: It is a most important matter for creating awareness about the library resources and services among the users. New technologies like, Web 2.0 and its expanded version Web 4.0 (Mobile Web) (*https://flatworldbusiness.wordpress.com/)*[13] can be used to provide information, products and services, manage housekeeping operations and attract users.

e) Process: Process is the amalgamation of various technologies, resources and systems. It is meant for systematisation of the products and services of the library. It can facilitate through reliable networks, systems, easy navigation to web documents, online housekeeping operations, reserve or renewal of documents etc.

f) Physical Evidence: '**Seeing is believing**' is the states of users' mentality. Different divisions of the library create belief in the minds of them. Though, the present virtual library has taken a special place in the field of library services, yet, it is the perception of the minds of the users to use library reading room and access various collections and retain themselves for longer time.

g) People: Staff members are the indispensable part of the library. They are the linkage to the facilities in the forms of delivery of products, interaction with the users', resolve query of the users', and strengthen services. E-marketing services in the library missing face-to-face communication. Recognition to the work and reward to the best performer can strengthen the library marketing processes.

So, the above discussions on 7P's of library marketing and its related services are very requisite for marketing orientation and style. Furthermore, internet can support web marketing more preciously in the library.

Web Marketing Plans and its effectiveness in Digital India

Web Marketing Plan is drawing attention for formulation and implementation of library marketing. It is the required guidelines link organisations for e-marketing purposes. Web marketing plans can be outlined through the following manners effectively.

- **Objectives/Goals:** Objectives identifies general goals of web marketing. The important aspects of the web marketing is to be accomplished and framed as if it will support to both the parties like, library users' and organisation.
- **Web Marketing Strategy:** It involves in designing plans, programmes and facilities in different domain areas and utilisation of library resources in the form of 4P's management strategies i.e., product, pricing, place and promotion.
- **Budget:** It includes revenue and cost targets for the financial year and important guidelines for revenue generation in the gradual manner.
- **Monitoring/Control/Evaluation:** It is meant for evaluating the system and identifying the problems for users' advantages. It is based upon the feedback of the users', the facilities like products and services are to the stakeholders accordingly. The steps involved in the library web marketing services are to assess the product or services and to ensure the usage report of the resources.
- **Library's Business Plan:** Business plan is to be reflected better for business environment. Supportive marketing strategies and products information create

opportunities for users' benefit like, placement and promotion. It seeks change in library plans for the development of the library community.

Role of a Librarian in the field of Web Marketing

Present 21st century has proved the competencies of the library professionals. Earlier librarians were being considered as the custodian of books and other learning materials. But today, librarians are competent in ICT, software and database management processes. A librarian requires basic managerial skills, appropriate management techniques and principles as required for other commercial/industrial organisation. As library is a service-oriented organisation, team work spirit, inter-personal communication, worthwhile vision, change management, strategic planning, user centric management, information handling skills, ICT skill, marketing and presentation skills, understanding cultural diversity, risk taking ability, creativity and acting as a change agent etc. are the obvious skill competencies of the library professionals. In addition to these, other qualities like; managing resources and services, using tools and techniques for timely services are important for effective web management services. The following figure-2 is represented for better understanding of change management and web marketing.
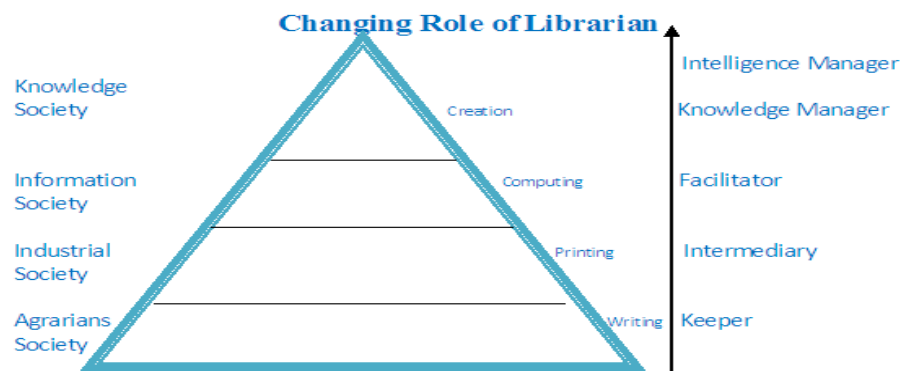

Fig.-2: Changing Role of Librarian
Source: IGNOU BLIS Course Material; Principles and Practices of Management; BLI-226; Block-1; Unit-4; P. 64[19]

The above figure-2 tells about that, different types of information are necessary for different categories of users' in the present society. As a librarian is the manager of the library, that is the look out of the librarian how to provide effective management to the right person at the right time. Still the magnanimity of the library staff members like, attitude, sincerity, and service oriented mind can make the library faithful and prominent.

Some Case Studies on Library Web Marketing

Library is the treasure house of knowledge. The resources, information products and types of services should be brought with the knowledge of the users'. Users' should understand the real importance of the library and how in reciprocal the library can change their lives. However, for better understanding, two important case studies have been undertaken for better understanding the role, importance and its tools and techniques of the web marketing are important in making the library more popular.

Case Study-I

In the case study-1, the National Library, Kolkata has been considered as a prestigious institution in the field of preservation and dissemination of information. It has made promotional videos as a tool for library marketing. One can come across different video programmes, facilities and details about the resources present in the library. Other links are also available for knowing about the available resources and services for satisfying the client's need. On this regard, few screen sorts are presented for awareness among the readers about the importance of the web marketing of the National Library, Kolkata.
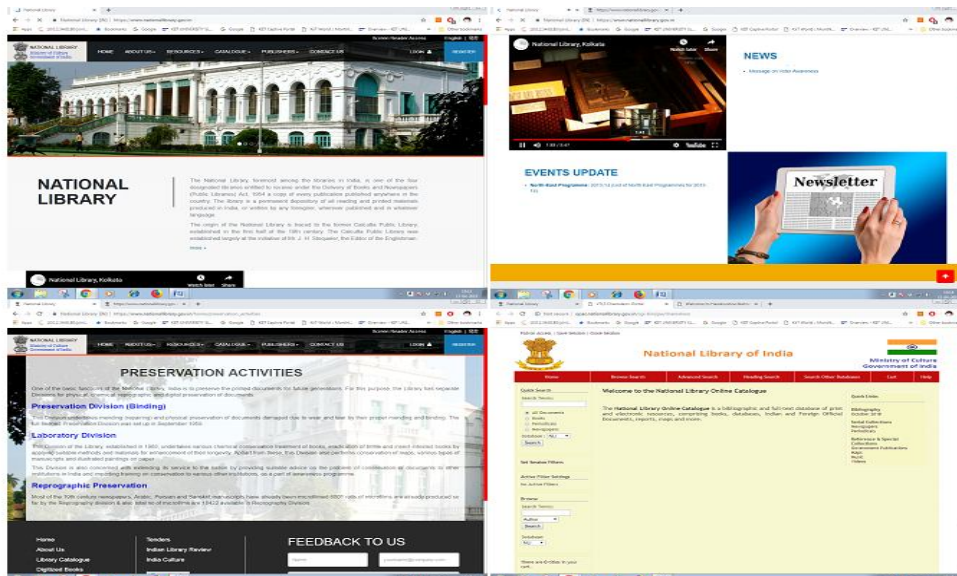

Fig.-3: Some important screen sorts of information about National Library, Kolkata
Source: https://www.nationallibrary.gov.in/;
https://www.nationallibrary.gov.in/home/preservation_activities;
http://opac.nationallibrary.gov.in/cgi-bin/gw/chameleon[4, 15, 16]

Now-a-day, Library Professionals are well to do taking to the users benefit. They are always dedicated to improve their images in different ways. The web 2.0 and its latest versions offer many opportunities for the users' benefits. National Library has also taken many steps in the field of collections, facilities, digital resources through multimedia presentations. Here, library websites, videos and web links is in no way less considered as a tool for web marketing. If it is compared to past, digital resources, online services and Web OPAC facilities were not in the library facilities. It is interesting to note that, a big change has been seen within the present young masses and the school going students in the field of using web resources.

Case Study-II

Excellent reference services, product information and online services are the inevitable part of the library professionals. It enhances the visibility and helps overall organisational growth. Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur has been taken as a second case study for better understanding the web marketing concepts as a whole.
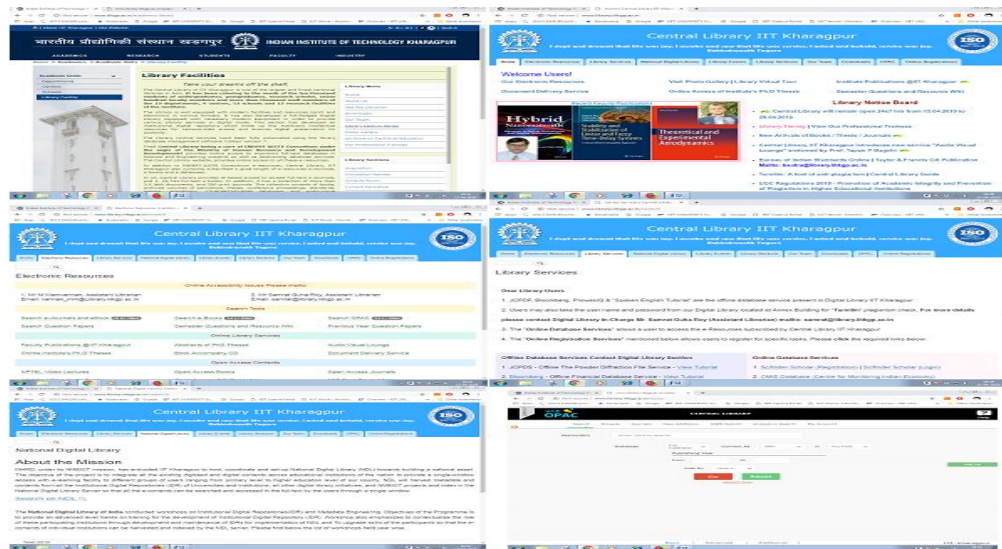
Fig.-4: Some important screen sorts of information about Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur
Source; http://www.iitkgp.ac.in/academics-library; http://www.library.iitkgp.ac.in/;
http://www.library.iitkgp.ac.in/node/8; http://www.library.iitkgp.ac.in/node/9;
http://www.library.iitkgp.ac.in/node/10; http://www.library.iitkgp.ac.in/opac/[5,6,7, 8, 9, 10]

IIT, Kharagpur proactively realised the importance of the library resources and services for the benefit of the users community. Sometimes, stakeholders are over pressed taking to their engagement and course of actions. So, they show their inability to derive time from their tight schedule for using the wealth of resources. Even they lack knowledge on available e-books, journals, theses, reports, dissertations, video lectures, learning materials and preserved in-house publications, course guide, CD, DVD, and other learning materials in the library. It helps the stakeholders to enhance their performance and promote ability. But, website facility, digital advertisement in the web pages, information regarding collections and facilities create awareness among the library stakeholders. So, it is understood from the above discussion that, web marketing is possibly enhancing the visibility of the library users', research and quality teaching learning processes.

Conclusion

In the concluding remarks, major attention draws that, library is playing major roles in educating and supporting in providing information to the users through web marketing. It is also a support to the educational process and development of the country. It is an essential service of the academic and research institutions for information seeking behaviour. Automation of the library, digitization of the resources and online transmission of products and services have become complex for library operation and management. Many a times, Library professions face challenges in nurturing the library and give justice to the services. The introduction of modern tools and techniques has supported the professionals to impart services better. The role of web marketing may not be avoided in collecting, processing and disseminating services in this digital age. Web marketing is steadily transforming the marketing pattern into a new height. All libraries should own the web marketing principles and adopt necessary technologies like, RFID, barcode, library websites, automation, digitization, conservation and preservation of the digital resources for better transmission of the library services as a whole.

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