



E-Marketing of Information Products and Services in Selected University Libraries of United States, United Kingdom and India

Ghulam Jeelani Shah^{1*} and Khaisar M. Khan²

¹Ph.D Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Mangalore University, Mangalore (Karnataka), India.

²Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Mangalore University, Mangalore (Karnataka), India.

(Corresponding author: Ghulam Jeelani Shah*)

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ABSTRACT: Electronic marketing is the norm in the present networked society. All profit and non-profit organizations, including libraries, utilize electronic technologies to promote and market their products and services. The objective of the present study was to identify electronic marketing of information products and services in selected university libraries of the United States, United Kingdom, and India. The findings reveal that the majority of the university libraries in the US and UK have library visibility on institutional websites and smartphones. On the contrary, the library's presence on mobile phones is not encouraging in India. The data reveals that 100% of the surveyed libraries in the US and UK use more than one Web 2.0 tool for e-marketing of information products and services, like Social Networking Sites, Microbloggers, Instant Messaging, and Academic Networks to promote and market information products and services. Besides other tools like wikis, blogs, internet forums, and document-sharing apps, virtual environments are also used by a small percentage of libraries. In the case of India, the results reveal that 100% of the university libraries in India use Social Networking Sites and Microbloggers for marketing of information products and services. 92.86% of libraries in India sometimes use weblogs, 71.43% of libraries rarely use Wikis, Internet Forums are rarely used by 64.29% of libraries, and Instant Messaging. 78.57% sometimes use Academic Networking sites to market information products and services. The positive sign is that university libraries across the study countries make use of various e-marketing tools to promote their information products and services.

Keywords: Electronic Marketing, Electronic Marketing Strategies, Electronic Marketing Practices, E-Marketing Tools, Web 2.0 Tools, Social Networking Sites, Academic Networks.

I. INTRODUCTION

E-marketing, or electronic marketing, refers to the use of digital technologies and the internet to promote products and services to consumers. It encompasses a wide range of tools and strategies, including websites, email campaigns, social media platforms, search engines, and mobile apps. It refers to the application of marketing principles, strategies, and techniques via electronic media, and more specifically, the Internet. E-Marketing is the process of marketing a product, a service, or a brand by making use of the Internet technologies. It includes both direct response marketing and indirect marketing elements and utilises a wide range of technologies to connect products and services with the users. Therefore, e-marketing encompasses all the activities that an organisation conducts via the Internet to reach its existing and potential customers, offer what they have, and develop brand identity.

E-marketing of information products and services is essential in today's digital age as it enables libraries and information centres to reach a broader, more diverse audience efficiently. It enhances visibility, promotes user engagement, and allows real-time communication of updates and services. Through tools like websites, email, and social media, institutions can market their digital resources, databases, and programs cost-effectively. E-marketing also allows personalized user experiences, data analytics for service improvement, and fosters a tech-savvy image. Overall, it ensures that valuable information services are accessible, discoverable, and aligned with users' evolving digital habits and expectations.

E-Marketing has handed over a vast array of tools to libraries to market information products and services with little to no cost, and the libraries have adopted the e-marketing tools to introduce new services, to promote their products and services, and to meet the user expectations. Web 2.0 and social media technologies are integral parts of e-marketing, which play a vital role in the process of electronic or internet marketing. The technologies are interactive, flexible, participative, commercial, and above all, user-centric. Libraries, especially university libraries, have started

to use e-marketing practices to promote their information products and services in order to connect users and information.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A good number of studies have been conducted on the awareness, use, and application of e-marketing tools in libraries across the globe, especially in developed countries. Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis investigated 126 academic libraries in the United States and sought responses from the librarians regarding the use and impact of Facebook on the libraries. The survey reveals that the majority of librarians were aware of the existence of Facebook (out of 126 librarians, 114 had heard of Facebook), and many have adopted the technology for marketing libraries [9]. Nguyen Cuong Linh focused on the application of Web 2.0 technologies in Australasian University libraries. The findings revealed that at least two-thirds of Australasian University Libraries are using one or more Web 2.0 technologies [14]. Bejune and Ronan explored the number of libraries using social software, popularly known as social networking sites. The authors found that various social networking sites, blogs, wikis, RSS, social bookmarking or tagging sites, instant messaging services, voice over Internet protocol, Widgets, and Virtual worlds are being used [5]. Rogers studied the use of Web 2.0 tools in American academic and public libraries. The research findings reveal that the majority of the libraries (70.7%) were using Blogs, followed by 66.7% libraries which were using social networks, and 50.7% libraries were using Instant Messaging services in their libraries for marketing and promoting library services [16]. Cao surveyed the use of Web 2.0 tools in Chinese libraries to determine the use of Web 2.0 tools by the libraries. The findings show that 52% of the libraries have implemented Web 2.0 tools, and the most popular Web 2.0 tool was RSS, used by 39.1% libraries, followed by 30.4% libraries which use blogs; 15.2% libraries use Wikis, and 2.2% of the libraries have used social bookmarking tools [8]. Tripathi and Kumar conducted a study on the adoption of Web 2.0 tools in the major academic libraries. The findings of the research revealed that Instant Messaging was the most popular Web 2.0 tool in the surveyed academic libraries, followed by Blogs and RSS feeds, respectively [18]. Chua and Goh studied Web 2.0 applications in library websites. The blogs are most widely used among the Web 2.0 tools (56.6%), followed by RSS feeds (50%) and Instant Messaging (46.6%) [10]. Karagiorgou and Vasilakaki investigated the user interaction with Greek academic libraries' profiles in social networking sites. The findings reveal that 59% of the users were not aware of the presence of their libraries on Facebook, and 77% users were not following the Facebook pages of their respective libraries [11]. Walia and Gupta conducted a survey on the world's national libraries and investigated the applications of Web 2.0 tools by the libraries. The study examined 66 national libraries having full English version library websites and found that 28 national libraries (42.00%) used Web 2.0 tools in their libraries [21]. Baro, Ebiagbe, and Godfrey studied the usage of Web 2.0 tools by librarians in the university libraries in South Africa and Nigeria. The findings revealed that the Web 2.0 tools are frequently used by librarians in the university libraries in South Africa than their counterparts in Nigeria [3]. Mahmood and Richardson Jr. conducted a study to find out the adoption of Web 2.0 tools in academic libraries. The findings concluded that all the libraries were using Web 2.0 tools in one or another form. RSS was the most popular Web 2.0 tool used by 62 libraries (93.00%), followed by Blogs and social networking sites (90.00%) each [12]. Yi, Lodge, and McCausland investigated the way Australian academic librarians were marketing their information resources and services. The most effective social media tools for marketing information resources and services, as stated by the respondents, were Library websites, social media tools, newsletters, and training programs [23]. Boateng and Quan Liu studied the usage and trends of Web 2.0 applications in top US academic libraries. The findings revealed that all 100 academic libraries had accounts in Facebook and Twitter, followed by Blogs, with the participation rate of 99% while RSS and IM/Chat services were used by 97% and 91% of the libraries, respectively [6]. Taylor and Francis surveyed the current practices in libraries regarding the use of social media from a worldwide perspective. The findings of the survey revealed that social media platforms were used by 70% of the libraries, and the posts are updated at least daily by 30% librarians [19]. Baro, Edewor, and Sunday investigated the use of Web 2.0 tools and the awareness level of librarians in university libraries in Africa. The findings of the study revealed that social networking via Facebook and Twitter was the most popular among the majority of the respondents (89.3%), followed by Blogs (77.1%) and Instant Messaging (76%); Wikis (74.3%); RSS feeds (57.9%) RSS feeds; and (53.6%) social bookmarking [4]. Xie and Stevenson investigated the use of social media in digital libraries and their related problems. The findings of the study revealed that Facebook and Twitter were the most popular social media applications used by all ten institutions selected for the study, followed by Flickr, which was used by nine institutions, while blogs were used by eight institutions [22]. Aras studied the Social Media Policies in University libraries and emphasized that in order to develop and move with the times, the University libraries should follow social media closely. The libraries need to learn various social media tools, make a strategy, and market the presence of their libraries on various social media platforms. The author lays further emphasis on user satisfaction, which is the most important factor to increase the usage of the library [2]. Bradley in his book "Social media for creative libraries" highlighted the complexities and simplicities of social media, authority check of the content on social media, guiding tools for librarians, offering current awareness services & selective dissemination of information resources through social media tools, presentation tools for librarians, teaching & training using the social media tools, communicating with the users using social media tools, marketing and promotion of library products and services and creating a social media policy in libraries [7]. Owusu-Ansah *et al.* studied the "applications of social media and Web 2.0 for research support in selected African Academic Institutions". The

research further discovered that a good number of academic libraries are aware of social media and use multiple social media tools to reach diverse user groups [15]. Mustafa *et al.* conducted a study on social media promotional tools in an Academic Library to identify and understand the elements and promotional functions available in Facebook and Twitter in one of the libraries of Malaysia. The findings of the study reveal that Facebook and Twitter have greatly impacted the promotional activities and initiatives taken by the library [13]. Vaaler and Brantley studied about the using of blog and social media promotion as marketing tools for library resources and services. The researchers had created a blog “Ref News” for Booth Library at Eastern Illinois University which was already using “Library News” a WordPress blog for of library resources and services and as a way to share library information regarding events and exhibitions [20]. Ahenkorah-Marfo and Akussah investigated the role of social media in offering reference and user services in academic libraries in Ghana. The researchers concluded that majority of the surveyed librarian were aware of the social media tools as reflected by other similar studies [1]. Zhu made an attempt to introduce an official **WeChat** account and its use by **Jinan University Library** to share information resources and services with students, faculty, and staff of academic libraries in China. The author stated that the academic libraries in China were enthusiastic about using the official WeChat account, which will allow the libraries to expand their resources and services to the users. The researcher concluded that **WeChat, which** is being followed by half a billion people, can be used to reach library users with timely information [24].

RESEARCH GAP

The studies have been conducted worldwide on the marketing of information products and services. However, no study has been conducted to compare the e-marketing of information products and services in university libraries in United States, United Kingdom, and India. The present study shall fill this research gap.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

(a) Objectives of the Study.

The study aims to:

1. To identify the digital platforms, such as websites and smartphones, used by the university libraries of the US, UK, and India for e-marketing of their information products and services.
2. To identify the adoptability of various E-Marketing technologies through which Libraries in the U.S, UK, and India market their information products and services.

(b) Methodology.

The data was collected from University Libraries in the US, UK, and India, wherein the investigator did not have direct access to the subjects of the study except in India. Hence, an online survey method was adopted to collect the data for the study. In order to select a sample for the research study, the investigator referred to multiple global ranking systems that rank Universities globally on the basis of various factors. Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings was chosen for the present study as THE is the leading provider of higher education data for the world's research-led institutions and provides the definitive list of the world's best universities, evaluated across teaching, research, international outlook, reputation, and more. THE's data are trusted by governments and universities and are a vital resource for students, helping them choose where to study [17].

The investigator decided to use the following methods and procedures:

- Select all the universities from the US, UK, and India as listed by THE for the year 2016 in the World University Rankings and compile a list of them;
- Access all library websites of the selected university libraries and record the email IDs of either the Library/University Librarian/Reference librarian/Dean of Libraries/Director of Libraries/Marketing Director/Business Librarian/Director of Information Services;
- A structured questionnaire was drafted and forwarded to the emails of the concerned library authorities of the selected university libraries;
- Examine the Institutional and Library Websites' of the selected Universities.

(c) Sample size and Responses

Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings listed 800 best global universities in 2016. Out of 800 universities listed in the year 2016, 147 universities were listed from the U.S, 78 Universities from the UK, and 17 Universities from India, including one Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) and seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). As the number of universities listed by THE from India was only 09, the researcher also chose 01 IISc. and 07 IITs for the present study as listed by THE. A total of 242 Universities as listed by THE were finalized as the Research sample without applying any sampling method.

Table 1: Population and Sample Size.

Sr. No.	Name of the Country	Questionnaires Distributed*	Responses Received	Percentage
1.	United States (US)	147	111	75.51%
2.	United Kingdom (UK)	78	60	76.92%
3.	India	17	14	82.35%
	Total	242	185	76.45%

Note: *Also represents total population

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

1. Library Visibility on Institutional Website

In the present times, websites play a pivotal role in communicating with the outside world and promoting the offerings. Keeping in view the importance and usefulness of websites in consideration, information professionals have long been engaged in creating websites for their libraries which provide a platform to users to gain access to information resources & services, library news and happenings, reference services, online catalogue, and information regarding other library activities. The use of a library website is effective only when it is prominent and visible on the institutional website, and a direct link is available from the institute's homepage to the library website's homepage.

The investigator accessed the institutional and library websites of the selected universities in the US, UK, and India to examine the visibility and prominence of the library website on the institutional homepage and the ease of locating the library links. The findings depicted that 87.75% library websites in the US were visible on their institutional websites, while 12.25% library websites were not prominent or visible on their institutional homepages. In the UK, 71.79% library websites were visible on their institutional websites, while 28.21% library websites were not prominent or visible on their institutional homepages. In the case of India, 82.35% library websites were visible on their institutional websites, while 17.65% library websites were not prominent or visible on their institutional homepages (Table 2).

Table 2: Library visibility on university website.

Library visibility on the institutional website	Responses		
	US	UK	India
Yes	129 (87.75)	56 (71.79)	14 (82.35)
No	18 (12.25)	22 (28.21)	03 (17.65)
Total	147 (100)	78 (100)	17 (100)

Note: Figures in parentheses represent percentages

2. Library Mobile Presence

Mobile internet usage is ever-increasing all around the globe and is widely used in our daily activities. The use of smartphones offers new avenues to libraries to market their information products and services, and the demand is to integrate mobiles with the marketing strategy. The libraries have to make their resources and services accessible via mobile apps and reach users who are very attached to their smartphone devices.

The respondents were asked to state their library presence on mobile phones. The results reveal that 91.89% libraries in the US have a mobile presence, while 8.11% libraries do not have a presence on mobile phones. All the libraries in the UK have a mobile presence; however, only 21.43% libraries in India have a mobile presence, while 78.57% libraries do not have a mobile presence. The study illustrates that the libraries in the US and UK show a good presence on users' smartphones. On the contrary, the library presence on mobile phones is not encouraging in India (Table 3).

Table 3: Presence of the library on mobiles in the US, UK & India.

Library Mobile Presence	US	UK	India
Yes	102 (91.89)	60 (100)	3 (21.43)
No	9 (8.11)	0(0.00)	11(78.57)
Total	111 (100)	60 (100)	14 (100)

Note: Figures in parentheses represent percentages

3. Use of E-Marketing Technologies in the US Libraries

E-Marketing technologies encompass a wide range of services that facilitate communication, information sharing, promotion, and marketing of libraries. The technologies used in libraries include Social Networking Sites, Internet forums, Weblogs or Blogs, Wikis, Instant Messaging, Social Photo & Video sharing, Academic Networking Sites, Social Bookmarking Sites, Mashups, and many others.

The data reveals that 100% of the surveyed libraries in the US use Social Networking Sites, Microbloggers, and Instant Messaging to promote and market information products and services. Academic Networks, Weblogs, and Photo and image Sharing sites are used by more than 90% of the libraries, as other electronic marketing technologies like Internet Forums, Wikis, Social Bookmarking, Mashups, Presentation sharing sites, and Document Sharing sites are also used to market information products and services (Table 4).

Table 4: Use of E-Marketing technologies in the US libraries.

Electronic Marketing Technologies	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Social Networking Sites	102 (91.89)	9 (8.11)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	111
Internet Forums	0 (0.00)	6 (5.41)	24 (21.62)	33 (29.73)	48 (43.24)	111
Weblogs	0 (0.00)	19 (17.12)	70 (63.06)	13 (11.71)	09 (8.11)	111
Microbloggers	26 (23.42)	85 (76.58)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	111
Wikis/WordPress	1 (0.91)	9 (8.18)	53 (48.18)	33 (30.00)	14 (12.73)	110
Instant Messaging	5 (4.50)	89 (80.18)	16 (14.41)	01 (0.90)	0 (0.00)	111
Social Photo & Video sharing	4 (3.60)	99 (89.19)	07 (6.31)	0 (0.00)	01 (0.90)	111
Academic networking	0 (0.00)	9 (8.11)	74 (66.67)	17 (15.32)	11 (9.91)	111
Social Bookmarking	0 (0.00)	3 (2.70)	35 (31.53)	21 (18.92)	52 (46.85)	111
Mashups	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	10 (9.01)	12 (10.81)	89 (80.18)	111
Presentation sharing	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	36 (32.43)	40 (36.04)	35 (31.53)	111
Virtual environments/worlds	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	03 (2.70)	06 (5.41)	102 (91.89)	111
Document Sharing	0 (0.00)	30 (27.27)	53 (48.18)	12 (10.91)	15 (13.64)	110
Other	0 (0.00)	1 (50.00)	1 (50.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2
Other (please specify)		EepURL service	EepURL service			

Note: Figures in parentheses represent percentages

4. Use of E-Marketing Technologies in the UK Libraries

The data depicts that 100% of the surveyed libraries in the UK use Social Networking Sites, Weblogs, Microbloggers, Instant Messaging, Photo and Video Sharing, and Academic networks to promote and market information products and services. The figures reveal that 85% of the surveyed libraries in the UK always use Social Networking Sites, while 15% of libraries frequently use the sites to market information products and services. Instant Messaging is frequently used by 86.67% of libraries in the UK, 93.33% of libraries use Social Photo & Video sharing sites, while Academic Networking sites are sometimes used by 78.33% of libraries in the UK. Internet Forums, Wikis, Social Bookmarking, Mashups, Presentation sharing sites, and Document Sharing are also used by a good percentage of libraries; however, Virtual environments/worlds are used by a very small percentage to market information products and services (Table 5).

Table 5: Use of E-Marketing technologies in the UK libraries.

Electronic Marketing Technologies	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Social Networking Sites	51 (85.00)	09 (15.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	60
Internet Forums	0 (0.00)	01 (1.67)	10 (16.67)	19 (31.67)	30 (50.00)	60
Weblogs	0 (0.00)	17 (28.33)	42 (70.00)	01 (1.67)	0 (0.00)	60
Microbloggers	0 (0.00)	60 (100)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	60
Wikis/WordPress	0 (0.00)	03 (5.00)	16 (26.67)	37 (61.67)	04 (6.67)	60
Instant Messaging	0 (0.00)	52 (86.67)	08 (13.33)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	60
Social Photo & Video sharing	0 (0.00)	56 (93.33)	04 (6.67)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	60

Academic networking	0 (0.00)	04 (6.67)	47 (78.33)	09 (15.00)	0 (0.00)	60
Social Bookmarking	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	36 (60.00)	12 (20.00)	12 (20.00)	60
Mashups	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	24 (40.00)	12 (20.00)	24 (40.00)	60
Presentation sharing	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	36 (60.00)	16 (26.67)	08 (13.33)	60
Virtual environments/worlds	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	03 (5.00)	04 (6.67)	53 (88.33)	60
Document Sharing	0 (0.00)	13 (21.67)	32 (53.33)	11 (18.33)	04 (6.67)	60
Other	0 (0.00)	01 (50.00)	01 (50.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2
Other (please specify)		Reddit	Weibo			

Note: Figures in parentheses represent percentages

5. Use of E-Marketing Technologies in Indian Libraries

Table 6 reveals that 100% of the university libraries in India use Social Networking Sites for marketing of information products and services, in which 57.14% of the surveyed libraries frequently use Social Networking Sites, while 42.86% of libraries always use these sites. Internet Forums are rarely used by 64.29% of libraries in India, followed by 28.57% of libraries in India, which never use the platform at all. The data further depicts that 100% use Microbloggers; 92.86% of libraries in India sometimes use weblogs, 92.86% of libraries in India frequently use Social Photo & Video sharing sites, 71.43% of libraries rarely use Wikis, 64.29% use frequently Instant Messaging while as Academic Networking sites are sometimes used by 78.57% of libraries to market information products and services. Other technologies like Social Bookmarking, Presentation Sharing and Document Sharing are also used sometimes by the libraries to market information products and services; however, no library in India uses Virtual Environments/worlds to market information products and services (Table 6).

Table 6: Use of E-Marketing technologies in Indian libraries.

Electronic Marketing Technologies	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Social Networking Sites	06 (42.86)	08 (57.14)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	14
Internet Forums	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	01 (7.14)	09 (64.29)	04 (28.57)	14
Weblogs	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	13 (92.86)	01 (7.14)	0 (0.00)	14
Microbloggers	0 (0.00)	14 (100)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	14
Wikis/WordPress	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	01 (7.14)	10 (71.43)	03 (21.43)	14
Instant Messaging	0 (0.00)	09 (64.29)	05 (35.71)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	14
Social Photo & Video sharing	0 (0.00)	13 (92.86)	01 (7.14)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	14
Academic networking	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	11 (78.57)	02 (14.29)	01 (7.14)	14
Social Bookmarking	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	06 (42.86)	01 (7.14)	07 (50.00)	14
Mashups	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	01 (7.14)	01 (7.14)	12 (85.71)	14
Presentation sharing	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	11 (78.57)	02 (14.29)	01 (7.14)	14
Virtual environments/worlds	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	14 (100)	14
Document Sharing	0 (0.00)	03 (21.43)	11 (78.57)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	14
Other	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0

Note: Figures in parentheses represent percentages

V. CONCLUSIONS

E-marketing of information products and services is essential in today's digital age as it enables libraries and information centres to reach a broader, more diverse audience efficiently. It enhances visibility, promotes user

engagement, and allows real-time communication of updates and services. Overall, it ensures that valuable information services are accessible, discoverable, and aligned with users' evolving digital habits and expectations. E-Marketing has handed over a vast array of tools to libraries to market information products and services with little to no cost, and the libraries have adopted the e-marketing tools to introduce new services, to promote their products and services, and to meet the user expectations. The present study concluded that the majority of the university libraries in the US and UK have library visibility on institutional websites and smartphones. On the contrary, the library's presence on mobile phones is not encouraging in India. The positive sign is that university libraries across the study countries make use of various e-marketing tools to promote their information products and services. The results reveal that the university libraries across countries (*i.e., the US, UK, and India*) make use of more than one Web 2.0 tool for e-marketing of information products and services, like Social Networking Sites, Microbloggers, Instant Messaging, and Academic networks to promote and market information products and services. Besides, other tools like wikis, blogs, internet forums, and document sharing, virtual environments are also used by a small percentage of libraries.

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