

# Knowledge Portal : An Emerging Tool for Libraries (Practical Approach of MPKV Library, Rahuri)

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## Abstract

Revolutionary changes are taking place with the advent of Information Technology. It is now easier and faster to search information through electronic media like Internet, CD ROM Databases, E-books, E-journals Online Journals etc. and Libraries are now acquiring, storing E-resources and making them available through portal. Portal allows user, the access of library services and resources over internet. This paper discusses the advantages and different types of portals. How to design and develop it, the content and features of portal, format for databases etc. Also discussed how the MPKV Library has developed Knowledge Portal to render value-added services to users.

**Keywords:** Portal, E-resources, CD ROM Databases, Internet, e-books, e-journals, CAS, Portal design and Management

## Introduction

Library plays a pivotal role in providing valuable services to the academic community by selecting and organizing information resources that support research, education and extension activities of the organization. Information is the base of knowledge and research. Information is power and providing right information to the right user at the right time is an integral part of library sciences.

With the advent of information technology, revolutionary changes in the conventional

services are taking place. Internet, intranet, extranet, electronic databases, search engines, web directories, web portals etc. are modern tools

which make services faster and easier to save the time. The user does not need to come physically in library but anybody can find thousand of references on a particular term by just one click, any time and anywhere and from any respective desktop. Internet access have altered users' expectations about information retrieval and as the use of e- resources such as CD-ROM Databases, Online Journals, OPAC etc.

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have grown, libraries need to host portal or gateway systems online to provide some of these services in the digital realm. Library portal enhances the value of electronic resources with functions such as resource description and discovery, combined searching of multiple resources, context-sensitive linking.

## Portal

Portal is emerging as modern significant tool for retrieving and delivering the contents of e-resources more quickly, efficiently and effectively through Internet. A portal is a web site that acts as a single source for all information on a specific domain. An effective Web portal offers the user a broad array of information, arranged in a way that is most convenient for the user to access. When designed, implemented and maintained correctly, a web portal becomes the starting or entry point of a web user introducing him to various information, resources and other sites on the internet. Popular Portals are Yahoo, MSN etc.

The Sun and Sun (2002) described, a portal as "A web page that serve as any entry point or gateway to resources and services"

According to Denis Howe, a portal is "A website that aim to be an entry points to the world wide web, typically offering a search engines and /or links to the useful pages and

possibly news or other services.

The defining characteristics of a portal is the user-driven customizability of websites content. A portal is only possible component to the library's web presence. Library portal is a web tool that allows library user access to library services over the internet.

### **Advantages**

- \* It disseminate various types of information (events, reports, and programs) knowledge, ideas, messages and data.

- \* The available resources can be used remotely for education and research,

- \* It reduces the time for searching required information as compared to traditional way.

- \* Improves the knowledge, manage and offers experience of individuals or group of individuals that is the key assets for the future generations

- \* Knowledge portals improve the learning process and developing the learning environment in organizations.

- \* The portal allows sharing all the internal documents, best practices, policies, procedures, expertise and experience of individual and external documents,

- \* The portal improves the security of the content because it allows access on single platform which is protected to view or manipulate,

- \* It allows to integrate various applications into the single database so that the relevant information can be obtained as and when required,

- \* The portal provides various documents' contents in a single platform.

- \* It improves decision making through accurate information

- \* It reduces the labor cost, paper based documents in the organizations or institutions

- \* It helps in day-to-day routine work

### **Types**

There are actually many, different types of portals; each one tailored to meet a specific business need.

#### **Vertical Portals (Vortals)**

These are web portals which focus only on one specific industry, domain or vertical. Vertical portals or vortals simply provide tools, information, articles, research and statistics on the specific industry or vertical. As the web has become a standard tool for business vortals provide an ideal gateway for businesses to market their products & services and to gain exposure within their vertical by developing and using vortals. Classic examples of vertical portals are cnet.com which focuses only on computer and related issues, mp3.com only on mp3 audio etc.

#### **Horizontal Portals**

These are web portals which focus on a wide array of interests and topics. They focus on general audience and try to present something for everybody. Classic examples of horizontal portals are yahoo.com, msn.com etc which provide visitors with information and on a wide area of topics.

#### **Intranet Portals : Enterprise Portals**

An enterprise portal (sometimes called a corporate portal) provides personalized access to an appropriate range of information about a particular company. Initially called intranet portals - enterprise portals existing for the benefit of the company's own employees, this set of technologies has developed to assist and provide access to a company's business partners (suppliers, customers) as well. More advanced enterprise portal solutions provide access via mobile devices, such as cell phones, PDA's, handheld PC's etc. facilitating on the road work, decision making and business processes.

The most common implementation of enterprise portals focus on providing employees with this information on a regular updated manner along with document management system, availability of applications on demand, online training courses and web casts etc along with communication in the form of emails, messaging, web meetings etc.

#### **Knowledge Portals**

Knowledge portals increase the effectiveness of knowledge workers by providing easy access to information that is necessary or helpful to them in one or more specific roles. Knowledge

portals are not mere intranet portals since the former are supposed to provide extra functionality such as collaboration services, sophisticated information discovery services and a knowledge map.

### **Market Space Portals**

Market space portals exist to support the business-to-business and business-to-customer e-commerce. E-commerce or e-business portals facilitate the sharing of information to external partners, customers and suppliers. They usually have a transactional processing component, provide information on products and services

which include supply chain management features. E-commerce portals aim to increase the value of the relationship whilst lowering the cost..

### **Self-Service Portals**

Self-service portals allow employees, customers or suppliers to access information about themselves and to carry out certain business processes in a way that is suited to their own needs. Portals are usually justified in terms of removing hard cost from the business through self-service options. The employee self-service (ESS)portal in relation to human resources, IS or financial services, is an obvious starting point for many.

### **Business Intelligence Portals**

Business intelligence portals or decision portals empower users in their decision-making process. More than just allowing users to query and report across multiple data stores, business intelligence portals have built-in tools that provide targeted reports to end-user groups and individuals.

### **Collaboration Portals**

Collaboration portals enable a geographically dispersed workforce to interact around projects and business-as-usual tasks through a common access or rallying point. Collaboration portals offer generic tools such as chat, white boards and threaded discussion streams along with ways to share objects such as maps, documents.

### **e-Learning Portals**

No longer the domain of academic institutions alone, e-Learning portals focus on guiding

students in the broadest sense through a structured learning experience. E-learning portals test abilities and provide feedback to the student in a personalized and confidential manner. They may also interact with other systems and business processes to provide in-context training and help.

### **Communication Portals**

Communication portals aggregate various forms of messaging into a single place. Bringing together email, voice, mobile, web feeds etc in a way that allows access and control from multiple interfaces and locations at any time. The individual can then tailor this, choosing for example, to received and manage critical communications regardless of where they are or what type of device they have with them.

### **Design and Development of Portal**

#### **Research**

\* While designing portal, the answers to the following questions need to be kept in mind, then one can organize content, label it effectively, and describe it.

\* What is the mission of organization and in turn, what is the purpose of the website.

\* Who is the primary user of website.

\* What content does the organization have to communicate via the website.

\* Who in the organization will do the work to create and maintain the website.

\* What task does user expect the website to facilitate and what technical resources do they have .

#### **Strategy**

The strategy is website blueprint. While designing the web following points needs to be considered

After considering the answers to the research questions, some sort of plan can be framed by putting those answers into practice.

\* Labeling be done according to the users' status.

\* Apply sorting techniques for organizing the content and grouping into broader categories.

\* Users want to accomplish specific tasks to do something else. I need a list of articles on....

Do you have the book whose title is... users need be considered and content be organized accordingly.

\* Tree structure of the website need to be prepared. Create shallow and wide website if a website is not easy (User friendly interface) to use, then user won't use it.

\* Boolean operator be used for searching metadata.

\* Create database and describe it in a user centric manner. Organizing content in a rational database application is the key to implementing portal.

\* Create a time table for implementation.

**Implementation :** Practical approach of MPKV Library, Rahuri

### MPKV Library Knowledge Portal

MPKV Library knowledge portal is an important tool designed and developed for the benefit of the students and teachers in the University. The resources collected for the portal are classified as Online catalogues of holding, Online journals and databases subscribed. Useful websites on agriculture and allied subjects and e-resources like databases created by the library. The portal is hosted on local intranet of the University. General information can be accessed directly at URL: <http://library/home.htm>. However, the retrieval of databases or e-resources are restricted to the authentic members working in Central Campus of MPKV, Rahuri. Username and passwords are provided to the members.

**Primary objectives of the portal are as follows**

1. To provide overall information of the library.
2. To make aware of library holdings through online catalogues
3. To provide online access to the OPAC of Books.

4. To provide online access to the databases created by library .

5. To provide useful linkages on agricultural and allied subjects.

6. To provide online journals and databases subscribed

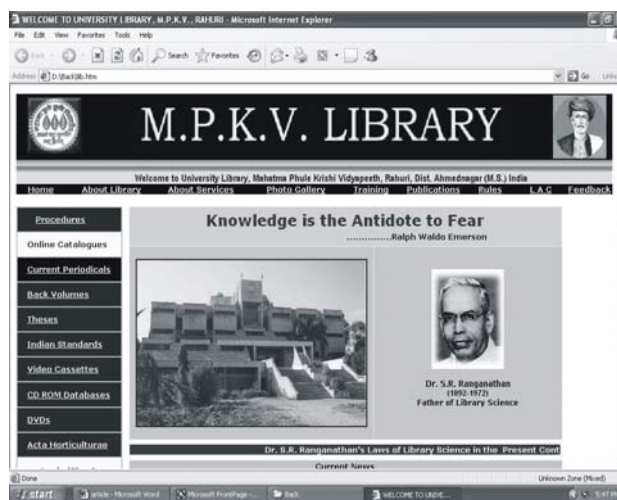
### Content for Portal

Three types of content is need to be incorporated on Web

1. Information about library-staff, directories, sections, maps of building, hours

2. Electronic version of traditional library services-online tutorials, book renewals, interlibrary loan request and status report, request for purchase, online chat/reference, virtual tours of the building etc.

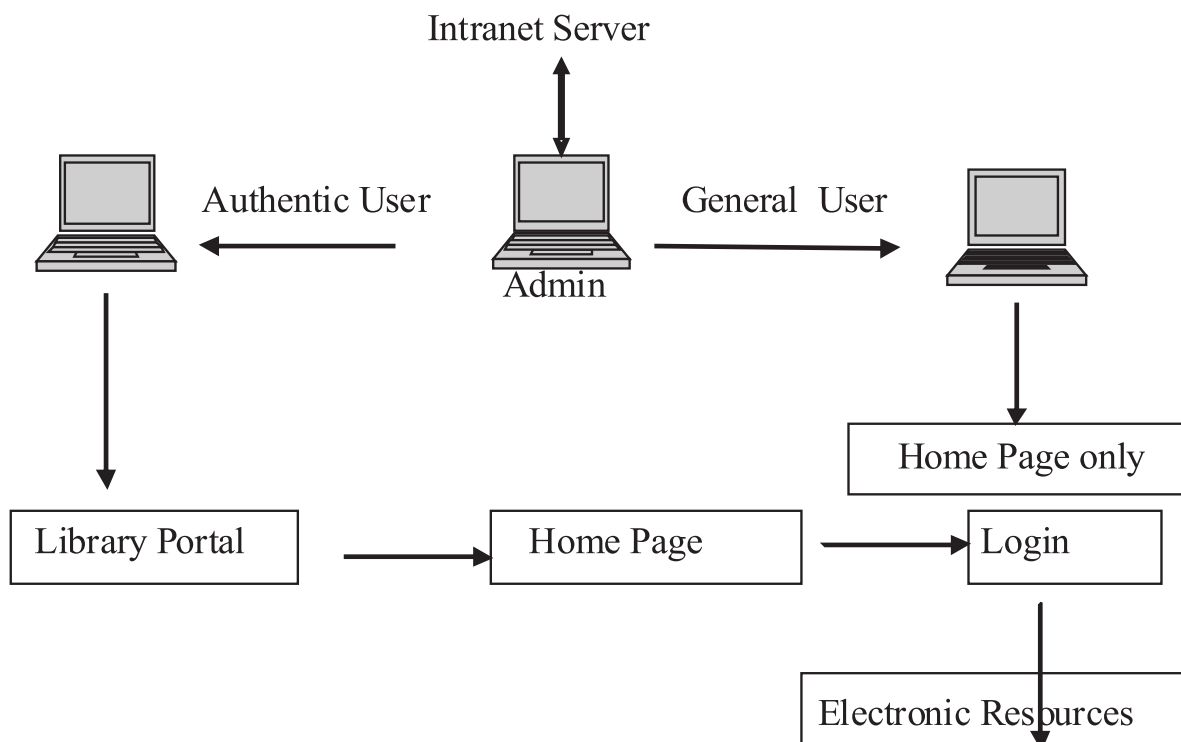
3. Access to library content- catalogues, indexes, full text magazines and journals, digitized special collections and free and commercial e books. Freely accessible internet resources, electronic databases.



Library Home Page

## Services available

Catalogues	Current News	Photo gallery
Important URLs	Search Engines	OPAC
E- Journals	CD ROM databases	ETAD
On-line Indian Journals	On-line Databases	JMAU Abstracts database
Feed back	E-books	CAS
New Additions		



MPKV, Library Knowledge Portal Access Management System

### Conclusion

With the advent of information technology, the role of librarian have changed. Most of the librarians have traditional library science background. It is the time for them to survive the profession in the IT environment by learning and adopting modern IT tools and techniques. Library professionals should accept this challenge to play proactive role in promoting IT based services in the libraries and

work as knowledge manager or gateway. As portal is an emerging modern tool that allows user, access to library services over the internet, it will be note-worthy event to the librarians when they will design, develop and will host their library knowledge portals to render value added services to the users.

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