Study of University Websites based on Selected Evaluation Criterias

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Abstract

In the era of information, websites play an important role to store and disseminate the information everywhere on the globe. Days have changed from personal visits and manual doings things to online. Anybody can register, watch, do marketing, do business, share ideas, book a ticket and exchange knowledge. And many more stuffs can be done over internet through websites. This process has entered almost every activity of an institution, academia, and research and development organization. In this context, it is the need of the hour to make an evaluative study of university website to investigate its authority; purpose and coverage; currency; objectivity; graphics; use of colour; contents; legibility; hyperlinks; promotion; searching and FAQ etc. In the present study- an attempt has been made to evaluate 27 university websites based on selected criteria's viz authority; purpose; coverage and currency of the websites. The results of the study indicate that the users do not aware the information about website designer. The link to library and its resources in the websites meet the academic needs. It is also found from the survey that the contact information is available in the university website and there is a consistency in the domain name.

Keywords: Website Evaluation; Evaluation Criteria's; South Indian Universities; Library Websites; Research Scholar; Faculty; Webmasters.

Introduction

Information has been identified as one of the important resources required for the success in every major human venture. The demands of information users and researchers are increasing day-by-day. Old technologies of information exchange are being replaced by new technologies and methods. Internet is a helping hand in this connection. Every corporation, organization, institutions attempts to launch itself into the virtual world using this modern phenomenon that is the reason, web has become a part of academician's everyday life. Many campuses are requiring students to have computers to take advantage of Web accessible classrooms, and many educators are incorporating the Web into their curricula. Hence the role of library and information professionals also changing everywhere to facilitate the need based resources. Every university is key role in hosting the latest and updated information available on their websites for the public, students, and research scholars. It will surely create the strong positive image of the higher learning education institute.

Therefore website has become an essential medium for information exchange of ideas, knowledge for the research & development and advancement of research activities at anywhere in the world. When we observe the increase in the design and development of websites from the last ten years, it shows the need and changing behaviours of users towards information and communication technology. So it is important to study about reliability, usefulness and up datedness of the website on a regular basis is very much needed. A lot can happen over internet, through websites. The success of website integrates on how much users consider the information on the website. Online or Web services rendered through websites has found significant momentum in both academia and research community in recent years. Collection,

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organization and dissemination of information with economy and efficiency depend on the skills and expertise of the library and information science professionals.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives are as follows:

1. To find out the authority of the website design;

2. To reveal the domain names;

3. To rate the contents;

4. To observe the links to other educational institutions links available;

5. To examine the coverage;

6. To check the currency.

Methodology

Questionnaire is reasonably most convenient tool for collecting research data from large, varied and scattered group of respondents. For the present study questionnaire method has been adopted to collect data. A pilot study has been undertaken. Based on the review of literature; feedback and suggestion recommended by the students; researchers; faculties and the expert's opinion driven from the pilot study, the questionnaire has been redesigned. There are 96 universities in south Indian states. We have selected twenty universities; based on the UGC- NAAC/ AICTE accreditation.

The sample size is drawn on the basis of sampling techniques proposed by Robert V Krejcie and Daryle W Morgan. According to sampling technique given by them, a total of 977 questionnaires were distributed with 99.0% confidence level, at 0.035 degree of accuracy. A total of 815 questionnaires were received back with 83.42% of response.

Scope and Limitations

Present study confined to websites of twenty seven universities of the South Indian states viz., Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The respondents are students, research scholars, faculty, and others. Others include webmasters, technical assistants, and computer science lab in charge and so on.

Data Analysis

Criteria -1: Authority

Table 1: Availability of information about website designer

Response	Respondents				Total
	Students	Research Scholars	Faculty Members	Others	
Yes	91 (18.2)	231 (46.2)	147 (29.4)	31 (6.2)	500
No	59 (18.7)	174 (55.2)	76 (24.1)	6 (1.9)	315

p=0.00

Table 1 deals with availability of information about the website designer. Authority indicates that the person, institution, or an agency responsible for website has the knowledge or qualifications to do so and in this connection, responses towards authority of the library website have been obtained.

It is revealed from the table that out of 500 respondents who have opined positively, 46.2% of the research scholars opined that information is available followed by faculty members (29.4%); students (18.2%) and others 6.2%) whereas, out of 315 respondents have opined negatively, 55.2% of the research scholars opined that the information about the website designer is not available on the website followed by faculty members (24.1%); students (18.7%) and others (1.9%).

It is clear from the data depicted on the table that there is no consistency in the opinion of the respondents. The Chi-square value p=0.005 show significant. Therefore, it is inferred that the respondents are not aware of the information about website designer.

Table 2: Links to the library

Response	Respondents				Total
	Students	Research Scholars	Faculty Members	Others	
Yes	149 (18.8)	396 (49.9)	213 (26.8)	36 (4.5)	794
No	1 (4.8)	9 (42.9)	10 (47.6)	1 (4.8)	21

p = 0.13

A question was asked to know whether the university websites have links to library and its resources to meet the academic need of the respondents. The responses obtained have been depicted in the table 2. It reveals that majority (49.9%) of the research scholars agreed with the view that the university website links to library meet their academic needs followed by faculty members (26.8%); students (18.8%) and others (4.5%). Whereas out of 21 respondents who did not agree that library link meet the academic need majority (47.6%) of the faculty members opined negatively followed by research scholars (42.9%); students and others (4.8% respectively).

The data in the table clearly shows that the link to library resources will meet the academic need of the

respondents. The Chi-square value p=0.13 shows highly insignificant means. There is association between responses and the different types of respondents. Therefore, it is inferred that the link to library and its resources in the university website meet the academic needs of the respondents across universities.

Table 3: Availability of contact information

Response	Respondents				Total
	Students	Research Scholars	Faculty Members	Others	
Yes	149 (18.8)	396 (49.9)	213 (26.8)	36 (4.5)	794
No	1 (4.8)	9 (42.9)	10 (47.6)	1 (4.8)	21

P = 0.58

Table 4: Rating of contact form

Attributes	Rating scale	Respondents				Total
		Students	Research Scholars	Faculty Members	Others	
Clarity of Information	Poor	4 (25.0)	7 (43.8)	3 (18.8)	2 (12.5)	16
	Average	31 (20.7)	72 (48.0)	40 (26.7)	7 (4.7)	150
	Good	62 (16.7)	180 (48.4)	111 (29.8)	19 (5.1)	372
	Very Good	27 (14.9)	96 (53.0)	50 (27.6)	8 (4.4)	181
	Excellent	26 (27.1)	50 (52.1)	19 (19.8)	1 (1.0)	96
	Mean= 3.23		**CV=29.36**		**p=0.20**	
Response of contact information Form	Poor	82 (20.5)	199 (49.8)	99 (24.8)	20 (5.0)	400
	Average	38 (19.7)	86 (44.6)	59 (30.6)	10 (5.2)	193
	Good	17 (11.8)	76 (52.8)	44 (30.6)	7 (4.9)	144
	Very Good	10 (17.5)	29 (50.9)	18 (31.6)	0 (0)	57
	Excellent	3 (14.3)	15 (71.4)	3 (14.3)	0 (0)	21
	Mean= 1.9		**CV=56.86**		**p=0.19**	

The table 3 reveals that majority (49.9%) of the research scholars said contact information is available in the university website followed by faculty members (26.8%); students (18.8%) and others (4.5%) whereas 47.6% of the faculty members opined that the contact information is not available in the website followed by research scholars (42.9); students and others (4.8% each). There is an association between the response and types of respondents.

It is also statistically proved by x^2 analysis (p=0.58) indicate highly insignificant. Therefore, it clearly indicates that contact information is available in the university website.

Table 4 depicts the rating of clarity of information available on the university website. It shows that 53.0% of Research scholars opined very good followed by faculty members (27.6%). 52.1% of faculty members also opined excellent followed by students (27.15%).

Therefore, the clarity of information on the website is good. This is also proved statistically. The x^2 analysis (p=0.201, Mean=3.23, CV = 29.36) indicate highly insignificant. Therefore, there is association between rating scales and types of respondents on clarity of information. It is inferred that the clarity of information on university website is good.

With regard to response of contact information from 49.8% of research scholars rated poor followed by faculty members (24.8%) and students (20.5%) whereas 44.6% of the research scholars rated average followed by faculty members (30.6%); others (5.2%) while 52.8% of research scholars rated good followed by faculty members (30.6%). More than seventy percent research scholars rated excellent followed by students and faculty members (14.3% each).

From the data in the table, it is clear that the availability of contact information form on the website is average. It is not up to the mark as expected by the respondents. This is also proved by x^2 analysis (p=0.19) indicate highly insignificant. The co-efficient of variation value 56.86 and mean value 1.9 also supports the same. Therefore, the contact information form available across universities is average.

Criteria- 2: Purpose

Table 5 shows the domain name of the university website. It is revealed from the table that 45% of

Table 5: Domain names

Domain	Respondents				Total
	Students	Research Scholars	Faculty Members	Others	
.in	1 (6.2)	14 (87.5)	1 (6.2)	0 (0)	16
.com	0 (0)	3 (75.0)	1 (25.0)	0 (0)	4
.edu	26 (22.6)	64 (55.7)	21 (18.3)	4 (3.5)	115
.ernet	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (100)	0 (0)	2
.info	1 (3.4)	19 (65.5)	9 (31.0)	0 (0)	29
.ac	122 (19.7)	279 (45.0)	186 (30.0)	33 (5.3)	620
.gov	0 (0)	25 (89.3)	3 (10.7)	0 (0)	28
thers	0 (0)	1 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1

p=0.00

research scholars stated '.ac' as domain name followed by faculty members (30%); students (19.7%) and others (5.3%) while out of 115 respondents who have stated '.edu' as domain name, 55.7% of them research scholars followed by students 922.6%) faculty members (18.3%) and others (3.5). It is also noted that out of 29 respondents who have stated .info, 65.5% of them research scholars; 31% faculty members.

It is clear that majority of the university website domain name is '.ac' and it is also statistically proved by x^2 analysis (p=0.00) indicate highly significance. There is a consistency in the domain name and the types of respondents' opinion. Therefore, the domain name of the university website is '.ac'.

Table 6: Appropriateness of the domain name

Response	Respondents				Total
	Students	Research Scholars	Faculty Members	Others	
Yes	145 (18.3)	394 (49.7)	217 (27.4)	37 (4.7)	793
No	5 (22.7)	11 (50.0)	6 (27.3)	0 (.0)	22

The table 6 reveals that out of 793 respondents who have opined that domain name of the website is most appropriate, 49.7% of the research scholars followed by faculty members (27.4%); students (18.3%) and others (4.7%) whereas only few (22) respondents were said the existing domain name of the website is not appropriate.

It is observed that the domain name of the website is most appropriate. It is also proved by x^2 analysis (p=0.73) indicate highly insignificant. There is a consistency in the opinion of the respondents across university. Therefore, it is inferred that the domain name is appropriate.

Table 7: Availability of information to specific users

Response	Respondents				Total
	Students	Research Scholars	Faculty Members	Others	
Yes	144 (18.6)	382 (49.4)	212 (27.4)	36 (4.7)	774
No	6 (14.6)	23 (56.1)	11 (26.8)	1 (2.4)	41

p=0.77

From the findings (table 7), it is seen that out of 774 respondents who stated information is available to specific users on the website, 49.4% of them were research scholars followed by faculty members (27.4%); students (18.6%) and others (4.7%) whereas out of 41 respondents who have not agreed, majority (56.1%) of them research scholars followed by faculty members.

It is clear from the analysis that the university website contains information to specific users. This is supported by Chi-square values 0.77 indicate highly insignificant. There is a clear association between the responses and the respondents. Therefore, it is inferred that information is available to specific users on the website of universities in south India.

Table 8: Ratings of information contents

Attributes	Ratings		Respondents			Total
	Scales	Students	Research Scholars	Faculty Members	Others	
information contents on the website suits the purpose of the website	Poor	2 (8.7)	11 (47.8)	8 (34.8)	2 (8.7)	23
	Average	22 (15.9)	72 (52.2)	38 (27.5)	6 (4.3)	138
	Good	71 (17.9)	193 (48.7)	113 (28.5)	19 (4.8)	396
	Very Good	35 (19.1)	94 (51.4)	47 (25.7)	7 (3.8)	183
	Excellent	20 (26.7)	35 (46.7)	17 (22.7)	3 (4.0)	75

p=0.81

A question was posed to know the rating of information contents uploaded by the concerned university authorities. Table 8 depicts the rating of information contents on the websites. Out of 75 respondents who rate excellent, more than forty six per cent of the research scholars followed by students (26.7%) rated excellent.

In the meanwhile, there are 396 respondents who rated good out of which 48.7% of them research scholars followed by faculty members (28.5%); students (19.1%) and others (4.8%). Out of 138 respondents, it is evidenced from the above table that the information contents uploaded to university

website is good. This is also supported by x^2 analysis (p=0.81) indicate highly insignificant. There is an association between the rating scale and the types of respondent. Therefore, it is inferred that the information content on the website was agreed by majority of the respondents across the universities.

Criteria 3: Coverage

Table 9: Links to other educational institutes

Attributes	Respondents				Total
	Students	Research Scholars	Faculty Members	Others	
Yes	45 (15.0)	161 (53.5)	79 (26.2)	16 (5.3)	301
No	105 (20.4)	244 (47.5)	144 (28.0)	21 (4.1)	514
Total	150 (18.4)	405 (49.7)	223 (27.4)	37 (4.5)	815

p=0.14

Table 9 reveals that out of 514 respondents who stated there is no links to other educational institutes, 47.5% of them were research scholars followed by faculty members (28%); students (20.4%) and others (4.2%) whereas out of 301 respondents said the website have links to other educational institutes of which 53.5% of them research scholars followed by faculty members (26.2%); students (15%).

It is clear from the analysis that the majority of the university websites do not have links to other educational institute. This is statistically proved by x^2 analysis (p=0.14) indicate highly insignificant. Therefore, it is inferred that the university websites do not have links to other educational institutes across universities in south India.

Table 10: Ratings of website coverage

Attributes	Rating scale	Respondents				Total
		Students	Research Scholars	Faculty Members	Others	
Information detail	Poor	0 (0)	4 (40.0)	5 (50.0)	1 (10.0)	10
	Average	33 (19.1)	91 (52.6)	42 (24.3)	7 (4.0)	173
	Good	60 (15.7)	188 (49.1)	116 (30.3)	19 (5.0)	383
	Very Good	42 (22.1)	94 (49.5)	47 (24.7)	7 (3.7)	190
	Excellent	15 (25.4)	28 (47.5)	13 (22.0)	3 (5.1)	59
	Mean=3.14		**CV=27.85**		***p*=0.36**	
Comparison to other website	Poor	2 (14.3)	6 (42.9)	5 (35.7)	1 (7.1)	14
	Average	29 (15.1)	101 (52.6)	50 (26.0)	12 (6.2)	192
	Good	74 (19.5)	176 (46.3)	115 (30.3)	15 (3.9)	380
	Very Good	37 (19.5)	103 (54.2)	44 (23.2)	6 (3.2)	190
	Excellent	8 (20.5)	19 (48.7)	9 (23.1)	3 (7.7)	39
	Mean=3.05		**CV=27.86**		***p*=0.58**	
Related Source links	Poor	1 (4.0)	11 (44.0)	11 (44.0)	2 (8.0)	25
	Average	36 (18.2)	106 (53.5)	46 (23.2)	10 (5.1)	198
	Good	64 (17.9)	165 (46.2)	112 (31.4)	16 (4.5)	357
	Very Good	37 (22.0)	90 (53.6)	35 (20.8)	6 (3.6)	168
	Excellent	12 (17.9)	33 (49.3)	19 (28.4)	3 (4.5)	67
	Mean=3.06		**CV=30.89**		***p*=0.19**	
Ability to meet the requirements	Poor	1 (7.7)	5 (38.5)	6 (46.2)	1 (7.7)	13
	Average	28 (15.5)	88 (48.6)	54 (29.8)	11 (6.1)	181
	Good	59 (17.6)	165 (49.1)	97 (28.9)	15 (4.5)	336
	Very Good	39 (18.5)	116 (55.0)	49 (23.2)	7 (3.3)	211
	Excellent	23 (31.1)	31 (41.)	17(23.0)	3 (4.1)	74
	Mean=3.18		**CV=29.34**		***p*=0.15**	

Table 10 gives the ratings of website coverage. With regard to information details, out of 393 respondents who rated good, majority (49.1%) of them are research scholars followed by faculty members (30.3%); students (15.7%) and others (5%) whereas out of 190 respondents who rated very good, (49.5%) of them are research scholars followed by faculty members (24.7%). It is also interesting to note that there are 59 respondents who rated excellent, of which majority of them are research scholars, followed by students (25.4%) while only few respondents rated poor. It is clear from the analysis that the website coverage is good. It is also supported by x^2 analysis (p=0.36) indicate highly insignificant. The mean value 3.14 and co-efficient of variation 27.85 shows consistency in the responses. Therefore, it is inferred that the website coverage across universities is good.

With regard to comparison to other website, it is found that a total of 380 respondents who rated good, more than forty five per cent of them research scholars followed by faculty members (30.3%); students (19.5%) whereas a total of 192 respondents rated average of which more than fifty per cent of them research scholars followed by faculty members (26%). Only 39 respondents rated excellent of which majority of them research scholars followed by faculty members. It is clear from the analysis that compare to other website, the university website is good. The

mean value 3.05 and co-efficient of variation value 27.86 indicates that there is a consistency in the rating scales across universities.

The x^2 analysis (p=0.58) indicate highly insignificant. Therefore, it is inferred that compare to other website, the existing university website is good in all respect.

With regard to related source links on the website it is found that majority (46.2%) of the research scholars rated good followed by faculty members (31.4%); students (17.9%) and others (4.5%). It is also statistically proved by x^2 analysis (p=0.19) indicate highly insignificant. The mean value 3.06 and co-efficient of variation 30.89 shows that there is an association between the rating scales and the types of respondents. Therefore, it is inferred that the existing university website have related source links across universities in south India.

With regard to ability to meet the requirement, it is found that majority of the research scholars opined good followed by faculty members (28.9%); students (17.6%) and others (4.5%). It is also supported by x^2 analysis (p=0.15) indicates highly insignificant. The mean values 3.18 and co-efficient of variation value 29.34 also indicate that the university websites will meet the requirements of the respondents. Therefore, it is inferred that the university website meet the requirements of the respondents.

Table 11: Ratings of websites in terms of Currency

Attributes	Rating scale	Respondents				Total
		Student	Research Scholars	Faculty Members	Others	
Currency	Poor	8 (26.7)	8 (26.7)	12 (40.0)	2 (6.7)	30
	Average	31 (16.1)	103 (53.6)	53 (27.6)	5 (2.6)	192
	Good	53 (16.0)	164 (49.5)	95 (28.7)	19 (5.7)	331
	Very Good	37 (18.7)	100 (50.5)	52 (26.3)	9 (4.5)	198
	Excellent	21 (32.8)	30 (46.9)	11 (17.2)	2 (3.1)	64
		Mean=3.098	CV=31.25	p=0.04		
Links visibility	Poor	0 (0)	8 (57.1)	6 (42.9)	0 (0)	14
	Average	21 (16.2)	67 (51.5)	36 (27.7)	6 (4.6)	130
	Good	62 (16.8)	179 (48.4)	109 (29.5)	20 (5.4)	370
	Very Good	45 (19.7)	118 (51.5)	57 (24.9)	9 (3.9)	229
	Excellent	22 (30.6)	33 (45.8)	15 (20.8)	2 (2.8)	72
		Mean=3.26	CV=27.3	p=0.21		
Links reliability	Poor	0 (.0)	2 (50.0)	2 (50.0)	0 (0)	4
	Average	23 (15.5)	75 (50.7)	41 (27.7)	9 (6.1)	148
	Good	61 (16.7)	181 (49.5)	109 (29.8)	15 (4.1)	366
	Very Good	44 (19.4)	119 (52.4)	55 (24.2)	9 (4.0)	227
	Excellent	22 (31.4)	28 (40.0)	16 (22.9)	4 (5.7)	70
		Mean=3.25	CV=26.7	p=0.26		

Criteria 4: Currency

Table 11 deals with rating of website in terms of currency, links visibility and links reliability. In terms of currency majority (49.5%) of the research scholars rated good, followed by faculty members (28.7%); students (16%) and others (5.7%). It is clear from the analysis that the up datedness of website is good. This is also supported by x^2 analysis (p=0.04) indicate significant. The mean value 3.09 and co-efficient of variation 31.25 also statically proved. There is a consistency in responses obtained. Therefore, it is inferred that the universities in south India update website.

With regard to links visibility, a total of 370 respondents rated good of which majority (48.4%) of them are research scholars followed by faculty members (29.5%); students (16.8%) whereas a total of 229 respondents rated very good followed by average (130); excellent (72) and poor (14). Therefore, from the data depicted it is clear that links visibility is good. This is also statistically proved by x^2 analysis (p=0.21) indicate highly insignificant. The mean value 3.26 and co-efficient of variation 27.3 also proves it. There is an association between the rating scales and types of respondents. Therefore it is inferred that the links visibility on the website is good.

While observing the links reliability, majority of the research scholars rated good followed by faculty members (29.8%); students (16.7%) and others (4.1%). It is also proved by x^2 analysis (p=0.26) indicate highly insignificant. The mean values 3.25 and co-efficient of variation 26.7 also indicate that there is an association between the rating scale and the types of respondents. Therefore, it is inferred that the links reliability is good.

Major Findings

The findings of the study are as follows:

1. Majority of the respondents are not aware of the information about website designer.

2. The link to library and its resources on the website meet the academic needs of the respondents across universities.

3. The majority of the websites have the contact information.

4. It is also found that majority of the universities haven't provided the contact form to seek feedback.

5. Majority of the universities have the domain name as .ac. in.

6. The domain name of the university website is appropriate.

7. Contents of the website holds good.

8. Majority of the university websites do not have links to other educational institutes.

9. The coverage of website contents across universities holds good.

10. Majority of the universities update the content of the website.

Conclusion

With the current increase in mobile internet users, population continues to grow even faster worldwide (Smith, 2012). University websites are portals that provide services and information to their visitors. They usually provide services, and also designed to provide content and services that serve different stakeholders' needs, including students, faculty, researchers and alumni. Prospective students can seek information about admission issues, current students can enquire about their results or register for new courses, staff can follow the university's latest news and alumni can seek announcements regarding job openings. There are some strong recommendations from the respondents of the present study that every university library must have the independent library website so that they can have what they want. Since library is only one point access wherein it should provide the career, personality development, higher education, research oriented and placements related information to the students and faculty. Websites play a major role in promoting the online resources. So that the ultimate goals, vision and mission of the higher learning centres could be achieved through such initiatives.

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