

Use and awareness of school library blogs: a case study

K G Sudhier^a and C Devi Priya^b

^aLibrary & Knowledge Centre, School of Distance Education, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, -695034, Kerala,
E-mail: kgsudhier@gmail.com

^bTata Consultancy Service, Technopark, Thiruvananthapuram, -695034, Kerala
E-mail: devipriyachidambaram@gmail.com

Received: 28 February 2017; revised and accepted: 25 April 2017

The study investigated the use of blogs and social networking sites especially the school library blogs by the students of Kendriya Vidyalaya(KV), Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The study reviewed the characteristics and evaluated the effectiveness of various blogs maintained by the library- the primary library blog, LibZine, Homework and Assignment online, My dear Book and Library junction. Questionnaire method was employed to collect data from a representative sample of 110 respondents to study the use of library blogs. Most of the students were aware of their school library blog and it was found that 37% of the students learned to use it by trial and error method. It was found that about 32% of the high school and higher secondary students have their own personal blog. More than 74 % of the students used it for interacting with each other. In general, the findings indicated that the school library blogs have an impact on the academic and other activities of the student community.

Keywords: Internet; Social networking sites; Web 2.0; Blog

Introduction

The modern academic community which consist of students and teachers are more oriented towards online information and online information sources. They spend more time on the web as most of the scholarly information are freely available on the internet. To meet the user requirements and also make them aware of the high quality resources available in the libraries, new service models should be designed. Blog is an example of one such service model. Blogs are easy to create and maintain. Libraries can use Web 2.0 technologies in services which facilitate resource sharing and collaboration¹.

According to Karami and Oloumi², “school library’s blogs are an extension of what librarians already do: identify, organize, and make information accessible. Blogs let librarians do it in a timely fashion. It gives an opportunity to be more responsive, to reach out to the faculty and students via our library blogs to highlight news, post student/faculty book reviews and invite comments, announce events, list new acquisitions, etc”.

Kendriya Vidyalaya, Pattom (KV Pattom) is a prominent school in the Thiruvananthapuram, the

capital city of the state of Kerala, India. The school has been named as a smart school in the state and is deemed to be one of the first generation institutions of its kind in the country under Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), the parent body that administers hundreds of Kendriya Vidyalayas in the country. Kendriya Vidyalaya, Pattom was established in 1964 and is affiliated to CBSE.

The school has a well-equipped library that started in 1965. It is the first automated KV Library in India³. The entire collection and services of the library has been computerized with an Integrated Library Management Software (ILMS) and OPAC of library holdings are available.

Library blogs

The library blog of KV Pattom was launched in 2007 on a Wordpress blogging platform. It was one of the first Web 2.0 initiatives executed by a school library in India. The blog has been considered by many as practical working model for Library 2.0. The hugely popular blog has crossed five million hits. It provides several kinds of information services and acts as window to many verified academic online resources.

The success of the blog prompted the library to launch other initiatives like *LibZine*, an e-magazine edited by a group of teachers, *My Dear Book*, a blog for publishing book reviews by students, and *Homework and Assignments online*- a website for sharing student home works and assignments⁴. *The Library Junction*, an academic online social network was initiated as a meeting place of young book lovers. The network provides its members the ability to create their own profile, post status updates, add comments and tags, send friend requests and express their 'likes' and 'dislikes'. All these library blogs of KV Pattom are linked together and with the official school website.

Home works and Assignments Online

The library launched a blog, *Home works and Assignments Online* that acts as a collaborative learning tool by providing students access to their routine home works and connecting them with teachers⁵.

LibZine

According to the school website, *LibZine* (Library magaZine), the e-magazine of the school that promotes creative talents in students by offering them a platform for publishing online. Students and staff members send their contributions (poems, short stories, book reviews, articles, painting etc) to the library e-mail and after suitable editing, they are published on the blog⁶.

My Dear Book

It is a blog for publishing book reviews of students. It gives an idea about the books available in the library and kindles the interest in students to read them. After a reading session in the library, students can give their views about the book⁷.

Library Junction

Library Junction, with a tagline, where minds meet and idea pop up, was developed as an online academic social platform with all the features of any popular social network. The net-generation students are the targeted users. It was designed as an online collaborative learning platform where members can ask questions, express views, hold discussions, share information, work on projects together, communicate with others and get to know the world better⁸.

Review of literature

Singh and Gill⁹ assessed the awareness and extent of the use of social media by the students and researchers of universities of North India. The study showed that all the respondents were aware and were making use of social media applications to help in their academic work. Islam and Mostofa¹⁰ studied the use of Facebook by the students of information science and library management (ISLM) department at Dhaka University. The study revealed that gender, educational level, geographical area and age influence the extent and nature of usage. Issac, Kurien and Dominic¹¹ described the use of blogs among LIS professionals in the University of Calicut. The study revealed that more than half (51.11%) of the professionals' blog to share information or insight but, a few use it to enhance their professional development. It was found that majority (73.33%) of library professionals receive professional information from blogs.

Alarabiatand Al -Mohammad¹² explored the current and potential use of Facebook for learning by Jordanian university students. The study shows that most of the students had Facebook accounts, which emphasised its popularity among the youth compared to other types of social media sites. Vaidegi and Munshi¹³ studied the use of SNSs in the learning process by social science students at Aligarh Muslim University. The study found that social networking tools made a great impact on the students learning by providing opportunities to them to link with their peers and instructors to clear their doubts and express their thoughts and opinions on the subject matter. Ramaswamy and Padma¹⁴ in their study reported the URLs of seven KV library blogs in Kerala. All the 7 library blogs were created using WordPress. Mazzocchi¹⁵ analysed the decreasing trend of library blogs. According to him, 'blogs are among the first web 2.0 tools that libraries have used to communicate with their users'.

Madhusudhan¹⁶ studied how researchers at the University of Delhi use social networking sites for their academic activities. It was found that some researchers expressed cyber bullying and privacy concerns, while majority of them maintained that using SNSs may be a waste of time. Haneefa and Sumitha¹⁷ investigated the perception and use of SNSs by the students of the university of Calicut, Kerala. Singh and Gill¹⁸ studied use of SNS by

researchers and Faisal¹⁹ described how blogs and SNS acts as user centric service tools in an academic library.

In general, the use of social networking sites have been studied and discussed in many papers. However, there seems to be little research that assesses the perception and use of social networking sites by school students in developing countries like India. This study provides an insight into the use and awareness of library blogs by students in the KV, Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram.

Objectives of the study

- To study the purpose for which the students use internet;
- To study the problems faced by students in accessing internet;
- To find out whether the students are aware of library blogs;
- To find out whether they have a blog of their own;
- To identify whether the students are using the library blogs to interact with each other and with teachers; and
- To find out the usefulness of different links, options and services available on the library blogs.

Methodology

Structured questionnaires were employed to collect data from a representative sample of 110 students of high school and higher secondary classes. A total of 99 filled in questionnaires were received back, which comes to an overall response rate of 90 per cent. The collected data through the questionnaire have been thoroughly organized, scrutinized and tabulated by using standard statistical methods, and their analysis along with interpretations have been discussed.

Analysis

It was found that the majority of the students (57%) in the sample population accessed internet from their homes. The others accessed internet at school or at internet cafes. Reliable internet availability is a prerequisite for the students to use the library blogs.

It is seen that the internet connections are poor (61.61%), power cuts are frequent (16.16%), computer facilities are inadequate (11.11%) and so on (Fig. 1). It was also seen that many students have their own blogs. From Table 1 it can be seen that 32% students have their own blogs. It is not known if the school library blog has been an inspiration for the students to create their own personal blogs.

It is seen that 50.5% (50) of the total students rarely visit the school library blogs and 24.24% (24)

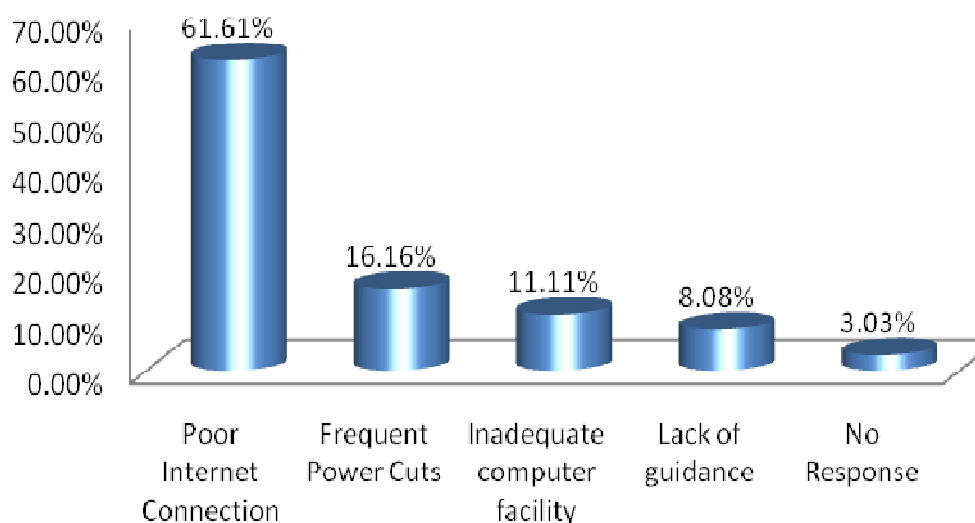


Fig. 1—Problems in accessing internet

of total students use it once in a week. It is also found that only five students are everyday users of the blogs and 6 students state that they are not interested to visit blogs (Table 2).

Table 1—Students having personal blogs

Sl. no.	Class	Yes	No
1	12	3 (25%)	9 (75%)
2	11	20 (38.46%)	32 (61.54%)
3	10	5 (29.42%)	12 (70.59%)
4	9	4 (22.22%)	14 (77.78%)
	Total	32 (32.32%)	67 (67.68%)

Table 3 shows the awareness about the services offered by the school library blogs.

It is found that 31 students (31.31%) are aware of all the library blogs maintained by the school library. They include *Library Junction*, *LibZine*, *My Dear Book*, *Home works and Assignment Online*. Seventeen (17.17%) students are using *Library Junction* only and 15 (15.15%) students prefer *Home works and Assignment Online*. It is to be noted that 60 students knew about two or more library blogs. The study also revealed that all the students are using at least one library blog.

Use of blogs for interactions

Students interact with fellow students and teachers for various reasons. Responses were sought to

Table 2—Frequency of use of library blogs

Sl. no.	Class	Frequency of use					Total
		Daily	Once in 3 days	Once in a week	Rarely	Not Interested	
1	12	1 (8.33%)	-	6 (50%)	5 (41.67%)	-	12 (100%)
2	11	2 (3.85%)	7 (13.46%)	8 (15.38%)	29 (55.77%)	6 (11.54%)	52 (100%)
3	10	1 (5.88%)	2 (11.76%)	3 (17.65%)	11 (64.71%)	-	17 (100%)
4	9	1 (5.56%)	5 (27.78%)	7 (38.89%)	5 (27.78%)	-	18 (100%)
	Total	5 (5.05%)	14 (14.14%)	24 (24.24%)	50 (50.5%)	6 (6.06%)	99 (100%)

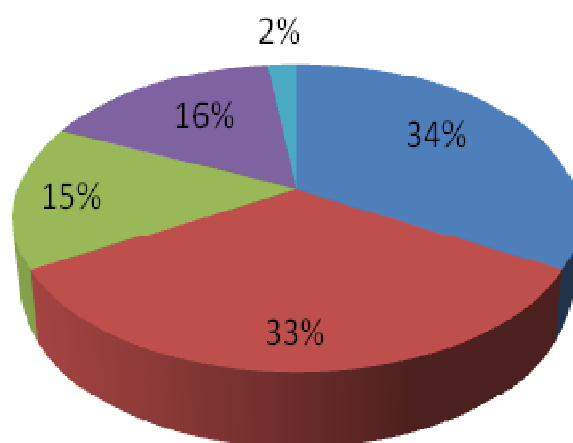
Table 3—Awareness of services of the library blogs

Library blog(s)	Class								Total	
	12th		11th		10th		9th			
	No. of Students	%	No. of students	%	No. of students	%	No. of students	%	No. of students	%
Library Junction (1)	2	16.67	7	13.46	6	35.29	2	11.11	17	17.17
Libzine(2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Homework and Assignment Online(3)	-	-	10	19.23	4	23.53	1	5.56	15	15.15
My dear Book(4)	-	-	1	1.92	0	0.00	6	33.33	7	7.07
All(1+2+3+4)	6	50.00	18	34.62	3	17.65	4	22.22	31	31.31
1+3 Only	4	33.33	11	21.15	2	11.76	1	5.56	18	18.18
1+2 only	-	-	1	1.92	0	0.00	3	16.67	4	4.04
1+ 2+ 3 only	-	-	2	3.85	2	11.76	-	-	4	4.04
1+2+4 only	-	-	2	3.85	0	0.00	-	-	2	2.02
1+3+4	-	-	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	5.56	1	1.01
Total	12	100.00	52	100.00	17	100.00	18	100.00	99	100.00

Table 4—Use of the library blog for interactions

Sl. no.	Class	With teachers			With students		
		Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
1	12	2 (16.67%)	10 (83.33%)	12 (100%)	9 (75%)	3 (25%)	12 (100%)
2	11	15 (28.85%)	37 (71.15%)	52 (100%)	41 (78.85%)	11 (21.15%)	52 (100%)
3	10	3 (17.65%)	14 (82.35%)	17 (100%)	12 (70.59%)	5 (29.41%)	17 (100%)
4	9	4 (22.22%)	14 (77.78%)	18 (100%)	11 (61.11%)	7 (38.89%)	18 (100%)
Total		24 (24.24%)	75 (75.75%)	99 (100.00%)	73 (73.74%)	26 (26.26%)	99 (100%)

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Need to improve ■ No Response

Fig. 2—Opinion about *My Dear Book*

examine the use of the blogs by the students to interact with teachers and fellow students. It was seen that students use the blogs to interact with fellow students than with their teachers.

It was found that majority of the students, 75 (75.75%) were not using the blog for interacting with their teachers. However, 74% of the students are using the library blog for interacting with each other and share their thoughts and views through the blog (Table 4).

Use of LibZine blog

The study revealed that majority of students of all the classes (77.78%) are of the opinion that the *LibZine* blog is useful to them. The book reviews of the students in *LibZine* the most preferred service used by majority of students (36.36%) followed by Club activities (15.15%) and science corner (14.14%). Club activities have helped them by providing

opportunity to work together. The other sections students found exciting are short stories, science corner, skill for life etc (Table 5).

Use of home works and assignment online blog

More than half of the total number of students (60.61%) who participated in the study found *Home works and Assignment Online* blog useful for submitting their home works in time. It helped them to find out the home works they have missed and submit assignments on time. Thirty seven students (37.37%) reported that were not using this blog (Table 6).

Opinion about My Dear Book

Fig. 2 shows the responses of students about the blog *My Dear Book*. Thirty three students (33.33%) are of the opinion that the blog is excellent, and the same number of students rated it as good. Sixteen

Table 5—Use of *Libzine* blog

Section	Classes								Total	
	12		11		10		9			
	No. of Students	%	No. of Students	%	No. of students	%	No. of students	%	No. of students	%
Book Review by students	2	16.67	20	38.47	6	35.29	7	38.89	36	36.36
Science Corner	2	16.67	5	9.62	4	23.53	3	16.67	14	14.14
Short stories	1	8.33	5	9.62	2	11.77	1	5.56	9	9.09
Experience	-	-	3	5.769	-	-	-	-	3	3.03
Club activities	3	25.00	6	11.54	1	5.88	5	27.78	15	15.15
Poetry	1	8.33	2	3.85	-	-	-	-	3	3.03
Word from old student	2	16.67	2	3.85	2	11.76	-	-	6	6.06
Skill for life	-	-	6	11.54	-	-	2	11.11	8	8.08
No response	1	8.33	3	5.77	1	5.88	-	-	5	5.05
Total	12	100	52	100	17	100	18	100	99	100

Table 6—Use of Home works and Assignments Online blog

Sl. no.	Class	Use of Home work and Assignment online blog			Total
		Yes	No.	No response	
1	12	9 (75.00%)	3 (25.00%)	-	12 (100%)
2	11	28 (53.85%)	23 (44.23%)	1 (1.92%)	52 (100%)
3	10	11 (64.71%)	5 (29.41%)	1 (5.88%)	17 (100%)
4	9	12 (66.67%)	6 (33.33%)	-	18 (100%)
Total		60 (60.61%)	37 (37.37%)	2 (2.02%)	99 (100%)

students are of the opinion that the blog need to be improved further. The students opined that *My Dear Book* gives them an opportunity to share opinion about their favorite book with their friends and also helped them to enhance their literary skills.

Conclusion

The library blog of Kendriya Vidyalaya, Pattom is a pioneer and novel initiative. It has been accepted and appreciated not only by the students and teachers of KV Pattom but also the parents, academicians, and librarians across the country. It can be taken as a model for those, who are planning to build school library blogs, and also blogs for libraries of colleges and other academic institutions. It is a fine example of how the Web 2.0 technologies can be made use for better and efficient library services.

With the growing popularity of social media, blogs are a useful medium to effectively connect students with the library. library blogs. The school library blog is to be globally and socially connected, providing comfortable and safe space for students and staff (and parents/community, too) to interact with each other and explore new ideas and technologies²⁰.

References

1. Sudhier KG, Developments in Web 2.0: challenges for LIS professionals. In *Library 2.0 and Information Management: Essays in honour of Dr. Jalaja, V*, edited by Dineshan Koovakkai and T M Vasudevan, (Atlantic: New Delhi), 2011, 59-75. .
2. Karami T and Oloumi T, Libraries and weblogs: The role of new phenomenon blogs in library services, research and learning. Paper presented at the 27th Annual Conference: Embedding Libraries in Learning and Research. Faculdade de Engenharia, Porto, Portugal, May 22 – 25, 2006.

- Available at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/iatul/2006/papers/27/> (Accessed on 02 January 2016).
3. Kendriya Vidyalaya, Pattom. Available at: <http://kvpattom.nic.in/> (Accessed on 12 January 2016).
 4. Library, Kendriya Vidyalaya Pattom. Available at: <http://librarykvpattom.wordpress.com/> (Accessed on 12 January 2016).
 5. *Homework and Assignment Online*. Available at: <http://homeworksonline.wordpress.com> (Accessed on 12 January 2016).
 6. *LibZine*. Available at: <https://libzine.wordpress.com/> (Accessed on 12 January 2016).
 7. *My dear Book*. Available at: <https://mydearbook.wordpress.com/> (Accessed on 12 January 2016).
 8. *Library Junction*. Available at: <http://grou.ps/libraryjunction/home> (Accessed on 12 January 2016).
 9. Singh KP and Gill MS, Role and users' approach to social networking sites (SNSs): a study of universities of north India, *The Electronic Library*, 33 (1) (2015) 19-34.
 10. Islam MM and Mostofa SKM, Usage pattern of Facebook among the students of Dhaka University: a study, *Annals of Library and Information Studies*, 62 (3) (2015) 133-137.
 11. Issac TP, Kurian SS and Dominic J, Use of blogs among LIS professionals in university of Calicut: An analytical study, *International Journal of Library and Information Science*, 4(1) (2015) 1-8.
 12. Alarabiat A and Al-Mohammad S, The potential for Facebook application in undergraduate learning: a study of Jordanian students, *International Journal of Information Knowledge and Management*, 10(1) (2015) 81-103. .
 13. Vaidegi D and Munshi SA, Utilization of social networking tools in the learning process by social science students at Aligarh Muslim University: a survey, *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 2(10) (2014) 60-71. .
 14. Ramasamy K and Padma P, Library blogs of selected Kendriya Vidyalayas of Kerala region: a state-of-the-art study of school library blogs in terms of theme, content, structure and web 2.0 tools used, *International Journal of Scientific Research*, 3(2) (2014) 231-134.
 15. Mazzocchi J, Blogs and social networks in libraries: complementary or antagonistic tools? *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1191 (2014) Available at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1191> (Accessed on 25 December 2015).
 16. Madhusudhan M, Use of social networking sites by research scholars of the University of Delhi: a study, *The International Information and Library Review*, 44 (2) (2012), 100-113. .
 17. Haneefa MK and Sumitha E, Perception and use of social networking sites by the students of Calicut University. *DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology*, 31(4) (2011) 295-301.
 18. Singh KP and Gill MS, Use of social networking sites by the research scholars: a study of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, *Library Herald*, 49 (3) (2011) 229-241.
 19. Faisal SL, Blogs and online social networks as user centric service tools in academic libraries: An Indian library experience. In *International Conference on Academic Libraries*, New Delhi, University of Delhi, 2009, 487-495. Available at: http://crl.du.ac.in/ical09/papers/index_files/ical-3_162_349_1_RV.pdf (Accessed on 22 December 2015).
 20. Divya LR and Sudhier KG, Web 2.0 and library service, *In National Seminar on Emerging Library & Information Technologies* (ELITE- 2011), 9-10 December 2011, Chennai, Tamil Nadu Veterinary & Animal Science University.