Perceptions and Feedback of LIS Professionals towards Internet Resources on Marketing of Library Services

Anna Kaushik


Our study aims to obtain perception and feedback of LIS marketing professionals regarding marketing activities, searching and finding internet resources on marketing of library services area through online questionnaire. The results of this study revealed that in "Marketing Library Service", Google and Yahoo emerged as most effective search term and search engines for searching and finding information on marketing of library services on Internet. About 43% respondents fetch information about marketing library services from their colleague if they don’t find desired information on Internet. This study will be helpful for information seekers and LIS professionals in order to identify search patterns and usefulness of internet resources available on marketing of library services area.

**Key Terms:** LIS, Internet Resources, Search Engines, Feedback, Perception, Marketing Library Services.

**INTRODUCTION**

In the present era, Internet becomes a main reservoir to access information for variant purposes. Origin of several internet and information technologies, variety of internet resources has been developed and available on different platforms and formats. Hawthorne said that wide use of web based electronic information resources begun in the mid 1990’s. Internet resources may be defined as information sources developed for specific purpose, particular targeting to a specific groups and available on Internet. These Internet resources mainly available on two platforms namely paid and free. On paid platform, one has to pay some amount for accessing internet resources and on the other hand, one can access these internet resources free of cost, thus, these free internet resources also known as open resources. Open access resources are gaining popularity by various open initiatives taken place after 1990s. But, nowadays, many open access resources are available on internet that contain worthy library and information science literature on subject specific area. On the other hand, search engines also considered as imperative tool for retrieving information hence Information seekers often used search engines to get desired information for various tasks but searching and finding relevant information from search engines is a really challenging job. Search engines produce different results in form of several types of internet resources and file formats.

Marketing concepts have proven their significance in terms of promoting library services as well as products and exploring information to right users at right time, therefore marketing theories and techniques very much adopted by every library and information centre globally. Thus, various open access resources such as websites, electronic journals, blogs, wikis, podcasts, online bibliographies, electronic books and so on, have been developed which impart information exclusively on marketing of library services area free of cost. Feed back and perception is always helpful in building successful products services and received various valuable personal opinions of users which may be used for developing remarkable products and services.

**OBJECTIVES**

This study consists following objectives:

- To obtain feedback from potential users regarding availability of internet resources on marketing of library services.
- To catch the perception of LIS marketing professionals with regard to marketing library services related activities and retrieving information through selected search engines.
- To obtain feedback towards internet resources on LIS marketing in terms of relevancy, currency, reliability, accuracy and alternative means.
To suggest effective measures for improving of Internet resources on marketing of library services.

**SCOPE**

This study mainly focused and confined to only 50 library and information science professionals who actively involved and have authority in the area of marketing library and information services. The perception and feedback of selected 50 LIS marketing professional taken on the basis of online questionnaire framed for this purpose. The selection of 50 LIS marketing professionals made on the following parameters:

- LIS professionals who have their own websites, blogs, and other web resources that are imparting information regarding marketing library and information services.
- Library and information science practitioners who actively involved in LIS marketing and associated with LIS associations which involved in marketing library and information services related activities and developed separate sections for marketing library services area.
- LIS people who have written book chapters or articles in library and information science subject related journals.
- LIS professionals who have written and edited any book on marketing library and information services focused area.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Different studies on the marketing of library services were carried out on the issues such as LIS professional attitudes, specific group studies, open access resources, web based electronic resources and search engines as well as search terms. Xia examined the conductivity of two Facebook groups namely Indiana University and Rutgers University towards LIS marketing and found that successfulness of Facebook groups depend on actively participation of organizations' librarians and alive discussions. This study has further suggested that Facebook groups should include students as well as faculty and staff members. Xia conducted a longitudinal study of scholars attitudes towards open access electronic journals published from early 1990s and highlighted the weakness of open access e-journals for open access advocates. Zhang examined the use of web resources in 30 scholarly journals in three different disciplines such as science, social science and humanities and discovered that web resources were not much used in journal articles but number of web resources had increased. Above study also suggested that new strategies should develop in order to manage web based information resources. Zhang also investigated the use of Internet-based electronic resources by library and information science researchers for scholarly contributions. Robinson discovered the impact of new forms of information resources, viz. weblogs and wikis in the literature of toxicology. A survey conducted by, Palmer et al. regarding attitude of academic librarians about open access principles and related behaviours and found that academic librarians have quite positive attitudes towards open access but wide differences was noted in funding and library supported open access initiatives. A focused group study was carried out by, Candela Ollé based on seven staff members of five Catalan academic libraries for getting perceptions for use of electronic resources and identified that use of electronic journals increased but librarians were encountered various problems such as platform break downs, difficulties in accessing resources off-campus, and discontinued resources. Kaur analyzed the attitude of library professionals in connection to marketing concepts and its implementation in the libraries through questionnaire and interview method and discovered that most of library professionals showed positive attitude for LIS marketing and also in favour of having marketing logo, mission statement and marketing professionals in their respective libraries but in real situation none library found to have all above mentioned parameters related to marketing concepts and techniques. Singh investigated the marketing culture underlying in Finnish research libraries and discovered that there are three kinds of marketing cultures found which includes the strong (the high flyers); the medium (the brisk runners); and the weak (the slow walkers) on the junctures of analyzing the libraries’ marketing attitudes, knowledge, and behavior permeating their organizations. Mi urged to apply classic marketing principles and strategies in order to add value in their library services and products. Kaushik's study also urges to pursue marketing library services, search term and Google search engine to searching and finding information marketing library services subject. Sandhu conducted a survey study on the basis of questionnaire regarding use of open access resources by engineering students of Punjab (India) in which 460 respondents participated and discovered that most of respondents were familiar with open access resources particularly open access journals, institutional repositories and self-archived materials available on the web. But open access journals were more use in comparison to other open access resources. The 78% respondents also indicated that open access would lead to easier accessibility of paper and benefited them. Another interesting study was carried out by, Kennedy expressing role of marketing techniques with regard to promote electronic resources of the library and successes or failures of marketing plans by using the corpus composed of 24 documents published from 1994-2009 through which 38 unique marketing techniques were discovered among which four marketing techniques viz. patron training in a group setting, flyers/brochures, emails to patrons, and surveys, found most popular, Shontz et.al. Investigated the attitude of public librarians of The New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) for marketing of library services by questionnaire and found that perhaps, maximum respondents had positive attitude towards marketing library services but library administrators, librarians who had taken a course or workshop in marketing, and those who perceived marketing to be a high priority in their libraries expressed more positive attitudes toward LIS marketing in contrast to other respondents. As such no study so far carried out on the perceptions and feedback regarding searching and finding internet resources on marketing of library services.

**METHODOLOGY**

To know about the perceptions of the LIS professionals involved in marketing library services, a questionnaire survey was conducted to obtain their feedback. For this study, an online questionnaire containing 18 questions was developed with help of free website namely "Kwiksurveys" (http://www.kwiksurveys.com/) exclusively available on internet that facilitates to build online questionnaire freely. This online questionnaire was sent to a focus group of 50 LIS professionals involved in the area of marketing library services. The 50 professionals were selected on the basis of well known experts who have authored papers, books or maintain blogs on marketing...
library services. Further, authors who have contributed to the IFLA Management and Marketing Section were also included as the respondents of the survey. Out of the 50 LIS professionals and experts, 30 complete responses were received which have been analyzed and presented in this study. In addition, Microsoft Excel is also used for tabulating and calculating the various results pertaining to this study.

RESULTS

The various results retrieved from the online questionnaire are described below:

- **Profile of Respondents**

  The questionnaire included the designations of the respondents as Senior Library Manager, Middle Library Manager, Junior Library Manager, LIS Teacher and LIS Researcher. The profiles of the respondents are shown in Figure 1.

  As can be seen in figure 1, majority of the respondents 40% are senior library managers followed by LIS teachers 30%. In addition to the five identified designations, two profiles viz. middle library manager and LIS researchers found equally i.e. 13% each but minority profile discovered from junior library manager that is 4%.

- **Length of Interest in Marketing**

  Although, the questionnaire was served to the focus group involved in marketing library services, to have better understanding of the how long the respondents were associated with marketing library services activities, the length of their interest in the subject was analyzed.

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    It was found that majority of (70%) respondents 21 were involved in conducting training programmes/workshops on the area of marketing library services and each 18 respondents were involved in publishing scholarly articles/books and involvement in association activities. While minority just 5 respondents engaged with open access archives. Hence, maximum LIS professionals involved in activities namely conducting training programmes/workshops is dominating relative to other activities on marketing of library services.

- **LIS Marketing Related Activities**

  To know the marketing activities in which the respondents were involved, eleven marketing activities were identified for the respondents to give their feedback. Figure 2 shows the responses obtained from LIS professionals.

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- **Perceptions towards Marketing Library Services**

  The following statements were asked to the respondents to react on a five point scale:

  - Marketing is essential in library and information service
  - Effective managers require separate marketing sections.
  - Enough budget is required to carry out marketing activities in libraries
  - Specialized marketing persons require to manage marketing activities
  - One can easily learn about marketing with using resources on the Internet
  - Internet resources on marketing library services are sufficient

  The responses got from each of the statement were studied and are discussed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Perceptions towards Marketing Library Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing is essential in library and information service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective managers require separate marketing sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough budget is required to carry out marketing activities in libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized marketing persons require to manage marketing activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>One can easily learn about marketing with using resources on the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet resources on marketing library services are sufficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The statement regarding the essentiality of marketing library and information services was asked to the respondents and responses received from them revealed by table 2 that all respondents agreed with the statement that marketing is essential in library and information service with 79% strongly agree to the statement. Majority of the respondents 69% agreed in which 38% strongly agree with separate marketing sections statement. 23% of the respondents were undecided whereas 8% disagreed with the statement. Enough budget needed for marketing activities in the libraries, It is clearly displayed in table that highest respondents 89% agreed including 30% strongly agreed and lowest respondents 4% unable to decide the said statement. 37% respondents opined that non-LIS marketing persons were not required to manage marketing activities in the libraries. 32% respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the resources available on the Internet can be used for learning marketing library information resources. 47% respondents responded disagree with the statement in which 11% strongly disagreed towards sufficient of Internet resources on the marketing library services on Internet.

**Preferred Terms for Searching Literature on LIS Marketing**

For high precision and recall of search results, it is essential to choose the best search strategy with the right combination of keywords used for searching information. For this purpose, five search terms have been identified for this study for efficient searching of information on marketing for library and information services. To know the LIS professionals preference with regard to search terms, they were asked to rank the search terms.

- **Frequency of use of Search Engines to Retrieve Required Information**

To understand how often the LIS professionals use search engines to search for information, a question was asked and responses obtained against above question represented by figure 3 that large numbers of respondents 54% used the search engines as and when required, 43% use it daily and 3% used the search engines just once a week. However, most LIS professionals used search engines as and when required.

- **Ranking of Search Engines for Searching Information**

There are a number of search engines available that one can use to search and retrieve information from the Internet. To know how LIS marketing professionals preference of these search engines, the respondents were asked to rank the five search engines. This ranking is shown through table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Engine</th>
<th>Rank 1</th>
<th>Rank 2</th>
<th>Rank 3</th>
<th>Rank 4</th>
<th>Rank 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yahoo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSN Live</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Askjeeves</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AltaVista</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to view from table 3 that Google was ranked as the first choice 100% of the all respondents, Yahoo ranked at second with the majority by 72% respondents rating it followed by MSN Live which ranked at number 3, Askjeeves ranked on number 4 and AltaVista ranked at last 5th position. Hence, Google search engine is the first choice of respondents to search information on the subject on Internet.

- **Availability of Resources on the Internet**

A question regarding opinions about the availability of the information resources was asked to target group. Figure 5 displayed the responses in which 44% of the respondents claimed that internet resources were adequate whereas equal proportion 44% respondents responded that the resources were very few. Only two respondents gave opinion that the resources...
were excessive and just one respondent felt that internet resources on subject on internet were inadequate.

- **Fulfillment of Information Needs**

![Fig. 6: Fulfillment of Information Needs](image)

Figure 6 shows that 12 respondents i.e. 43% found the information useful many times, and 32% found the information useful only sometimes. Just 25% of the users found the information useful mostly. Thus, maximum LIS professionals found information useful many times.

- **Relevance of Information Retrieved**

- **Currency of Information on the Internet**

It is clearly seen by figure 8 that majority 64% of the respondents found that information available on marketing of library services is update and 11% of the respondents found information to be most updated. 25% of the respondents found that the information available marketing library service on the Internet is not updated.

- **Reliability of Information on the Internet**

![Fig. 7: Relevance of Information Retrieved](image)

Figure 7 depicts that the 81% respondents found the relevant information available on marketing library services and 11% found information to be very relevant. Only 8% claimed that irrelevant information is available on internet on the subject.

- **Alternate Means to Obtain Information**

![Fig. 9: Reliability of Information on the Internet](image)

It was found from figure 9 that a large numbers of respondents 88% perceived the information available on the Internet is reliable and 8% perceived that information is very reliable while only 4% respondents viewed that information on the Internet is not reliable.

- **MAJOR FINDINGS**

- The majority of the respondents are senior library managers involved in activity for conducting training programmes/workshops on the area of marketing library services.
- Marketing library service found the most appropriate term for searching relevant resources on marketing library services.
- Google and Yahoo search engines discovered maximum relevant resources on the subject.
- Majority of respondents claimed that separate sections and enough budget required for marketing activities.
SUGGESTIONS

- Some search engines such as Google and Yahoo have been the most preferred general search engines for many years now. Since, different search engines have different search algorithms, it is well known that all of them do not return similar search results. Therefore, it is essential to carry out search engine studies on different areas of LIS on certain period basis in order to identify the best search engines for a particular topic.

- It is necessary to produce more studies on evaluation of internet resources on marketing of library services and other LIS areas using different criteria according to internet resources categories.

- It is necessary to build one stop point/shop/platform/website to gather all kind internet resources on marketing of library services at one place.

- It is also necessary to carry out perception of subject specific people in certain intervals in order to know their real insights and opinions that certainly helpful to get strengths and weaknesses of internet resources available on a particular subject.

Future Research may be carried out on the Following Issues:

- The study on new version of evaluation criteria and other benchmarks to evaluate internet resources on the other area of library and Information Science.

- Longitudinal studies (over a period of time) may carry out to judge the availability of internet resources on a particular subject by using many search engines.

- Study focused on development of models or one stop point to access internet resources on the other subjects of LIS.

- Study of user’s pattern and behavior for internet resources on marketing library services as well as other LIS subjects in particular time frame intervals.

REFERENCES


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