Use of Wiki by Students of Sociology and LIS Departments of University of Pune: A Comparative Study
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ABSTRACT
The paper attempts to compare the use of Wikipedia among students of Department of Library and Information Science (DLIS) and the students of Department of Sociology from University of Pune. It has been found that the library science students are more literate in the use of Wikipedia as compared to the students of sociology, the reason might be Wikipedia is a part of curricula of library science students. Also the fact that Wikipedia is editable, hence the students of library science are more cautious before using the information available on Wikipedia.

Key Terms: Wikipedia, Web 2.0, Sociology, LIS, RSS, Blogs.

INTRODUCTION
The introduction of web 2.0 has revolutionized the world. It has changed the aspect in which the scholarly communication of information used to take place. The components of web 2.0 such as Weblogs, RSS, Wikis, Social Networking, Mashups and many more are used by the users for carrying out many applications. Students involved in classroom learning process are mostly dependent on the classroom teaching and lecture notes. Apart from these sources the students are also using components of web 2.0 such as RSS, Wiki, Blogs etc. into the learning process. Among components of web 2.0 many institutions have developed wikis for promoting the learning contents and also to cultivate collaborative learning among the students.

Ward Cunningham coined the term wiki in 1995 when he started his website using the software wikiwikiweb developed by himself. Since then many wiki tools have been developed and used in variety of knowledge sharing projects. Wikipedia was launched in 2001 by Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger, using the concept and technology of a Wiki as a free encyclopedia that anyone can edit and currently contains more than 4,264,436 articles in 285 languages. Wikipedia is the world’s seventh-most-popular website, visited monthly by around 11% of all internet users, Wikipedia.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
O’Shea conducted a study in an undergraduate, 1st year education course regarding the implementation of wikis as part of course assignments. 74% students reported initially they were worried at learning a new technology, their overall experience using the wikis was positive. Canole concluded from undergraduate student responses on surveys that through Web 2.0 applications such as wikis students developed new forms of evaluation skills that enabled them to critique and make decisions regarding new content. Students look it see as just another tool to support their learning. Carpenter reported that the majority of graduate education students in their online courses indicated that wikis facilitated group learning. Harris concluded that wikis aided in student learning as reported by those enrolled in an online health information education course. Coutinho reported similar results in their study of graduate Educational Technology courses. Choy experimented with wiki software for supplementing online learning and concluded that wikis have the potential to support and structure communities where individuals came together to share, learn, create and collaborate with each other. Minocha has described the wikis-based collaborative activities and the evaluation of the pedagogical effectiveness of a wiki for collaborative learning.

A lot of educators categorically refuse any citation coming from Wikipedia, warning students to stay as far away as possible from that source, including numerous K12 institutions and Lehigh University, University of Delaware whereas some views it as a starting point to get themselves introduced to the new concept and also a source pointing them to different other sources, Shareski.

Others see wiki as a site which provides a starting point to introduce the concept of the value of information, and set their student to check the facts on other sources.
CHARACTERISTICS OF WIKI

Tonkin has categorized the use of Wiki into following four broad categories:

- Single User: Individual user can develop his own thought and can edit his own thoughts, which is useful for revision and monitoring changes.
- Lab Book: This enables students to peer review notes kept online by adding, for example, commentary or annotations to existing lecture notes or seminar discussions.
- Collaborative Writing: A group of users can use this for writing a paper, research project or any assignment collaboratively.
- Knowledge Base: Wiki supported by an advanced search functionality so that the data can be access rapidly and accurately.

UNIVERSITY OF PUNE

University of Pune is one of the premier institutions in India established in 1948. Presently it has 53 Academic Departments on the campus catering education in the field of Science, Social Science, Arts, Humanities, Engineering, Medical etc. and more than 900 colleges and institutions affiliated to the university. All the departments on the university campus are well connected with a network and sufficient nodes for accessing internet has been provided in the department, apart from this the university library has an internet facility centre which can accommodate more than 50 students at a time. Students who do not have internet facility at their department, use the facility available at the internet centre of the central library. Students access internet and also the databases subscribed by the library for its users.

OBJECTIVES

Following objectives were set for the study.

- To test the awareness of the students towards Wikipedia.
- To find the purpose for which they are using Wikipedia.
- To find out the dependency of the students for information on Wikipedia.
- To make comparison between the students from Sociology and Library Science.
- To know students from which department are well versed with Wikipedia.

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

The scope of the study is limited to two social science department viz. students from the LIS and Sociology. The study comprises of all the students admitted for the first year and second year for both the courses. Total 120 questionnaires were distributed to the students of Sociology and 60 questionnaires to the students of DLIS, accordingly 115(95.83%) students from the Sociology and 60(100%) students from the DLIS gave their feedback, these 175 respondents became the sample for final analysis of the study. The further analysis is based on the feedback given by these 175 students.

DATA ANALYSIS

- Use of Web 2.0 Components

The present generation is more dependant on the resources available on the web. Many form of information resources are available on the web, hence the question was asked whether the students are using the components of web 2.0 and it is found that all the students are using the components of web 2.0.

- Use of Wikipedia

In connection to the above question it was asked whether the students are using Wikipedia and if they are using it then for what purpose they are using. All the 175 students stated that they are using Wikipedia, and as far as their usage is concerned it is shown in the following table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information about a known concept</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47(40.87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about unknown concept</td>
<td>23(20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To know meaning of the term</td>
<td>19(16.52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about a known concept + Information about unknown concept</td>
<td>26(22.61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>115(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table 1 it is clear that the purpose of using Wikipedia differs from the students of sociology department and library science department. Out of the total 115 respondents, 51(29.14%) students use Wikipedia to retrieve information about the known concept, of which 47(40.87%) are from the sociology department and 4(6.67%) are from library science department, followed by 65(37.14%) students using Wikipedia for obtaining the information about the unfamiliar concept, out of these 23(20%) and 42(70%) students are from sociology and library science department respectively, where as 40(22.86%) students use Wikipedia for obtaining information about the known as well as about the unfamiliar concept, of which 26(22.61%) and 14(23.33%) students are from sociology and library science department and 19(16.52%) students from the sociology department use Wikipedia for retrieving meaning of the term.

Actually Wikipedia consists of articles on the concepts written and edited by any person who is interested in the subject or who is having sufficient knowledge about the subject. When it comes to the consultation of some information from Wikipedia, it is always wiser to consult it for such a concept which is not known or for which one is unfamiliar. From the above analysis it is clear that, very few students from sociology department use Wikipedia to retrieve information about the concept which is unfamiliar to them, where as majority of the students from library science department consult Wikipedia when they come across the concept which is unfamiliar to them.

- Features of Wikipedia

As it was found that the students are using Wikipedia for one or the other purpose, it was assumed that the respondents from both the departments are well versed with the features of Wikipedia, hence question was asked that according to them which are the feature of Wikipedia which attract them or users and the
responses received from the respondents has been tabulated in the following table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Sociology</th>
<th>LIS</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy to search</td>
<td>15(13.04%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15(8.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>11(9.57%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11(6.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>23(20%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23(13.14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editable</td>
<td>25(21.74%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25(14.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of References used</td>
<td>11(9.57%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11(6.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperlink</td>
<td>09(7.83%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>09(5.14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to search + Online</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01(1.67%)</td>
<td>01(0.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to search + Online + Collaborative + List of references</td>
<td>07(6.08%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>07(4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to search + Online + Editable</td>
<td>05(4.34%)</td>
<td>17(28.33%)</td>
<td>22(12.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to search + Online + Editable + List of references used +Collaborative + Hyperlink</td>
<td>09(7.83%)</td>
<td>42(70%)</td>
<td>51(29.14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>115(100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>60(100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>175(100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from the table that out of total respondents, 51(29.14%) respondents are very well aware about the features of Wikipedia, out of these, 42(70%) respondents from Library science and only 9(7.83%) respondents from the sociology department are having sufficient knowledge about the features of Wikipedia. Nearly 94(81.73%) respondents from the sociology department opted various features which attract them, 15(13.04%) respondents stated that search is easy and these feature attracts users, 11(9.57%) respondents stated that collaborative is the feature while 25(21.74%) stated editable, 11(9.57%) opined the list of references given at the end of the article and 9(7.83%) opined hyperlinks given in the article and 23(20%) stated online are the features which attracts them to Wikipedia, these finding reveals that the students from sociology department are not fully aware about all the features which attract the users.

It is the students of the library science who opted for many features of Wikipedia which attracts the users. The reason behind this can be that the Wikipedia is a part of their curricula and they are taught to evaluate the available information source, which includes features and other aspect of information source; also the students are well aware of the importance of references used in the article and the importance of editing the outdated information and keeping it more current.

**Usefulness of Wikipedia**

The students were asked how the Wikipedia fits to their study or at what stage of their assignment/study or research the Wikipedia is more useful to them. The options provided to the respondents were at the beginning of the study, towards the middle of the study, at the end of the study and at any stage of the study. The responses received from the respondents has been tabulated in the following table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Sociology</th>
<th>LIS</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning</td>
<td>26(22.61%)</td>
<td>52(86.67%)</td>
<td>78(44.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards the middle</td>
<td>23(20%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23(13.14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the end</td>
<td>09(7.83%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>09(5.14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At any stage</td>
<td>57(49.56%)</td>
<td>08(13.33%)</td>
<td>65(37.15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>115(100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>60(100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>175(100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the total respondents, 52(86.67%) from library science department and 26(22.61%) respondents from sociology department felt that Wikipedia fits at the beginning of their assignment/study or research, followed by 57(49.56%) from sociology department and 8(13.33%) from library science feel that Wikipedia can be useful at any stage of their assignment, while 23(20%) respondents from sociology department stated that Wikipedia is more useful towards the middle of their assignment and 09(7.83%) respondents from sociology department felt that it is more useful to them at the end of their assignment/research.

The above finding clearly indicates the literacy level of respondents from both the departments. Library science students felt that whenever they came across some new concept of which they are not aware they consult Wikipedia i.e. at the beginning of the study and once they get familiar with the concept and get the sufficient references available in the article they go for more literature and hence felt that Wikipedia is more useful to them at the beginning of their assignment/research. Students of sociology do feel that it is useful to them at any stage of their assignment and seems to be less bothered for getting towards the other references from books, journal articles etc.

**Cross Verification of Wiki Information with other Search Engines**

The respondents were asked whether they were able to find suitable answers for the concept they were looking in Wikipedia and it was found that all the respondents do find suitable answers for the concept they were looking in Wikipedia. The above finding clearly indicates the literacy level of respondents from both the departments. Library science students felt that whenever they came across some new concept of which they are not aware they consult Wikipedia i.e. at the beginning of the study and once they get familiar with the concept and get the sufficient references available in the article they go for more literature and hence felt that Wikipedia is more useful to them at the beginning of their assignment/research. Students of sociology felt that whenever they came across some new concept of which they are not aware they consult Wikipedia i.e. at the beginning of the study and once they get familiar with the concept and get the sufficient references available in the article they go for more literature and hence felt that Wikipedia is more useful to them at the beginning of their assignment/research.

**Table 4: Cross Verification of Wiki with other Search Engines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross Verification with other Search Engines</th>
<th>Sociology</th>
<th>LIS</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17(14.78%)</td>
<td>60(100%)</td>
<td>77(44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>98(85.22%)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>98(56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>115(100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>60(100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>175(100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is obvious that total 77 respondents i.e. 17(14.78%) from sociology department and 60(100%) respondents from library science department cross check the information available on Wikipedia before its actual use, where as 98(85.22%) respondents from sociology department directly make the use of information available on Wikipedia for their assignment/research etc.
It can be inferred that out of the total population only 77 respondents know that Wikipedia is a component of web 2.0 and because of its editing characteristic any user may alter the available information, hence it is always wiser to cross verify the information. Because of its editing facility their can some information which may be uploaded by the person who has very little or no knowledge about the concept and the students may use the same information for their assignment or research.

- **Accuracy and Updated Information on Wikipedia**

Further opinion regarding the accuracy and update theness of information available on Wikipedia to the 77 students who cross check the information before actual use and the responses revealed that 54(70.13%) students found that the information available on Wikipedia is not updated properly where as 23(29.87%) students felt that the information available is accurate and updated.

- **Opinion Regarding the Reliability of Wikipedia**

Lastly open ended question was asked to the respondents about the reliability of Wikipedia and the answers reveal that almost all the respondents opined that, Wikipedia is a good source of information having result for the maximum terms they used for searching, where as 48(80%) students from the library science further elaborated that even though it is good source of information they cannot fully rely on the information content, because they don’t get any idea about the author who has edited the information. It can be of more value if the Wikipedia highlights the name and designation of the person who has edited the information.

**FINDINGS**

The findings of the study have been highlighted as under:

- All the students from library science and sociology department are well aware of the various components of web 2.0 and are using it. Wiki and social networking sites are used by all the students.

- Purpose of using Wikipedia differs from the students of sociology department and library science department. Total 65(37.14%) students are using Wikipedia for obtaining the information about the unknown concept of which 23(20%) students from sociology department and 42(70%) students from library science department. The finding clearly indicates that the library science students are less dependent on the literature available on Wikipedia as compared to the sociology department.

- The features of Wikipedia are well explored or known to the students of library science as compared to the students of sociology department. Actually easy search, online, editing, list of references collaboration, hyperlink are the features of Wikipedia which is known to 70% of the library science students and 7.83% students from sociology know about these features.

- It is found that 86.67% students from library science department found that the Wikipedia is more useful to them at the beginning of the study, while only 22.61% students from sociology department feel the same. 49.56% of the respondents from sociology department opines that Wikipedia is useful to them at any stage of the study while only 13.33% students from library science students opines the same.

- All the respondents from both the department find suitable answers for the concept they were looking at, but when it comes for cross verification of the information found on Wikipedia 100% students from library science department carries out this activity whereas only 14.78% students from sociology department do the cross verification.

- It is found that, out of 77 students who cross check the information before actual use 54(70.13%) students found that the information available on Wikipedia is not updated properly where as 23(29.87%) students felt that the information available is accurate and updated.

- 48(80%) students from the library science stated that even though Wikipedia is a good source of information but they cannot fully rely on the information content, because they don’t get any idea about the author who has edited the information.

**CONCLUSION**

It is clear that web 2.0 is getting more popular among the users especially Wikipedia due to the information content in it. Students are more dependent on the Wikipedia for getting the information on the concept of which very little is known to them. Students from library science are more cautious towards the information which is retrieved from Wikipedia as compared to the students from sociology department, it is obvious because they are well aware with the fact that the information available on Wikipedia can be altered by any users, hence it is wiser to verify the information before use. Students of library science know much more aspects of Wikipedia as compared to students from sociology department due to the reason that, Wikipedia is a part of their curricula and is being taught in detail also the evaluation of information sources is the basic job of library science students. Because of all these aspects library science students are in better position to use the Wikipedia at the right time. Students from both the departments are using Wikipedia because it is a quick way for getting information on a related topic.

**REFERENCES**


