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Design and Development a Web-Enabled Directory of Library and Information Science Teachers in India: A Proposed Model

Dr KP SINGH*
ESTHER MOIRANGTHEM**
NANDI NEGI***

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Directory is the vital reference tool for finding various sorts of information related to an organization, institution, company, persons, etc. These sources become more beaming and significant for the users when they are available in E-form and accessible Online. The present study is an outcome of an M.Phil research work carried by the authors. Data for the study were collected through a specially designed questionnaire administered manually and electronically. The collected data was scrupulously analyzed, organized, validated and then used for the development of a web enabled directory. The directory aims to provide at one stop all the possible information related to library and information science faculties in the country.

0 INTRODUCTION

Directories are basically the lists of institutions, companies, firms, etc. of the government, corporate, and private organisations. Directories are used to find the information on various aspects of organisations such as name and address, programmes and activities, courses, faculty, lab and library facilities, etc. These sources play a vital role in providing the various sorts of information on institutions and teachers to the students and researchers, scientists and technocrats, administrators, policy makers, and even to a general information seeker, both within and outside the

* Senior Assistant Professor and Principal Investigator, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Delhi, Delhi 110 007. E-mail: singhkp_1972@yahoo.co.in; kpsngh@aerodirindia.com.

** M.Phil Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Delhi, Delhi 110 007.

** Research Associate, AR&DB/DRDO Research project C/o Department of Library and Information Science, University of Delhi, Delhi 110 007. E-mail: nandinegii@gmail.com

country. The Internet and web technologies have changed the way people communicate, interact, acquire, share knowledge, search, investigate and participate in the creation and re-use of the information. It is also an undisputed fact that information and communication technologies have brought new dimensions and opportunities in the process of information access and acquisition, consolidation and communication, creation and retrieval, downloading and distribution throughout the world [1]. Using the web technologies, one can easily design and develop such online information tools to provide reliable, up-to-date, authentic and comprehensive information on the various aspects of LIS teachers in India. This directory provides the academic, research and professional commitments/assignments of a LIS teacher. Apart from their personal information such as address and contact information, professional information such as areas of specialization/interests, research guidance, publications, participation in professional events, work experience and association with learned bodies, projects handled, etc, are covered in this directory. Another feature is the "Feedback" page where one can give his personal remarks and advance suggestions regarding the directory. This will help in further research and further refinement of the future edition of directory.

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01 BRIEF EPITOME OF LIS EDUCATION IN INDIA

India has witnessed a steady growth of Library and Information Science (LIS) education. The institution of LIS education in India dates back to 1911 when WA Borden (1853-1931) an American and disciple of Melvil Dewey for the first time started a short term training programme in library science at Baroda under the patronage of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III of Baroda (1862-1939). Four years later in 1915, another American and student of Dewey, Asa Don Dickinson (1876-1960), the then Librarian of Punjab University, Lahore (now in Pakistan) started a three-months apprentice training programme for working librarians. Before independence, only five universities (Andhra, Banaras, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras) in India were offering PG diploma course in library science. After independence, new colleges, universities, educational institutions and learned societies emerged and the need for professionally qualified personnel to manage libraries was felt. As a result, a number of library science schools started to increase and many library associations which existed in various states started providing training courses in LIS. Dr SR Ranganathan initially started certificate course at Madras Library Association in 1929 which was taken over by the University of Madras

and in 1937 the course was converted into Postgraduate (PG) Diploma in Library Science. University of Delhi was the first university to establish a full-fledged Department of Library Science just before independence in 1946, to impart LIS education at various levels i.e., bachelor, master, and research programmme. Over a period of time, LIS has grown and developed into a full-fledged discipline; courses are being imparted by university departments, institutions, library associations and specialized institutions. It is estimated today that in India approximately 85 universities and 32 colleges and institutions affiliated to universities are offering regular courses at various levels, whereas 27 universities are also conducting these courses through distance education. In addition, NISCAIR (formerly INSDOC), New Delhi and DRTC, Bangalore are offering a two-year Associateship in Information Science.[2]

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1 WHY THIS INITIATIVE?

The Internet and web technologies have changed the way people communicate, interact, acquire, share knowledge, search, investigate and participate in the creation and re-use of the information. It is also an undisputed fact that ICT has brought new dimensions and opportunities in the process of information access and acqusion, consolidation and communication, storing, retrieving and distributing the value added information throughout the world. With the application of web technologies one can easily design and develop such online information tools in order to fulfill the following needs:

(*a*) An authentic and reliable, accurate and incessant online information tool to retrieve information round the clock (24×7) and to know the teaching and research activities of the LIS teachers in India;

(*b*) To have statistics of the various segments such as publications, research output, consultancy provided, research projects undertaken, patents filed, foreign deputations awarded, conferences attended, national and international recognition is received, etc. individually as well as collectively;

(*c*) An online interactive information tool for the students and researchers to find and select guide/supervisor according to their areas of interest;

(*d*) An authoritative tool to know the areas of specialization of the LIS teachers in India;

(*e*) A standardized and up-to-date tool to utilize the services of the LIS teachers in India by the agencies/institutions to act as resource person, expert for policy planning and other similar assignments; and

(*f*) Finally an online communication tool to interact with LIS teaching community by the research scholars, library professionals, publishers and distributors for their academic and professional development.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The project was undertaken with a view to:

(*a*) collect and synthesize data related to the LIS teachers working in the various teaching departments of colleges, universities and LIS institutes of India;

(*b*) design and develop a web enabled online directory using the technology for content development, website and web technologies development, etc

(*c*) provide an interface/platform to LIS teching communities to share their experiences and expertise for the benefit and growth and development of the discipline; and finally

(*d*) provide a future roadmap for other academic, research institutions/ LIS professionals in the country for undertaking such innovative initiatives in the age of ICT environment to contribute in national information innovation initiatives.

3 PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THE STUDY

Indian librarianship has had a great impact on world librarianship and has produced world level LIS teachers, thinkers and philosophers such as Dr SR Ranganathan, Prof S Das Gupta, Prof BS Keswan, Prof VV Rao, Prof S Bhasiurudin, Prof Neelameghan, Prof B Guha, Prof PB Mangla, Prof S Parthasarthy, Prof PN Kaula, Prof CR Karrisdappa, Prof PSG Kumar, Prof CP Vashishth, Prof N Laxman Rao, Prof MP Satija, etc. It is estimated that about Four Hundred LIS teachers are engaged in teaching and research activities in the country at various levels. Unfortunately, till today no comprehensive/scientific study has been conducted/ available in order to know their working record on teaching, training, research and professional activities.

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On the other side with the advent and application of ICT has shrunk the boundaries of the world and brought many revolutionary changes in the entire processes of consolidation and communication, access and acquiring, storing and retrieving, downloading and distributing information throughout the world. Therefore, it is the need of hour that a reliable, authentic, up-to-date, and authoritative expert database of the Library and Information Science teachers in India should be designed and developed and made available publicly for reference and use. If this noble idea could practically be implemented, certainly it will be very useful and significant information tool to know the teaching, research and other professional activities of all the LIS teachers in India at one place.

4 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

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The organized resources such as directory printed or online, of the educational institutions/ organisations/staff in any field of knowledge requires a systematic collection of the data from the respondents who are geographically scattered. The present study is based on following methodologies:

One: a structured 'Data Capture Form' was designed and devolved comprising of all the fields required for a web-enabled directory consisting of various activities of LIS teachers such as working profile, areas of interests, specializations, publications and participation in national and international conferences, etc;

Secondly: data available on their personal/institute websites/blogs was thoroughly searched and downloaded for the study;

Thirdly: the major portion of data was collected through personal visits/mails/e-mails/SMS/ telephone to the LIS teachers throughout the country;

Finally: a proposed model of the web-enabled directory of LIS teachers in India was designed and developed using the appropriate tools and technologies.

5 DISCUSSIONS AND OUTLINE OF THE WORK

SNAPSHOTS OF THE PROPOSED MODEL (OFF-MODE)

The following are some snapshots of the web pages of the proposed web-enabled online Directory of LIS teachers in offline mode:

51 HOMEPAGE OF THE DIRECTORY

The following snapshots show the front page of the proposed model with an introduction about the database. This database is a store house for all kinds of information regarding LIS departments including information about which courses are offered where, eligibility and admission procedure and contact address etc, and biographical information about the LIS faculties including their research specialization/ area of research interest, all information at one stop. The web page shows the links on the left side of the page where one can click on these links to go to the particular webpage for further information.

52 LIST OF THE LIS DEPARTMENTS

The directory has an option where the user can link to any LIS department on the hyperlink "List of the LIS Departments" which opens to a new webpage as shown in the following snapshots. This webpage shows the list of LIS departments in universities and colleges in various states over the country. The LIS departments are arranged alphabetically according to their regional location as shown in the snapshots of the web page. One can find information about any LIS department in this page at a click. This page is further linked to the departmental webpage of the particular university or college.

53 WEBPAGE OF THE DEPARTMENT

When a user clicks on a particular department, it will open up the web page of the particular department. This webpage provides detailed information about the department including its history, courses offered, eligibility, admission procedure and contact information. It also has information about its teaching faculty as seen in the following snapshot.

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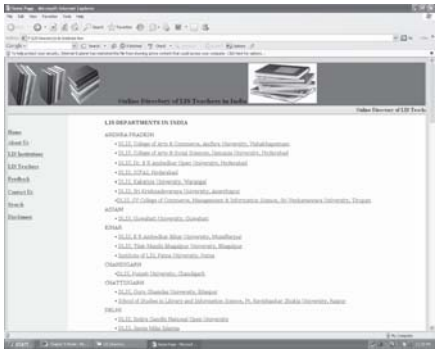
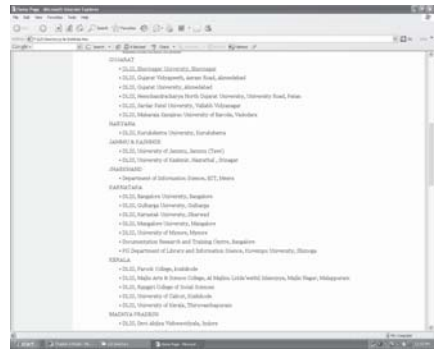
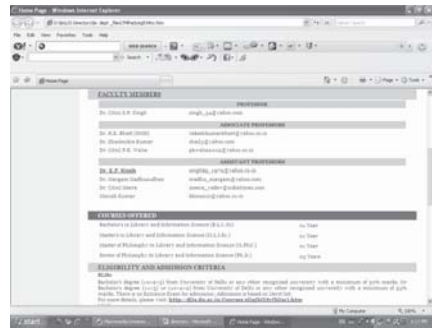




One can also find more information about the faculty member. The highlighted line as seen in the corresponding snapshot links to a webpage



showing details of the faculty member. The following is a snapshot of the web page of the faculty link of the proposed directory.

54 WEBPAGE OF THE FACULTY MEMBER

This webpage provides a list of the faculty members of a particular department. This page shows the number of professors, associate professors and assistant professors and their email id. One can know more information about each faculty member at a click as it is linked to a personal webpage as shown in the next snapshot.

55 PERSONAL WEBPAGE OF A FACULTY MEMBER

One click at a faculty member will open to the personal webpage of the faculty member as shown in the above snapshot. This page provides a detailed biographical data of the particular faculty member. Information includes the contact information, educational qualifications, work experience, area of research interest, list of the research guidance,

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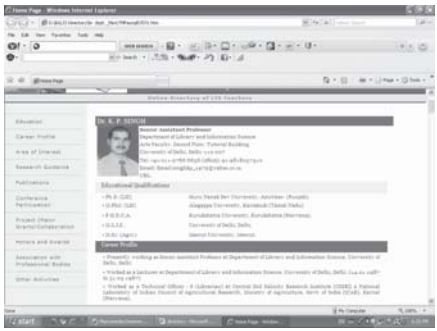
bibliographical details of the publication, participation in conferences and seminars, honours and awards, association with professional bodies and professional activities.

Brief biographical information of the faculty is available in the web page including its contact information, educational qualifications, and areas of specialization or research interest, career profile, a bibliographical list of publications, honours and awards, affiliation to professional bodies and other relevant information. This information will



help LIS students in finding their research area, choose research guide in relevance of their research topics, and also review of literature, etc.

56 WEBPAGE OF FEEDBACK OR SUGGESTIONS

This directory has another important option of "Feedback or Suggestions" which allows a user to submit his comments, suggestions and grievances or complaints. There is an option where the users have to fill in his name, designation, organization associated with phone no. and email id so that they can be contacted back with their replies. This option will help in further refinement and improvement of the directory.

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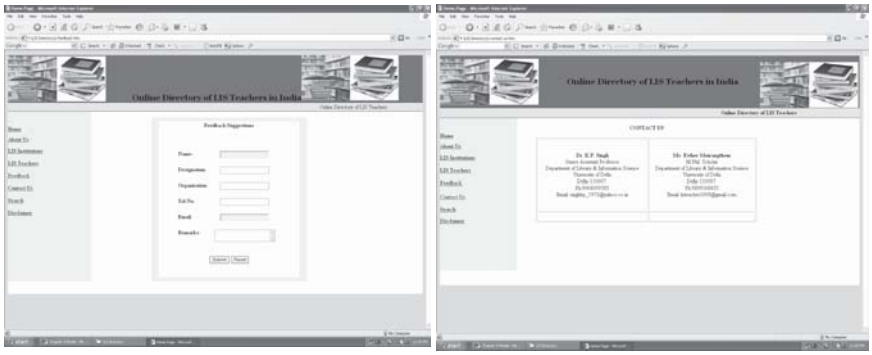

57 WEBPAGE OF THE CONTACT ADDRESS

Another feature is the page of 'Contact Us' where the communication address of the web master is given for the users to contact for any kind of issue regarding the directory and even further information about LIS education.

6 CONCLUSION

The above snapshots have shown how the web-enabled online directory will look like. This directory is only proposed and aims to serve the LIS fraternity by providing all kinds of information regarding the Library and Information Science Education – courses offered, institutes offering LIS courses in a particular state, information about the LIS faculty and their areas of specialization and research interest and their contact address as well. This directory will also serve as an interactive medium where all the LIS professionals can communicate with each other, discuss and debate.

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