The Need for Islamic Information Management in the Information Institutions In Malaysia: An Analysis of Problems

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Knowledge Sharing Among Patrons In Academic Library: A Case of IRC UTP

Cooperation for mutual benefit

Presenter

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Topic

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KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG PATRONS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARY: A CASE OF IRC UTP

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ABSTRACT
Nowadays, Knowledge Management has become an essential discipline for an organization to survive due to the significant use of information and its availability. Being an information rich spot, having a Knowledge Management system will be a very big help in transferring the tacit and explicit knowledge that exist in one library, especially in an academic library such as Information Resource Centre, Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS (IRC). Academicians or students may looks for book and a knowledgeable librarian may help by identifying the availability or location of the book. However, whether the book matches the patrons needs or not, can only be answered after they get and read the book themselves. In the 21st century, “knowledge is power” and knowledge sharing is increasingly becoming crucial tool in providing a dynamic interaction among library patrons. It will be good if a patron can share their reading experience and help another patron find a suitable book through reading the shared knowledge.
This project focuses on studying the knowledge sharing culture in an academic library and developing a knowledge sharing portal for the library patron, which the Communities of Interest (CoI) are focus on students who are not only read for leisure but also to complete their academic assignment. By having this portal, it can become the platform to share the knowledge and aid to speed up the quest of suitable book for one’s assignment.

INTRODUCTION
Knowledge Management is a new discipline in the information and library environment to help institutions survive in an ever faster-moving and competitive environment. Therefore, knowledge sharing among academic library patrons is becoming a crucial tool in providing a dynamic interaction among library patrons, especially students. In Universiti Teknologi Petronas’s Information Resource Centre (IRC), there is still lack of knowledge sharing among library patron and this may be due to unavailability of suitable communication medium. Therefore, this project focus on developing an interactive knowledge sharing portal for a Community of Interest (CoI) among IRC patrons, especially students who share a similar interest or passion, in order to create a supportive virtual community.

In IRC, there is lack of knowledge sharing initiatives between the library patrons especially among the students. Recently, the newly improved WebOPAC portal enables all registered patrons to access IRC’s resources via the Intranet and the Internet. WebOPAC also allows patron to view their loan account, but there are no
communication tools exist in the portal for knowledge sharing among the patrons. According to Robertson and Reese (1999), most of digital libraries are nothing but documents and search tool and it should not be just that. They further added that less attention has been paid to allow library users and library staffs to relate themselves in a more valuable ways. With that, a way to promote knowledge sharing among IRC users can be by implementing a knowledge sharing portal, which will be equipped with not only search mechanism but other communication tools that can provide exchange of knowledge and information.

The primary objective of this project is to promote knowledge sharing among IRC patrons in UTP by developing a portal as a medium where not only patron can get knowledge but also share and disseminate knowledge that they have to other patron.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING
In spite of the promotion and “e-revolution” of knowledge management in academic libraries, there are still many challenges and obstacles faced in the implementation process of knowledge sharing. According to Grey, sharing knowledge is one of the first cultural roadblocks we run into when implementing a KM project or program (2005). Terpstra & Sarathy (1972) identify five attributes of culture in their culture definition: technology and material culture, language, education and religion (as cited in Soley & Pandya in 2003). Looking at technology and material culture in UTP, Internet is available almost everywhere especially at the IRC, class labs and student’s hostels. Students can get in touch with the IRC and other IRC’s user at any time. Language is not much a barrier as English
is the primary Internet language and the medium of instruction in UTP. In computer education, students’ literacy level is high as each of them is prepared with computer skills at the early stage of their foundation years. In this context, religion should not be the barrier. Most students are Muslim and the Holy Quran at its first teaching stress on the obligation of seeking knowledge, teaching knowledge and sharing knowledge with others who do not know (Mamat, M. N., 2005). Not to focus on Islam only, M Noor Mamat also suggested that religion is the best intrinsic enforcement to develop good habits and positive environment such as knowledge environment or knowledge ecology (2005). Therefore, what can be the reason of not sharing their knowledge?

**STUDENT’S USE OF LIBRARY’S ELECTRONIC RESOURCES**

Information professionals have long sought to comprehend what factors are relevant in encouraging a person to seek out information. Understanding how students navigate this maze of resources is important in helping us to develop and assess pedagogy designed to instruct students in library usage. Students are more and more Web-savvy, many of them having been brought up around computers and the Internet (Kibirge, H.M. & DePalo, L., 2000). However, students may not have been exposed to library resources, or not be aware of which resources a library might have, or how to make use of them. According to Waldman (2003), students who frequently go to the library more often are most likely to use the library’s electronic resources and for students who express an interest in learning about the library’s electronic resources will be more likely to exhibit higher self-efficacy.
KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Among the first librarians who introduced the concept ‘knowledge management’ are Xiaoping and Rui (Parirokh, M, 2006). White (2004) reports a finding of a case study at Oxford University Library Services (OULS) on how academic libraries can benefit from KM in integrating librarian and patrons’ knowledge into the whole process of library services. She concludes that an effective knowledge sharing culture exists at OULS and considers their organization as a learning organization. It shows that the knowledge can happen in Oxford University Library but what about IRC, UTP?

METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out the project, several tasks were conducted phase by phase. Survey and interviews was conducted to check on user requirement and to understand the current environment of IRC, UTP.

For the survey, questionnaires are distributed among the students to check on their computer literacy, willingness to share and usage of existing technology for library information search. The questionnaire consists of 13 questions. The questionnaire is divided into 2 sections, which consists of a Yes and No questions; and also ranking questions. The questions types are open and close ended, where respondent may give their comments. Section A focuses on Student response on knowledge sharing while Section B function is to solicit information on IRC’s current system.

Interview was done with the IRC’s personnel to identify the computer technology use by the librarian to conduct their daily job
in providing information to the patrons. A knowledge sharing portal is developed to answer the patrons need.

RESULT & FINDING
WebOPAC Vs. Knowledge Sharing Portal
From the survey, 65% of the respondents use the existing WebOPAC to find and locate books in IRC. Therefore, it shows that the student know how to use the internet and how to use the system provided by the IRC to look for resources. When being asked whether to consider using a portal to communicate and share knowledge among IRC users, 86% responded yes. It is obvious that they are willing to share. However, due to unavailability of communication features in the currently used, WebOPAC they are not able to express their interest or needs. Respondents are happy for WebOPAC information and notification, user-friendliness; and interface but all of them scored 0 over 5 scale for communication tools functionality in WebOPAC. Due to that unavailability it is significant to have a portal that is linked with WEBOPAC for the purpose of knowledge sharing among the patrons who have similar interest..

Knowledge Sharing Portal Functionalities
Based on user’s requirement, the knowledge sharing portal was developed with several functionalities:

1. Registration

All patrons need to register to the system before they can login to the portal using a form provided. All text boxes should be filled with their particulars. After registration process and for their next access, patron need to login with username and password created during registration. Patron with wrong username and password will be notified. This function is for security reason. The Home Page is where patrons can start with the log in or registration (refer to Figure 1).

![Figure 1: Home Page](image-url)
2. Personal Page

Registered patrons can personalize their access via My Profile, My Group and My Archive.

![Figure 2: My Profile Page](image)

3. People

Patrons are able to search for other members by alphabetical order or through searching mechanism. They can view other member’s profile page. Patrons may also search for groups by alphabetical order and through searching mechanism. Each view has personal page and members are able to join groups. With this functionality, patrons may identify their community of interest. It may attract the
members of community to share if they can find people with common interest.

4. Forum

This function is to provide discussion facilities to patrons (refer to Figure 3). Each topic will be monitored by the administrator. There will be online chatting available. Users can go live chat with other members. This is where we expect the patrons to share knowledge on the resources they used in the IRC.

Figure 3: Forum Page
5. Resources

Users will be able to view an alphabetical order list of books available in the IRC (refer to Figure 4). Users can view information of the book and request for it.

![Search Mechanism for Books](image_url)

**Figure 4: Search Mechanism for Books**
CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, knowledge sharing in academic library can be cultivated via portal. The patrons are technologically ready and willing to share their knowledge. Although, technology and material culture, language, education and religion can be the barrier in knowledge sharing but in IRC UTP the barriers are very minimal. It is significant for the librarian not only to share among them but to look at on the opportunity of sharing among the library’s patron too because the patron do hold knowledge on getting the best resources in the library from the users’ point of view.
REFERENCES


