



LM
30,6/7

Marketing the academic library on the web

Kiran Kaur

Department of Information Science,

*Faculty of Computer Science & Information Technology, University of Malaya,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

454

Received 1 March 2009
Revised 20 March 2009
Accepted 15 April 2009

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to describe the marketing initiatives taken by academic libraries to promote collection and services to their clientele. It specifically aims to examine academic library web sites for marketing approach, promotional and public relations activities.

Design/methodology/approach – The study relies heavily on web site exploration and interviews with library managers. A total of 22 library web sites were examined based on pre-determined criteria developed from the extant literature and initial web site investigation. The paper also draws upon the authors' personal experiences and observations. Interviews were used to investigate university library manager's level of awareness of the library web site as a marketing tool and how they perceived this to be used to the library's advantage.

Findings – It is found that academic libraries are lacking in their promotional activities. Library web sites are not fully utilized as a marketing tool and an enabler to reach out to the community for promotion of services and collections.

Research limitations/implications – The study is limited to Malaysian university libraries, therefore generalization to others is to be cautioned but there are important lessons to be learnt.

Practical implications – This paper will be helpful to libraries planning to implement a marketing strategic plan to improve its outreach to users and enhance the users' image of the library.

Originality/value – A study such as this is new in Malaysia and reveals several marketing strategies that may be useful to other academic libraries.

Keywords Academic libraries, Internet marketing, Worldwide web, Malaysia, Marketing strategy

Paper type Case study

Introduction

Academic libraries have been comfortably serving their clientele by providing information resources and services to fulfill the needs of students and researchers. These collections and services are mainly planned and managed by librarians who believed that they know best. The necessity to ask users what they want and need has always been warranted by the literature in marketing library services but in practice, this deed is yet to be known as "common practice". The traditional notion of "librarians know best" has been challenged by the increasing availability of information on the internet and world wide web (WWW). Students and faculty no longer rely only on the library as sole repositories for published information as well as intermediary for acquiring materials from the outside world. Libraries are losing their role as the "primary information provider" as users turn to search engines as their starting point to do research (De Rosa *et al.*, 2005). The study by OCLC in 2005 revealed that a majority of people use search engines rather than library resources for seeking information. This study also reported that only 2 percent of university students begin



their research by using a library web site! The ease of acquiring information via the WWW has created millions of information consumers with university students the most discerning and demanding of them. Libraries need to proactively promote their resources and services to them (Mi and Nesta, 2006) or face the risk of losing these customers to the likes of Google and Yahoo! The phenomenon of users preferring to use search engines to find information on the internet rather than library resources is partly contributed by the fact that libraries have failed to market their services and attract users to the library (Fialkoff, 2006).

Traditionally, library marketing strategies included publicity activities such as display panels, posters, exhibits, bulletins, promotional materials (Ronan, 2003; Kibbee *et al.*, 2002); promotional events (Coppola *et al.*, 2002); direct mail, newspaper and radio advertisements (Girvin Strategic Branding & Design, n.d.). The main aim then was to realize the library's mission in support of its parent institution's mission. Marketing strategies do not just include telling the library clientele what collections and services are being offered, but it also contributes to building a relationship with library customers that begins and ends with awareness of the library's users: their values, their concerns and their needs. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL, 2005) defines marketing as:

The organized process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that will (if applicable) satisfy individual and organizational objectives. Marketing collects and uses demographic, geographic, behavioral, and psychological information. Marketing also fulfills the organization's mission and, like public relations inspires public awareness and educates.

Most academic librarians agree on the necessity of marketing library services. Whether it is called outreach, liaison work, or public relations, many have embraced the need to actively promote library resources and services (Lee, 2005). In the internet age, the academic library has developed dynamic web site to provide information about the library, provide access to information resources and offer web-based services. These technology-based developments are to keep pace with the ever changing user needs that are influenced by the expanding innovations in information creation and dissemination via the internet. As an increasing number of users are turning into solely networked users and rarely visit the library in person, it is only viable that libraries begin to view the web site as a marketing and public relation tool. The treat posed by the internet and WWW can be challenged by using the web site to market and promote the library to its community.

Marketing and library web site

Academic libraries are finding that integration of marketing concepts and techniques can facilitate the achievement of important organizational goals. Marketing efforts by the library results in the library gaining visibility and support for its efforts. Library users become more successful in making the best use of the services available for them to meet their academic and research goals (Spalding and Wang, 2006a,b; Wenhong, 2006). Wenhong also stresses that marketing is a matching process: one side is what we have and what we can do for researchers; the other side is the researcher's ever-growing expectations, needs and wants. By applying marketing strategies, a library is more successful in gaining visibility and support for its efforts, and the library users are more successful in making the best use of the services available to

them to meet their academic and research goals. Some of the marketing initiatives suggested are: publicizing activities; publicizing the resource information to researchers; service promotion and exhibition of faculty ability (Wenhong, 2006). Other favored means of communicating with academic library users include exhibits, press releases, complaints/suggestion boxes, newsletters and other library publications, friend groups, publication from outside the library, receptions, book sales, and special events (Nims, 1999). These activities can now be incorporated into the library web site. Open communication channels between librarians and users will increase understanding between the provider of service and the consumer. There is a belief that the main focus of every library is customer service, which is another term for marketing. Marketing is vital to the success and continued existence of a library (Sless, 2003). Effective marketing provides the means by which users are made aware of the services of the library and their value (Martey, 2000), for instance, reference librarians need to market their services and resources actively to create awareness of their library's value for international students.

Developing collections and online services are not sufficient without the willingness to obtain response from the users, take action their feedback, and communicate the benefits of the academic library to them. One such attempt was made by a group of researchers (Gardner *et al.*, 2008) who carried out an analysis of 69 academic library web sites to investigate how key services and collections are promoted to faculty via the web site. They modified the coding methodology used by Detlor and Lewis (2006). Their study concluded that most libraries believed that faculty web pages were important outreach vehicle for promoting library services for teaching and research. However, besides basic services like lending, reserves, document delivery and access to online catalog and databases, these libraries have not fully explored the opportunities to contribute to scholarly communication through digital library initiatives, institutional repositories and open access. Without such efforts, the library risks making itself invisible to the academic community.

Another investigation to provide academic libraries with concrete ideas for marketing their chat reference services, was carried out by review of the literature between 2002 through 2004 (Vilelle, 2005). His investigation reveals the importance of ongoing marketing of services in academic libraries because of the transitory nature of student population. In terms of visibility, the researcher also found that the placement of the virtual reference icon on the library web site contributed to the increased use of the service.

A survey of 106 academic libraries in the USA to study the placement of marketing and public relations links on the homepages (Welch, 2005) used four main categories to analyze the university and library home pages based on primary goals of library marketing and public relations revealed by an ARL study in 1999:

- Visibility – direct link from institutional home page to library web site.
- Fundraising – direct links to friends/associates group pages and gifts/donations.
- Information – direct links to news, exhibits, new collections, or “what’s new” pages.
- Consultation and comments – direct links to “Ask-a-librarian”, e-mail, or comments pages.

The study revealed that ARL and non-ARL libraries are doing well for visibility and consultation and comments category, but need to enhance efforts in fundraising and information. Academic libraries were found not to be too keen on creating direct links for gifts and donations, though there were libraries that evidently reported increase in financial aid by having this link on the top half of the library's main page.

Cultural and communication differences make international students uncertain about the subject resources and services available in a library (Mu, 2007). Libraries have to reach out to international students to make them aware of services that can be crucial to their learning and The reference librarian's role is unclear to most international students because they do not know that a reference librarian's primary responsibility is to answer questions (Kumar and Suresh, 2000).

There are many aspects of library works that have benefited from internet, such as collection management, cataloging, interlibrary loans, document delivery, user education and reference services. University library web sites are increasingly becoming important navigational devices in the organization of information, they should act as a source of information for teaching, research and study for their universities staff and students. A study on the role of the library web site by Diaz (1998), claims that a library web site is a way of making internal resources or products available; an agent for archiving and retaining information that comes and goes on other sites; a window to and a component of the Web at large and finally it is to serve as a communication tool for a library and its user.

Through an evaluation of the web sites of 107 Association of Research Libraries (ARL), it is suggested that libraries would need to devote more resources to marketing the library web site to campus stakeholders (Detlor and Lewis, 2006).

Simply building the perfect suite of tools and content would not be sufficient. Libraries should make a persistent and persuasive pitch to students, faculty and staff to position the library web site as the first place to look for their information and learning needs.

Libraries are discovering that by using marketing principles and techniques, they can better their users' needs, justify funding, communicate more effectively with a variety of external audiences, and achieve greater efficiency and optimal results in delivering products and services that meet identified needs of their users (Spalding and Wang, 2006a,b). What good are library resources and services if they are not known by the academic community, especially in the web environment, when library users are accessing the online library and has little contact with library staff. New and innovative methods of publicity are necessary to reach out to these new breed of online users. This study is a step towards assessing what efforts have been made by academic libraries over the web to promote and publicize resources and services.

The next section describes the methodology and results of a study conducted to examine how Malaysian university libraries were facing up to the challenge of using the library web site as a marketing and public relations tool. The findings are discussed and recommendations for academic libraries are put forth. Finally the paper presents the derived conclusions.

Methodology

This study focused on the web sites of 18 public universities and four private university in Malaysia (Table I). All libraries are members of PERPUN, a forum of

| No. | University | Library |
|-----|--|--|
| 1 | University of Malaya www.um.edu.my | University of Malaya Library www.umlib.um.edu.my |
| 2 | National University of Malaysia www.ukm.my | Tun Sri Lanang Library |
| 3 | Science University of Malaysia www.usm.my | Hamzah Sendut Library www.lib.usm.my/ |
| 4 | Universiti Putra Malaysia www.upm.edu.my | Perpustakaan Sultan Abdul Samad – UPM www.lib.upm.edu.my/ |
| 5 | Universiti Teknologi Malaysia www.utm.my | Sultanah Zanariah Library http://portal.psz.utm.my/psz/ |
| 6 | International Islamic University Malaysia www.iiu.edu.my | International Islamic University Malaysia Library http://lib.iiu.edu.my/ |
| 7 | Universiti Teknologi MARA www.uitm.edu.my | PTAR Library www.library.uitm.edu.my/ |
| 8 | Universiti Utara Malaysia www.uum.edu.my | Perpustakaan Sultanah Bahiyah http://cmslib.uum.edu.my/psb/ |
| 9 | Universiti Malaysia Sarawak www.unimas.my | Centre for academic services www.cais.unimas.my/ |
| 10 | Universiti Malaysia Sabah www.ums.edu.my | Perpustakaan Universiti Malaysia Sabah www.ums.edu.my/library/indexbm.htm |
| 11 | Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris www.upsi.edu.my | Perpustakaan Sultanah Bainun http://pustaka.upsi.edu.my/web/guest/home |
| 12 | Tun Hussein Onn University of Malaysia www.uthm.edu.my | Tun Hussein Onn University Library http://lms.uthm.edu.my/equip/elibrary |
| 13 | Islamic Science University of Malaysia www.usim.edu.my | Islamic Science University of Malaysia Library www.usim.edu.my/lib/ |
| 14 | University of Malaysia Pahang www.ump.edu.my | UMP Library Portal http://umplib.ump.edu.my/index.cfm |
| 15 | University of Malasia Perlis www.unimap.edu.my | University Malaysia Perlis Library http://lib.kukum.edu.my:8000/ |
| 16 | University of Technical Malaysia Melaka www.utm.edu.my | UTeM Library Knowledge portal http://library.utm.edu.my/index.php |
| 17 | University of Malaysia Terengganu www.unt.edu.my | Sultanah Nur Zahirah Library http://ilmusea.unt.edu.my/c/portal |
| 18 | Universiti Malaysia Kelantan www.umk.edu.my | Universiti Malaysia Kelantan Library http://library.umk.edu.my/ |
| 19 | Multimedia University www.mmu.edu.my/ | Siti Hasmah Digital Library http://vlib.mmu.edu.my/ |
| 20 | Universiti Tenaga Nasional www.uniten.edu.my/newhome/ | UNITEN Library www.uniten.edu.my/newhome/ |
| 21 | Open University Malaysia www.oum.edu.my/portal/ | TSDASDL http://iportal.oum.edu.my/ |
| 22 | Universiti Teknologi Petronas www.utp.edu.my/ | Information Resource Centre www.utp.edu.my/irc-new/ |

Table I.
List of university
libraries

cooperation between all the Head of University Libraries and Director General, National Library of Malaysia. All libraries serve undergraduates, postgraduates, faculty and staff.

Two libraries were omitted because the web sites were not available for analysis, probably due to the fact that these were newly established universities.

The first step was to set a list of features that would identify marketing strategies via the library's web site. Several library web sites were scanned and based on the literature the researcher decided to adapt the criteria used by Jeanie Welch. This set of criteria was complemented by findings from Detlor and Lewis. The following were used as guidelines (see Table II).

The 22 web sites were assessed by a trained student assistant with the help of the researcher. First, the university home page was surveyed to check if there was a direct link to the Library. Then the library homepages were examined. If a library had more than one home page, only the home page of the main library was examined. Each site was examined for the presence of features on the checklist. The results were randomly checked again by the researchers for verification. The second phase involved interviews with selected library managers to find out their perception about using the library web site as a marketing tool. Owing to time and availability constraints, only six face-to-face interviews and three telephone interviews took place.

Results and discussion

The 22 university and library web sites were examined between June 2008 and August 2008. Any changes to the web site after that have not been incorporated in this paper. Any changes within this time were considered and data amended accordingly. The results are presented based on the four primary categories.

Visibility

Visibility was defined as the existence of direct links from the university web site to the library web site. Direct links were defined as links that were immediately visible. Any mouse-over, pop-up or pull-down links were considered indirect (see Table III). Thirteen (59 percent) of the libraries have a direct link from the institutions main web page to the library. Another two have no link at all and the remaining 7 (31 percent) have links either on the second page or visible only upon mouse over. Surprisingly, four of the library managers were not aware of this and one even said that it never occurred to him to check on this as students were expected to link directly to the library web site. It is very important that the Library is seen as a valuable asset and given priority by the university management. Most remote users would look for a direct link to library from the parent organization.

| Criteria | Description |
|---------------------------|--|
| Visibility | Direct link from institutional home page to library web site Readability |
| Networking | Direct links to friends/associates group pages and gifts/donations Direct links to other libraries |
| Information | Direct links to library news, exhibits, new collections, or "what's new" pages Direct links to Internet gateway |
| Consultation and comments | Direct links to "Ask-a-librarian", e-mail, or comments pages Direct links to copyright information |

Table II.
Criteria used to identify marketing strategies

Table III.
Visibility

| Criteria | Description | Public university (18) % | Private university (4) % | Total (n = 22) % |
|---|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Links to library from university's main page | Direct link (immediately visible) | 10 | 3 | 59 |
| | No direct links (drop down menu, mouse over, second page...) | 6 | 1 | 31 |
| | No link at all | 2 | 0 | 0.9 |
| Language options | English language only | 12 | 4 | 73 |
| | English and Malay language | 4 | - | 18 |
| | Malay language only | 2 | - | 9 |
| Direct link to associate groups | Malaysian Librarians Association (PPM) | 6 | 1 | 31 |
| | Alumni or other library groups | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | PERPUN /MyUniNet Portal | 15 | 3 | 81 |
| | Other local university libraries | 9 | 3 | 54 |
| | Library programs | 12 | 2 | 63 |
| Direct link to "library news" (tailored message to library users) | Exhibitions | 6 | 0 | 27 |
| | Library updates/information | 12 | 3 | 68 |
| | Photographs of events | 3 | 2 | 22 |
| | Online bulletin | 3 | 0 | 13 |

Visibility also included readability in this study. In Malaysia the national language is Malay and English is the second language. Since academic libraries have local and international clientele, it is necessary for library web sites to be readable to the masses. Both languages are deemed important to disseminate information and act as effective marketing tool. In an effort to reach the multi national students, all four private university library web sites agree in English and 16 (88 percent) of the public university libraries also use English as the medium for communication. Among these 16 libraries, only three are in dual language, English and Malay. When asked, the library managers report that they will soon have information in English and Malay language. The two libraries that had only the Malay language version, claimed that they supported the necessity for an English language version but efforts were hindered by time and manpower limitations.

Networking

Networking is important for libraries to survive. Since libraries are always managing on a limited budget it is advised that libraries use the Web for promotion so that more people will know of the library's activities and feel compelled to help the library financially. Direct links to associate groups is seen as a viable method to keep in contact with people who are most likely to know library needs and be receptive towards raising funds or gifts for the library. In Malaysia, there is only one librarians association, the Malaysian Librarians Association (Persatuan Pustakawan Malaysia, PPM) (see Table IV). Only seven (31 percent) libraries had a link to PPM's web site. Also only three university libraries provided a direct link to IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations). None of the other libraries have any links to library associations, groups of interest or alumni.

Since all libraries under investigation are members of PERPUN, it was expected that a link to the PERPUN's web site or its MyUniNet Portal (<http://portal.perpun.net.my/>) would be placed on the individual library web site. Investigation revealed that though not all, a majority of 18 (81 percent) libraries provided this link to the networked resources.

Links to other academic libraries was provided by only 12 (54 percent) libraries. This is an important aspect as it shows commitment to collaboration between academic libraries and a willingness to share resources and services. It makes it easier for users to access shared resources and increases the use of the library web site as a gateway to information.

Information

Information availability is a catalyst to public relations, as it involves publicity, image enhancement and awareness. Library news includes news about library programs, exhibitions, library updates, photographs of events and online bulletin (see Table V). A majority of 14 (63 percent) libraries had library programs announced on the web site. Only six (33 percent) libraries, all of which were public university libraries had news about upcoming exhibitions. A total of 15 (68 percent) libraries informed users about library updates and only five (22 percent) had online photographs about library events. A total of three (16 percent) public libraries has access to an online library bulletin. One of which even has an online library periodical indexed by LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts).

Table IV.
Networking

| Criteria | Description | Public university (18) % | Private university (4) % | Total (n = 22) % |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Direct link to associate groups | Malaysian Librarians Association (PPM) | 6 | 1 | 31 |
| | Alumni or other library groups | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | PERPUN/MyUniNet Portal | 15 | 3 | 81 |
| | Other local university libraries | 9 | 3 | 54 |

| Criteria | Description | Public university (18) % | Private university (4) % | Total (n = 22) % |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Direct link to "library news" (tailored message to library users) | Library programs Exhibitions | 12 6 | 2 0 | 50 27 |
| | Library updates/information | 12 | 3 | 68 |
| | Photographs of events | 3 | 2 | 50 |
| | Online bulletin | 3 | 0 | 13 |
| New Library collection (Books/journals/databases) | | 9 | 2 | 50 |
| Link to internet resources (subject based resources) | | 11 | 2 | 59 |
| Link to newspapers/or press release | | 8 | 4 | 54 |

Table V.
Information

A total of 11 (50 percent) libraries listed new library collections on the web page, including new books, new journals or databases on trial. A high number of 13 (59 percent) of the libraries have links to internet subject resources arranged by discipline, either by the librarians or a link to others. However it is notable that private university libraries have not yet explored this value added service that can be an asset to library marketing. Internet resources that have been selected and organized by subject specialized librarians can encourage students and faculty members to increase usage of library web site rather than having to search from within the internet using search engines.

Since library users are a divert group of people the provision of links to news and newspapers can be a contributing factor to encourage library web site usage. Only 12 (54 percent) of the libraries in this study provided links to current newspapers.

Consultation and comments

Contacts provided in the web site are in the form of an e-mail or a link to the librarian for reference service, popularly called Ask-a-Librarian (see Table VI). Of the libraries, 15 (68 percent) provided an e-mail address for users to contact the library. As for online reference, only nine (40 percent) offered Ask-A-Librarian service.

A total of 77 percent public and 100 percent of the private university libraries had their library mission on the web. However only 5 (22 percent) of the libraries provide information about copyright.

Ten libraries (45 percent) had links to other search engines. It is evident that private university libraries are more acceptable towards providing links to the internet than public universities. The library managers stressed that they did not want to encourage student use of the internet but rely more on online databases for information.

An important issue for all students and academic staff is the compliance to copyright and understanding plagiarism, especially in the digital environment where clear guidelines and laws are constantly evolving. If librarians could not only concentrate on enforcing the copyright and plagiarism policies but also take responsibility to educate the masses, they could easily enhance their credibility and image among the academics. Only five (22 percent) university libraries made an effort to educate their users about copyright and plagiarism through the library web site. A existing link or web page describing these issues could very well have academics use it as a reference and easily guide their students to this information.

Gathering feedback of clientele is an important aspect of strategic marketing as it constantly reminds users that their opinions are important to the organization and helps build a relationship between the library and its users. Upon investigating it was found that nine (68 percent) of the libraries had provided some means of offering feedback including complaints and suggestions using either e-mail or web forms. Only three (16 percent) of the public university libraries and two (50 percent) of the private university libraries had put up an interactive online survey to gather feedback about customer satisfaction from library users.

Conclusions and recommendations

This brief investigation reveals practices of academic libraries in marketing library collection and services. In this era of internet and open access to information and competitors like Google and Yahoo, academic libraries have to strategize to attract

| Criteria | Description | Public university (18) % | Private university (4) % | Total (n = 22) % |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Direct links to contacts | E-mail Ask A Librarian (or anything similar to that) (PI. note the term used) | 12 | 3 | 68 |
| Library mission statement | | 7 | 2 | 40 |
| Links to search engines | | 14 | 4 | 81 |
| Copy right information | | 7 | 3 | 45 |
| Feedback/complaints/suggestions | | 3 | 2 | 22 |
| User survey link | | 7 | 2 | 40 |
| | | 3 | 2 | 22 |

Table VI.
Consultation and comments

more customers. Do users only visit the library web site for opening hour information, borrowing eligibility, etc., or is there a possibility to make the library web site a user's first stop to seamless access to information and social networking? Unlike in the business field where marketing is essential to profit making, libraries are not targeting users for profit in cash value. Nevertheless libraries must tap on marketing initiatives to increase the value of the library in the eyes of the user and continue to encourage users to be loyal. Academic libraries have the opportunity through their web pages to be very visible to their university community, but they will retain that attention only if they focus on what their users want (Mi and Nesta, 2006). This study has managed to explore the extend to which libraries have successfully embraced strategies to lure the university community to its web site.

There need to be increased efforts to improve visibility of the library. Successfully gaining support from the parent institution can improve library image and further expand library use. Another important issue is not only being visible but also usable. In this context, it means the ability to read the web site. In countries with increasing international student intake, libraries must be receptive enough to offer information in languages that are understood by the masses. The use of English language, to a large extent, ensures a wider audience and helps foreign students and staff to use the site without much difficulty. This is especially important in the provision of reference services to create awareness of their library's value for international students (Martey, 2000). There is also a pressing need to raise awareness about collaboration and sharing. The lack of direct links to library association and shared information via the Portal and links to other libraries clearly underlines the phenomena of self-sufficiency, which is no longer the trend in the electronic age. Libraries should work together and provide users with seamless resources beyond the boundaries of one single library.

Using push technologies, libraries are now having direct links to inform users about what is happening at the library, about the new collections and spread library news through electronic newsletters and bulletins. It is not very encouraging to know that less than 60 percent of the libraries are involved in such activities. Libraries must realize that users have many other avenues to search for information, so the library must proactively promote itself and let users know what is happening at the library, what new collections there are and how libraries are evolving to electronic services to fulfill the users' demand for speed and convenience.

Marketing is mainly about awareness. Therefore communication is the key strategy to effective marketing. Customers (library users) who are well understood have higher opportunities of having their needs fulfilled by the library. Channels of communication must be open and convenient to help build a relationship with users. This relationship is the future of the academic library. We want users to come back to the librarians for help when they need information, we want users to trust the library in fulfilling these needs and most of all we want users to believe that the library cares for their needs. So opening a communication channel with users via Digital Reference service, or online chat or even web forms can slowly but surely draw the users back to the library. This study has revealed a very low percentage of libraries who engage in such efforts. Greater commitment towards customer feedback can help customers feel a sense of belonging or loyalty which will further cause them to return (to the library/web site). In the marketing literature, service recovery is given great emphasis. When customers are ensured of feedback and action when something is not how it should be, the company

shows concern to rectify the matter. Marketing enables libraries to create perception of need and thereby create demand (Madhusudhan, 2008). This helps towards preventing declining reader-support. As user demands become increasingly complex, marketing concepts offer challenging possibility for libraries understand how to develop successful strategies for prospective partnerships as a means for the library to defend its value.

References

- Coppola, E. *et al.* (2002), "Web Chat action team final report and recommendations", Syracuse University Library, available at: <http://libwww.syr.edu/information/strategicplan/progressreports/webchat/finalreport.pdf> (accessed 11 June 2008).
- De Rosa, C. *et al.* (2005), "Perceptions of libraries and information resources: a report to the OCLC membership", OCLC, Dublin, OH, available at: www.oclc.org/reports (accessed 3 June 2005).
- Detlor, B. and Lewis, V. (2006), "Academic library web sites: current practice and future directions", *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 251-8.
- Diaz, K. (1998), "The role of the library website: a step beyond deli sandwiches", *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, Vol. 38, pp. 41-3.
- Fialkoff, F. (2006), "What's so bad about books?", *Library Journal*, Vol. 131, available at: www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6298439.html.
- Gardner, S.J., Juricek, J.E. and Xu, F.G. (2008), "An analysis of academic library web pages for faculty", *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 16-24.
- Girvin Strategic Branding & Design (n.d.), "King Country Library System and University of Washington Virtual Reference services: marketing guidelines", available at: www.secstate.wa.gov/library/libraries/projects/virtualRef/textdocs/MarketingGuidelines.pdf.
- Kibbee, J., Ward, D. and Ma, W. (2002), "Virtual service, real data: results of a pilot study", *Reference Services Review*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 25-36.
- Kumar, S.L. and Suresh, R.S. (2000), "Strategies for providing effective reference services for international adult learners", *Reference Librarian*, Vol. 33, pp. 327-36.
- Lee, D.O. (2005), "Marketing resources for the busy librarian", *College and Undergraduate Libraries*, Vol. 12 Nos 1/2, pp. 81-91.
- Madhusudhan, M. (2008), "Marketing of library and information services and products in University libraries: a case study of Goa University Library", *Library Philosophy and Practice*, available at: www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~mbolin/madhusudhan.pdf (accessed 15 December 2008).
- Martey, A.K. (2000), "Marketing products and services of academic libraries in Ghana", *Libri*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 261-8.
- Mi, J. and Nesta, F. (2006), "Marketing library services to the net generation", *Library Management*, Vol. 27 Nos 6/7, pp. 411-22.
- Mu, C. (2007), "Marketing academic library resources and information services to international students from Asia", *Reference Services Review*, Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 571-83.
- Nims, J.K. (1999), "Marketing library instruction services: changes and trends", *Reference Services Review*, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp. 249-53.
- Ronan, J.S. (2003), *Chat Reference: A Guide to Live Virtual Reference Services*, Libraries Unlimited, Westport, CT.

- Siess, J.A. (2003), *The Visible Librarian: Asserting Your Value with Marketing and Advocacy*, American Library Association, Chicago, IL.
- Spalding, H. and Wang, J. (2006a), "Marketing Academic Libraries in USA: challenges and opportunities", *Chinese Librarianship: an International Electronic Journal*, Vol. 22, available at: www.iclc.us/cliej/cl22SpaldingWang.htm
- Spalding, H. and Wang, J. (2006b), "The challenges and opportunities of marketing academic libraries in the USA", *Library Management*, Vol. 27, pp. 494-504.
- Vilelle, L. (2005), "Marketing virtual reference: what academic libraries have done", *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, Vol. 12, pp. 65-79.
- Welch, J.M. (2005), "The electronic welcome mat: the academic library web site as a marketing and public relation tool", *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 225-8.
- Wenhong, J. (2006), "Marketing and Service Promotion Practices in the LCAS", *Library Management*, Vol. 27 Nos 6/7, pp. 336-43.

Further reading

MyUniNetPortal (n.d.), available at: <http://portal.perpun.net.my/portal/aboutmyuninet1.php> (accessed 4 October 2008).

About the author

Kiran Kaur is a lecturer in the Unit of Library & Information Science at the University of Malaya, Malaysia, where she teaches the program of Master of Library and Information Science. A former teacher and academic librarian, she has many years of experience in academic librarianship, specifically library management. She is actively involved in library science research and has published articles in renowned peer reviewed journals, such as *Library Management* and *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science*. Kiran Kaur has also been involved in the editorial works of the *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science* which is currently being indexed by ISI Web of Knowledge. Her research interests are focused on library services, specifically library marketing and service quality. Kiran Kaur can be contacted at: kiran@um.edu.my