

CREDIBILITY OF DENTAL COLLEGE WEBSITES IN KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

The influence of information and communication technology (ICT) in developing countries makes more demand for web-based reliable information. Many user studies confirm that, being able to trust the information on a website is very important to them in deciding to visit a website. Application of ICT and web hosting in an academic environment has increased gradually in the recent decades. This paper aims to study and analyze the various aspects of the credibility of Dental College websites in Karnataka. Some selected 37 Dental Colleges in Karnataka, were considered for the study of which include all Dental Colleges in Karnataka. The analysis of the data represents the extent and the level of credibility possessed by the Dental College websites in Karnataka.

Keywords: Karnataka. Information and communication technology, Dental College Websites, Credibility, WebPages, Homepage

INTRODUCTION

Websites help in accessing universe of knowledge across the globe, irrespective of their geographical location and anybody can publish anything in World Wide Web (WWW) from his desktop. With the help of WWW and related Internet technologies, any organization or institution can make its presence on the Internet. For many institutions, websites are crucial to ensure sales and services. The Internet already has a profound influence on institutes of higher education, and this influence is, projected to further grow. It is a debatable issue that whether all websites and web contents in the Internet are reliable, up to date and standardized.

Print sources come across different stages of reviewing and filtering. Unlike most printed information sources, in web publishing, no one has to approve the content before hosting it on the Internet. This means that the quality of the information found on the net must be evaluated very carefully, because there is no surety whether the information

provided is trustworthy or not. When a person opens a website, the first impression or judgment is probably made within a few seconds. Whether the user will stay or move on to the next option is based on the credibility and aesthetics of the website, its ease of use, and navigation, etc. Credibility is limited to the believability or trustworthiness of information found in the WWW. If a website is not perceived as credible it is unlikely to be used. The term credibility means the extent to which the users trust the information content on a website. This paper aims to study and analyze the various aspects of the credibility of dental college websites in Karnataka.

WEB CREDIBILITY

Credibility is a perceived quality that does not reside in an object, a person, or a piece of information. Therefore, in discussing the credibility of a computer product, one is always discussing the perception of credibility¹. Many scholars agree that credibility perceptions result from evaluating multiple dimensions simultaneously. Although the literature varies on how many dimensions contribute to credibility evaluations, the vast majority of researchers identify two key components of credibility as trustworthiness and expertise. A person makes an assessment of both trustworthiness and expertise arrives at an overall credibility assessment. Web credibility is about making your website in such a way that, it comes across as trustworthy and knowledgeable². In nutshell, web credibility is a perceived quality of a website by a user, whereas web evaluation is the process of web credibility.

DENTAL COLLEGES IN KARNATAKA: A BRIEF NOTE

In 1956 the first dental college was established by the Institute of Oxford Dental college in Bangalore, In 1971 Government Dental College in Bangalore and 1971 Bapuji Dental College in Davangere, which is followed by A.J Dental College in Deralkatte. Subsequently more number of dental colleges were established in the state of Karnataka. However all the dental colleges are based on their organizational structure?

At present, conventional or affiliated dental colleges form a significant segment of the dental colleges system in Karnataka. As on August 2010, there were about 37 dental colleges in Karnataka. Only 29 dental colleges have their own websites, some dental colleges are have not own websites. Every dental college is trying to project its facilities, courses, services of their libraries and constantly updating or improving the functionality of its website. While some dental colleges have opened a portal for their libraries, some have provided a link to it in their website.

OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To examine the websites of the dental colleges in Karnataka.
- To collect the data with regard to the structure and contents of the dental colleges in Karnataka
- To analyze the contents and structure of the websites under study.
- To compare the websites of various dental colleges under study with the established guidelines.
- To offer suggestions for the design of an ideal website for a dental colleges.

HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses applied for the study were:

- A majority of the dental colleges in Karnataka has hosted websites on the Internet.
- The dental college websites are heterogeneous in the structure and contents.
- Most of the websites do not confirm to the established guidelines.

METHODOLOGY

In the study, self-evaluative method was adopted, which include the following

- A review of state-of-the-art websites
- Designing a check list
- Evaluation of the websites and data collection.
- Analysis and interpretation of data

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Growth of Dental Colleges in Karnataka

Table-1 clearly stipulates that out of 37 dental colleges in Karnataka 2 were established before 1960, 08 dental colleges were established during 1970-1990. During 1991-2000 26 more dental colleges were established, further 01 dental college was established in 2003. This clearly shows that highest number of dental colleges was established during 1956-2003. Websites of all the 37 dental colleges were considered, evaluate and analysed. There is a phenomenal growth of the dental college in Karnataka.

Table-1 Classification of dental colleges in Karnataka based on their year of Establishment

Year of Establishment	No. of Dental College	Percentage
Before 1960	02	5.40
Between 1970-1990	08	21.62.
Between 1991-2000	26	70.27
2003	01	2.7
Total	37	100

Classification of Websites by URL Extension

Table-3 highlights the classification of dental college websites by their URL extensions. Table shows that 32% of all the dental colleges websites are using .org as URL extensions, only one dental colleges is using .edu.in, and other dental colleges each under the study are using .ac.in, .com, .edu,. This clearly shows that half of the dental colleges under the study are using .org and rests of the dental colleges are using different URL extensions.

Table-2 Classification of Websites by URL Extension

URL Extension	Dental Colleges N=29	Total (Percentage) N=37
.ac.in	04	10.81
.com	05	13.51
.edu	07	18.91
.edu.in	01	2.70
.org	12	32.43
Total	29	37 (100)

Classification of Websites by Library Information

Library-related factors are given in the Table 3. All the dental colleges (100 per cent) provide the information about library, nearly 5 per cent of them are having separate page or homepage for library, 27% of dental colleges were provide the contact information about library.

Table-3 Classification of Websites by Library Information

Library Information	Dental College N=29	Total (%) N=37
Information about the library is provided	16	78
Libraries working hours details are provided	15	78
There is a separate home page for the library	10	5
Information about OPAC search is provided Contact information about library is given	16	27

Classification of Websites by Nature of Library Collection

Table-4 Provides the information about library collection related details. All the dental colleges website under the study are having the information about kinds of collection, information about library, No. of books collection available, list of journals subscribed etc.54% of all the dental college websites are providing the information about audio visual collection, online and e-resources and digital resources.

Table-4 Classification of Websites by Nature of Library Collection

Library Collection-Related Factor	Dental College N=29	Total (%)N=37
Information about library's kind of collection is available	29	78
Information about library's No. of book collection is available	29	78
List of journals subscribed is available in the website	20	54
Information about library's audio-visual collection is available	21	57
Information about library's online or e-resources is available	28	75
Information about library's digitised resources is available	21	56

Classification of Websites by the Provision of Library Services

Table-5 clearly spelled out the details about library services. It is observed from the study that all the dental colleges websites under the study mention about lending service, reference service, reprographic service, question bank service, Internet service etc. 78% dental colleges have provide library networking and resource sharing and specialized service like CAS & SDI information, 27% of dental college websites mentioned about institutional membership, followed by 32% dental colleges mention Book Bank facilities, some dental colleges do not have Virtual online library service and CD Rom technology services.

Table-5 Classification of Websites by the Provision of Library Services

Library Services-Related Factors	Dental College N=29	Total (%)N=37
Lending	29	78
Reference	29	78
Reprography	29	78
Question bank (hard copy)	29	78
Question bank (Online)	12	32
Micro filming	03	8
Virtual online library	--	--
CD Rom services	--	--
Internet services	29	78
Specialised services like CAS, SDI, etc.	16	43
Book Bank	12	32
Institutional membership with external libraries	10	27

8.6 Classification of Websites by Webpage Size and down load Speed (Affiliated)

Website down load speed and size of the webpage is a major feature for any website. The data may not be accurate and only provide guidance to improve the download time of the website. Website optimisation (WSO)¹⁶ is the process of reducing the size of a website and complexity to maximise website's performance. Webpage analyser 0.98 from Website Optimisation is a free website performance tool and webpage speed analysis to improve a website performance. One has to enter a URL to calculate page size, composition, and download time. The script calculates the size of individual elements and sums up each type of webpage component. Based on the page characteristics the script then offers advice on how to improve page load time. The script incorporates the latest best practices from website optimisation secrets, web page size guidelines and trends, and website optimisation techniques into its recommendations.

The web optimization of Web Page Speed Report has the connection rate starting from 1.44 Mbps to 14.4 K. For this study, 56 K connection rate was taken as the sample to represent the other connection rates. According to the web credibility users' studies done in the past, the optimal download time for a homepage is 10 s. So for better download results, it is suggested to design 45 kb to 55 kb sized homepage.

Table 6 describe that there is a correlation between the website sizes and download time taken; typically 4-5 kb is downloaded in one second. Only six dental colleges less than 5 s categories, thirteen colleges under the study fall under 50 s of the overall website size, remaining eight colleges study more than 50 categories. Many homepages of dental colleges in Karnataka have pictures, which occupies nearly 50.98% of the overall website size. By reducing the picture size a significant size reduction can be achieved. Due to some technical reasons, the web optimization tools could not be retrieve data from eight dental colleges in Karnataka.

Table-9 Classification of Websites by Webpage Size and Down load Speed (Affiliated)

Name of the dental college	Total size of the Website	Total size of the Images	Percentage of Images Total size	Download time at 56k Connection
A.B. Shetty Memorial Institute of Dental Sciences- Deralakatte	419010	19091	4.55	88.31
A.J. Institute of Dental Sciences, Mangalore	298	90	30.20	0.26
Al Ameen Dental College Bijapur	5143	108	2.09	023

Bapuji Dental College & Hospital Davangere :	180275	103010	57.14	4.98
Bangalore Institute of Dental College	310213	296731	95.65	3.69
College of Dental Sciences, Mangalore	241209	88897	36.85	2.87
College of Dental Surgery,Manipal	343764	33835	9.84	87037
Coorge Institute of Dental Sciences Virajpat	719742	1187	0.16	155.85
Dayananda Sagar College of Dental Sciences, Bangalore	797035	397738	49.90	56.65
Farooquia Dental College & Hospital Mysore	61189	59276	96.87	13.19
Government Dental College, Bangalore-	213515	1917	0.89	42.95
H.K.E. Society's Nijalingappa Institute of Dental Sciences & Research Gulbarga -	170407	4802	2.81	55.56
Sri Hasanamba Dental College & Hospital Hassan	321487	124215	38.63	70.47
J.S.S. Dental College & Hospital Mysore:	220619	198995	90.19	47.17
K.G.F. College of Dental Sciences & Hospital Kolar Gold Fields	196970	24795	12.56	44.06
K.V.G. Dental College & Hospital Kurunjibag – Sullia - D.K.	3894	--	--	0.98
KLE Society's Dental College Belgaum	176402	88674	50.26	37.16
KLE Society's Dental College Bangalore	19504	12225	62.67	5.69
Krishnadevaraya College of Dental and Hospital,Bangalore	275604	22824	8.28	57.53
M.R.A.Dental College,Bangalore	759868	88908	11.69	175.06
Oxford Dental Sciences, Bangalore	338440	65753	19.42	77.65
P.M. Nadagouda Memorial Dental College, Bagalakot	83027	34901	42.83	18.75
Rajiva Gandhi College of Dental Sciences, Bangalore	354772	331305	93.38	73.31
Siddaganga Dental College, Tumkur	1018	---	---	0.46
S.B. Patil Institute for Dental Sciences & Research, Bidar	877517	542601	61.83	179.49
SDM College of Dental Sciences & Hospital Dharwad	251	--	--	0.25
Vakkaligar Sangha Dental,	148553	62011	41.74	32.61

Bangalore				
Vydehi Institute of Dental Sciences Bangalore	834959	241061	28.87	183.41
Yenepoya Dental College Mangalore	1055763	31848	3.01	222.01

FINDINGS

- 32 % of dental college websites URL extensions is .org.
- All most all the dental college websites background colour is matching.
- All websites are used graphics in their websites.
- Sitemap, search feasibility and homepage link is given in all the websites in Karnataka.
- History of the dental colleges, Faculty information, copy right and contact Information is provided in all the dental college websites.
- Site update information and calendar of events are also given in the entire website under the study.
- Information about library, library working hours and information about OPAC is given in almost all the websites.
- Library collection, No. of books available, No. of journals subscribed and different kinds of library services are provided in all the websites.
- The non academic and administration information such as placement cell, hostel facilities, canteen facilities etc. provided in almost all the websites under the study.

CONCLUSION

It is observed from the present study that all the dental college websites are different from one another in many respects. Some findings from previous studies are correlated in our study. In Karnataka, though all the dental colleges have their own websites, they had standard design and structure. The growing use of Internet among the general public including students, staff, etc., has revolutionized the process of dental college publicity and dissemination of information pertaining to dental college activities, services, rules and regulations, admissions, various sections, staff, etc. Library webpages of dental colleges in Karnataka not only serve as excellent media for publishing the library activities, programmes, resources and services but also help to bring to the notice of the user all the significant information which they must know in developing and using their libraries. The information

provided in the webpages of dental colleges in Karnataka and their library pages need to be evaluated periodically using established criteria like web design, accessibility, arrangement, etc. This will help the dental colleges to improve their websites according to the user's needs.

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