

Homepages of Indian Central Universities Websites: A Study

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Abstract

Information and Communication Technology has made it very easy to access information through various channels of communication. Such one channel is homepage. University plays very important role by providing higher education. Websites are mirrors of the university, thus it should contain all kind of information which may be, courses offered, university achievement, administration and contact address etc. with these points researcher felt that a systematic study of homepages required for more than one reason. Firstly, such a study would give an idea about the contact, scope, coverage and depth of information provided in the homepages of Indian Central Universities. Secondly, a study of the nature would help the prospective design of university website regarding the kind of information that should be made available in websites.

Keywords: *Internet Resources, Webpage of Indian Central Universities, Website Design*

1. INTRODUCTION

Internet is a network of networks that links computers around the world. It allows communication across networks. One can communicate between one network and any other network [1]. This allows people to have access to information from different websites, locations and machines. It literally puts a world of information and a potential worldwide audience at your fingers [2].

The internet started with the launch of Sputnik, the ensuing space race, the cold war and the development of ARPANET (Department of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) in 1950. But it really took off in the 1980s when the National Science Foundation used ARPANET to link its five regional super computers centre [3]. From there evolved a high speed backbone of Internet access for many other types of networks, Universities, Institutions, Bulletin board systems and Commercial online services [4]. The end of the decade saw the emergence of the World Wide Web, which herald a platform independent means of chain enhanced with a pleasant and relatively easy to use graphical interface.

Internet growth in India mirrors the trend worldwide, with the service being the fastest growing segment of the telecommunications sectors. An IMRB (Indian Market Research Bureau) study says that about 43 lakh households have already had a first hand experience on the net. These represent three fourth of the 5.7 million socio-economic class A and B households in the top 16 cities of the country-a group that can be referred to as relevant population for the Internet.

2. NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The Government of India, Ministry of HumanResource Development has established 41 Central Universities in India. All these universities are scattered across the country. The emergence of IT has enabled all these universities to have their own websites. Maximum all the universities have their websites and linked to their libraries. Theses websites acts as a rich source of information for the aspiring students planning to pursue higher education and to public at large. These websites are being updated from time to time. These websites normally provides information about the university administration, authorities, courses offered, faculty, and examination procedure.

The researcher felt that a systematic study of a homepage is required. Firstly, such a study would give an idea about the content, coverage, scope and depth of information provided in the homepages on Indian Central Universities. Secondly, a study of the nature would help the prospective design of university website regarding the kind of information that should be made available in websites. Thus, the study has been chosen.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has the following objectives:

- i To understand the concept of homepage, website and webpage;
- ii To create a directory of websites of Indian Central Universities;
- iii To identify the kind of information that could be gleaned from the homepages;
- iv To study and analyze the contents of homepages;
- v To give related suggestions.

4. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study is limited to the Central University websites of India only. The websites that were retrievable with the help of search engines only were considered. Only those websites available on the World Wide Web were considered for this study. This study has taken only 40 homepages of Indian Central University websites and their libraries. One Central University of Tamil Nadu do not have website. Mainly 35 elements have taken for homepage analysis. They are: Title, University logo, University photo, Background picture, Sitemap, University address, Phone number, Fax number, E-mail address, Copyright, Site developed (Designed and maintained by), Courses offered, Department, Staff/Faculty, Affiliated colleges, Distance education, Governing bodies, Administration, Vice-Chancellor, Student services, Library, Research, Alumni, Established year, About university, Infrastructure, Admissions, Fees structure, Comments and suggestions (contact webmaster), Feedback, Last updated, Current date, Number of visitors, Search, and FAQ.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted on the homepages of 41 Central Universities of India, except the Central University of Tamil Nadu which does not have the website. The method followed to find out the objectives of this study is by search engines. The list of central universities are taken from the UGC (University Grants Commission). Each of the homepages of these universities was analyzed using the pre-structured checklist to know the nature of link and coverage of information about their websites.

6. CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES IN INDIA

The Government of India is responsible for arranging, locating and distributing financial resources required by the University Grants Commission (UGC) for the establishment of Central Universities in India. Currently there are 41 Central Universities in India (Annexure 1). Improving the quality and access of higher education and research in India have become keeping in view the growing needs for qualified human resources in various sectors of the economy. Therefore, it can be hoped that there would be more Central Universities in India in the near future. The Central Government has also been empowered by Special Act of the Constitution to maintain a particular standard conducive to the educational health of the country.

Table 1 Chronological Growth of Central Universities in India

Year of Establishment	No. of Universities	%
Before 150	04	9.76
1951 to 1960	01	2.44
1961 to 1970	00	0.00
1971 to 1980	03	7.32
1981 to 1990	03	7.32
1991 to 2000	08	19.51
2001 to 2010	22	53.66
Total	41	100

The Central Government lays special emphasis on research and development carried out in technical as well as other institutions. Salient features of Central Universities in India are:

- i The President of India acts as the 'Visitor' for all the Central Universities.
- ii The President has the power to nominate few members to the Executive Committee/Board of Management/Court/Selection Committees of the University in terms of the various statutes and provisions laid down in the University Act.
- iii The Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD) assists the President of India in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors, Court Nominees, and Selection Committee Nominees.

The present study covers all the Central Universities listed in the Department of Higher Education website in India. Table 1 shows the year of establishment of 41 Central Universities in India. There was a phenomenal growth during 2001-2010; nearly 22 (53.66 %) Central Universities were established during this period. Banaras Hindu University was the first Central University established in 1915. In the last 21 years, about 30 Central Universities have been established, which reflects the growth of higher education in India.

Table 2 State-wise Distribution of Central Universities in India

Name of the State & Union Territory	No. of Central Universities	Name of the State & Union Territory	No. of Central Universities
Andra Pradesh	3	Maharashtra	1
Arunachal Pradesh	1	Manipur	2
Assam	2	Meghalaya	1
Bihar	2	Mizoram	1
Chhattisgarh	1	Nagaland	1
Delhi	4	Orissa	1
Gujarat	1	Pondicherry	1
Goa	1	Punjab	1
Haryana	1	Rajasthan	1
Himachal Pradesh	1	Sikkim	1
Jammu & Kashmir	1	Tamil Nadu	1
Jharkhand	1	Tripura	1
Karnataka	1	Uttar Pradesh	4
Kerala	1	Uttaranchal	1
Madhya Pradesh	1	West Bengal	1
Total			41

The distribution of Central Universities in India is given in Table 2. Almost all the Indian States and Union Territories have established at least one Central University. While Uttar Pradesh and Delhi have the maximum of four (9.76 %) Central Universities, Andhra Pradesh has three (7.32 %) followed by Assam, Bihar and Manipur with two and remaining 24 States with one Central University each.

7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The analysis and interpretation of the 40 homepages examined over the Internet is presented in this chapter. These 40 homepages represent the dynamic websites of 40 Indian Central Universities of the total 41 Central Universities. The data elements gathered are grouped into different types of elements such as inception, academic, facial, services, frames, and so on.

7.1 Facial Elements of the Homepages of Indian Central Universities (ICU)

Table 1 represents the general facial elements of the homepages of Indian Central University websites (ICU). Almost all the universities have the 'university name/title' accounting to 40 representing 100%. Only 38 universities have 'university logos' accounts to 95%. About 31 university homepages have 'university photo' scoring 77.5%. Homepages having background picture account for 32 representing 80%. Of all the homepages only 28 university homepages have sitemaps representing 70%.

Table 1 Facial Elements of the Homepages of Indian Central Universities (ICU)

Sl. No.	Elements	No. of Homepages (n = 40)	%
1	Title	40	100
2	Logo	38	95
3	University Photo	31	77.5
4	Background Picture	32	80
5	Sitemap	28	70

7.2 Communication Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Most of the websites has given communication elements like university address, phone number, fax number, e-mail address, etc. Table 2 represents the communication elements of the homepages of the ICU. It can be seen from the Table 2 that about 40 university homepages have 'university address' accounts to 100%. Homepages having 'phone number' accounts for 39 representing 97.5%. 35 homepages have 'fax number' representing 87.5% and 38 homepages have e-mail address representing 95%.

Table 2 Communication Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Sl. No.	Elements	No of Homepages (n = 40)	%
1	University Address	40	100
2	Phone No	39	97.5
3	Fax No	35	87.5
4	E - Mail	38	95

7.3 Intellectual Property Rights Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Most of the universities are given IPR elements like copyright, site developed (designed and maintained by), etc at the end of the homepage. Table 3 indicates that 36 homepages have the element 'copyright' accounts to 90% and 22 homepages have the element 'site developed (designed and maintained by)' scoring 55%. Right to Information Act is given by 31 universities scoring 77.5%.

Table 3 Intellectual Property Rights Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Sl. No.	Elements	No of Homepages (n = 40)	%
1	Copyright	36	90
2	Site Developed By	22	55
3	Right to Information Act	31	77.5

7.4 Academic Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Universities are comes under the category of academic institutions. So, it is essential to put their academic elements on their websites. Some of the universities are given academic elements like courses offered, department, faculty, distance education, Vice-Chancellor, etc on their homepages. Table 4 represents the academic elements of the homepages of the ICU. Table 4 shows that 39 homepages have the element ‘courses offered’ accounts to 97.5% and the remaining elements i.e., departments, staff/faculty, affiliated colleges, distance education, governing bodies, administration and Vice-Chancellor are appeared in 37, 32, 25, 17, 29, 35, and 38 homepages respectively.

Table 4 Academic Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Sl. No.	Elements	No of Homepages (n = 40)	%
1	Courses Offered	39	97.5
2	Departments	37	92.5
3	Staff and Faculty	32	80
4	Affiliated Colleges	25	62.5
5	Distance Education	17	42.5
6	Governing Body	29	72.5
7	Administration	35	87.5
8	Vice-Chancellor	38	95

7.5 Service Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Table 5 shows the different service elements of the homepages of ICU. Among several services, major 4 service elements like student services, library, research, alumni are listed in the table. Out of 40 homepages, research service has appeared in 19 homepages that accounts to 47.5%. The remaining service elements i.e., library, alumni, and student services are appeared in 32, 15 and 29 homepages respectively that accounts to 80%, 37.5% and 72.5% respectively.

Table 5 Service Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Sl. No	Elements	No of Homepages (n = 40)	%
1	Research	19	47.50
2	Library and Information Center	32	80.00
3	Alumni	15	37.50
4	Students Service	29	72.50

7.6 Inception Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Table 6 represents the breakup of general inception elements of the homepages of ICU. It may be observed from the Table 6, out of 40 homepages, 39 homepages have universities information i.e., details about the university that accounts to 97.5%. The remaining inception elements, established year and facilities of the university are appeared in 39 and 31 homepages that accounts to 97.5% and 77.5% respectively.

Table 6 Inception Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Sl. No.	Elements	No of Homepages (n = 40)	%
1	About the university	39	97.50
2	Established year	39	97.50
3	Facilities	31	77.50

7.7 Admission Related Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Table 7 shows the information about the admission elements like admissions and fees structure. The element ‘admissions’ have appeared in 33 homepages of ICU that accounts to 82.5% and the element ‘fees structure’ have appeared in 19 homepages that accounts to 47.5%.

Table 7 Admission Related Elements of the Homepages of ICU

Sl. No.	Elements	No of Homepages (n = 40)	%
1	Admissions	33	82.50
2	Fee Structure	19	47.50

7.8 Feedback Elements of the Homepages of the ICU

Some of the university homepages have put their feedback elements like comments and suggestions and feedback, etc. Table 8 represents the feedback elements of the homepages of the ICU. 16 homepages have the element 'comments and suggestions (contact webmaster)' and it accounts to 40%. Whereas, 23 of the homepages have the element 'feedback' and they constitute 57.5%.

Table 8 Feedback Elements of the Homepages of the ICU

Sl. No.	Elements	No of Homepages (n = 40)	%
1	Comments/ suggestions/ Contact Webmaster	16	40
2	Feedback / e-mail	23	57.5

7.9 Dynamism of the Homepages of ICU

Website should be updated to view the latest information. Table 9 reveals the dynamism of the homepages of ICU. Only 10 homepages have the 'last updated' information which indicates 25%. And only 17 university homepages have information about 'current date' that accounts to 42.5%. 14 homepages have contains the information about the 'number of visitors' accounts to 35%.

Table 9 Dynamism of the Homepages of ICU

Sl. No.	Elements	No of Homepages (n = 40)	%
1	Last Updated	10	25
2	Number of Visitors	14	35
3	Current Date	17	42.5

7.10 Search Facilities and FAQ on the Homepages of ICU

Table 10 indicates the breakup of search in the website facilities on the homepages of ICU. Like any other homepages, ICU are also having search facilities FAQ. 19 homepages have the search facility, which accounts to 47.5% and the element FAQ appeared in 11 homepages representing 27.5%.

Table 10 Search Facilities and FAQ on the Homepages of ICU

Sl. No.	Elements	No of Homepages (n = 40)	%
1	Search	19	47.50
2	FAQ	11	27.50

8. CONCLUSION

The present paper has collected the data about the websites of all Central Universities of India. Out of 41 Central Universities of India, 40 universities have their websites. As stated earlier the researcher has concentrated only on these university homepages. Almost all the university homepages having the title element and about 95% of the homepages have given their logos and half of the universities have given their e-mail addresses. More number of universities lack in providing the information like research, alumni and fee structure further also lack in maintaining the dynamism of the website. It appears that more systematic effort is required by the universities while designing and developing their websites. As their websites are becoming more authentic source of information, a more serious effort is in need. A more detailed study not only on the homepages but also on the other subsequent pages of the universities is required. This would definitely help the universities to improve upon their existing websites.

Annexure - 1	
Sl.No.	List of Central Universities in India and their URL
1	Aligarh Muslim University, Uttar Pradesh www.amu.ac.in
2	Assam University, Assam www.assamuniversity.nic.in
3	Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Uttar Pradesh www.bbauindia.org
4	Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh www.bhu.ac.in
5	Central Agricultural University, Manipur www.cau.org.in
6	Central University of Bihar, Bihar www.cub.ac.in
7	Central University of Gujarat, Gujarat www.cuguj.org
8	Central University of Goa, Goa www.unigoa.ac.in
9	Central University of Haryana, Haryana www.cuharyana.org
10	Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh http://hpuniv.nic.in
11	Central University of Jammu & Kashmir, Jammu & Kashmir www.cujk.ac.in
12	Central University of Jharkhand, Jharkhand http://cuj.org.in
13	Central University of Karnataka, Karnataka www.cuk.ac.in
14	Central University of Kerala, Kerala www.cuk-edu.in
15	Central University of Orissa, Orissa http://cuorissa.org
16	Central University of Punjab, Punjab www.centralunipunjab.com
17	Central University of Rajanathan, Rajanathan www.curaj.ac.in
18	Central University of Tamil Nadu, Tamil Nadu
19	English and Foreign Languages University, Andhra Pradesh www.efluniversity.ac.in
20	Guru Ghasidas University, Chattisgarh www.ggu.ac.in
21	Hemawati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Uttaranchal www.garhwaluniversity.org
22	Indira Gandhi National Open University, Delhi www.ignou.ac.in
23	Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi www.jmi.nic.in
24	Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi www.jnu.ac.in

25	Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Maharashtra www.hindivishwa.org
26	Manipur University, Manipur http://manipuruniv.ac.in
27	Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Andhra Pradesh www.manuu.ac.in
28	Mizoram University, Mizoram www.mzu.edu.in
29	Nagaland University, Nagaland www.nagauniv.org.in
30	North Eastern Hill University, Meghalaya www.nehu.ac.in
31	Patna University, Bihar www.patnauniversity.ac.in
32	Pondicherry University, Puducherry www.pondiuni.edu.in
33	Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh www.rgu.ac.in
34	Sikkim University, Sikkim www.sikkimuniversity.in
35	Tezpur University, Assam www.tezu.ernet.in
36	Tripura University, Tripura www.tripurauniversity.in
37	University of Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh www.allduniv.ac.in
38	University of Delhi, Delhi www.du.ac.in
39	University of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh www.uohyd.ernet.in
40	University of Sagar, Madhya Pradesh http://sagaruniversity.nic.in
41	Visva Bharati University, West Bengal www.visva-bharati.ac.in

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