INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT & MANAGEMENT

A Monthly Double-Blind Peer Reviewed (Refereed/Juried) Open Access International e-Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories

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INTRODUCTION

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESIS (ES)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSIONS

LIMITATIONS

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

REFERENCES

APPENDIX/ANNEXURE

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BOOKS

-   Bowersox, Donald J., Closs, David J., (1996), "Logistical Management." Tata McGraw, Hill, New Delhi.

-   Hunker, H.L. and A.J. Wright (1963), "Factors of Industrial Location in Ohio" Ohio State University, Nigeria.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BOOKS

-   Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

JOURNAL AND OTHER ARTICLES

-   Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

-   Garg, Sambhav (2011): "Business Ethics" Paper presented at the Annual International Conference for the All India Management Association, New Delhi, India, 19–23

UNPUBLISHED DISSERTATIONS

-   Kumar S. (2011): "Customer Value: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Customers," Thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

ONLINE RESOURCES

-   Always indicate the date that the source was accessed, as online resources are frequently updated or removed.

WEBSITES

-   Garg, Bhavet (2011): Towards a New Gas Policy, Political Weekly, Viewed on January 01, 2012 http://epw.in/user/viewabstract.jsp

THE PROMISES, APPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF 'EDUCATIONAL BLOGGING'

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ABSTRACT
Blogs are a new form of web-based communication tool. The emergence of blogs as a communication platform has been particularly dramatic for classroom teaching over last few years. The use of blogs for the educational purposes is increasing all over the world. Teachers and students can use blogs to promote discussion on various topics, share information, support group and individual learning online. Educational blogs or simply 'Edublogs' can help the students develop critical thinking skills, writing skills and knowledge construction abilities. Educational blogging helps students and teachers to share inter and intra disciplinary knowledge with each other. Edublogs can be easily updated and accessed so these can act as a transformational technology for higher education. Blogs have great potential to become an effective digital learning tool for traditional classroom education and for distance education too. Blogs are interactive, easy to set up and manage thus enabling students to engage in online exchanges and learning beyond physical classroom. This research paper highlights the promises and applications of educational blogging and tries to find out the advantages and disadvantages of using edublogs for making Indian education system more effective. This paper provides an overview on why educators should use blogs as a teaching pedagogy and explains how teachers and students can get huge benefits through edublogs. The researchers have also tried to find out the challenges of using edublogs in Indian higher educational setting. The researchers have given their suggestions for effective integration and incorporation of edublogs in Indian education system. The researchers strongly recommend universities, higher authorities, school and college managements, teachers and other higher education entities to set up blog facilities within their learning management system as distinct benefits can be derived from using blogs in education and embracing e-learning approaches.

KEYWORDS
higher education, edublogs, learning, students, knowledge, sharing, skills.

JEL CODE
I20

INTRODUCTION
Emerging online communication tools such as Blogs, Wikis and forums are being used in classrooms to enhance learner expectations and experiences. Blogs are a new mode of web-based communication through which users frequently post comments and express their thoughts and interlink with each other. These days' blogs also support multimedia content such as video, audio, graphics and animation. There are various types of blogs such as family blogs, group blogs, community blogs, corporate blogs and "Edublogs', a new type of blogs which is emerging in education circle. These days, blogs are being used to share knowledge and thoughts in the field of education. According to previous researches, educational blogging can encourage more autonomous learning. One of the most important features of blogs is scope for interactivity. Edublogs have the capacity to enrich learning by creating peer dialogue, promoting interpersonal and group communication among students. Teachers can utilize blogs to share knowledge, thoughts, experiences and feelings related to learning or curriculum. Teachers can remain in touch with their students at any time and at every place through edublogs. Edublogs can cover a wide range of topics including course material, education news, instructional methodology and pedagogical techniques. Blogs are being incorporated in the classroom teaching for instructional purposes.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
This study highlights the promises, applications and challenges of using edublogs in the field of higher education in India. This research paper explores the advantages and disadvantages of edublogs in making the teaching and learning process more effective by integrating "Edublogs" in the teaching pedagogies for providing formal and informal education. Suggestions have been given for effective integration of edublogs to make traditional classroom teaching more effective.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
This research paper has following objectives-
1. To evaluate and examine the promises and applications of "Educational Blogging" in higher education in India.
2. To examine and investigate the challenges of integrating "Edublogs" in the traditional classroom education in India.
3. To highlight the benefits of "Edublogs" for teachers and students and giving suggestions for effective integration and incorporation of "Edublogs" in higher education setting in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The Methodology is based on using primary sources to accumulate the information through preparing questionnaire presented to teachers & students, face to face approach & the secondary sources from reference books, magazines, internet and journals.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA
India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, next to United States and China. Accreditation for higher learning is overseen by 12 autonomous institutions established by the University Grants Commission. Indian higher education system has expanded at a fast pace by adding nearly 20,000 colleges and more than 8 million students in a decade from 2001-02 to 2011-12. As of 2012, India has 42 central universities, 275 state universities, 130 deemed universities, 90 private universities, 5 institutions established and functioning under the State act, and 33 institutes of National importance. Other institutions include 33,000 colleges as Government Degree Colleges and Private Degree Colleges, including 1800 exclusive women's colleges, functioning under these universities and institutions as reported by the UGC in 2013.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Blogs, also called weblogs can be defined as a frequent, chronological publication of personal thoughts and web links on online communities (marketingterms.com, 2006). Online communities have been defined by Wenger and Snyder (2002) as "groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise". Blogs, as a mode of communication, is one of the most prevalent contemporary mechanisms of personal experience. According to Blood (2000), blogs came into existence when the phrase 'weblog' was first used by 'Barger' in 1997. Blogs are updated instantly and allow users to post comment (Siemens, 2002). Blogs can be created with a few clicks of a mouse, and no experience in web authoring is needed (Wu, 2005). In the weblog world, consumers of information are also producers of information, and a new form of authorship is created that emphasizes connections to the community, discourses and processes (Wrede, 2003). Blogs have the potential to facilitate thinking skills and knowledge construction (Fang & Liu, 2004; Kagder & Bull, 2003; Mao, 2003; Oravec, 2003) when used in an educational setting. Through blogs, educators can create personal journals including texts, images, course material and links to other online resources, publish them online and receive comments from their students. A blogger, who might be a teacher in case of edublogs, has the ability to voice his or her opinion to a large number of students online in a very short span of time and this may imply a potential vanity on the part of the author in courting fame (Oravec, 2003). With the help of blogs, educators can create situations where students who are passionate about specific topics are able to study in groups and participate in online communities (LaMonica, 2006). These days' blogs are being used by educators to promote discussion on various topics online and support individual as well as group learning to enhance the overall learning experience of students inside and outside the traditional classroom setting. In fact, they provide a mechanism for dissemination of education related material. According to some researchers there is a noticeable improvement in the quality of student writing when it is presented in a blog (Oravec, 2002; Carlson, 2003) so there are obvious benefits of incorporating blogs in traditional classroom curriculum. The interaction with regard to a topic allows teachers and students to share their experiences, viewpoints, information, convey material and other resources (Boyd, 2003; Lee, 2003). With the help of blogs, creation of content gets easier and easier for educators so blogs promise to transform how we teach and learn (Richardson, 2006). Blogs have the potential to be a transformation technology for teaching and learning (Williams and Jacobs, 2004). Social constructivism theory also supports the application of blogs in education as this theory states that knowledge is formulated through the process of social interaction and collaborative learning.

In the context of knowledge management, weblogs can serve as a personal information repository, a journal of thoughts and ideas, a repository of feedbacks and comments and an online presence (Roll, 2004). Educational blogs can also be referred as "Online diaries", where students can write about their experiences and share their ideas related to course material (Davi, Frydenberg and Gulati, 2007). Weblogs have been described as student diaries and learning logbooks by Wagner (2003). Blogs are a constructivist tool for learning where participants construct knowledge, share ideas, and build upon each other's work (Richardson, 2006). The blogosphere is a powerful learning space that improves student achievement (Palmer, Holt and Bray, 2008), promotes reflective thinking (Xie, Ke and Sharma, 2008), and offers the opportunity to interact with others and learn in a natural environment as part of everyday life (Ladyshewsky and Gardner, 2008; Sevelj, 2006). Chiddo (2006) described educational blogging to be both a student-centered and peer-focused activity which maintains two kind of student interaction: intra-personal dialogue as well as inter-personal interaction (Gorsky, Caspi & Chajut, 2008).

PROMISES OF "EDUCATIONAL BLOGGING" FOR IMPROVING INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SCENARIO

Teachers can make teaching and learning process more effective by using edublogs as these acts as a competitive, collaborative and cooperative learning tool. It is important to use blogs for educational purposes for the following reasons-

- There is a lack of innovativeness in Indian education system. Educational blogging can bring innovation in Indian education system. With the help of blogs, teachers can edit, create, update or delete their teaching material online such as handouts, notes, assignments, lecture summary, review materials etc. Blogs must be treated as a source of value addition for our education system as they can be used as an e-learning tool so that the teaching and learning process can continue outside the classrooms too.
- Using edublogs will improve the instructional effectiveness and will surely enhance learning outcomes and student performance by improving student engagement and confidence level.
- Educational blogging can also be beneficial for those students who are enrolled in distance learning programmes as they can get an access to expert opinions, educational content, assignments and lecture summaries through edublogs so the level of distance education can also improve by incorporating blogs in teaching pedagogies. These Students can get a chance to read related articles through edublogs.
- The scope of educational blogging is not confined to share information or content only but teachers can also remain in close contact with the parents through these blogs. Parents can better evaluate the performance of their child through maintaining close contacts with the teachers through these blogs. Edublogs can help parents for close monitoring and timely feedback about their child's performance in the classroom.
- Teachers can easily set up and administer edublogs in comparison to other educational technologies.

APPLICATIONS OF "EDUCATIONAL BLOGGING" IN HIGHER EDUCATION

If we take a close look on our educational environment, we can easily notice that the student community is changing radically. The generation Y students are living and studying in an environment filled with electronic gadgets including mobile phones and internet. They continuously use mobile phones, cameras, desktops, laptops, tablets, e-readers, video games, E-mail, text messages, blogs and instant messengers in every walk of life including their study, work, play and communication. Educational blogging can be used in our educational setting for the various purposes. Some of the major uses of blogs in education includes- improving writing skills, sharing ideas and resources, recording student progress, group work and course administration. Wagner (2003) has proposed the use of blogs as learning logs for enhancing and strengthening the best features of teaching techniques. The application of blogs is a useful supplemental aid to teachers according to Johnson (2004). Weblogs have been applied for a number of educational purposes such as for supplementing classroom teaching with blogging for MBA students to develop business language and communication skills by Forster and Tam (2004). Weblogs have also been applied for improving journaling skills of pre-service teachers by Stiler and Philleo (2003). The other uses of blogs for educational purposes are as follows:

- ❖ Teachers can use edublogs to post information about class time, syllabus, assignments, research activities, projects, exercises and as a platform to discuss class topics.
- ❖ Educational blogging can be utilized for real world writing experiences. Students get a chance to write and publish their own articles online which boosts their confidence level. Moreover, the readers which are generally the teachers and the fellow students can also comment on their articles written on edublogs.
- ❖ Teachers can give feedback easily to students about their queries, progress and performance.
- ❖ Teachers and students can share their knowledge with each other and express their opinions on diverse topics.
- ❖ Educational blogging facilitates communication and discussion among teachers and students on various topics.
- ❖ Educational blogging helps students in developing their knowledge by using peer networks.
- ❖ Students can get easy updates on their homework and assignments through edublogs.
- ❖ Students can get multiple responses to a single question which enhances their knowledge horizon.
- ❖ Educational blogging helps students and teachers to create content, construct new knowledge and share information with each other online.
- ❖ Teachers and students both can utilize edublogs to organize class discussions, seminars and post summary of lectures.
- ❖ Edublogs act as a platform of self-expression for teachers and students.
- ❖ Teachers can link to online items that relate to their course or subject material.
- ❖ Edublogs act as a place of file sharing as electronic files can be easily uploaded and downloaded on the blogs.

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ADVANTAGES OF USING BLOGS FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

According to Wu and Hiltz (2004), educational advantages of weblogs include opportunities for active learning, collaborative learning, increased higher level thinking, and flexibility in course delivery. Educational blogging offers multiple benefits to students and teachers for enhancing their learning experiences. Some of the benefits of educational blogging are as follows:

❖ Educational blogging boosts confidence among students as it gives them a chance to express themselves. Students feel more empowered as a result of self-expression. Blogs facilitate informal communication and creativity among students.
❖ Edublogs help students remain motivated, interested and more involved in studies.
❖ Students can get easy access to information posted on edublogs anytime and at anyplace.
❖ Educational blogging promotes creative and analytical thinking among students as students think before answering any question or publishing their stories or making any comment online thus in a way edublogs empower students.
❖ Educational blogging acts as a promoter of critical and intuitive thinking among teachers and students.
❖ Students can learn from their peer group and online networks on edublogs
❖ Students can get easy access to quality information through peer groups on edublogs.
❖ Different students and teachers from different educational institutions, places and parts of a country can share an edublog to learn together.

DISADVANTAGES OF USING BLOGS FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

Along with the advantages, educational blogging has some disadvantages too. These disadvantages are as follows-

❖ Generally, students have the tendency to write about petty and trivial issues on blogs to grab the attention of their peer group which does not contribute to their educational growth and enhancement.
❖ Security and privacy issues are also attached to blogs as they can also be misused to post false and misleading information which may be harmful for readers.
❖ Spending too much time on blogs and online communities can sometimes isolate teenage students rather than connecting them to others which may lead to their social alienation.
❖ If an edublog is public than there are chances of disruptions by some people who may post comments and stories that might be incorrect, inaccurate and insulting. Due to this reason many teachers prefer that access to a class blog should be given only to registered students.

CHALLENGES IN ADOPTING AND INCORPORATING 'EDUCATIONAL BLOGGING' IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL SETTING IN INDIA

Teachers and students can face a lot of barriers in adopting and incorporating educational blogging in higher educational setting in India. Before incorporating edublogs in any educational environment, it is important to train all the teaching staff about all the aspects of edublogs as active engagement by teachers is necessary to promote the benefits of educational blogging to students. It is important for teachers to spread awareness among the students about the benefits of using edublogs for their knowledge enhancement. Teachers must provide positive feedback to those students who are using edublogs for educational purpose as directed by the teachers. Teachers must know how and when to use edublogs for educational purposes.

Some challenges and problems which can act as a barrier in adopting and incorporating educational blogging in higher education setting in India are as follows-

❖ A vast majority of teachers are not technology friendly in the schools and higher educational institutions in India. Teachers can't motivate students for being technology friendly until and unless they do not know to use it themselves. Teachers need to be trained to use and incorporate edublogs and other modern technologies as a part of teaching pedagogies to make classroom teaching more effective.
❖ Lack of technological infrastructure can be another barrier for educational blogging. A vast majority of schools and colleges in India have inadequate teaching technology aids. Teachers and students are not comfortable with using technical equipments like computers, projectors, CTV-video films, E-tutoring software, teleconferencing and videoconferencing devices, wikis and edublogs. In rural areas teachers and student do not get easy access to an internet connection. To overcome these barriers, it is important for government and policymakers to provide adequate financial support, facilities and infrastructure to schools and colleges.
❖ Teachers may show resistance in using edublogs for supplementing classroom teaching as they may feel that it will make them less powerful but this resistance should be overcome through proper planning and strategy formulation by the concerned authorities by making teachers aware of the benefits they and their students can get from using edublogs. Teachers need to understand that educational blogging will actually empower them.
❖ Poor support system from concerned authorities, government, school and college managements can also act as a challenge for integrating and incorporating educational blogging in Indian educational setting.
❖ Teachers and students might not feel comfortable in using edublogs initially but this fear of using technology can be removed through teacher and student training programmes to make them familiar with all the aspects of modern educational technologies including educational blogging so that they can learn to use edublogs for educational purposes.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION AND INCORPORATION OF 'EDUCATIONAL BLOGGING' IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL SETTING IN INDIA

Some researchers like Berge and Giles (2006) and McAfee (2009) argue that before implementing technology initiative in an educational setting, it is imperative for any institution to undertake strategic planning and re-assess what goals it needs to achieve through the use of technology. Some of the suggestions for effective integration and incorporation of educational blogging in higher educational setting in India are as follows-

❖ First of all, teachers need to change their beliefs about modern teaching technologies including educational blogging and should learn to use them. They need to see edublogs as a collaborative learning tool which will supplement teaching and will empower them; not as something which will make them weak.
❖ Teachers should take initiative to set up a class blog as a result of collective efforts of the entire class.
❖ All the students of a class should be added as a member of the edublog and each one should be free to give their opinions and comments on a topic; publish stories and articles; post classroom notes, assignments and comments; delete and update articles etc.
❖ Others than the class students may also be allowed to join the edublogs so that they can also get benefit from the knowledge being created through blog. This can be especially beneficial for those who are enrolled into distance learning programmes.
❖ Teachers and students must be trained to use edublogs by concerned authorities. Training programmes should be conducted at regular intervals to make them aware about recent developments in the field of educational technologies.
❖ Teachers should motivate students to use blogs and should make them aware about the benefits they can derive from using edublogs for their knowledge enhancement. Teacher guidance can motivate students for knowledge creation and sharing through edublogs.
❖ Government, policymakers and concerned authorities should take appropriate steps to provide adequate infrastructure to support innovative teaching methodologies and aids to schools and colleges so that the maximum advantage of modern educational technologies can be taken.

CONCLUSION

Educational blogging has the ability to open a new door to learning activities for enhancing student participation, engagement and collaboration in education. Educational blogging can enhance knowledge creation, sharing and delivery as it is an innovative instructional pedagogy. Teachers can take benefits of educational blogging to engage students and help them learn important skills, concepts, sustain social and intellectual interaction. Edublogs offer multiple learning benefits to students which include critical thinking, analytical thinking, writing skills, knowledge creation and sharing. Educational blogging has opened a wide range opportunity for teachers to support competitive, cooperative and collaborative learning.

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