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# **BLOGS – BECOMING BELOVED FOR LIBRARIANS AND LIBRARY PATRONS: A MODEL BLOG OF ALLAM IQBAL LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR**

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## **Abstract**

Unprecedented growth and popularity, besides hospitality displayed by blogs and blog softwares culminated into massive use of this service in many fields including Library & Library Information Science. This paper briefly discusses some blogging softwares and blog search engines including those used in the field of Library and Library Information Science. The Author has tried to come out with a model blog for Allama Iqbal Library using blogging software Live Journal and the same is presented through this paper.

**Keywords :** Blogs/ Electronic publishing/ Library Services

## **1. Introduction**

A blog is a website where entries are made in a journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order. The term blog traces its origin from word weblog coined by Jorn Barger 1 (An American blogger having written extensively on Artificial Intelligence) on 17th December 1997. This term has been quickly adopted both as noun as well as verb ( 'to blog' meaning to edit ones weblog or to post ones weblog).

A typical blog entry can have TITLE representing main heading of the post; BODY carrying contents put through posting ; PERMALINK representing URL of the article ; DATE indicating date and time of publication of blog entry. Additionally, COMMENTS allowing users to leave comments on the blog; CATEGORIES (tags) subject/s covered under a particular blog are indicated 2 .

### **1.1 Fame and Features**

The features of blogs had a direct impact on the fame and familiarity of blogging. Although blogging is almost only a decade old phenomenon but it exploded on web like a big a fire. The spread of blog fever is ascribed to the fact that blogs let online contents to publish quite easily without need of any markup language or editor. Additionally, the popularity of blog and blogging is attributed to the design and development of blogging softwares. One more significant factor in the growth of blogs is the blogging community. It is taken as human weakness that everyone is desirous to have his or her work

recognized by others. Since the blogs offer a quite easy and cheap medium for publishing widely it lead to the development of blogger community. Librarians could not distract themselves from the growing community of bloggers to become part of it. Features like filling in a simple online form and accomplishing updates by typing few lines besides outdated announcement / events getting automatically deleted have increasingly contributed in fame and familiarity of blogs and blogging. Although positive aspects are associated with blogs and blogging but negativity has not remained estranged when blogs are being misused by seditious and rebellion. Many legal issues have been noticed in the events associated with blogs and blogging.

## 1.2 Kits and Tools

Weblogs can be accessed by using software like Internet Explorer but available advanced tools e.g. Firefox make blog reading more efficient and less time consuming without need to go to blog websites individually instead makes possible to browse updated blog headlines customized to include only those of interest. The other softwares like Opera, Safari and IE7 supporting RSS technology also enable users to see number of last posts in a small window without need to visit URL of the blog 3.

## 2. Blogs

Following are commonly used software offering blog services:

**Blogger.Com:** One of the most popular free blog hosts wherefrom users can create personal or group blog for free either by using own web hosted services(Blog Spot) or ones own web host. With the aid of Access Controls blogger can restrict and put restrictions on a desired type of user/s and can have choice for a type or group of user to write to his / her blog. Blogger profile enables a blogger to find people and blogs sharing his / her interests. Using Blogger Mobile one can send photos and text to ones blog but this service is presently restricted to US only.

**Greymatter:** Is the original web logging software and journal software with features viz. comments templates and variables. Greymatter is a completely free program with provision to add more functionality and other enhancements 4.

**Live journal:** This is the preferred and popular web based software with easy and quick sign up process. It has also premium version.

**Multiply :** It lets to share all kinds of digital media including photo blogs, videos music and more all in one convenient place. It also enables to publish schedule events and parties on social calendar. Makes one to share something new from the network through ones own personal message board.

**Moveabletype:** A popular weblog software used for manipulating web designs formats and functions. It requires some programming skills and payment for installing other services required.

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**Wordpress:** A free blog software with great interface and useful features like private hosting, file uploads etc.

**20 Six (UK) :** It is a free blog host with some nifty features like image hustling statistics, RSS/XML feed, voting comment, moreover it has one more advantageous feature for mobile blogging (Posting to year blog using MMS or e mail). Moreover, it offers 1000 design with full customizing tips (Font, type, size, colour, scheme, own header image etc 5.

### 2.1 Blog search Engines

Ordinarily blogs are searchable by browsers like Internet Explorer, Netscape etc. however , different blog search engines have been designed for efficient and effective research for blogs. There include directories listing Weblogs and blog tools.

Familiar ones are:

**Technorati :** An internet search engine for searching blogs competing with Google , Yahoo and Ice Rocket and it indexes over 55 million weblogs 6.

**Google Blogs Search:** It offers efficient blog searches , web images , video news etc. <http://blogsearch.google.com>

**Feedster :** Search engine for RSS feeds which constantly monitors world of blogs also includes images searches, [www.feedster.com](http://www.feedster.com)

**Blogdigger :** Blog search engine providing full text search as well as metadata search on RSS information. It facilitates searches by date and also through links. [www.blogdigger.com](http://www.blogdigger.com)

**Fagan Finder :** It facilitates blog as well as RSS searches . It has links to other blogs and blog metadata collectors e.g. blogsphere like UK Blogs , Australian Blogs. [www.fagfinder.com.blogs](http://www.fagfinder.com.blogs)

**Blog catalog :** It lists blogs sites by category with search options [www.blogcatalog.com](http://www.blogcatalog.com)

### 3. Indian Scenario

Blogs and blogging have become popular in our country too as it is both pastime as well need oriented phenomenon with the Jurists , Medical professionals, Journalist and Educationists . While browsing through relevant blog directories rarely blogs of Libraries and Library Science in Indian context are sighted .

Some familiar Indian blog sites are :

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**Sulekha.com Blogs:** Blogging software with blog directory listing blogs and bloggers with facility of search and help . The directory does not list blogs in on library science.<http://www.sulekha.com/blogs/>

**Blogs in India :** This directory of blogs lists blogs on subjects like Arts Humanities, Business, Education, Science Computer Science, Social Science but no blog on Library & Library science is sighted here

However under reference blogs it has referred to libraries merely

**Sify blogs :** This site offers free blogging service. Under directory of blogs it has listed blogs on Art & culture, Business & Economy, Sports & Recreation with no blog on Library & Information science is in scene through this site 7.

**Quick Online :** It enumerate some popular sites of Indian blogs & bloggers , These include : Kamat blog portal, blogstreet India, India bloggers ring, Technorati India, Indian bloggers , SunSuna.com , Blogwise India , Bloflux, India directory , blog dup india

#### 4. BLOGS and Library Services

The very trend set by bloggers from the fields like Journalism, Politics, Medicine Art & Culture also crept in the Libraries and Library Science field. The professionals in this field are making use of blogs for communicating technical skills amongst professionals besides there is increasing use of dispensing patron services through library blogs.

Some familiar Library Blogs are :

**Peter Scott's Library Blog:** Through this blogs blogger shares technical knowledge regarding use of Internet to help library patrons. Scott compiled first hypertext index of internet resources, Hytlenet released in 1991 and has maintained following sites: Libdex, Library index, Library weblogs (by and for Librarians) Weblogs compendium- a site for blogging resources 8.

**Library Technician :** Through this blog an anonymous blogger shares technical knowledge and views about the profession besides job market etc.

**OSS4lib :** Here blogger lists open source or free softwares designed for Libraries and provides news about ongoing open source projects and related issues beneficial for libraries. It is maintained by Dan Chudnov, staff programmer at Yale Centre for Medical Information.

**Beyond the Job:** This employment oriented blog maintained and mainly contributed by two reference Librarian / Professors in Library Information Science namely Sarah Johnson and Rachel Singer Gordon. The blog provides tips, news and notices for Library Jobs 9.

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**Blogwithoutlibrary** : A blog about functioning of libraries vis – a – vis blogs. This blog holds some weblog and maintains useful links and has a book surfer . <http://www.blogwithoutlibrary.net>

**LISZEN Library Blog Search Engine** : Library blog search engine having access to some library blogs like, Library link of the Day ; LIS News etc 10.

The growth of library blogs and use of these blogs aimed to keep patrons up-to-date on library events staff picks and news etc .Workshops , training courses are being conducted wherein participants are being familiarized about blogging , RSS technology and their use to promote library services<sup>8</sup>.

Some of the services these blogs are put made use of :

1. Presenting content creation
  2. Create custom catalogues searches
  3. Publishing book reviews
  4. Popularizing use of softwares
  5. Announcement for exhibitions, conferences etc.
  6. Accessing Library resources
  7. Professional interaction for efficient human resource development
  8. Offering trial services for material from open access repositories
  9. Special offers from publishers to Library school student and scholars.
  10. Novel trends in searching catalogues like one published by Library of congress for prints & photograph Online catalogue 11.
  11. Change in title of a book \ or a journal
  12. Seeking votes for conducting polls for medal winners
  13. Important reports concerning human welfare
  14. Free offers for subscription of magazines digests etc.
  15. Free trials for online journals
  16. Special offers to the student on vehicles & other items of student use
  17. Scholarships, opportunities for higher studies
  18. New trends in teaching etc.
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## 5. ALLAMA IQBAL LIBRARY MODEL BLOG : <http://smattoo.livejournal.com/402.html>

### 5.1 Background

Allama Iqbal Library is the name of central library of Kashmir University Library System having hegemony in the Campus in view of its commanding role in controlling & maintaining internet service of the whole university. The network spread across the whole campus with Internet connectivity to each & every department besides some of the departments /centers having established respective labs with internet connectivity to more systems.

The connectivity to the campus is supported by Ernet link with bandwidth of 1 Mbps reinforced by another link of 512 Kbps from Software Technology Park of India (STPI). The Library houses two Internet Access centres one in first and another in 4th floor of its multistoried building. Although, the necessary infrastructure facilities are mostly confined in the central library still libraries attached with deptts./centres too have at least one system with internet connectivity. The services rendered through blog in a library is possible only via adequate internet facility the same being available in the library under discussion therefore, Blog for this library shall prove a milestone in extending services through this web based platform .

**5.1.1 Software used :** For the development and design of this model blog Live journal blogging software has been made use of. Livejournal is free blogging software with feature like Easy and effortless signing in facility for creating blogs. The blogs created can be customized as per choice. The software can geared to adorn and adopt the blog in a derived way. It facilities creation of photo gallery for the blogs. It offers facilities like leaving comments, with restricting comments, users etc. It enables bloggers to interact with the other users, User groups etc.

### 5.2 Features of Model BLOG

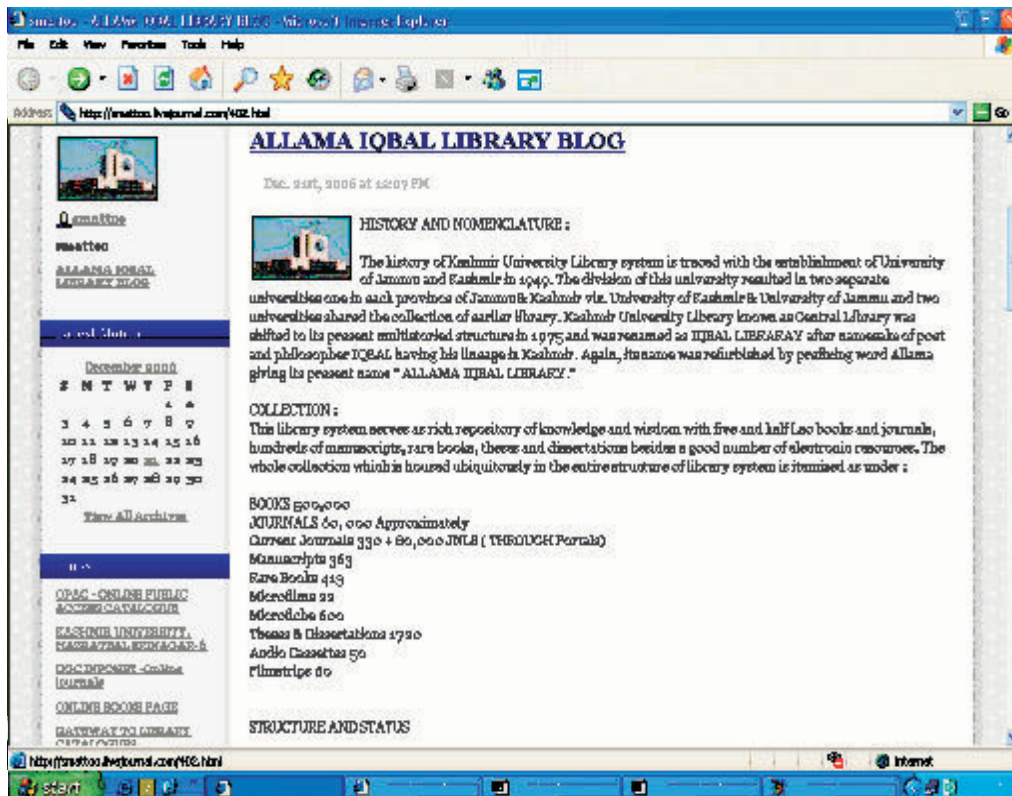
The model blogs has the following features:

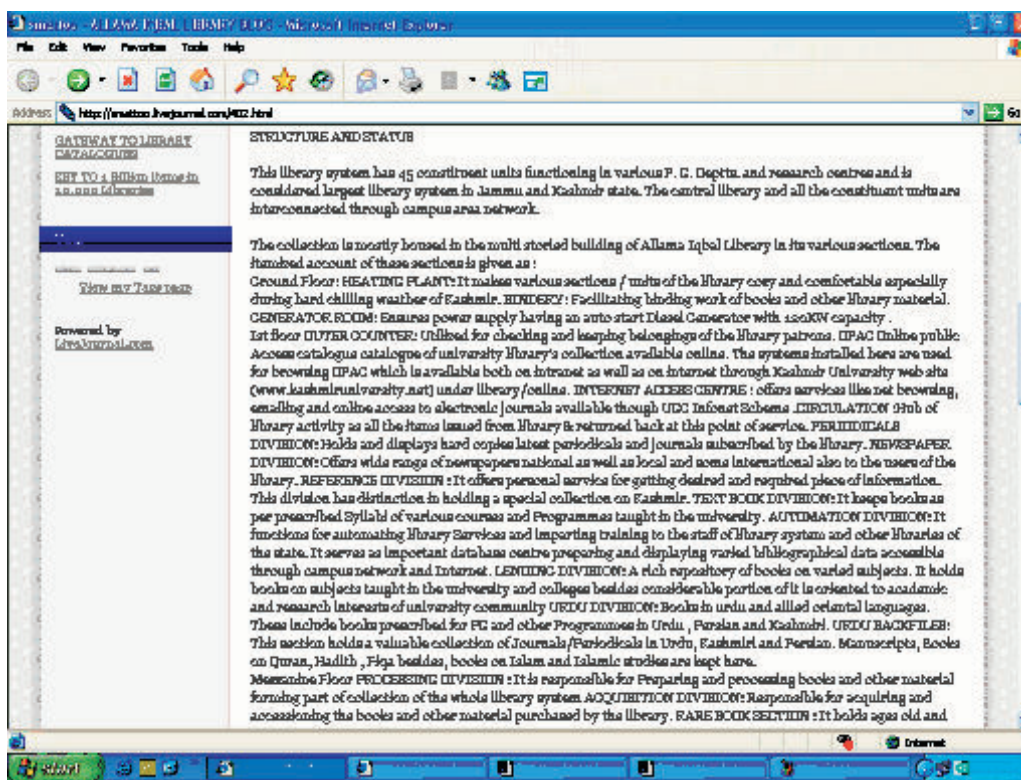
- It can be useful platform the students , faculty and scholars to interact with library staff.
- Since this service is being started with an aim to get feedback from the student and others associated with university it may prove an important force to gear up the service of the library.
- The library is quite crucial to campus research and study the blog will act as an interactive medium for notifying services like e- journals, and availability of other portals in the campus.

The Services of the library could be geared to the expected level through the links of the model blog. The blog offers following services through its links:

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1. Browse collection of the library through its OPAC linked to blog.
2. To know campus related matters through its link to Kashmir University website.
3. To browse and use Online journals and other resources through its link to UGC Infonet Online Journals.
4. To access and use university's unique articles data base of Journals available in the library periodicals collection.
5. To browse and use mammoth resources available through ONLINE BOOKS PAGE
6. To browse and use collection of online libraries through Key to 1 billion item through 10,000 libraries





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