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# GUINDY CAMPUS LIBRARY PORTAL OF UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS : A CASE STUDY

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## Abstract

*Research and education are progressive with the paradigm changes in the valuable services offered by the Libraries. The spectrum of electronic resources required for research and the necessity of customizing them for use have contributed to the design and function of Library Portals. These portals contain gateway functionality and also provide tools for organized knowledge discovery. The paper illustrates the features and proactive role of the Campus Portal (Science Campus, Guindy) of the University of Madras in enhancing the quality of research.*

**Keywords** : Library Portal, University Portal, Campus Portal, Academic Portal, Subject Gateway.

## 1. Introduction

The demands of the contemporary society has become highly selective and expect customized information, be it either about products or services. Reaching out to such demands successfully has become possible through mechanisms namely 'Portals'. Michael Looney and Peter Lyman define them as: "Portals gather a variety of useful information resources into a single, 'one-stop' Web page, helping the user to avoid being overwhelmed by 'infoglut' or feeling lost on the Web". [1]

Academic users of portals seek valuable services provided by the Libraries to the academic community which select and organize information resources that support research and education. Library portals in the digital realm enhance the value and function of electronic resources with the facility of searching multiple resources.

## 2. Definition

Accenture (Accenture Higher Education Survey) defines a Portal within the frame-work of Higher Education as a site having the following characteristics:

- Gateway that provides a single point of entry to information and tools
- Web-based aggregation point
- Targeted used group
- My "homepage" or "Library"
- Easy to use
- Accessible from anywhere anytime. [2]

It is essential to highlight in the context of the Institutional (eg. a University) portal, a Campus Portal would further zero down to providing or customizing the electronic resources or web services. They would serve

as aggregators to organize and display information resources required specifically for their clientele (researchers, faculty etc.).

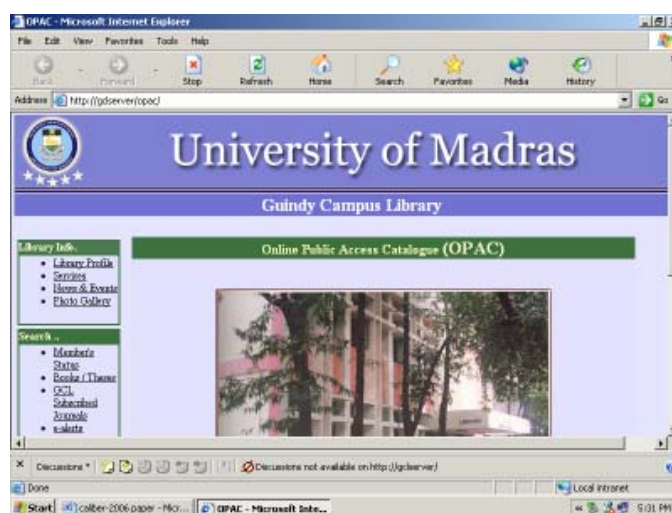
### 3. Objective

This paper plans to visualize the proactive role of the Guindy Campus Library Portal of University of Madras taken up as a case study.

### 4. Guindy Campus Library Portal

University of Madras has an institutional portal which furnishes information to its stake-holders in a wider perspective pertaining to its mission and motto. Library services forming a component of the portal, provide a link to all the four Campus Libraries of the University namely, Chepauk, Guindy, Taramani and Marina. Each of these Campuses are dedicated to specific Schools of disciplines.

Guindy Campus which caters to the academic needs of the Schools of Chemical, Physical, Life and Earth Sciences has an exclusive Campus Library Portal. This portal is at present accessible in the intranet only. Efforts had been taken to satiate the needs of the academic science community; a one stop point wherein the researcher saves much of his precious time to look for what he/she requires most importantly and urgently – starting from the basic Library Info to specialized electronic resources such as Subject Gateways.



The following illustrates the facets of the Campus Portal. [3]

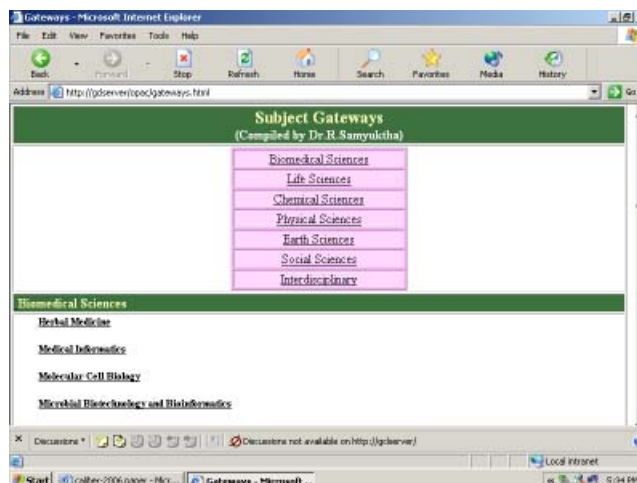
#### 4.1 Library Info

- **Library profile** : Provides information about the Working hours, Library Collection, Membership details, Borrowing eligibility, Library staff, Details of the faculty of the Campus and the Floor Plan of the Library.

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- **Services** : Both traditional services and value added electronic information services are listed to give an overview of the library services offered.
  - **News & Events** : Information regarding forthcoming Seminars, Conferences or Workshops organized by the Departments of the Campus, Orientation programmes for Research scholars, Refresher courses for faculty etc are periodically furnished
  - **Photo Gallery** : Displays an image gallery of the events organized by the Library such as Workshops, Orientation programmes, Faculty interaction programmes and also those associated with the Librarian who spearheads & participates in various events.

#### 4.2 Search Facility

- **Member Status** : The Library members could check out the transactions, about what documents are due to be returned and could renew the borrowing period from their desktop without having to walk into the Library.
- **Books / Theses** : Members have the OPAC accessible in the intranet to search for the books they require the no. of copies available, locate theses by various parameters such as by the Guide, Author, Keyword, Title, Accession no etc. Details of submission from which Department and whether it is a doctoral or M.Phil. dissertation is also indicated. University being a research institution, a lot many searches are done for Theses.
- **E-Alerts** : Electronic alerts of table of contents of important journals what the campus Library does not subscribe to are posted for browsing.
- **Journals Subscribed** : The currently subscribed print journals and the archive of subscribed journals can be searched for availability with details of missing volumes and the receipt date of latest issues. This enables the user to know if the current issue is displayed for use thus saving his precious time.
- **INFONET Journals and Databases** : The electronic resources under the UGC INFONET consortia both electronic journals and databases can be searched alphabetically, by subject coverage or by publisher. The links created at the portal for journals in the consortia (over 6000 e journals) helps the user to access the homepage of the journal right away and download the full text articles required. There has been an overwhelming appreciation for this facility because of the ease at which they can access electronic resources.
- **Subject Gateways** : The Library has been indeed very proactive in extending exclusive support to the research done in the Schools of the Campus. Subject Gateways or compilation of electronic resources on themes with specific focus areas prove as strong linkages to enhance research.



Details of the Disciplines (relating to the Schools of the Campus) and the themes on which electronic resources are compiled are listed below.

- **Biomedical Sciences** - Herbal Medicine  
Medical Informatics  
Molecular & Cell Biology  
Microbial Biotechnology & Bioinformatics  
Nutraceuticals
- **Life Sciences** - Life Science Trends in Plant Biotechnology  
Ecology and coastal environment
- **Chemical Sciences** - Catalysis  
Chemistry and Materials  
Methods of Chemical analysis
- **Physical Sciences** - Physics  
Photonics
- **Earth Sciences** - Earth Sciences
- **Social Sciences** - Library and Information Science  
Research Methods in Social Sciences
- **Interdisciplinary** - Electronic research tools  
Nanoscience and Nanotechnology  
Research funding and Proposal writing
- **Open Access Resources** : In the light of the open access movement gaining ground globally, it was felt that open sources of journals, directories, tutorials, powerpoint presentations, Conference proceedings etc provide a rich supplement to research.

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### **4.3 Other Resource Links**

Links to important fund granting organizations, government bodies, institutions etc like the UGC, DBT, DST, CSIR which are time again required to be accessed to apply for projects etc. also serve as quick access points.

### **5. Methodology**

The data required to be uploaded on the portal is done periodically. Constant scrutiny, reviewing, evaluation of resources, removing dead links forms the back-end tasks.

Focus areas on specific themes are arrived at with several discussions with the respective faculty and scholars and also as a result of the queries received time and again to furnish details. Open sources, several institutions like universities who give access to resources are given links to.

Internet, indeed has been a major highway to cull out the required information after constant evaluation of the resources.

### **6. Librarian's Role**

Academic Librarians play a major role in evaluating and organizing the content created in the Campus portals in tune with their parent institutions. Right from planning to implementation, knowledge about copyright, expertise in creating customized web-based information delivery systems are several of the skills that they display. [4]

In tune with these skills the Library personnel of the Guindy Campus Library too have exercised keen interest in determining what is valuable with more scholarly focus to support the academic programs offered by the Campus.

### **7. Future Plans**

The Library intends to build up an Institutional Repository (IR) of the research output of the Campus of Journal articles, Research Reports, Conference Proceedings Lecture material and also the Theses or Dissertations. Being a institution of higher education the need for an IR is deemed essential. The Library personnel have undergone training with the required software to establish an IR and progress in this direction would enhance the visibility and use of the institutional research output.

### **8. Conclusion**

The Guindy Campus Library portal was an initial attempt to customize the existing resources like the library catalog, commercial full text databases, electronic journals, Subject Gateways etc accessible in the intranet. More resources tailored to the user requirements would be added as and when possible. Next move would be to integrate all the four Campuses of the University of Madras for a cooperative effort to share their respective areas of strength. This would enrich the level of content in the institutional portal environment. Library portal would translate to Scholarly portals leading users to discover the depth of information at their fingertips.

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### About Author



**Dr. R. Samyuktha** designed as Deputy Librarian, University of Madras, presently heads the Science Campus (Guindy Campus) of the University. With a basic graduation in Nutrition and Dietetics, has a post graduation in Public Administration and a doctorate in Information Science. Work experience of nearly twenty five years has enabled roles of organizing and participating in several Workshops, Seminars, Conferences, Training and Orientation programmes. Member in several Expert Committees, Professional bodies, Co-ordinator of the UGC INFONET consortia for University of Madras and proactive in facilitating library services to the research community.

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