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# **Componential Study of LIS Websites and Blogs as Tools for Communication**

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## **Abstract**

Library and Information Science professionals are using technology indigenously to their benefit. Websites and blogs serve their purpose of communicating with their users and bringing to the fore the diverse resources, services and requisite information which is of immense utility to the users as utmost care is taken to create a well designed, organized and structured portal. This study is taken up to investigate the features included in LIS websites and blogs which guides and helps our fraternity to develop a state of the art site.

**Keywords:** LIS Websites, Blogs, Communication tools, Library services, E-resources

## **Introduction**

Libraries and LIS professionals have made their presence felt in the virtual world of late. The users are more tech-savvy, they look up for information first on the web. It is a different matter all together that all the information they want is not on the web. Librarians strive their best to sort, sieve, review, acquire and organize resources according to the information needs of the users. Resources both print and electronic are purchased by the libraries, some subscribe to databases and consortia. Some open source resources are also available on the web. All the information that is acquired, in which ever form it is should be brought to the notice of all the stake holders. Users should know about the collection details; resources and services available, instruction classes, other library activities and extension activities, etc. A notice board of the library does not serve the purpose, as it cannot encompass all the information the libraries want to convey and share with their users. And to communicate all the information through notice board, it entails that the users should visit the library physically and keep a tab on the notice board or notice register. To avoid the physical barrier as such, library web sites and blogs are good answers nowadays for libraries to keep up with the changing times and make their presence felt in the electronic environment and be vocal about their resources, services, activities and current updates in the field.

LIS web sites and blogs are to be created keeping their vision, mission in view. A lot of planning goes into their creation by the library professionals. Many things are to be conveyed to the users in simple language and easy to use navigation tools. A lot many things are also to be avoided which make web sites or blogs a cluttered place or just a glossy thing. A library web site and blog is a tangible form of showcasing the library on the web as well as communicating with the users. Related information is also provided to the users by giving external links and redirecting the user to the concerned website.

### **Create a Website or to Blog?**

A website is static in nature where contents are not updated that frequently and it is organized in pages but the chronological order of page creation is not shown in the website content uploading.

A blog is a type of website in which the contents appear chronologically i.e. the recent posts appear first. Blogs are mainly authored by individuals or by a small group of people. Blogs also have a comments section in which users can respond to it. Blogs have evolved from personal pages and diaries on the web. Blogs are dynamic in nature as they are updated more frequently and new content is added which shows in a chronological order (new content appears first). Blog updates are also known as blog posts.

All blogs can be a type of website or a part of website but all websites cannot be called blogs. Sometimes a blog is created as part of a website to have interaction with the users or as a form of marketing strategy.

### **Review of Research and Development in the Subject**

Diaz, Karen (1998) has done extensive study on the subject of library websites. She says that for good or for bad, libraries make their presence felt by creating web sites to keep pace with the rest of the world. She says that after a decision has been made to create a web site, the question pops up next of what to include in it. The organization's requirements and complexities are kept in mind while planning is done for a site as it plays a variety of roles. She says that a library web site plays the role of a workstation and it allows the users to know electronically all that the library has to offer. It helps the reference librarian to help find information for the users.

It is a tool that helps the user to find if a particular book is available and if yes where it could be found. She also says that it is a better tool that allows the librarian to hear from the users through interactive forms, chat rooms and e-mail links.

Nooshinfard and Ziaei (2011) stated in their paper that Information and Communication Technology incorporated in Library and Information Science provide better services of which web site is part of it. The resources provided by the library are needed and used by the students. They also say that the libraries should ensure that users are able to find resources easily and use them to the optimum. If they are unable to locate the information and use them to the fullest, then it is as if the library has wasted funds and that leaves the students discontented.

Stover, Mark (1997) opined that library website provides basic information about the library through OPAC and databases, internal navigational tool, online reference service, external link to other sites and timely updates. He says that online catalogue searchable on the web is most important and preferred by the user as it provides a consistent and standardized interface for the user as it is more easy to use, does not need any support for using it and is more flexible to retrieve data.

Khan, Khaisar M and Beenamole, T (2012) in their paper reiterated that the nature and quality of a college library website is expected to reflect the quality of its parent institution, inputs from the faculty and feedback from users. There are set standards and guidelines to maintain the quality of websites which vary from college to college. The user needs and expectation for e-resources also vary.

Dhamdhere, Sangeeta N (2012) in her paper said that library website may be the library's own domain or it may occupy a place within the college's website. Initially the college websites were maintained by other agencies but as there is a constant need for updating the website and also the content size may be more, so now the websites are maintained by the librarians. To some users the library website is as good as the library itself as it provides collection details through OPAC and search options. The library website is part of the public image; therefore it is like a mirror of the library which shows its collection, services, facilities, communication media and other information. The users of the library expect value in terms of performance, reliability,

durability, quality, appealing appearance and wide variety of features and options that enhance access to library resources and increase its availability and accessibility. <sup>(5)</sup>

Haumin, Lun and Margam Madhusudhan concluded in their paper that blogs indeed are a boon for students and professionals. Getting appropriate information in need is something which is not easy in this digital age. LIS blogs serve their function by providing all predetermined information by keeping in place all the right information and update the users in related fields. By providing relevant content, features and services the LIS blogs keep their users abreast of knowledge and are a very good medium of communication.

Bansode, S. Y and Pujar, S. M. have studied blogs as online tools for library services and said that they are welcome and easy to use as they can expose thought, aim and vision of the library. It adds value to the services provided and shows their existence to the world. User base increases, visibility of services increases and inputs for organizational development too increases. Effective marketing is possible through blogs and it is a most economical and creative way. Sharing of resources becomes easy as users can use them without coming to the library.

### **Significance of the Study**

The investigator wishes to study the preparedness of library professionals in the face of technological onslaught, are they armed with the requisite knowledge and keep themselves updated with the current subject developments and are LIS websites or blogs an appropriate means to communicate the information which is intended for the users on the web because the web is the first platform which is sought by them today if they need to know or acquire information on any topic and to what extent are they able to make any impact on the users.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study if the LIS websites and blogs are maintained by librarians or other personnel.
2. To study if the selected websites and blogs are an independent entity or part of a parent set-up.
3. To study the components of the selected websites and blogs in detail to see as to what they are communicating to their users.

4. To see if the selected sites are interactive with the users or are a one way communication tool.
5. To see if they are updated frequently or not.
6. To study if they are an effective tools of communication with the users or not.

### **Sample of the Study**

The websites of IIT Delhi Central Library and IIM Ahmedabad Vikram Sarabhai Library and blogs of Library Soup and LIS Café have been selected for the present study. Their web address is given in the table below -

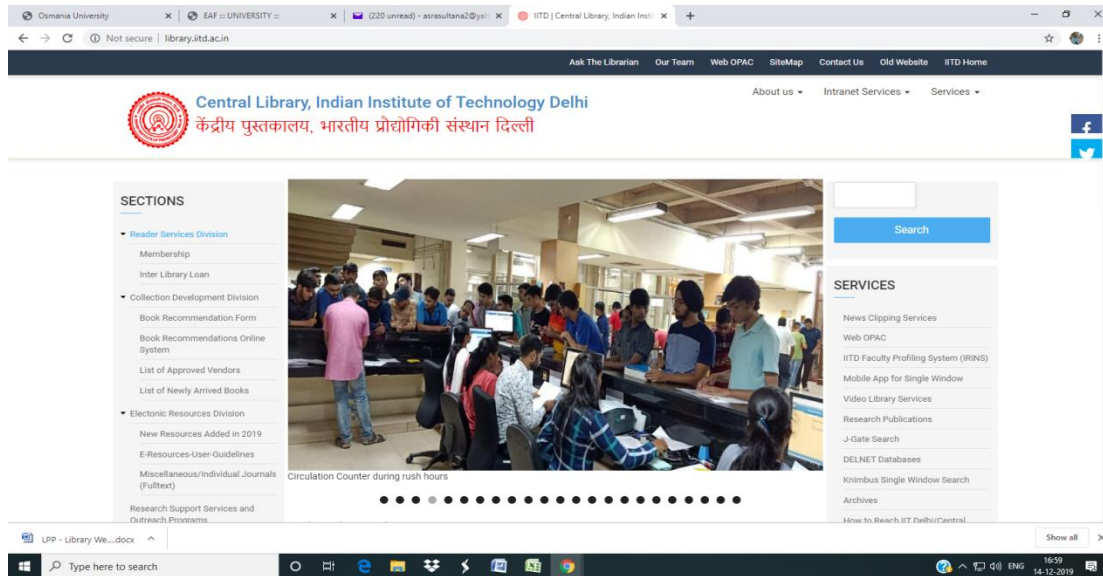
<b>S. No</b>	<b>Name of the site/blog</b>	<b>Address</b>
1	IIT Delhi Central Library	<a href="http://library.iitd.ac.in/">http://library.iitd.ac.in/</a>
2	IIM Ahmedabad Vikram Sarabhai Library	<a href="https://library.iima.ac.in/">https://library.iima.ac.in/</a>
3	Library Soup	<a href="http://library-soup.blogspot.com/">http://library-soup.blogspot.com/</a>
4	LIS Café	<a href="https://libraryandinformationsciencecafe.blogspot.com/p/home_6.html">https://libraryandinformationsciencecafe.blogspot.com/p/home_6.html</a>

### **Results and Discussion**

The selected website and blog of the sample have been scrutinized and analyzed in detail by the researcher and the components included in them are listed here which gives an insight into what goes into their creation, the features included in them, what they convey to the users and the virtual image they create.

#### **1. IIT Delhi Library Website**

The website of IIT Delhi Central Library includes the following components under the heads – Sections, Services, Downloads, Tools, E Resource, Search, Single Window Search, Standards and Academic Writing Tools.



i. Sections include the following which gives detailed information to the users on the membership rules, entitlement, circulation terms and conditions and the assistance provided to the users -

- Reader Services Division
- Membership
- Inter Library Loan
- Collection Development Division
- Book Recommendation Form
- Book Recommendations Online System
- List of Approved Vendors
- List of Newly Arrived Books gives month wise break up
- Electronic Resources Division lists out and gives links to the electronic holdings of the library
- New Resources Added in 2019- Full-text Resources list is provided
- E-Resources-User-Guidelines lists out fair use policy
- Miscellaneous/Individual Journals (Fulltext) list provided
- Research Support Services and Outreach Programs
- Text Book, Book Bank and Theses
- Humanities and Social Sciences (HUSS)
- Hindi Collection
- Store and Purchase

ii. Downloads

- Bank Exchange Rate
- Book Recommendation Form
- Corporate Membership

- Library Handbook
- Previous IITD Question Papers
- Image Gallery

**iii. Tools**

- Sitemap

**iv. Single Window Search**

It is an interface for one stop solution which provides search facility for students query, Faculty Publications, usage policy for e-resources, IITD Faculty Profiling System (IRINS) and Library Mobile App for Single Window Search on Google Play is provided

**v. Services**

- News Clipping Services - The Central Library has been compiling News Clips related to Higher Education/IITs/Academic matters from various e-sources/Google alert, etc. Month wise and Year wise links are given
- Web OPAC – LIBSYS link to WEBOPAC is given
- IITD Faculty Profiling System (IRINS) – link to IRINS homepage is given
- Mobile App for Single Window service on Googleplay is given
- Video Library Services - classroom video lectures are video recorded and an archive is maintained. Other lectures under NPTEL are also a part of the collection.
- Research Publications -Yearwise Publications of IIT Delhi Covered in Scopus and Web of Science Citation Databases are listed
- J-Gate Search
- DELNET Databases
- Knimbus Single Window Search
- Archives lists out all old circulars and notices
- How to Reach IIT Delhi/Central Library/Seminar Hall – directions to reach by train, metro, by road and parking facilities are listed here

**vi. E-Resources**

- Bibliographic Databases
- Fulltext Resources (Packages) – list is provided
- Standards
- A to Z List of E-Journals
- E-Journals Backfiles
- Journals Department/Centres Wise
- E-Books@Library
- Browse E-TextBooks



- Journals in Print
- ePrint&etd@IITD – redirected to eprints homepage of IR of IIT Delhi for ETDs and faculty publications

**vii. Academic Writing Tools**

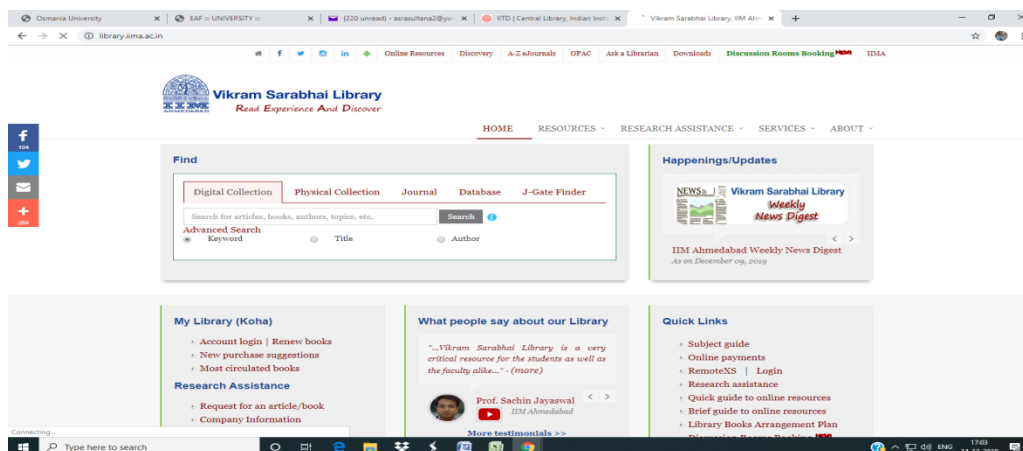
- Grammarly@Edu Software/Tool
- Grammarly Registration
- Turnitin

**viii. Standards**

- ASTM
- BIS
- IEC

**2. IIM Ahmedabad Library Website**

The website of IIM Ahmedabad Vikram Sarabhai Library includes the following components under different heads in boxes which are at equidistance to each other.



**i. In Home page a Find box appears which include the following features**

- Digital Collections
- Physical Collection
- Journal
- Database
- J-Gate Finder
- Search (for articles, books, authors, topics, etc prompt is shown)

- Advanced Search for keywords, title, author
- ii.** Happening/updates – for new arrivals
- iii.** User account – My Library of Koha and Research Assistance
- iv.** Feedback box – What people say about our library
- v.** Quick Links includes the following
  - Subject guide
  - Online payments
  - RemoteXS | Login
  - Research assistance
  - Quick guide to online resources
  - Brief guide to online resources
  - Library Books Arrangement Plan
  - Discussion Rooms Booking
- vi.** Ask a Librarian
- vii.** Faculty Research Papers
- viii.** Faculty Publications (Books)
- ix.** Library at a Glance box – Library statistics are provided
- x.** IMA in Media
- xi.** Facebook @VSL
- xii.** Twitter @VSL
- xiii.** Useful Links – includes
  - IIM Libraries Consortium,
  - Remotexs facility
  - Research Assistance
  - ILL
  - NICMAN
- xiv.** Contact details and assistance
- xv.** Offline Databases
  - Bloomberg
  - Datastream
  - Thomson Reuters Eikon
  - ProwessIQ

**xvi. Datasets**

- ASI – Unit level data
- NSE – CM & FAO
- NSS Data

**xvii. Popular Databases**

- EMIS Intelligence
- CRISIL Research
- FT.com
- CMIE-Prowess dx
- EBSCO – Business Source Complete
- Euromonitor Passport
- Bloomberg

**xviii. Resources**

- Online Resources
- Print Resources
- IR
- NDL
- Others

**xix. Research Assistance**

- At a glance
- Request for Article/Book/Chapter
- Literature Search/Compilation of Bibliography
- Subject Guide

**xx. Services**

- For Faculty
- For Students
- For Staff
- For Others

**xxi. Others**

- Zotero

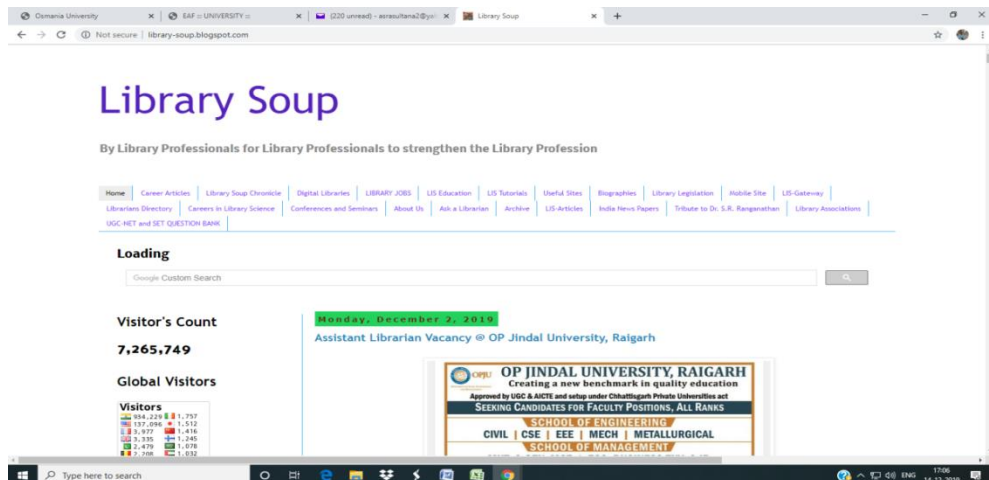
- Mendeley
- Grammarly
- Avoiding Plagiarism

Horizontal menu bar at the top includes the following features –

- About – introduction of the library, library committee, general rules, copyright, FAQs
- New Arrivals – Books, Journals, News and Videos
- Spaces – Photogallery, Special book display, Tinker Space and for visually challenged
- Discovery – external links to EBSCO and A-Z ejournals is provided
- OPAC – Koha Web OPAC opens
- Ask a Librarian
- Downloads – Books/Journals/Magazines/Newspapers, online databases, offline databases, membership forms, Installation Guides, 3D Printer Software, Manual and others
- IIMA

### 3. Library Soup Blog

Library Soup is a blog which deals in Database, Computer, IT, KM, Digital Library, Library Jobs, Recruitment, Seminar, Conferences, Workshop, UGC NET, Librarians and LIS and is maintained by Library Professionals for Library Professionals to strengthen the Library Profession



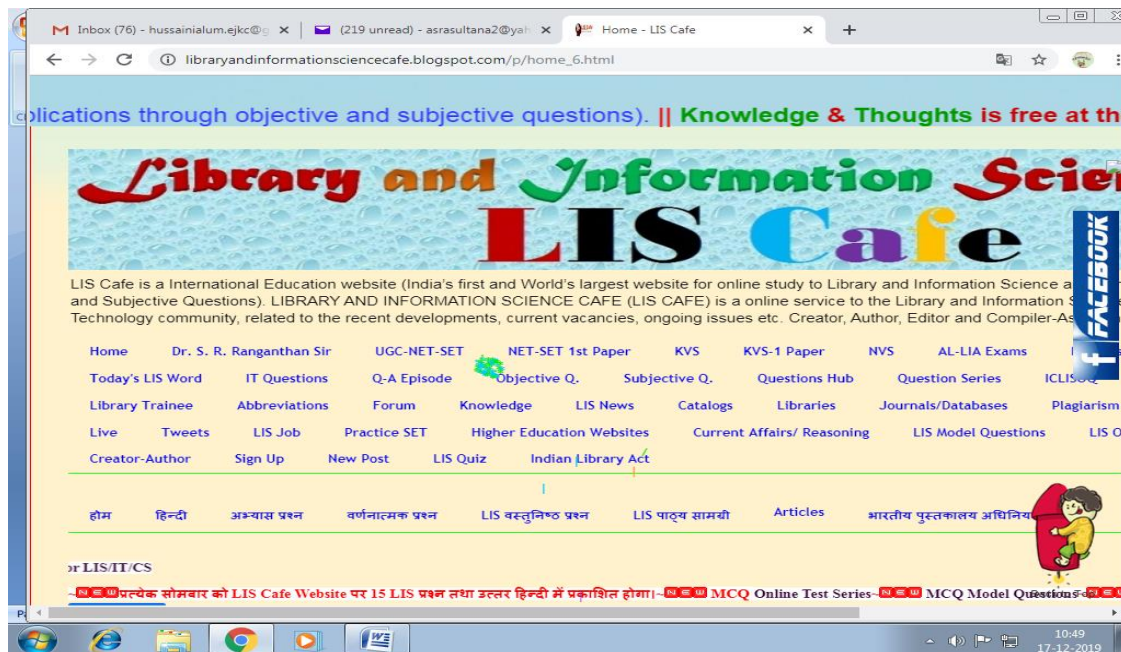
The horizontal menu bar at the top include the following components –

- Home Page
- Career Articles
- Library Soup Chronicle
- Digital Library
- Library Jobs
- LIS Education
- LIS Tutorials
- Useful sites
- Biographies
- Library Legislation
- Mobile Site
- LIS Gateway
- Librarians Directory
- Careers in Library Science
- Conferences and Seminars
- About Us
- Ask a Librarian
- Archive
- LIS Articles
- India Newspapers
- Tribute to Dr S R Ranganathan
- Library Associations
- UGC-NET and SET Question Bank
- Custom Search
- Job Vacancies
- Library Soup Android APP
- Upcoming Workshops
- Library Interns

- Project Associates notifications
- JRF Projects

#### 4. LIS Cafe Blog

It is an international educational blog for online study of library and information science and computer applications through subjective and objective it is an online service of LIS, computer science and information technology recent development, current vacancies and ongoing issues.



The components of the blog include -

- Home Page
- Dr S R Ranganathan
- UGC
- NET, SET
- KVS
- NVS
- AL-LIA exams
- EBooks
- SSB

- TSPSC
- Today's LIS world
- It questions
- QA episode
- Objective questions
- Subjective questions
- Questions hub
- Question series
- New trends
- Students corner
- Library trainee
- Abbreviations
- Forum
- Knowledge
- LIS news
- Catalogs
- Libraries
- Journals/database
- Plagiarism
- Koha software
- LIS jobs
- Practice SET
- Higher education websites
- Current affairs/ reasoning
- LIS model questions
- Online test series
- LIS quiz
- Indian library act
- Custom search/box

## **Data Analysis**

For the sake of homogeneity the analysis of the two library websites and LIS blogs is done separately. It has been seen from the above discussion that a few common services form the components of IIT Delhi and IIM Ahmedabad library websites like membership rules and services, new arrivals notification, ILL facility, research assistance, e-resources, databases and archive. A few features are unique to the IIT Delhi library website like book recommendation and book location service, single window search through Knimbus, vendors list, IRINS a research information management system, Mobile app, how to reach the library information and academic writing tools. The few features which are unique to the IIM Ahmedabad library website are Discussion Room booking, Remotexs, My library – Koha user account, facebook, twitter accounts of the library, Feedback box, Spaces in which there are discovery tools for the visually challenged, 3-d printer software, IMA in media, Library at a glance in which statistics are listed and NICMAN – a national information system on management and related disciplines.

The two LIS blogs contain a few common features like library jobs notifications, library legislation enacted in the country, career and other job issues, UGC NET/SET, LIS education news, Information Technology aspects, databases, useful sites for higher education, a page on the father of library science Dr. S R Ranganathan and custom search. A few features are unique to the Library Soup blog like project interns, digital libraries, mobile sites and app, android app. Seminars, conferences, workshops alerts, tutorials, biographies, LIS Gateways, Ask a Librarian, newspapers and details of various associations. The few features which are unique to the LIS Café blog are Koha software, e-books, abbreviations list, plagiarism service, question hub in which subjective and objective questions are included in LIS, quiz, current affairs and reasoning.

It is also noteworthy to say that library professionals themselves are maintaining the two library websites and blogs, they are all independent entities and not a part of any parent set-up, frequently updated and effective tools of communication. IIT Delhi and IIM Ahmedabad library websites are partially interactive through Single Window Search and Ask a Librarian service, where as the blogs true to their nature, are interactive with the users.



## Conclusion

The library websites of IIT Delhi and IIM Ahmedabad help the users in easily locating required information without wasting their time by providing a very distinct and easily managed digital portal by utilizing the services of cloud-based e-content management systems like Knimus and RemoteXs which are meant for academic institutions. The students and faculty are benefitted a lot as it helps in optimum utilization of e-resources like e-books, e-journals and e-content as they are brought together under one umbrella from anytime and anywhere basis, instead of being scattered here and there, and provide access to them easily, efficiently and quickly. The LIS blogs are also quite beneficial as they provide immense information on useful topics, job alerts and career news are covered and keep the targeted audience abreast of the recent developments and happenings in the field. Both the websites and blogs are well organized, eye-catching and communicate useful information to their intended users which is made possible by harnessing the available advanced technology to the utmost benefit of all the stake holders in the field.

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