

Usage of Computer Labs for Educational Institutes

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Abstract

Generally, Computers is a force which can significantly increase the efficiency of the any existing institution/ universities of the country. They have become an integral part of the educational teaching-learning methodology of the Institutes/ universities Faculty and students. We can also refer them under the ICT facilities for the students. Although originally in the Mid 80's of the century it is pertinent to note that it has been predicted as a medium to enhance the educational standards in general, now a day's it has been seen that use of computers set a path away from the routine/ regular intensive practices of teaching and it is relatively easy to analyses and makes conclusions on generated large datasets/ information/ and findings through various computer applications. When it comes to understand the chronicle of computer labs situated in Educational Campuses, we briefly lay across the functionality of these labs is to provide knowledge to the students by giving the full access to the computers in those labs for academic explorations. Even it is relevant to note that, today these computers in labs also have variety of other uses and purposes such as research to the incubation centers established under institutes to convert student's ideas into prospective business products. The real purpose behind writing this research paper is to analyses the students adaptation of Mode of lab usage for their academic functionality respectively at Mass communication

Institutes. It is also found in this research that, the Students from various Institutes also effectively and often use their own personal computers for various kind purposes which are not within the purview of computer labs objectives. This finding held across various institutes also considering the difference of objectives each institute and students have regarding the functionality and activities held in those respective labs.

Key words

Computer Lab, Media, Education

Introduction

It has been relevant to note that, in the accreditation and assessment procedure of NAAC of institutes gives most preference while giving Grading scores to their focus and planning of ICT facility usage while teaching-learning. It is even similarly found in the case of NIRF ranking. Even, Institutes in their prospectus includes this information. In the age of digitization of every aspect of the teaching learning methodologies, usage of these labs is also effective tool to offer the students firsthand experience of the use of latest technologies. In the field of mass communication there is huge leap happened in last decade where it has transform from drawing board to the design with use of software's, therefore it is not hard to explain the

importance of establishment and usage of labs while conducting any course in this sector.

The purpose of this paper is to understand why computer labs are so important for the Mass communication institutes and approach of this generation towards these technologies. Every authority or the leading people of the institutions always analyses their infrastructure with the current market trends and also effectively make note of it for their future purposes of expansion; so they can provide better availability to the students for better prospect in the real world.

When we think of computers in any institute, it is relevant to note that, primarily it is limited only for the administrative purposes for the maintaining the records and accounting calculations and for this it is enough to buy only few of them even considering their availability and cost in the market.

Through the following years, while observing their growing active participation in the teaching evolution of the Mass communication sector. Computers and the use of software's are highly looked as the effective Medium of learning when it comes to the employability in this sector.

In the last 20 years, it has been observed that, many UGC recognized universities and institutes has accepted the importance of ICT facility and eventually the role of computers in the teaching mode. So therefore, it is relevant to note that from the use for administrative purposes it has been gradually shifted towards the use for students teaching functionality.

At this point, due to expensiveness and rare availability this functionality in beginning is only available in the faculty rooms/ staff rooms and with the less quantity. So from these we can understand that, student was not

having frequent acquaintances with computers in those period. Eventually, to address this problem there is idea developed and designed to establish computer labs in the campus to provide access as well as availability to each students of the course without any time constraints.

It is relevant to note that, at that time there is another constraint where, computers in the labs were standalone and they did not have any sort of communications with each other, which also resulted into the repetitiveness and quality of the tasks. There is a first major breakthrough happened in America where they have connected all the computers in the lab with the use of coaxial cable and formed a networks [1]. Further they connected to campus file servers allowing students to store their work in central file repositories for security and to easily share data with others [1]. The computer labs were not only making academic work easier for individuals but also bettering academic collaboration among students[1]. It is pertinent to note that, when computers in these labs connected to the internet and have access to the World-Wide Web. This activity opened the Pandora box to the students with lodes of information flow from various parts of the world. Otherwise, it has been seen that, this sort of information is very hard to come by in normal form and vary rare possibility to get access to the students but web access made it easier.

It is relevant to note that, the facility of World-Wide Web has provided opportunity to the faculty to use progressive and more practical teaching mode with use of ICT facility and in the case of students they get access to the ample of information and resources at one stop. At the beginning of the internet era it is relevant to note that the commercial usage of the internet is very high and products information is the basic purposes of any website activities. But now when the inclusion of Email system and social media it has been seen that, usage of internet has been not

limited to the product information and it has been transferred to the more analytical and personal opinion sharing purpose. Social media platforms are primary mode of information exchange and create information networks amongst the fellow students. This study aims to showcase the graph of student computer usage for the academic as well as other purposes.

Research Methodology

It has been relevant to note that, the main purpose of this research analysis is to establish the intention and approach of students used the computer labs in the respective institutes. To accomplish this objective, a survey was crafted and developed to create poll on their daily functionalities.

It is relevant to note that, while doing this poll there was assistance required to accomplish the objective, initially we have approached the institute's computer lab assistants and through them we have tried to obtain the maximum number of students. These lab assistance/mangers used the online mode of survey as developed by us and they have circulated the manuals and instructions to understand the purpose and information to participate in this activity. Survey is the mode of information where users in this case student can have equal opportunity without any interference to share their opinion freely. In this respective survey, Questions were kept closely focused on the functionality and preference of students and some of the other information to help understand how students may vary across attempting to use of the computers. Further, Students need to furnish information which is in tabular format and it has defined their purpose of visit to the computers labs in the institutes. Also, it is pertinent to note that, this survey analyses the use of different software's and will it enhance their ability to understand the topics and course contents.

Analysis Result

When it comes to analyze the results of the survey, it is found that initial phase contains the information related to the student's attempts for the respective survey. It is relevant to note that, there is a fair section of range of students participating in this survey. It is pertinent to note that, half of quantity from the total students from the respective institutes.

Mass communication students [2] Table 1

Category	count	Average Visit
Alumni	307	30.5%
Junior	232	26.1%
Senior	213	43.4 %
Total	752	100%

From the Table No.1 it is seen that, lab visits of the students are very much varied amongst the total 752 students responses received by the survey. In the Table No. 1 it has been also seen that, average timing of the visit is around 43.3 minutes and students complete their tasks.

Purposes

Wee while creating developing this survey we have classified our purpose to categorize the students responses and it is significant to note that, the percentage of usage for academic purpose outnumbered every other mentioned purposes of students.

Mass communication students–purposes [2] Table 2

Category	count	Average Visit
Academic	532	60.5%
Personal	203	39.5%
Total	735	100%

Students approach and practical tasks

Respondents were asked to describe the type of each computer activity that they completed during their lab visit. The choices were web browsing, email, Social Networking sites using other software's in the operating systems, and using specialized software. Specialized software and emails was the most frequent type of task with web browsing and Office applications were also heavily used. Social Networking sites were lightly used.

Mass communication students–Type of tasks [2] Table 3

Category	count	Average %
Web Browsing	302	31.4%
Email	203	19.2%
Specialized Software's	532	40%
Social networking Sites	132	9.4%
Total	1169	100%

Relationship between Tasks and Purpose

Well here I have tried to establish the relationship between Tasks and task purpose, and while examining the same I have found that throughout the academic use has been dominated the chart.

. Over 50% of web, 70% of email, and approximate 97% of applications and specialized software tasks were Academic in nature.

Conclusion

It has been relevant to state that, Computer labs were created and developed to provide access to technology and which will result into enhancing the capacity towards the understanding the subject. Even it has been observed that, students because of the emergence of the social media use computers for their personal usage to share the information.

Mass communication students–Relationship [2] Table 4

Category	Web browsing		Email		Specialized Software		Social networking Sites	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Academic	445	63.9%	664	67.3%	155	96.4%	2	1.6%
Personal	147	36.1%	109	32.7%	24	3.6%	21	98.4%
Total	592	100%	773	100%	179	100%	23	100%

Here, it is significant to note that, students tend heavily towards lab use for academic purposes. This is surprising since the evolution of social networking sites, still studies indicates that, average rate of Internet usage in computer labs for personal use. Since, it has been observed that, and it is strongly related to socializing and not academics, therefore we can say that, student see computer labs as strictly related to academic endeavors and do not feel comfortable using them for these other purposes.

Additionally, this research paper has focused on how students are using the existing computer lab infrastructure why it is important. It is relevant to note that, these observations could serve as the platform / stage /baseline/ for the study of students utilizing labs in particular way.

Reference

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