Integrating the Library within the Moodle Learning Management System: a Case Study

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Abstract

Information and communication technology (ICT) has been the game changer for education sector during the last decade. Most of the higher education institutions have started leveraging ICT to facilitate teaching and learning through learning management system (LMS). Though library plays an important role in teaching and learning process whether it is face-to-face or online learning, nevertheless, it is rarely found the presence of library within the eLearning platform/LMS. This paper discusses how library resources can be best integrated into eLearning platform of Jaipuria Institute of Management Jaipur, thereby making it easier for both the instructors and students to search the library resources with ease.

1. Introduction

Information and communication technology (ICT) has been the game changer for education sector. Most of the higher education institutions have started leveraging ICT to facilitate teaching and learning through learning management system

(LMS). LMSs such as Moodle, Sakai, Blackboard, Desire2Learn and ATutor are widely used in higher education institutions around the world, let alone India; and it has become prime IT tool for organizing and facilitating course information for both faculty and students. Though library plays an important role in teaching and learning process whether it is face-to-face or online learning, nevertheless, it is rarely found the presence of library within the eLearning platform/LMS. That is to say, it is the high time for the integration of library resources and tools with LMS, thereby promoting the discovery and use of library resources. In order to address this issue, this paper discusses how library resources can be best integrated into e-learning platform of Jaipuria Institute of Management Jaipur, thereby making it easier for both the instructors and students to search the library resources with ease.

2. Background

Jaipuria Institute of Management located in Jaipur offers two years Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) with dual specialization in Marketing, Finance, HR, Operations and Strategy. In 2013-2014 academic sessions, the author initiated the designing and development of e-learning platform using open source software Moodle in Jaipuria Jaipur; and it has been implemented since then. Library of Jaipuria Jaipur had little presence within Moodle. So, it was felt and suggested to devise methods to enhance the library's involvement in Moodle: displaying of library resources in course pages where students may easily access and interact with information pertaining to the courses are being taught; and of course with librarians, who will guide the students in their academic endeavour.

3. Moodle Learning Management System: an Overview

Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment), developed by Martin Dougiamas, is one the most famous LMS around the world. In the academic arena, Moodle is the most sought media tool that is widely used across most universities to develop interactive educational environment. It was originally developed for Linux Operating System (OS), but now it is compatible with various Windows and Macs OSs. Moodle supports myriads of features, including quiz, assignment submission, survey, wikis, lesson, glossary, calendar, chat, discussion forum and many more.

4. Aims and objectives of the Study
- To explore the possibilities for library integration in e-learning platform/learning management system;
- To integrate the library tools i.e. catalogues, journal articles, subject guides, online database and other learning materials in LMS;
- To promote the use of library resources and
- To showcase the resources available in the library within courses

5. Integrating library in eLearning: the why

Learning Management Systems are changing the pedagogy. Now students are using eLearning platform for accessing their course materials i.e. syllabus, class notes, PPT and other learning materials. In the digital environment, the gap between eLearning platform and library has become widening; in order to bridge that gap integration of library with LMS is needed. Integration of library within the eLearning/LMS platform because (a) to promote the library resources that are relevant to individual courses, (b) to maximize the usages of database (EBSCOHOST, Emerald, Proquest, Science Direct etc.) and other resources procured by the library, and lastly (c) if the library is not integrated in the LMS, then it will prone to risk of marginalization.

6. Integrating library in eLearning: the how

Integration of library into learning management systems can be done in two different methods i.e. the macro method and the micro methods (Shank and Dewald, 2003).
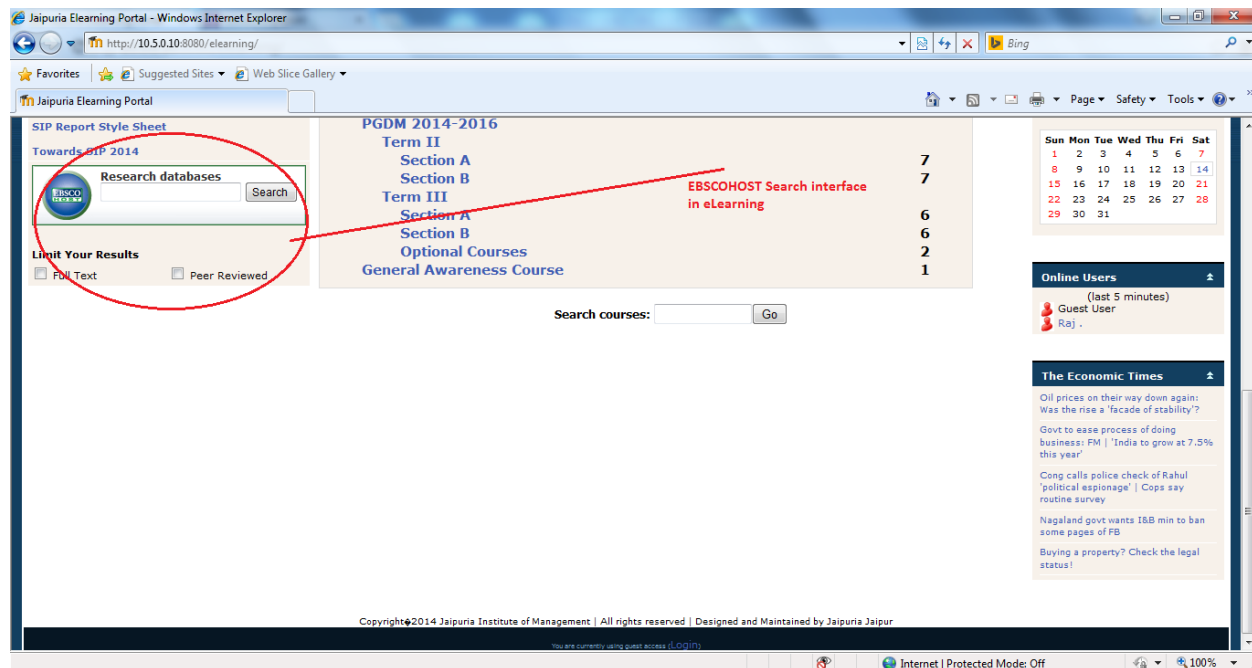
6.1 Macro methods of Integration

In the macro method, library resources are integrated into eLearning platform, which can made available in all course sites. The standard library resources include: library website, library catalogue, library account, link to databases, ILL, guide to write SIP and avoid plagiarism (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Macro Integration of Library into LMS

By integration it, library will promote its resources available in the library to its users. Consequently, it will maximize the utilization of the resources. Search box of subscribed database can also be integrated into the platform for easy searching of the articles/eBooks in the database i.e. EBSCOHOST, Emeralds, ScienceDirect, ProQuest etc. (Figure 2). Search box of EBSCOHOST is integrated in the eLearning platform of Jaipuria Institute of Management (Figure 2). The macro

method of integration has dual benefits; it can be easily maintained and it can increase the visibility of the library resources.
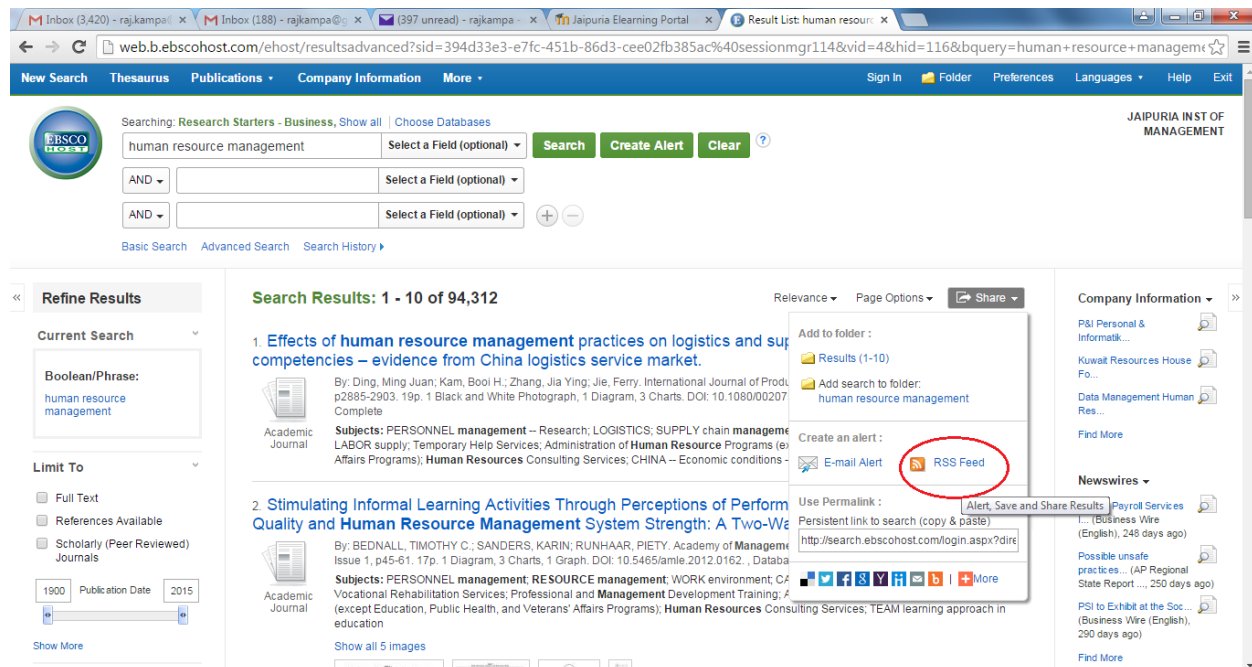

Figure 2: Search Interface in eLearning
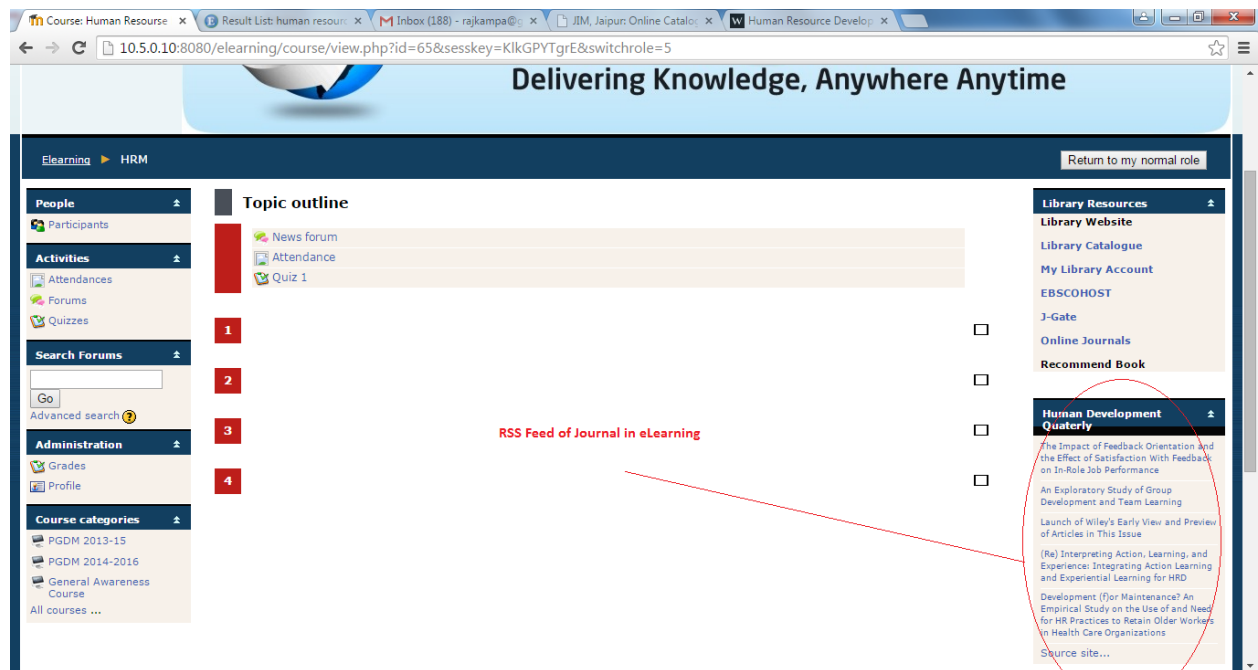
6.2 Micro Methods of Integration

The micro method is primarily concerned with courses and specific library resources are integrated with that course. With the course specific integration of library resources, the students are more likely to access the library resources extensively that are visible within the course. Here resources pertinent to the course are integrated. The micro method of integration of library resources includes course text books, course pack, old question paper, research guide; RSS feed of articles in database, research guide etc.

Adding Dynamic Content

Dynamic content of academic journal related to the course can be added in the eLearning platform using RSS feed (Figure 4). Besides, saved searches in database can also be added therein. To add the saved searches, locate the RSS feed of search that you like add. Click turned editing on in Moodle and add block module to add Remote RSS feed (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Adding Saved Searches

Figure 4: RSS Feed of Journal

Adding Articles of a Database

Many of the databases like EBSCOHOST, Emerald, ProQuest etc. have full text of articles that the instructor wants the students to read. The static link of URL of the article that database term it in different name like 'permalink', 'stable link', stable URL, 'persistent link' can be integrated in Moodle. To add article, click "link to file or website" and enter the permalink of the article in case of EBSCOHOST database.

7. Conclusion

Learning Management Systems are changing the process of teaching and learning. Now students are using LMS platform for accessing their course materials i.e. syllabus, class notes, PPT and other learning materials; and it is widely accepted in

the higher education institutions as a supplement to physical classroom. In this changing environment, it is imperative for the library to remain an active part in the learning management system/virtual learning environment/online learning that is taking place. The integration of library resources into the learning management system of Jaipuria Institute of Management, Jaipur is quite exciting and remarkable, thereby marking a subtle presence of library resources therein and the methods employed for the integration of library is a framework for delivering course specific information to students. Consequently, it offers an ample scope for library to reach out to most students.

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