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# Dialogic communication on universities in Ghana libraries' websites

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study aims to ascertain the contents of universities in Ghana libraries' websites and find the dialogic potential of the websites.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A qualitative content analysis technique was used. The sample includes the libraries' websites of universities in Ghana that have received presidential charter. A checklist was developed to assess the content of the websites. In assessing the dialogic potential of the websites, Kent and Taylors' framework was used.

**Findings** – Findings from the study show that Ghanaian universities libraries' websites are providing only static information about libraries and their services. The libraries' websites are deficient in providing vital information on newspapers, print journals, frequently asked questions and date of post. Again, findings of the study indicate that universities in Ghana libraries' websites have poor dialogic features.

**Originality/value** – There is no study investigating the dialogic potential of universities in Ghana libraries' websites.

**Keywords** Web sites, World Wide Web, Communication

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

The success of most organizations is relatively dependent on a positive public image, and this is especially so for public sector and not-for-profit organizations. Public sector institutions, such as libraries, have recognized the need for mutual and positive relations with different groups, who have an interest in the libraries in order to enjoy their financial and emotional support that contributes to the growth and success of the organization (Marshall, 2001). Just like with any other organization, libraries need to establish and maintain effective communication channels with their publics constantly, to communicate their relevance to them (Alansari, 2013). The relevance of public relations (PR) has been recognized by business organizations for a long time, but, for libraries, it appears they have been slow to embrace the concept. This has been attributed to the reluctance of libraries to borrow ideas from the private sector to improve their service delivery (Lindsay, 2004). As suggested by Hazleton and Botan (1989), PR is about using communication to build lasting relationships. According to Kent and Taylor (1998), organizations can negotiate and build this lasting relationship by leveraging the content of their World Wide Web (WWW) sites.



Websites have become one of the academic library's most visible artefacts for communicating with users, just as the library home page has become the starting point for most users to conduct research and explore the resources available (Osorio, 2001). A stream of research (Kent and Taylor, 1998; Kent *et al.*, 2008; Taylor *et al.*, 2001) investigating organizations' use of dialogic principles in online communication has become an area of great importance in PR literature. According to Pearson (1989, p. 177), for instance, "public relations, is best conceptualized as the management of interpersonal dialectic". However, it appears that organizations, especially libraries, do not seem to be fully utilizing the interactive potential of the Internet to build and maintain these relationships (McAllister-Spooner, 2009). This is problematic, especially in this era where the relevance of libraries seems to be in doubt. The need for libraries to constantly be in touch with their publics makes it expedient for libraries to use dialogic principles in building their websites. Studies investigating the dialogic potential of websites abound (Hinson *et al.*, 2012; 2013; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2013); however, little is known about the application of dialogic principles in the design of universities in Ghana libraries' websites. Therefore, relying on Kent and Taylor's (1998) dialogic communications framework, the researchers examine the content of Ghanaian universities libraries' websites and the dialogic potentials of these websites.

## Review of the literature

### *The WWW and libraries*

The adoption of the Internet by libraries' websites started in the 1990s (Qutab and Mahmmod, 2009). By 1993, most academic health science libraries had developed websites (Brower, 2004). Liu (2008, p. 6) described universities libraries' websites as libraries' "virtual presentation to the world; gateways to information that supports faculty and students' research and educational needs". Lee (2001) stated that the design of a library's website is a progressive activity. Different design and evaluation principles have evolved over the years (Chao, 2002; Kupersmith, 2003). Against this background, Qutab and Mahmmod (2009) advised that libraries' websites and website evaluation should be included in general Web management principles. Kumar *et al.* (2009) assessed the content of the Indian Institute of Management libraries' websites and found that all of them had structured information about the library and a site map. They concluded that library authority must identify experts in Web design and form a Web team to be responsible for managing the website to present the library to its clients through the WWW. In an examination of websites of 41 health sciences libraries with an emphasis on best practices for navigational design, Brower (2004) recommended that several important navigational elements for all health science library's home pages be included, such as bibliographical databases listed by title, e-books, electronic journals, hours of operation, instructions or tutorials, news and services. In a similar study to check the accessibility of e-resources from theological libraries' websites, Ganski (2008) found that half of the websites make e-resources available and also that they are easily accessible through a quick navigational pathway. In a content analysis of the libraries' websites of technical university libraries in North India, Vasisha (2013) found that only two libraries, namely, National Institute of Technology Hamirpur (NITH) and National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK), had provided information about back volumes of journals and standards available in the library. It is quite surprising to note that the websites of all the libraries had information about electronic resources, but only

four libraries out of seven have furnished information about journals in print form. [Konnur et al. \(2010\)](#) reported that universities libraries' websites in the city of Bangalore have not risen to expectations as virtual expressions of academic excellence.

#### *Dialogic communications theory of PR and the Web*

[Kent and Taylor \(1998, 2002\)](#) stated that the Internet presents an opportunity for organizations to develop true discourse between organizations and their publics, and that the terms "dialogue" and "dialogic" are becoming more prevalent in describing ethical and practical approaches to communication in academia and industry as PR theory and research move towards a two-way relational communication model. Dialogue refers to "any negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions" ([Kent and Taylor, 1998](#), p. 325) and represents efforts by parties in a relationship to engage in an honest, open and ethically based give-and-take relationship ([Hinson et al., 2012](#)). [Kent and Taylor \(1998\)](#) suggested that in dialogic communication, dialogue is "not a process or a series of steps", but rather "a product of ongoing communication and relationships". Maintaining dialogue is a crucial part of a successful relationship between an organization and its publics, including the news media. Dialogue can benefit organizations by increasing their credibility and public support, as well as enhancing their image ([Ledingham and Bruning, 2000](#)). [Kent and Taylor \(2002\)](#) outlined five features of dialogue:

- (1) mutuality, or the recognition of organization – public relationships;
- (2) propinquity, or the temporality and spontaneity of interactions with publics;
- (3) empathy, or the supportiveness and confirmation of public goals and interests;
- (4) risk, or the willingness to interact with individuals and publics on their own terms; and
- (5) finally, commitment, or the extent to which an organization gives itself over to the public.

[Kent and Taylor's](#) dialogic theory for measuring dialogic communication in websites has been applied to a variety of organizational types. For example, [Taylor et al. \(2001\)](#) studied how activist organizations use the Internet to build relationships, and they found that while most activist organizations met the technical and design aspects required for dialogic relationship building on the Web, they were not yet fully engaging their publics in two-way communication. Similarly, [McAllister-Spooner \(2009\)](#) found that in spite of recommendations of scholars to incorporate two-way dialogic channels, websites are very poorly using dialogic tools and that most organizational websites are effectively utilizing only an introductory level of relationship-building functions.

#### **Conceptual framework**

To serve as guidelines for the successful integration of dialogic communication in PR practice, [Kent and Taylor \(1998, 2002\)](#) offer five principles to facilitate dialogic relationships with publics through the Internet: usefulness, dialogic loop, ease of interface, return visits and conservation of visitors.

*Usefulness*

How useful the information is to the organization's publics is necessary for dialogic relationship-building (Kent and Taylor, 1998). Esrock and Leichty (1999) once argued that home pages or websites often target a variety of publics, thus attempting to provide useful information to each of their target audiences which often includes media, investors and customers. Organizations should provide content that is useful for the user and not just what the organization needs (Kent and Taylor, 1998). Features of this principle include:

- datedness of the site;
- a statement of philosophy or mission;
- library rules;
- information sharing on social media;
- the availability of frequently asked questions (FAQs); and
- links to leaders of the organization and how to contribute to the organization (Kent and Taylor, 2002; Kent *et al.*, 2003; Waters and Tindall, 2010; Hinson *et al.*, 2012).

The features that will be used to facilitate the analysis of this principle are:

- datedness of the site;
- FAQs;
- maps and directions;
- a mission statement;
- working hours;
- library rules; and
- a list of e-journals.

*Dialogic loop*

The term dialogic loop refers to how the site incorporates features that allow various publics to query organizations and, more importantly, how the site gives the organization the opportunity to respond to questions, concerns and problems (Hinson *et al.*, 2012). According to Kent and Taylor (1998), even if all the principles above have been met, it cannot be dialogic if it does not meet this principle which most encourages two-way communication (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2013). Features of this principle that will be used for analysis include:

- an e-mail/feedback form;
- contact information;
- creating a sense of community or interaction; and
- a suggestion link or box.

*Ease of interface*

Ease of interface advocates for websites that are quick to load, have well-organized information and have interfaces that allow easy navigation by various publics (Kent and Taylor, 1998). The conceptual pillar relating to the ease of interface indicates how easy it is for Web browsers to navigate a site. This dialogic principle is based on the premise

that users who visit a company's website should find it relatively easy to navigate the site and to access information easily. Such ease of interface is a requirement for dialogic relationship building. Websites are used to inform different types of audiences about the organizations' products and services and, therefore, must be easy for the browser to navigate (Knezevic *et al.*, 2011). The features that will be used to facilitate the analysis of this principle are: low reliance on graphics, links to external search gateways and library quick links.

#### *Return visits*

The principle of return visits advocates that websites should incorporate features that make them attractive for repeat visits, such as updated information, changing issues, special forums, new commentaries, online question and answer sessions and online experts to answer questions (Kent and Taylor, 1998). The website should incorporate features that make them attractive for repeat visits. The features that will be used to facilitate the analysis of this principle are: explicit invitations to return, news items and the presence of an online catalogue.

#### *Conservation of visitors*

Conservation of visitors refers to how the site keeps visitors on the site. Websites must not include features that make it easy for visitors to leave the site without making provision for return visits (Kent and Taylor, 1998). Organizations should create websites that keep visitors interested and surfing the site without going somewhere else. This principle has evolved into a measure of how timely the information is on a website (Kent and Taylor, 1998). Features of conservation of visitors for this study include: a photo gallery, easier navigation of the site and library information sharing on social media.

### **Methodology**

To assess the content of universities libraries' websites in Ghana, a qualitative content analysis was used. Qualitative content analysis has been extensively used by scholars (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Traynor *et al.*, 2008; Hinson *et al.*, 2013). This technique was chosen because of its flexibility in analysing text data (Cavanagh, 1997). Based on the extant literature (Clausen, 1999; Catherine, 2001; Vasisha, 2013; Kumar *et al.*, 2009), a checklist was developed to ascertain the content of universities libraries' websites in Ghana. Similar features (concepts) regarding the content on the Ghanaian universities libraries' websites were grouped under sub-headings:

- general information;
- library collection;
- library services;
- non-book materials;
- e-resources; and
- link, search and retrieval interface.

Kent and Taylor's (1998) dialogic framework was adapted to fit within library and information services to assess how well they incorporate dialogic principles of PR. The variables used include:

- usefulness of the site;
- dialogic loop;
- ease of interface;
- return visits; and
- the conservation of visitors, already illustrated above in the Conceptual Framework section.

The study involves the libraries' websites of all the universities that have received a presidential charter. A visit to these universities' websites indicated that only six of them had a library website. Consequently, the final sample used in this study is six universities libraries' websites in Ghana (Table I).

### Presentation of findings

#### *General information available on the websites*

Table II shows the general information available on the Ghanaian universities libraries' websites. All the websites have information about the library, with University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and University of Cape Coast (UCC) providing a welcome note. All the libraries' websites, with the exception of UCC and University of Education, Winneba (UEW), provided information about the staff. The only libraries' websites that provided information about the rules governing the library are UG and UCC, whereas UCC and University of Mines and Technology (UMAT) are the only libraries' websites that provide a mission statement for the library. In the case of UG, UCC and UEW, information about working hours and the various departments in the library is available; however, only UMAT provided a hit counter facility. Information about membership is provided by UG, UCC and UMAT. Information of the various searchlight libraries is provided by KNUST, UEW and University of Development Studies (UDS). It is also apparent that none of the libraries' websites provides a date of update, floor maps or library committees.

Table III shows the library collection on the Ghanaian universities libraries' websites. It is evident that all the libraries' websites provide information on e-journals; however, only UG and KNUST provide information about books. None of the libraries' websites had information on print journals, newspapers or annual reports. Information about students' theses is provided by KNUST, UCC and UEW. KNUST and UCC happened to be the only libraries' websites that provide information on conference

University	Library website URL
University of Ghana (UG)	<a href="http://library.ug.edu.gh/screens/balme/index.html">http://library.ug.edu.gh/screens/balme/index.html</a>
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)	<a href="http://archive.knust.edu.gh/pages/sections.php?siteid=library&amp;mid=65&amp;sid=248">http://archive.knust.edu.gh/pages/sections.php?siteid=library&amp;mid=65&amp;sid=248</a>
University of Cape Coast (UCC)	<a href="http://ucc.edu.gh/library/">http://ucc.edu.gh/library/</a>
University of Education, Winneba (UEW)	<a href="http://www.uew.edu.gh/library">www.uew.edu.gh/library</a>
University of Development Studies (UDS)	<a href="http://old.uds.edu.gh/library.php">http://old.uds.edu.gh/library.php</a>
University of Mines and Technology (UMAT)	<a href="http://library.umat.edu.gh/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=section&amp;layout=blog&amp;id=7&amp;Itemid=58">http://library.umat.edu.gh/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=section&amp;layout=blog&amp;id=7&amp;Itemid=58</a>

**Table I.**  
List of universities  
and their library's  
website



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**Table II.**  
General information  
available on the  
websites

General information	UG	KNUST	UCC	UEW	UDS	UMAT
Welcome note	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
About the library	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mission statement	×	×	✓	×	×	✓
Working hours	✓	×	✓	✓	×	×
Membership	✓	×	✓	×	×	✓
Library rules	✓	×	✓	×	×	×
Copyright	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
Library committees	×	×	×	×	×	×
Library staff	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓
Site map/floor maps	×	×	×	×	×	×
Departments	✓	✓	×	✓	×	×
Searchlight libraries	×	✓	×	✓	✓	×
Hit counter	×	×	×	×	×	✓
Date of update	×	×	×	×	×	×
Graphics	2	2	2	×	2	2
Background colour	3	2	2	1	1	3
Information organization	3	3	2	2	1	3

**Notes:** Present = ✓; absent = ×; good = 1; better = 2; best = 3

**Table III.**  
Information about  
the library collection

Library collection	UG	KNUST	UCC	UEW	UDS	UMAT
Books	✓	✓	×	×	×	×
Journals (print)	×	×	×	×	×	×
E-journals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Theses	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×
Newspapers	×	×	×	×	×	×
Conference proceedings	×	✓	✓	×	×	×
Annual reports	×	×	×	×	×	×
Government publications	×	✓	×	×	×	×

**Notes:** Present = ✓; absent = ×

proceedings. It is also conspicuous that KNUST is the only library's website that had information on government publications (Table IV).

All the libraries' websites examined provided information on non-book materials and e-resources (Table V). However, none of the libraries' websites had information about e-books. The UG library's website was the only site that provided information on CD-ROM databases. In the case of UG, KNUST, UCC and UEW, information on institutional repositories is given.

Table VI clearly indicates the links, search and retrieval interface facilities available on the Ghanaian universities libraries' websites. Results show that almost all of the libraries' websites, with the exception of the KNUST library, provide contacts. The UG library's website is the only site that has a suggestion box, user education and links to an external search gateway, social media and library quick links. The UDS and UMAT



Dialogic  
communication

Library services	UG	KNUST	UCC	UEW	UDS	UMAT
CD services	✓	×	×	✓	×	×
OPAC	✓	×	✓	×	×	×
Translation services	×	×	×	×	×	×
Video views	×	×	×	×	×	×
Inter-library loans	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
Database access	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E-mail queries	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓
SMS queries	×	×	×	×	×	×
Circulation services	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
Reference services	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×
Reprographic services	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Disabilities services	✓	×	✓	×	×	×

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**Table IV.**  
Information about  
library services

**Notes:** Present = ✓; absent = ×; OPAC = online public access catalogue

E-Resources	UG	KNUST	UCC	UEW	UDS	UMAT
E-books	×	×	×	×	×	×
E-journals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
List of e-journals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CD-ROM databases	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Non-book materials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Institutional repositories	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×

**Table V.**  
Information on non-  
book materials and  
e-resources

**Notes:** Present = ✓; absent = ×

Dimensions	UG	KNUST	UCC	UEW	UDS	UMAT
News	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×
Suggestion box	✓	×	×	×	×	×
FAQs	×	×	×	×	×	✓
Images (pictures)	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
Contacts	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
User education, instruction, help	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Links to external search gateways	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Links to social media	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Library quick links	✓	×	×	×	×	×

**Table VI.**  
Links, search and  
retrieval interfaces

**Notes:** Present = ✓; absent = ×

libraries' websites are the only two which do not have news items. The UMAT library's website is the only site which has FAQs.

**Incidence of dialogic variables on Ghanaian universities libraries' websites**

In this section, we assess the dialogic potential of the websites (Table VII).

*Usefulness of the site*

Results emanating from the content analysis of Ghanaian universities libraries' websites indicate that the sites do not adequately provide useful information to visitors, with the exception of UCC. UCC scored four out of the seven items used to measure the usefulness of the site to visitors. Even though UG and UMAT scored three out of the seven variables, the websites of KNUST and UDS libraries both scored as low as one out of seven variables. None of the libraries' websites showed datedness, maps or directions. All the websites, however, have provided a list of e-journals. Only the UMAT library's website provided information on FAQs. Only UCC and UMAT display their mission statement. KNUST, UDS and UMAT did not display their working hours. All of the websites, except for UG and UCC, did not display the library's rules. This is an

Dialogic principles	UG	KNUST	UCC	UEW	UDS	UMAT
<i>Usefulness of the site (7)</i>	3	1	4	2	1	3
Datedness of the site	×	×	×	×	×	×
FAQs	×	×	×	×	×	✓
Maps and directions	×	×	×	×	×	×
Mission statement	×	×	✓	×	×	✓
Working hours	✓	×	✓	✓	×	×
Library rules	✓	×	✓	×	×	×
List of e-journals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Dialogic loop (4)</i>	4	1	3	2	1	2
E-mail queries	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓
Contacts	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suggestion links (box)	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Site creates sense of interaction (welcome note)	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
<i>Ease of interface (3)</i>	3	1	1	1	1	1
Links to external search gateways	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Low reliance on graphics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Library quick links	✓	×	×	×	×	×
<i>Return visits (3)</i>	2	1	2	1	0	0
Explicit invitation to return	×	×	×	×	×	×
Online catalogue	✓	×	✓	×	×	×
News items	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×
<i>Conservation of visitors (3)</i>	3	2	2	1	1	1
Images (pictures)	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
Easier navigation of site	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×
Library information sharing on social media	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Total score	15	6	12	7	4	7

**Table VII.** Dialogic potential of the websites

**Notes:** ✓ Means variable is present; × means variable is absent

attestation of the inadequate usage of the usefulness dimension by Ghanaian universities libraries' websites.

#### *Dialogic loop*

On the principle of dialogic loop, only UG and UCC libraries' websites have scored high marks, indicating a high level of interactivity. UG and UCC scored four and three, respectively, out of the four variables. KNUST and UDS showed poor interactivity, with scores of only one out of four. The UG, KNUST and UCC websites create a sense of interaction with a welcome note. Only the UG library's website provides a platform for suggestions.

#### *Ease of interface*

The assessment of the libraries' websites shows that, with the exception of UG library's website which scored all the variables, the rest depicted relatively low ease of use, each only scoring one. On this principle, the analysis indicated that none of the libraries' websites relies heavily on the usage of graphics. However, only UG has quick links to surfing the library's website and to external search engines and resources (Google and Google Books).

#### *Return visits*

None of the libraries' websites had an explicit invitation to visitors to return to the site. However, both UG and UCC had an OPAC which can draw visitors/clients back to the site. All the libraries' websites, with the exception of UDS and UMAT, paste news items on their sites which can also draw clients back to the site.

#### *Conservation of visitors*

Conservation of visitors refers to how the site keeps hold of visitors and makes them want to return to the site. Only UEW had pictures to attract or make visitors stick to the site. Frequent visits to the sampled libraries' websites show that is not easy to surf the libraries' websites for either UDS or UMAT. Out of the sampled libraries' websites, only UG provided visitors the opportunity to share information on a social media platform (Twitter and Facebook).

#### *Summary of dialogic performance*

The overall dialogic principle performance of the universities libraries' websites in Ghana was obtained by adding up the individual principle marks for each university library's website into the overall total dialogic score. The study generated a total of 20 dialogic variables assessed for the overall dialogic performance with the results shown in Table VIII. The analysis shows that the UG library's website had the most dialogic principles, with a total score of 15 out of the aggregate score of 20. The UCC library's website proved to be the next highest score, with a total of 12 out of the 20. The UEW library's website and the UMAT library's website were the next, scoring seven each. The KNUST library's website and UDS library's website scored six and four, respectively, out of a possible total of 20.

### **Discussion of findings and conclusions**

Findings of the study indicate that Ghana university libraries' websites have poor dialogic features. None of the universities libraries' websites displayed datedness of the

site or directions. In line with [Kent and Taylor's \(1998\)](#) assertion that organizations should provide content that is useful for the user and not just to meet the organization's needs, only two libraries' websites (UG and UCC) provided information on library rules and only three provided information on their working hours (UG, UCC and UEW).

Regarding the dialogic loop principle, the study indicates an average use of these features by the sampled university websites. Although only UG had a suggestion link (box), almost all the Ghanaian universities libraries' websites, with the exception of the KNUST, expressed the two-way communication requirement of a dialogic loop as posited by [Kent and Taylor \(1998\)](#) in their research. All the libraries' websites, except for KNUST, displayed contact and e-mail queries. This is an attestation that Ghanaian universities libraries' websites are somewhat interactive.

This study found that UG is the only library's website that offered a degree of friendliness and ease of use, with features ranging from links to external search, low reliance on graphics and library quick links which make it easier for visitors to surf around the website. It can then be said that, with the exception of UG, none of the others (KNUST, UCC, UEW, UDS and UMAT) provides an easy-to-use means of navigating the site as advised by [Knezevic et al. \(2011\)](#) in their publication, "Web as a customer communication channel in the confectionery industry in South Eastern European countries".

An assessment of the sampled libraries' websites revealed poor dialogic features on the principle of return visits; none of the libraries' websites had an explicit invitation for visitors to return to the website. Only two libraries' websites (UG and UCC) had an online catalogue that could draw visitors/clients back to the site. However, only two libraries' websites (UDS and UMAT) did not have news to encourage clients to make a return visit. Conservation of visit also received a below-average amount of dialogue on the sampled libraries' websites, although three (UG, KNUST and UCC) of the six websites scored almost all the variables. The UG is the only library's website that had a social media platform that could keep visitors/clients on the site. In contrast with that, three libraries' websites – UEW, UDS and UMAT – scored only one of the three variables.

It is concluded from the findings that most of the Ghanaian universities libraries' websites are providing only static information about libraries and their services. The study confirmed [McAllister-Spooner's \(2009\)](#) findings that most websites poorly used dialogic tools. All the libraries' websites, but UG and UCC, scored below 10 of the 20 variables. This is a clear indication of how poor Ghanaian universities libraries' websites used dialogic values. It is palpable from the content and dialogic features analysis that the Ghanaian universities libraries' websites are deficient as far as

**Table VIII.**  
Aggregate dialogic  
incidence of  
Ghanaian  
universities libraries'  
websites

Institution	Usefulness of site	Dialogic loop	Ease of interface	Return visits	Conservation of visitors	Total score (20)
UG	3	4	3	2	3	15
KNUST	1	1	1	1	2	6
UCC	4	3	1	2	2	12
UEW	2	2	1	1	1	7
UDS	1	1	1	0	1	4
UMAT	3	2	1	0	1	7

providing informative library websites is concerned. Almost all of the universities libraries' websites are deficient in providing vital information on datedness and FAQs. Few of the libraries' websites provided important information on working hours and library rules.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made to Ghanaian university libraries for the improvement of the libraries' websites:

- The provision of working hours on the websites shows the hours of operation of the library. The study shows that only three libraries' websites provide this information. It is recommended that all the universities libraries' websites provide library hours. This is to help users make decisions regarding when to visit the library.
- FAQs and user education instructions help users of libraries' websites to be well-informed about the services provided without having to contact a librarian online. The study reveals that almost all the libraries' websites do not have FAQs and user education instructions. It is imperative for these services to be provided on the universities libraries' websites because it helps users find answers to their questions.
- The study shows that only one of the libraries' websites had a suggestion box. We recommend that suggestion boxes should be provided to ensure that users of the websites are easily able to send their views and comments to the management of the libraries. This is also to encourage complaints, in case improvement is necessary.
- A provision of e-mail/online reference services, such as ask-a-librarian, provides a platform for users' questions and challenges to be addressed. The university libraries should provide these services on their websites to help address users' queries.
- Social media networks and links, such as to Facebook, Twitter and MySpace, help build relationships with target audiences and create a platform to share information. This makes the library's website interactive and more attractive to return visitors.

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