KM Cyberary is a Gateway to Knowledge Resources

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BACKGROUND

The literature about portals or gateways exists in huge volume. However, only a limited number of articles have addressed the topic of knowledge portals applying various concepts of arrangement to organizing the information on the portals. Likewise, not many authors have written about knowledge portals. So, this study helps to understand one such knowledge portal and its features, coverage of subjects, and so forth.

Information is scattered in various Web sites on the ocean of the Internet. The Internet contains a huge amount of global information. To access the required, specific, relevant and quality information is not an easy task. Thus as a solution to the problem many tools came on the scene like search engines, subject catalogues and directories, virtual libraries, gateways, and so forth.

The systematic process of finding, selecting, organising, distilling and presenting information, improves an user's comprehension in a specific area of interest (Bhojaraju, 2005). Knowledge portals in turn represent these attributes.

Portals

Portals cannot be defined in one definition; it can be defined as a door or gate. A portal by definition, is a common technology framework with the ability to support the integration, community definition, content, personalization, and security that underpins all of the data and applications within the Web. The Computing Dictionary tries to define the term more specifically as, "A Web site that aims to be an entry point to the World Wide Web, typically offering search engine and/or links to useful pages, and possibly news or other services." These services are usually provided for free in the hope that users will make the site their default home page or at least visit it often (e.g., Yahoo, Google, MSN) (FOLDOC). "Portal is a term, generally synonymous with gateway, for a World Wide Web (WWW) site that is or proposes to be a major starting site for users when they get connected to the Web or that users tend to visit as an anchor site." Strauss (2000) defines a portal as a special kind of gateway to Web resources—"a hub from which users can locate all the Web content they commonly need" (whatis.com).

A portal is a gateway to Web access, A hub from which users can locate all the Web content they commonly need

(Strauss, 2000). Portals are different from Web pages tied to a home page in the sense that a portal is centred around a target community of users, whereas, a Web page is centered around the organization that "owns" the site.

Types of Portals

Portals may be of various types (Tatnall, 2005a):

1. **General Portals:** Also known as horizontal portals, are extremely broad, but generally shallow in content. These can be used by searchers to find anything they want on the Web. E.g., Yahoo, MSN, Excite, Lycos, Google, Netscape, etc.
2. **Specialised Portals, Vertical Portals, or Vortals:** Focusing more on a specific community of users (e.g., information/knowledge portals).

Information Portals can be viewed as a category in their own right as portals whose *prime* aim is to provide a specific type of information and are thus called knowledge portals or gateways.

KNOWLEDGE PORTALS AND GATEWAYS

Knowledge portals increase the effectiveness of knowledge workers by providing easy access to information that is necessary or helpful to them in one or more specific roles. Knowledge portals are not mere intranet portals and are supposed to provide extra functionality such as collaboration services, sophisticated information discovery services and a knowledge map.

Gateway is a generic term used interchangeably with the term 'subject gateway.' It generally refers to a network element that acts as an entrance point to another network. The term is used to describe a "range of Internet sites that in some way provide access to other, predominantly Internet accessible, resources" (Koch, 2002). Subject gateways are Internet-based discovery services, addressing the shortcomings of the large search engines (quality selection, precision, subject focus). They evolved from esoteric link-lists to professional quality-controlled subject gateways and draw on library and information science expertise.

Information gateways are services on the World Wide Web where resources are selected according to their quality of content, catalogued, and classified. Information gateways, in this way, are more intensive than the normal link lists but more useful for the users as users find high quality resources through these gateways.

A subject gateway thoroughly defined by the DESIRE (Development of a European Service for Information on Research and Education) Project in its handbook as: "information gateways are quality-controlled information services that offer (1) online links to other Internet sites or documents; (2) selection of resources via an intellectual process, within a predefined collection scope; (3) intellectually-produced content descriptions, preferably with keywords and controlled terminology; (4) an intellectually constructed structure for browsing; and (5) at least partially manually-created metadata for individual resources."

Thus we can say the gateways are information systems for quality assessed information resources on the Internet, within a specific subject. The purpose of these gateways is to help a user community discover high quality relevant Web-based information quickly and effectively.

Characteristics of Subject Gateways

The subject gateways are characterized by the following factors (Koch, 2002):

1. Generally limited to specific subject(s).
2. They are selective, pointing only to Internet resources that meet with quality selection criteria.
3. Subject and information specialist often by librarians builds them.
4. Maintenance of collection on a regular basis so as to check links, and remove inappropriate resources.
5. Most of these allow the end user to either search or browse the database of resource descriptions.

KM CYBERARY

The *KM Cyberary* project started in 2003. The idea behind building KM Cyberary was to make it a single point of access to all information resources. It is a collection of information links that connect to different Web resources—a gateway to all knowledge resources—a Cyberary of categorised and personalized content. It is very much the idea of a personalized filter into the Web.

The main objective of the KM Cyberary project was to provide a unique platform for all types of users to reach their information. This is an accumulation of e-resources, which give links to various useful e-resources viz. Knowledge management, librarianship, philosophy, health, technology, ITES/BPO/KPO/RPO, ITIL, call entres, business information, and other subjects. It is hoped that this gateway may be of some help for users who are in search of information.

Features of KM Cyberary

KM Cyberary provides a gateway to information resources on the Internet. This specifically helps to increase the effectiveness of users in information searching by providing links to various information pools. Some of the features of KM Cyberary are as follows:

- A unique platform for all Internet users searching information on various subjects.
- Information derived from multiple sources.
- Each resource selected is evaluated explicitly defined quality selection criteria.
- Use of a subject classification scheme to index all resources in order to facilitate subject browsing. KM Cyberary is organized in Alphabetico-Subject arrangement.

Figure 1. KM Cyberary Homepage

Figure 2. KM Cyberary successive page
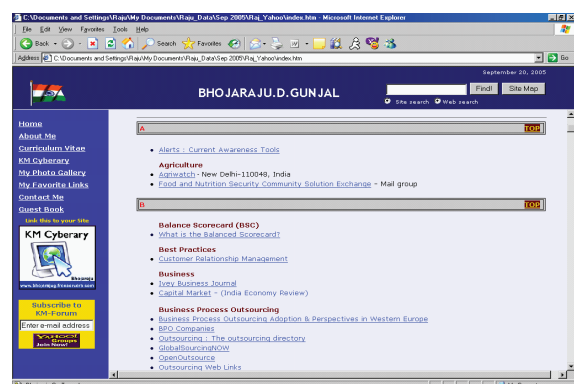
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