

Poster



Enhanced Access to the CGIAR Virtual Library via Social Media

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Abstract— The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) has been very active in generating new agricultural knowledge through researches on diverse subjects undertaken by its fifteen agricultural research centers located in various parts of the world. The CGIAR Virtual Library (CGVLibrary), one of the major collaborative projects among information managers (IMs) in the system, aims at bridging the gap between agricultural research outputs and potential users. Since its launch in 2006, it has served as a key online gateway to global agricultural knowledge. Instant access is enabled to researches on agriculture, hunger, poverty, and the environment, especially the full text global public goods generated by the various centers in the CGIAR. While content development, quick retrieval, and improvement of web site interface are major concerns for the IMs, various avenues are being pursued to market the tool to prospective users. In the past, live seminars, paper presentations in conferences, publications in various venues, use of print media (flyers, posters, etc.) were utilized to link the CGV Library to worldwide researchers. The advent of social media altered the mode of information delivery to a large extent. In addition to conventional media, social networking tools are now being explored and utilized to market the CGV Library. This poster will show how social networking tools, such as Skype, Twitter, wikis, blogs, etc. are helping to create better awareness of the virtual library and to reach out to scientists in a more effective manner.

Keywords-Virtual Library; CGIAR; Agricultural research; Social media; Social networking; Blogs; Wikis

I. INTRODUCTION

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) is “a strategic alliance of members partners and international agricultural centers which aims to reduce poverty and hunger, improve human health and nutrition, and enhance ecosystem resilience through high-quality international agricultural research, partnership and leadership”.¹ This group generates a huge volume of valuable agricultural knowledge through researches on various subjects conducted by fifteen agricultural research centers under its umbrella.

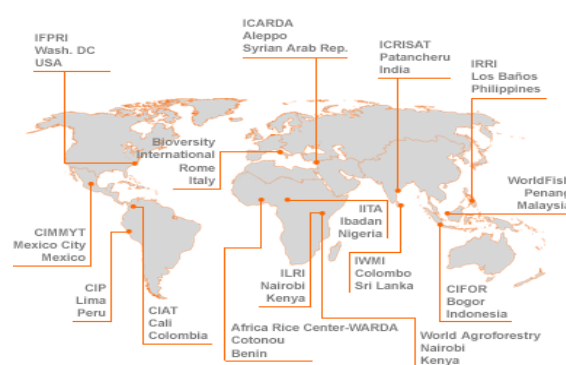


Fig. 1. CGIAR Centers Map (Source: <http://www.cgiar.org/centers/index.html>)

II. THE CGIAR VIRTUAL LIBRARY AT

[HTTP://VLIBRARY.CGIAR.ORG/V?RN=130864394](http://vlibrary.cgiar.org/V?RN=130864394)

The CGIAR Virtual Library (CGVLibrary), one of the major collaborative projects among information managers (IMs) in the system, aims at bridging the gap between agricultural research outputs and potential users. Since its launch in 2006, it has enabled instant access to researches on agriculture, hunger, poverty, and the environment, especially the full text global public goods generated by the various centers in the CGIAR. While content development, quick retrieval, and improvement of web site interface are major concerns, various avenues are being pursued to market the tool to prospective users. In the past, live seminars, paper presentations in conferences, publications in various venues, use of print media (flyers, posters, etc.) were utilized to link the CGVLibrary to worldwide researchers. While these earlier attempts have somehow exposed the virtual library to a bigger audience, modern advances in social networking are waiting to be explored and offer better opportunities for wider awareness.

¹ Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
<http://www.cgiar.org/>

III. THE CGIAR VIRTUAL LIBRARY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Many web 2.0 technologies are now being used by libraries to connect faster and in a more friendly way to clients. Advanced libraries, mostly in the developed countries, have made web 2.0 applications an integral part of their services. (Duke, 2006; Xiao, 2008).

The big challenge for information managers in this digital age, is how to maximize the use of social media to advertise their products. Information managers present during XIIIth World Congress of the International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists (IAALD), held in Montpellier, France last April reconfirmed the vital role of social media in “enhancing information management for agriculture and rural development.” (Meadu, 2010).

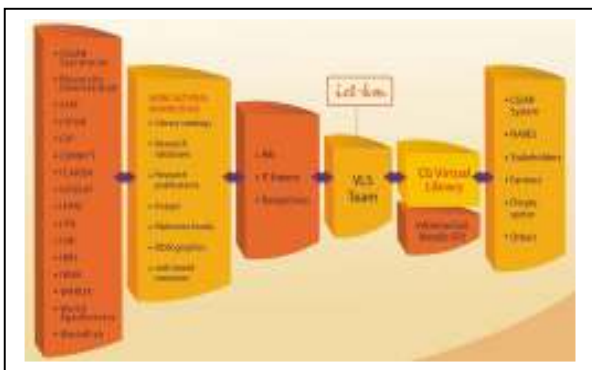


Figure 2. CGIAR Global Public Goods are shared with end-users Via the CGVlibrary (Source: Alvare, 2007)

In addition to conventional media, social networking tools are now being explored and utilized to market new information tools, like the CGV Library. (Ramos, 2009)



Fig. 3. The search interface of the CGV Library

A. Live Reference Service Via Skype

By invoking Skype name CGVLibrary, researchers seeking agricultural information, especially those pertaining to CGIAR research, will receive instant assistance from librarians of the various agricultural centers. Currently information providers from these centers are taking turns in looking after site and answering queries from worldwide users.- Live service through Skype is available 16 hours a day (2:00 AM – 6:00 PM GMT).

B. Knowledge Exchange via the CGVLibrary Wiki

Launched in April 2007, the CGV Library wiki page is an active vehicle for current awareness. It is a community-curated site for the exchange of information about the CGV Library, the activities of the CGIAR Libraries and Information Services Consortium (CGIAR LISC) and other aspects of agricultural information generation and management. Ex Libris and SFX issue monthly reports or updates on free resources available on the web and these facilitate the addition of more electronic resources, especially open access journals, to the virtual library. Other vital information are accessible via links on the sidebar like project timetable, activities, to-do lists, resources, statistics, institutional repositories, etc. A search box is also available for topic-specific inquiries.



Fig. 4. Live Reference service via the Skype Interface

C. Interactive Discussion and Updating via the CGVLibrary Blogs

Blogging is one of the most popular avenues for online interaction and communication nowadays. The virtual library team selected the Wordpress free blog facility for this tool. This blog site, which started in November 2007, features short communications from the CGIAR IMs and touches on any topic that involves information sharing, best practices, institutions with similar interests, etc. User involvement is encouraged as users have the opportunity to add comments, or feedbacks, which help much in improving the platform.

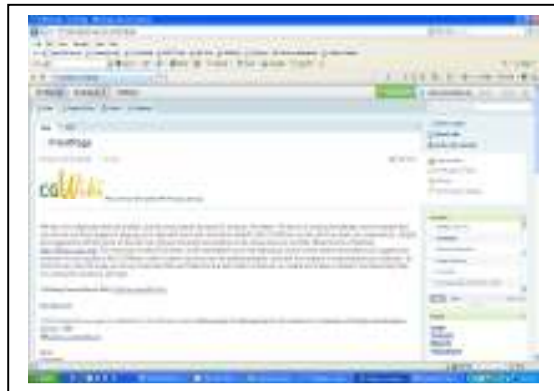


Fig.5. The CGV Library Wiki page (Source: <http://cgvlibrary.pbwiki.com/FrontPage>)



Fig. 6. The CGVLibrary Blog site (Source: <http://cgvlibrary.wordpress.com/2007/11/28/hello-world/>)

IV. CONCLUSION: FUTURE PLANS

- Continuous content development through the efforts of the various information managers in the CGIAR centers
- Integration of search facilities with other international agricultural databases
- Improvement of user interface
- Engage users in the improvement of content and utilities
- More active marketing of the CGVLibrary
- Utilization of more social networking avenues for creating awareness
- Active and sustainable commitment among CGIAR information managers to develop this tool for current and the next generation of users

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