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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# BLOG MANAGEMENT AS THE NEW FACET OF REJUVENATED LIBRARY MANAGEMENT IN WEB 2.0 ERA: A LIVE MANAGERIAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE LIBRARY BLOG AT LIBRARY, KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA, NO.1, NARIMEDU, MADURAI

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### ABSTRACT

Customer is the king in any profession and so are our library users. Librarians have started striving all the ways and means, utilizing all the available formats and forms and using all channels of communication in fulfilling the information needs of library users – who are techno savvy in this modern web era. The tools of web 2.0- library 2.0- have come handy to LIS professionals to reach the wider online users easily. Reaching library users with the required information or a note on the information at their desktops have become feasible due to the comprehensive technological applications available in this information superhighway. Blogs are the best vehicles for online information dissemination. Blogs facilitate keeping the library web pages interactive and attractive. Managing the blogs involve a) general managerial functions like planning, organising, staffing, directing, co-ordinating and reporting and b) technical management functions like post management, page management and link management. This paper attempts to depict the various aspects of library blog management at wordpress domain – a free web hosting –cum-weblog software. It elaborates multi-faceted components of library blog management – layout management, content management, home page management, web 2.0 tools incorporation management, interactive management, Export-Import management, user survey management, widget management etc. This paper mirrors the blog management experience of the authors in creating and maintaining the library blog at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Narimedu, Madurai, Tamilnadu, India – the blog which has got more than 10,66,000 online users as on 27/04/2013

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## INTRODUCTION

### Blog and Blogging

Blogs have started invading the library sector especially the academic library sector victoriously now-a-days. The influence of blogs on the effectiveness of libraries in reaching their online users with sufficient information or surrogates of information is evident with the explosion of library blogs in the internet at present. A blog is a frequently updated website wherein the entries are shown in the reverse chronological order. The entries may be in the form of pages, posts and links. 'Weblogs are pages consisting of several posts or chunks of information per page, usually arranged in reverse chronology' (Bausch, Haughey and Hourihan 2002:7)<sup>(1)</sup>. The Oxford English Dictionary Online defines the noun blog as, "2. A frequently updated web site consisting of personal observations, excerpts from other sources, etc., typically run by a single person, and usually with hyperlinks to other sites; an online journal or diary." blog n. (short for weblog) The process of creating and maintaining blogs is known as blogging. The person who creates and maintains the blogs is called as 'Blogger'.

### Blog Management

Management is the process of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, co-ordinating and reporting the activities that aim at fulfilling the objectives of the business concerned. Blog management

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is the process of planning, organising, staffing, directing, co-ordinating and reporting the activities which aim at accomplishing the purpose for which the blog was created.

### What is special about blog management?

The managing the blog involves both technical functions and managerial functions. Thus the blogger needs to be technically sound enough and managerially experienced.

### Technical functions

- Web Searching
- Evaluation of web resources
- Proficiency in the selected blog environment
- Compressing and editing image files and
- Zipping and PDF conversion of text files

### General Managerial Functions

The acronym POSDCORB, was coined by Luther Gulick, to describe the basic general functions of management. In Gulick's own words, the elements of POSDCORB are as follows<sup>(2)</sup>.

- Planning**, that is working out in broad outline the things that need to be done and the methods for doing them to accomplish the purpose set for the enterprise;
- Organizing**, that is the establishment of the formal structure of authority through which work subdivisions are arranged, defined, and co-ordinated for the defined objective;

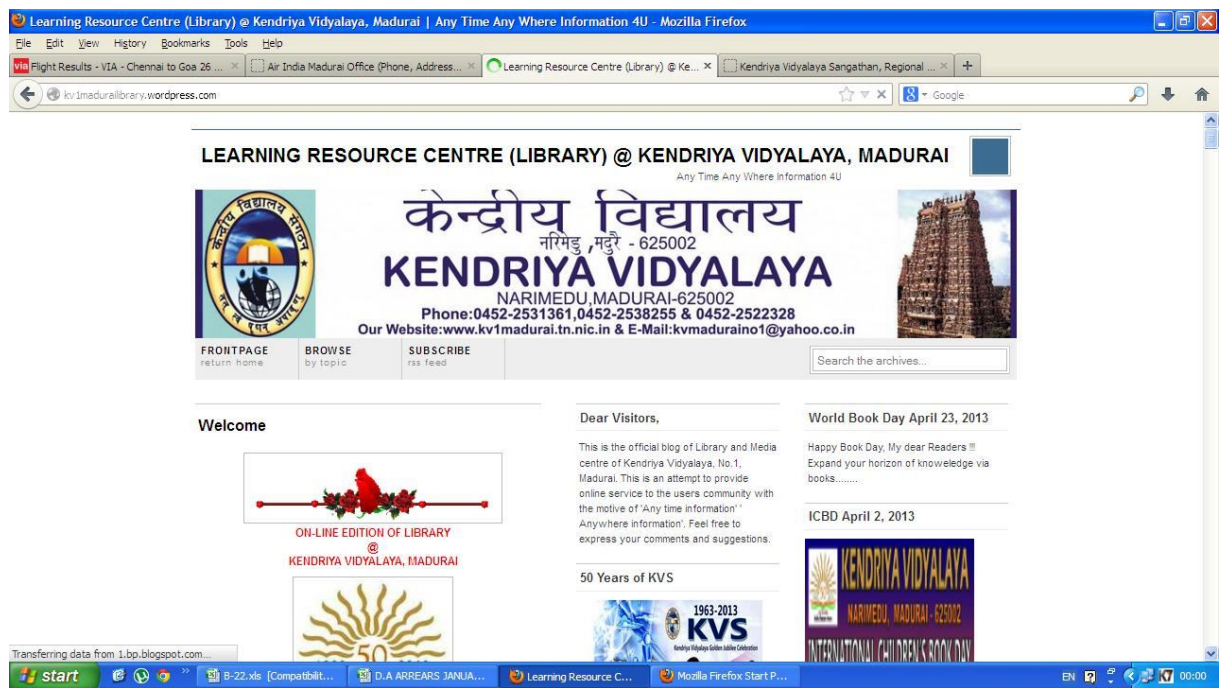


Figure 1. Home Page

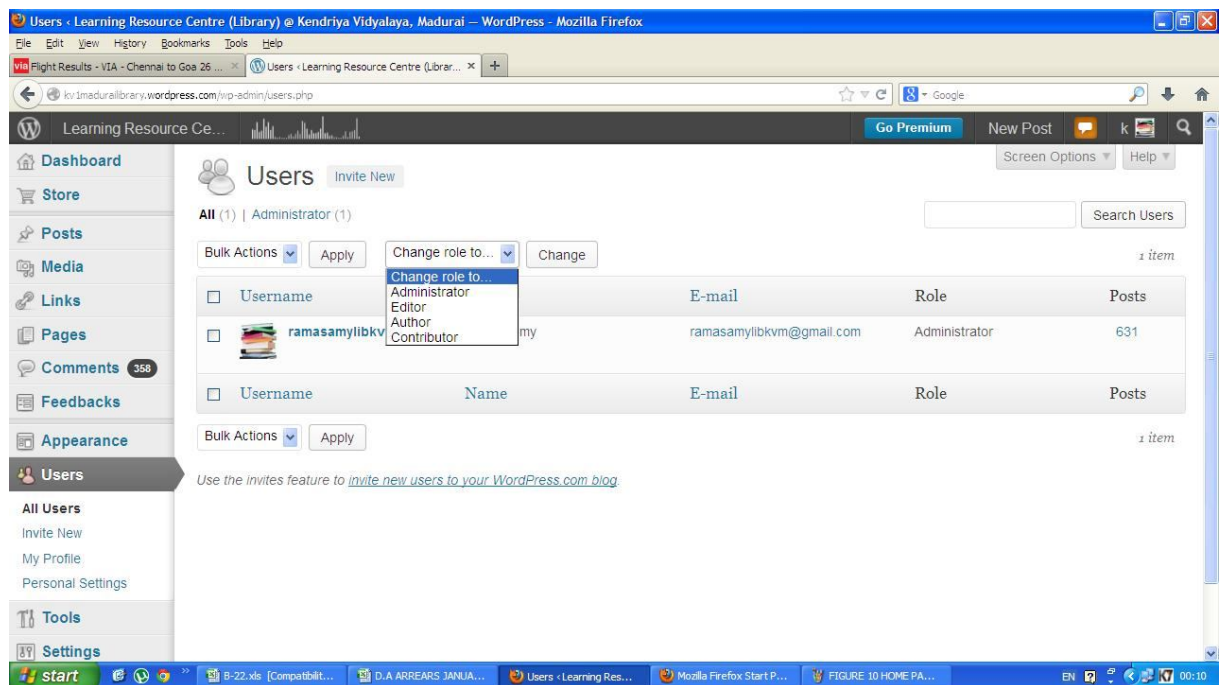


Figure 2. Administrator

- **Staffing**, that is the whole personnel function of bringing in and training the staff and maintaining favourable conditions of work;
- **Directing**, that is the continuous task of making decisions and embodying them in specific and general orders and instructions and serving as the leader of the enterprise;
- **Co-ordinating**, that is the all important duty of interrelating the various parts of the work;
- **Reporting**, that is keeping those to whom the executive is responsible informed as to what is going on, which thus includes
- keeping himself and his subordinates informed through records, research, and inspection;
- **Budgeting**, with all that goes with budgeting in the form of planning, accounting and control.

### Library Blog Management (LBM)

It is the process of managing the library blog for the purpose of fulfilling the mission for which the blog was created by the librarian. The librarian might have created a particular blog with an idea to

- give general information about the library
- work as the web OPAC platform
- use it as the advocacy tool
- promote a particular event / programme / celebration
- supplement the teaching-learning resources of the parent institution and
- aid his library users on a specific field of study / subject/ discipline

**Librarians as Bloggers and Content Managers**

The LIS professionals, having realized the importance and potentiality of blogs as the modern, online and interactive tool, started using library blogs as the information dissemination vehicle. The librarians in the modern web era have taken new avatars as the bloggers and content managers. And thus, it is important for them to choose a particular blog management platform /content management system to enable them to give web presence to their library and information centres.

**Our Blog Management Experience**

We, at Learning Resource Centre, Kendriya Vidyalaya, No.1, Madurai, Tamilnadu, decided a couple of years ago to start a blog exclusively for us, though there was a school website with few pages of information about our library.

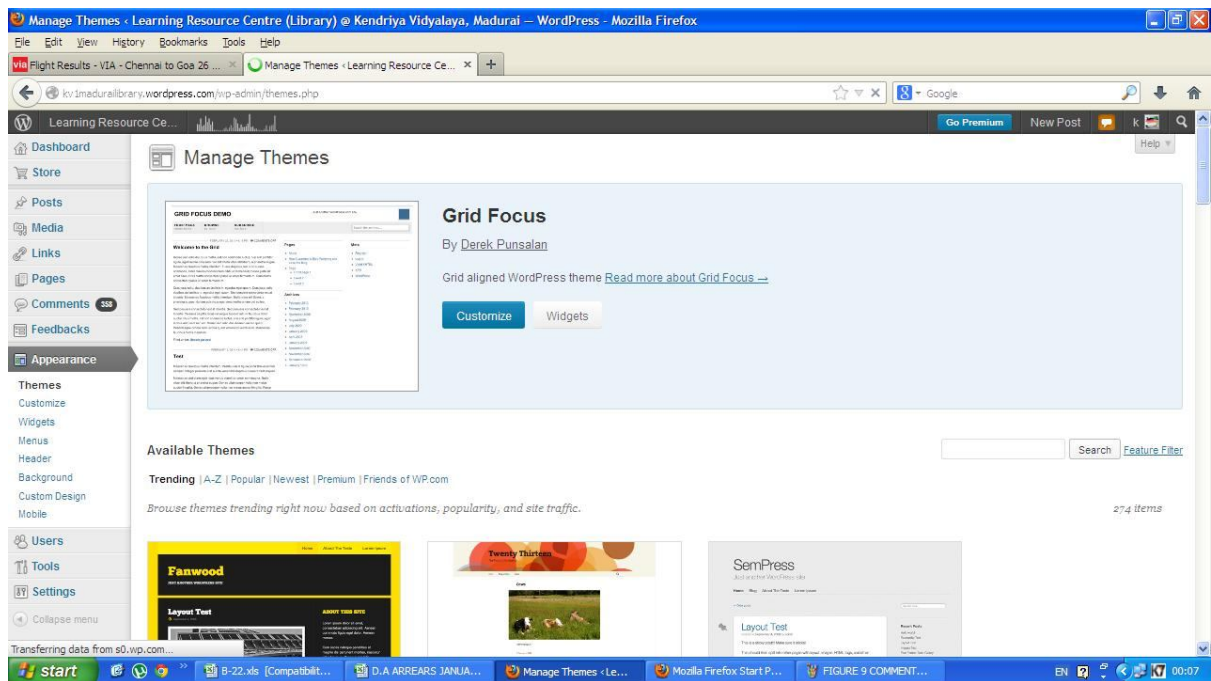
**Planning**

**Why a library blog for us?**

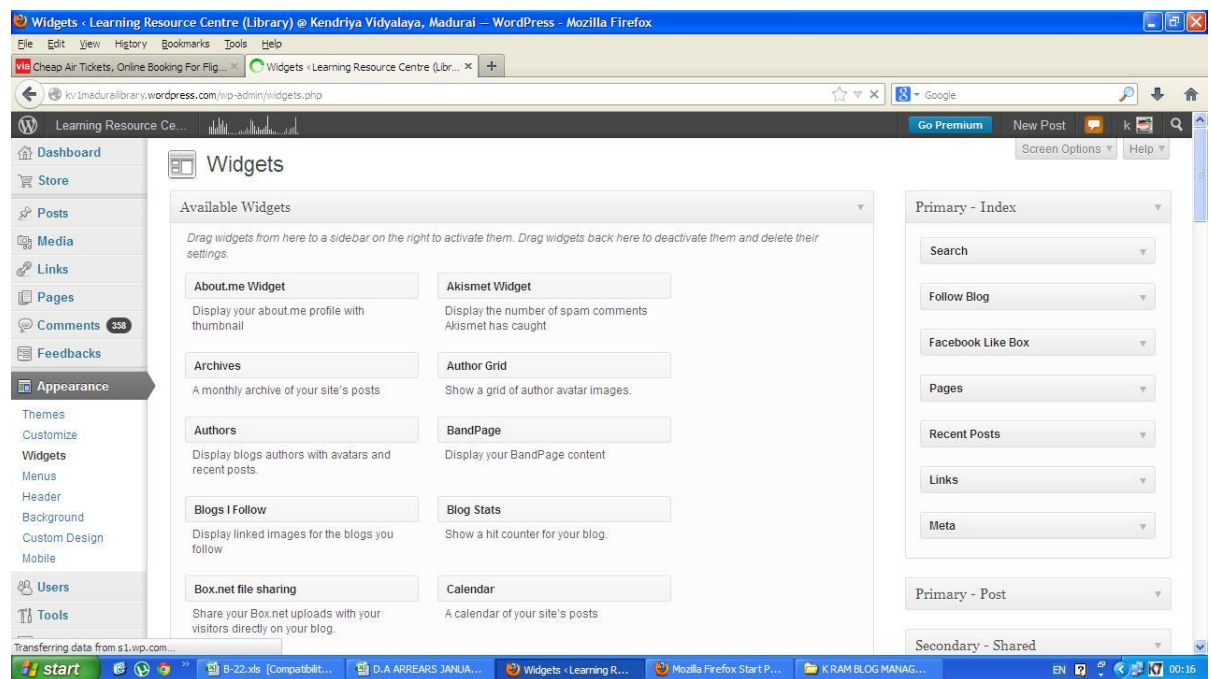
It was felt that a blog for our library would be able to help us to reach a wide range of library users. It would function as a filler of the gap between the resources available with us and the information needs of our users. It would act as an advocacy tool for our library. It would raise the image of our learning resource centre.

**What Weblog/blogging software to Use?**

A blogware is a software designed to simplify the creation and maintenance of weblogs. As specialized content management systems, weblog applications support the authoring, editing, and publishing of blog posts and comments, with special functions for image management, web syndication, and moderation of posts and comments.



**Figure 3. Theme Management**



**Figure 4. Widget Management**

We had decided to go for open source software for the purpose of creating a blog. Our probe had given us a glance of 15 popular open source blog tool and publishing platforms in front of us. They are : Wordpress, Serendipity, Movable Type, dot clear, Nuclear CMS, Life Type, Boast Machine, text Pattern, b2evolution, eggblog, subtext, Zomlog, blogengine.net, Triptychblog and Prestopia Blog. The domain chosen for hosting the library blog should be a flexible, rich-featured and advanced one in all respects with an ease to work with. The platform selected should be free and have a wide on-line working community to hear your problems and ready to offer a solution. We had decided to go for Wordpress, since wordpress is a state-of -the art blog publishing platform with a focus on aesthetics, web standards and usability. It is an open source content Management System, often used as a blog publishing application, powered by PHP and My SQL, licensed under GPL v2.

**Birth of Our blog: (www.kv1madurailibrary.wordpress.com)<sup>(3)</sup>**

Our library blog was created at wordpress domain in June, 2010 as a beta version. The blog was officially launched in September, 2010. The blog is effectively utilized as an online information dissemination forum; an interactive feedback mechanism; current awareness service platform and a online resource heap for the students and staff of Kendriya Vidyalaya, Narimedu, Madurai in supplementing their teaching and learning information requirements. It has an online hit of around 10,66,000 visitors as on 27/4/2013 within 1065 days of its inception.

**Staffing**

Though wordpress offers the administrator the ability to allot different roles to different blog managers like editor, contributor, etc., we had decided to have only one chief blog manager in the name of Adminstrator.

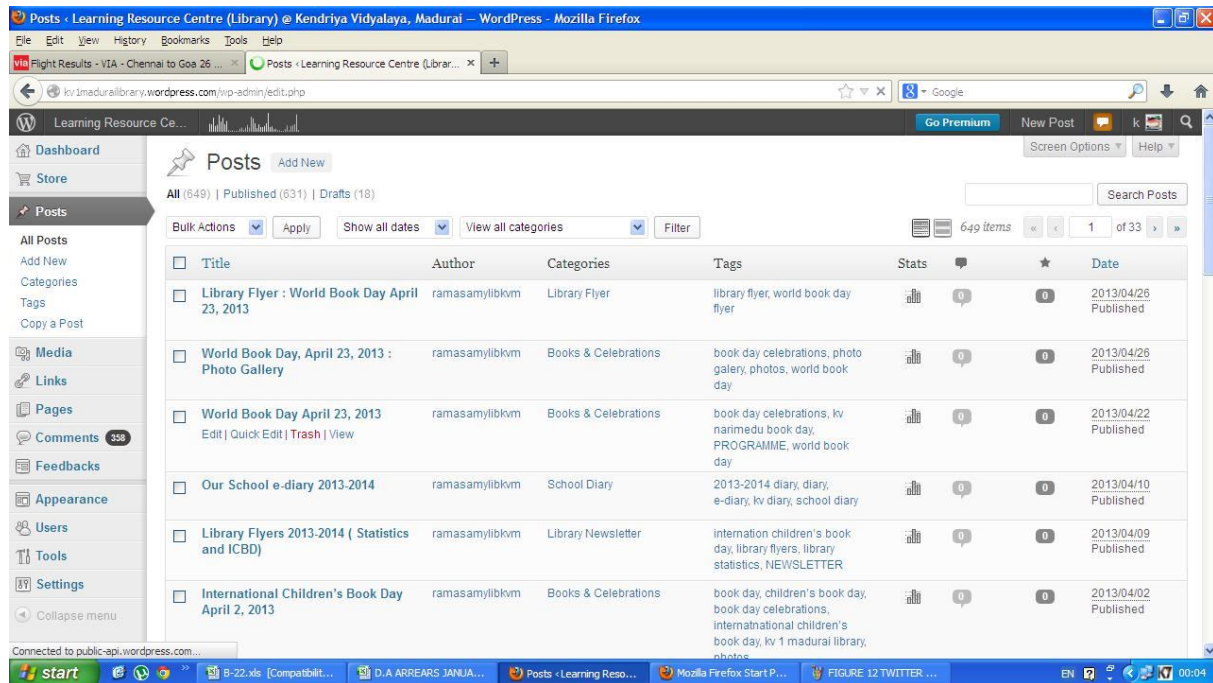


Figure 5. Post Management

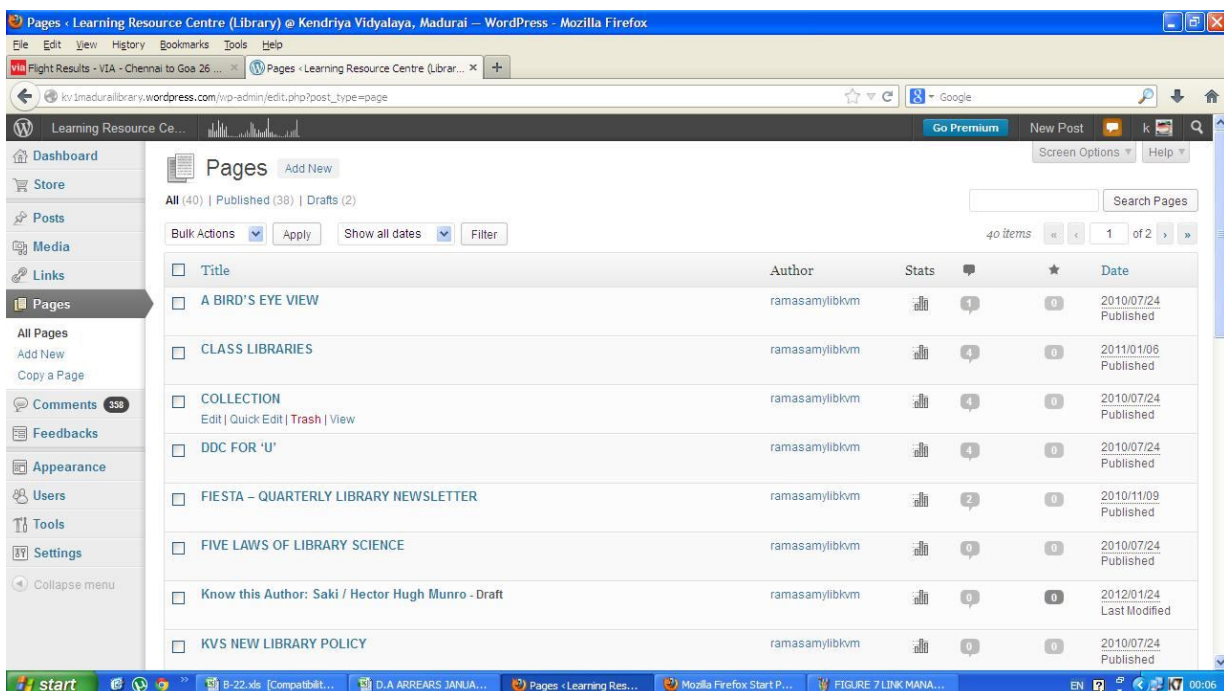


Figure 6. Page Management

### Components of Our Wordpress Library Blog Management

#### Layout Management

The layout of the blog should be aesthetic and functional. It should serve the purpose of your library. This layout management includes two sub-functions.

#### Theme management and Customization Management

The first and foremost aspect of any library blog management is to decide what is the theme we need to select among the available free themes. The theme decides your blog background, number of side bars, number of columns, font style and size and the in-built widget

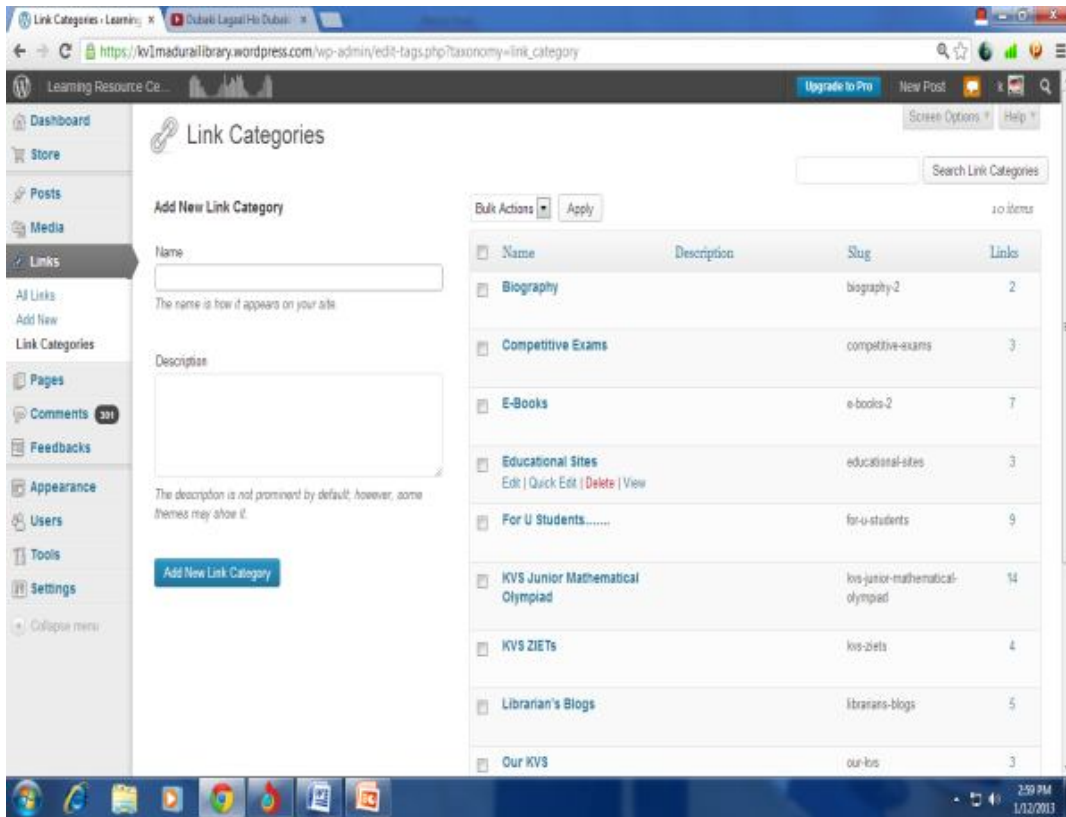


Figure 7. Link Management

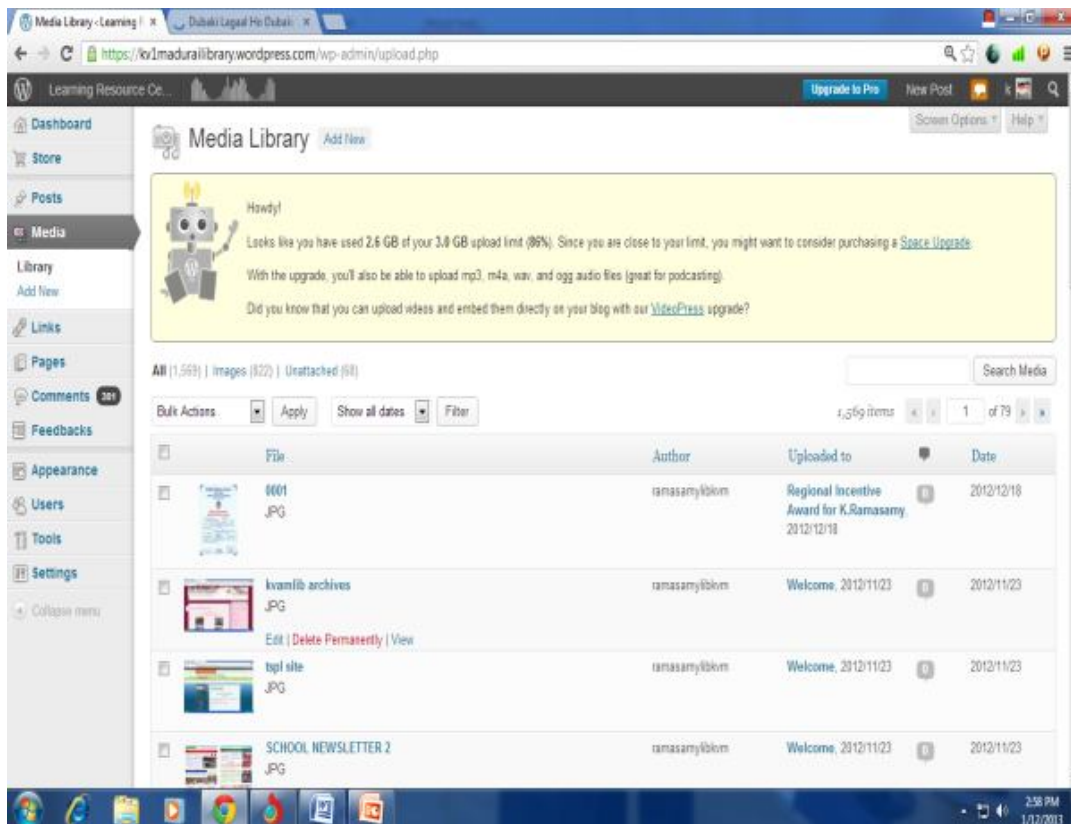


Figure 8. Media Management

setup. We have selected Grid Focus with 3 columns and 3 sidebars as our theme.

### Widget management

Widgets are small in-built blocks available in wordpress dashboard. You can select any number of widgets any number of times to be included in your blog. Each widget serves a purpose. There is a image widget, text widget, page widget, e-mail subscription widget, admin widget, top posts widget, fresh posts widget, blogroll widget, twitter widget, delicious widget, blog statistics widget, countdown widget, calendar widget, archives widget, categories widget and what not available at our disposal.

### Content Management

The information you would like to place in your library blog can be categorized into: Posts and Pages. Thus content management includes post management and page management.

### Post management

The posts are your information pieces. These posts can be placed under different categories. Categories are the grouping mechanisms. Once general groups are made, then individual posts pertaining to that particular group will be placed over there. Any number of categories, sub-categories and sub-sub categories, in nested hierarchical form, can be created. We have more than 50 categories of information.

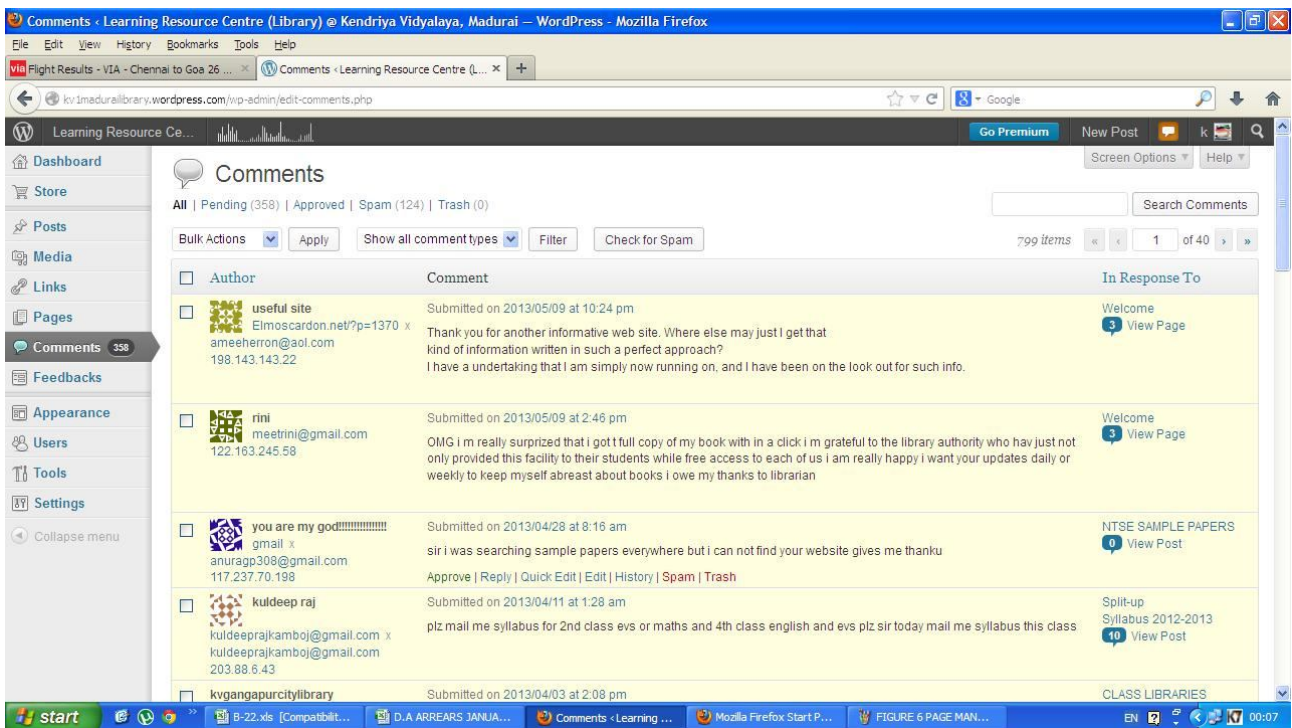


Figure 9. Comments Management

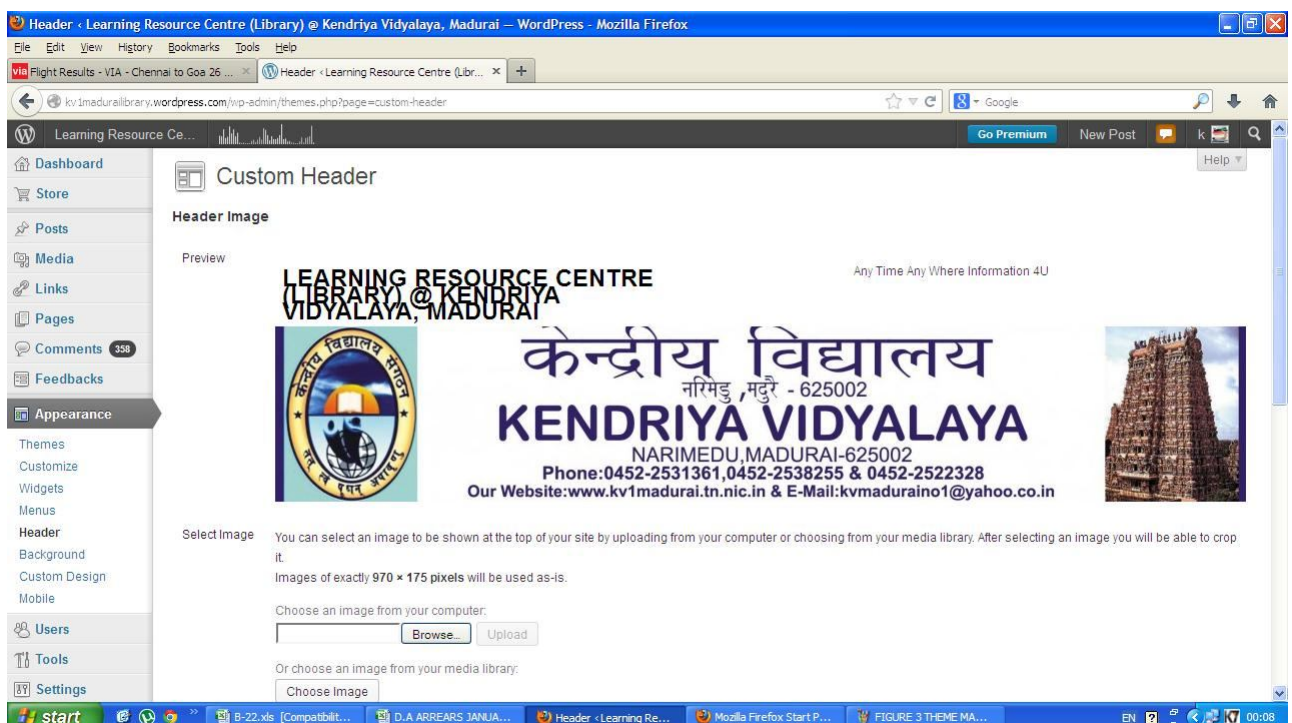


Figure 10. Home Page Customization

E.g. a) Author of the week : Every week a brief biographical sketch of one particular author will be added. b) Study Material : It is subdivided into Class X and Class XII. Then, class XII category is subdivided into Science, Commerce and Humanities stream. The post management includes adding new posts, editing/deleting of the posts and creating categories and sub-categories.

### Page management

Page widget is used to display pages in our library blog. Various almost static information about the library like working hours, time table, brief resume of the library, monthly statistics, library committee, class library committee, list of student librarians etc., can be displayed as pages. Page management includes adding new pages, editing/deleting pages, fixing parent pages and sequencing the pages.

### Link Management

One of the main uses of library blogs is to help the users with useful links on various subjects. These links work as online subject guides. These links can be grouped under any number of link categories. We have created link categories like educational sites, competitive exams, bibliography, science experiments etc.

### Media Management

The media types include word files, pdf files, ppt files, excel files and various image files. Any file type can be stored in the media for future editing or preserving. Media management includes adding new media, editing/deleting the stored media and browsing the media library.

### Home page management

It is very important to see to it that the home page of the library blog is very attractive and welcoming. It should be pleasing and informative. We need to add pictures, quotes, site statistics, introductory remarks and what not to make it eye-attracting and worth-browsing. The home page management includes selection of right theme, customizing the header option, creating and changing the tagline you created for the blog, giving a name for your blog to appear on the home page and including most static things therein. It is possible in wordpress to have a static page as the home page or to have the current posts as the home page. We had opted to have a static welcome page to be our home page.

### Interactive management

The goodness of web 2.0 in wordpress blog enables the blogger to give enough provisions in the weblog to help the online users to interact with us in the form of giving comments, sharing the content with social networking sites and direct e-mail reply to the users via wordpress. Interactive management includes comments management, e-mail management and share management.

### Incorporation Management

The beauty of wordpress blog is that it is enriched with a lot of widgets enabling the librarians to incorporate a wide variety of interactive social media tools and other useful online tools into its mainstream. For example, we have incorporated tools like twitter, RSS feed, Delicious social bookmarking tool and Goodreads in the home page of our library blog.

### Tag Management

In any retrieval system, whether it is physical or on-line, keywords used to describe a resource is very important. Use of correct keyword / tag will help the users to retrieve the information with precision. Wordpress allows us to assign any number of keywords (tags) for a post; it suggests related tags; it gives a list of tags others have used for such kind of posts and it helps us to create a tag cloud – a cloud of all the frequently used tags.

### Statistics/Report Management

Reporting - Preparation and presentation of reports on the use of library blog is the very important aspect of blog management. Wordpress helps us to get day-wise, week-wise and month-wise statistics of blog hits. It also tells us the top clicks and top posts that enable the librarians to identify the most preferred use of blog information by the users. It helps him to decide in future as to what kind of information should be placed more in the library blog.

### General Settings Management

There are certain general aspects like blog tagline, time setting, date format how many posts are to be displayed on a page, site visibility, time zone, blog picture come under general settings management.

Figure 11. RSS Management

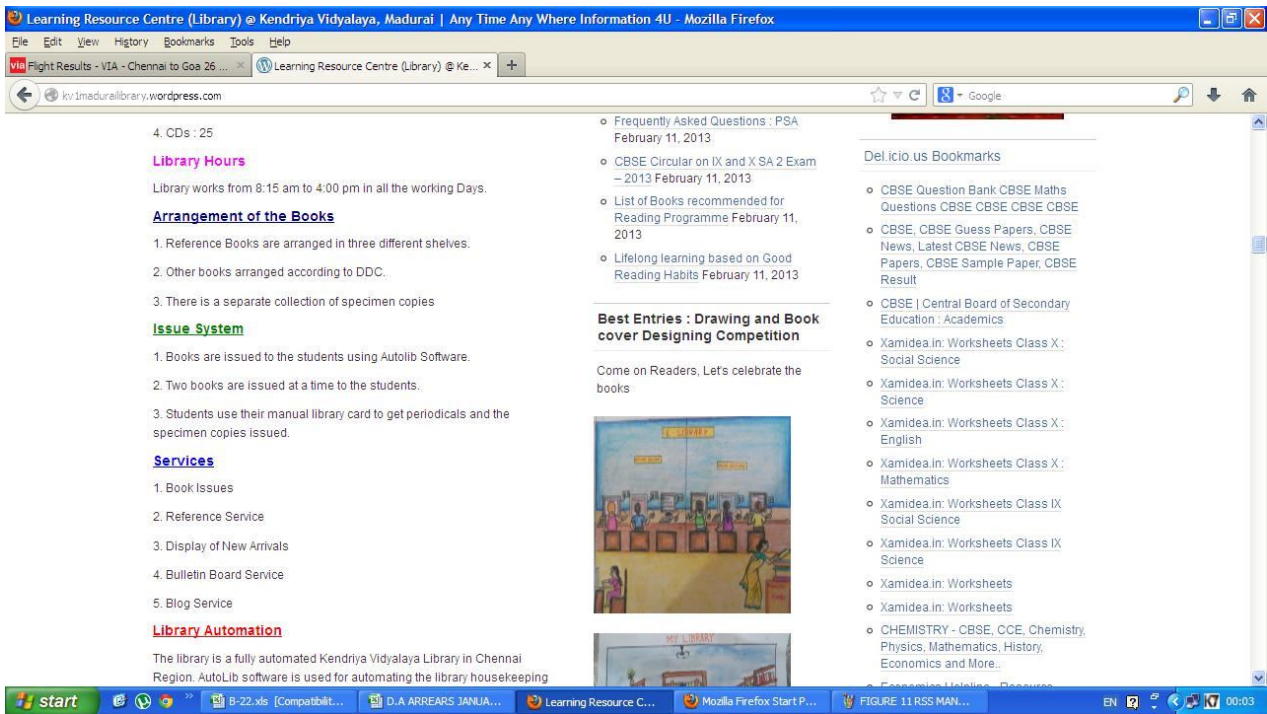


Figure 12. Delicious Management



Figure 12. Twitter Management

### Export and Import Management

If you have created a blog in any other domain like blogger, you can easily download your data into wordpress. If you like to export your wordpress data into any other standardised blog hosting platform, that is also possible here.

### Online User Study/ Survey Management

If librarians like to conduct any on-line survey or user study in order to identify the strengths and weakness of library collection, services and the user expectations, such studies and surveys can be conducted using Polldaddy widget available with wordpress. The results of the polls can be made publically visible or not; the number of votes also

can be shown to the online visitors and the poll dates (from and to) can be fixed.

### WHY DID WE CHOOSE WORDPRESS FOR CREATING OUR LIBRARY BLOGS?

Our experience has brought into the limelight the following features of Wordpress, which facilitated us reaching more than 10,66,000<sup>+</sup> online visitors in 1065 days of its inception.<sup>(4)</sup>

- More than 110 themes to select from
- Ability to set static home page / vibrant home page
- Any number of pages / sub-pages
- Any number of categories / sub-categories / posts



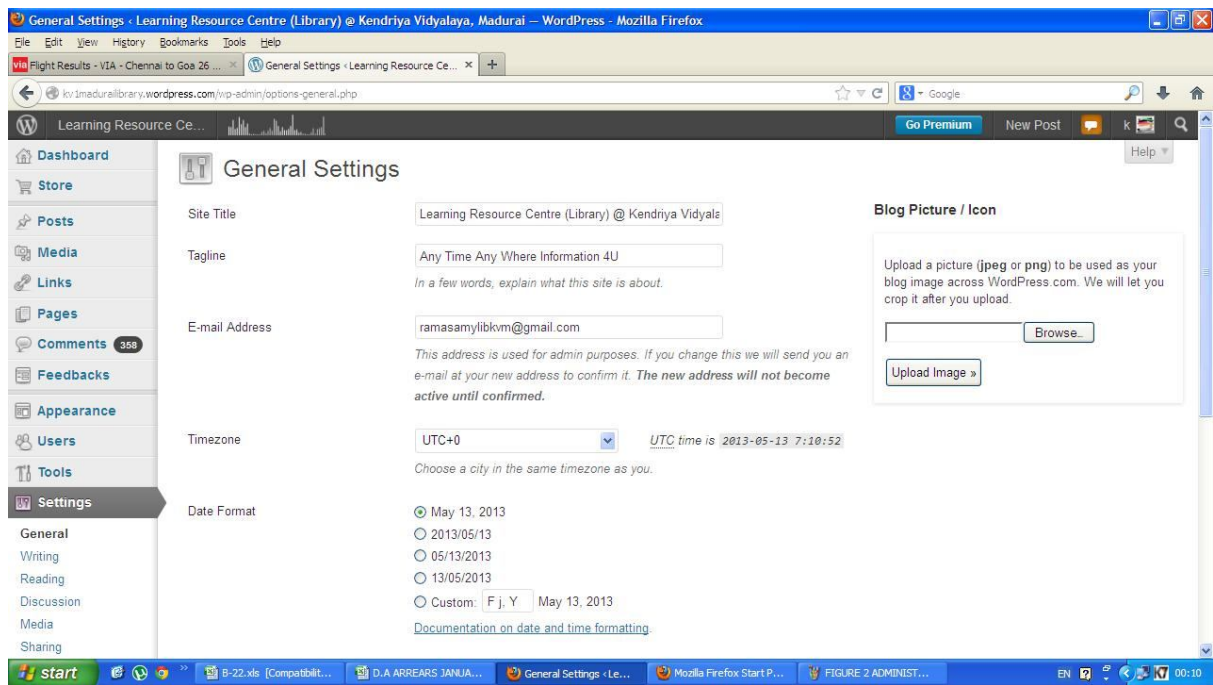


Figure 13. General Settings Management

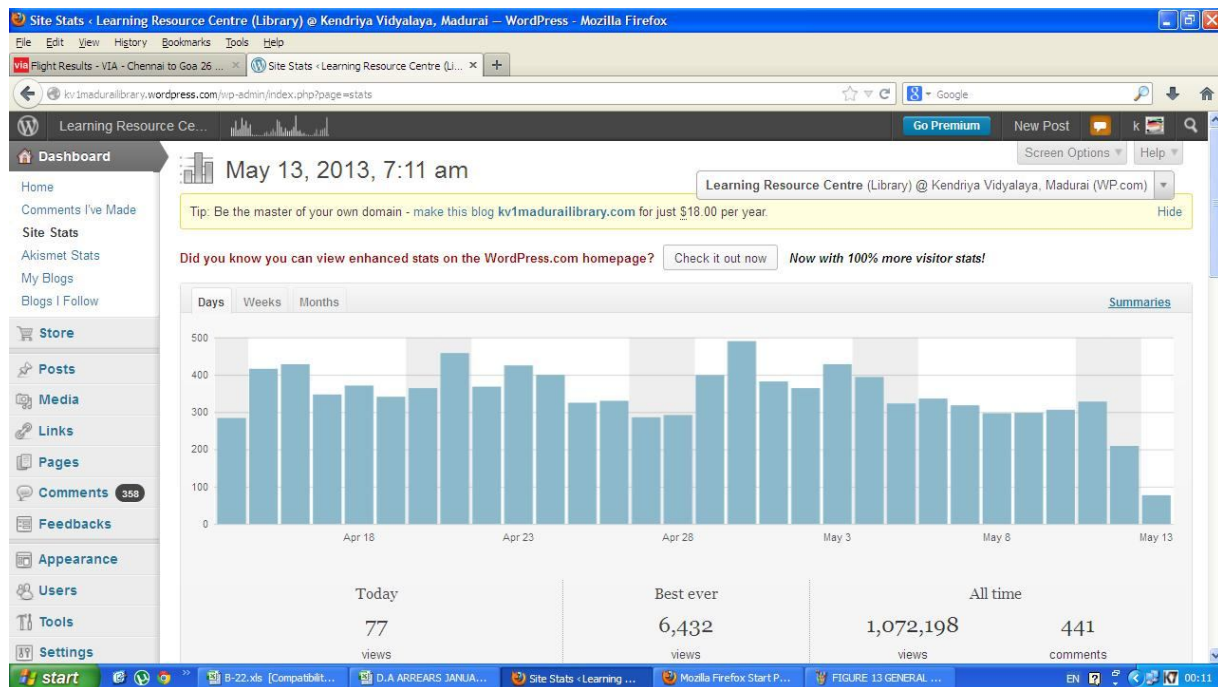


Figure 14. Statistics Management

- Media library to store all wanted files that can be used later
- Support media of different file formats - ppt, pptx, doc, docx, xls, pdf, jpg, png, gif etc
- Ability to display a group of picture files either as a gallery or as a slide show
- 3 GB of free space in the base install
- Space upgrde and video upgrade are available at a nominal cost.
- Link categories enable creating any number of blog rolls / website lists
- Link categories can be created to the files available in the media library.
- Secured blogging place; Akismet protects your blog from all spam comments.
- Provision to convert tags to categories and Vice Versa
- Tag Cloud - a cloud of tags in a single place to click and get the results
- Display of visitor's comments
- Easy to use Admin Widget in the blog
- Easy and powerful Dashboard for editing / modifying/ creating pages / publishing posts
- Easy to delete the pages / posts / blog
- An active wordpress form to support you 24 X 7 X 365
- Literature aplenty - to gain information and knowledge on how to blog at wordpress effectively (WordPress Community)
- Dozens of plug-ins to support advanced customization functions
- Provides poll option to conduct polls
- Quick press for at-once posting

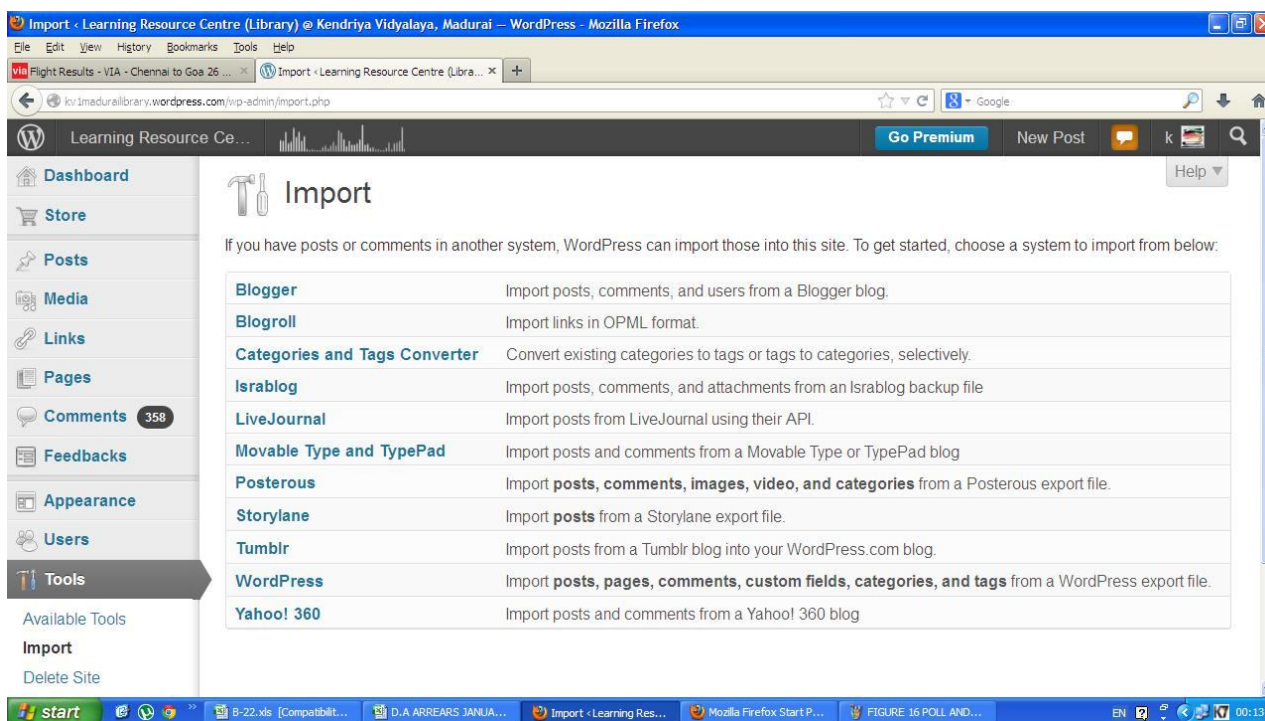


Figure 15. Import Management

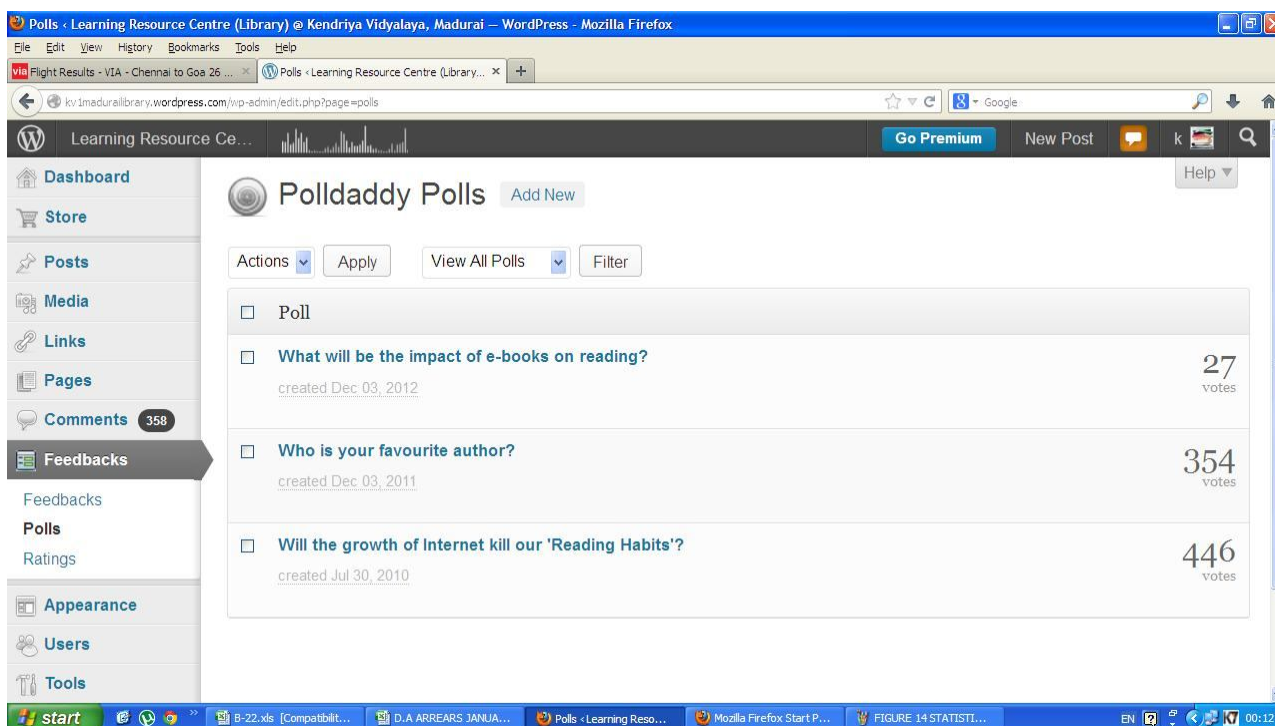


Figure 16. Poll Management

- Quick edit option for renaming posts / files / categories / changing the parent page or hierarchy of posts
- E-mail notification to the the subscribed users on all new postings
- E-mail alert on moderation of comments posted by visitors
- Ability to read the blog in 50 Native languages (Multi lingual menu option / search mode)
- RSS / RSS feed widget
- Tag surfer - to add tags other people use (relevant to your blogs)
- Publicize - connect your blog to popular social networking sites (face book / twitter / yahoo 360)
- Share button - add to your blog to allow your visitors to share posts with their friends (e-mail, print etc.)
- Privacy settings - make your blog visible only to listed users / everyone except search engines/ everyone including search engines)
- Post by e-mail - publish post using e-mail
- Import option - when you have posts in another system (blogger, livejournal, movable type etc) , you can import those into your wordpress blog
- Export option - can export your wordpress posts / pages / comments into a XML download file
- Add user from community - to assign different roles to different users (Admin, author, editor etc.)

- Pages can be arranged in the order of your wish
- Any number of tags for each post - the tags work like index terms at the time of search and retrieval
- Multi-author blogging
- Easy to publish the webpage without depending on hardware and html skills.
- Search option - to carry on searches within your blog
- Nested structure of hierarchy - helps to arrange entries in a more scientific and logical way.

### Conclusion

Promoting your library's services, resources, and programs online can be a lot easier with the help of a blog. A great library blog requires three ingredients: inspiration, motivation, and dedication. Inspiration is that "ah-ha" moment when your new marketing idea meshes perfectly with a blog as the delivery vehicle. Motivation is the energy to put good ideas into practice and helps launch the new blog. Dedication is what comes next. It's the hard work that keeps the blog updated with pithy, lively posts on a constant basis. Blogs can be very effective tools for reaching online audiences. That too, library blogs at Wordpress domain will definitely rejuvenate the library and information centres and help the users become empowered to interact, comment and rejoice from library services.

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