



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

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**USAGE OF E-RESOURCES BY ACADEMICS – A STUDY
(WITH REFERENCE TO AFFILIATED BHARATHIAR UNIVERISTY COLLEGES, COIMBATORE CITY)**

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ABSTRACT

Recent advances in the field of information technology contribute significantly to improve the services of libraries. It has emerged as a powerful educational tool for an instant access to information. It has made a tremendous impact on the academic activities for the teachers, students and scholars. Electronic resources play a vital role in the academic field. The commonly available electronic resources namely CD-ROMs, multimedia, computer networks, Internet, ROMS, OPACs, web databases etc. have lead to a paperless society. Therefore, there is necessity to make study on the different aspects of e-resources and the issues relating to the use of e-resources by users, more particularly by the faculty members of academic institutions. The present study is an attempt to analyse the use of e-resources by the faculty members and scholars of affiliated colleges of Bharathiar University, Coimbatore and to find out the problems and constraints faced by the users in accessing the e-resources with some purposeful suggestions for its development. A well structured questionnaire is designed to collect primary data from the faculty members and research scholars from Arts and Science affiliated colleges of Bharathiar University, Coimbatore city. The data were collected randomly from 30 colleges having research department. The questionnaire was distributed to 300 respondents. Ten respondents were selected randomly from each college (Five Faculty Members and five Research scholars) for the study. From the study, most of the respondents were familiar with E-resources and used for the communication and self learning purposes. Few respondents were found difficulty in using E-resources due to lack of IT knowledge. This paper concludes that awareness should be generated among the usage of online resources and adequate training is needed to enhance the usage of E-resources.

KEYWORDS

Academics, Databases, Digital Library, Electronic Resources, Online Resources.

INTRODUCTION

In the fast-emerging and ever-growing information explosion it is very difficult to retrieve particular information without wasting time. Recent advances in the field of information technology contribute significantly to improve the services of libraries. It has emerged as a powerful educational tool for an instant access to information. It has made a tremendous impact on the academic activities for the teachers, students and scholars. The commonly available electronic resources namely CD-ROMs, multimedia, computer networks, Internet, ROMS, OPACs, web databases etc. have lead to a paperless society. Information is just a 'finger touch' away from the user and it would not be inappropriate to say that the internet has become the biggest global digital information library, which provides the fastest access to the right kind of information in nano seconds to end user at any time and at any place in the world. It acts as a powerful supplement to the traditional ways of studying and learning. The internet can provide access to essentially unlimited resources of information, not conventionally obtainable through other means.

Electronic resources play a vital role in the field of science and engineering studies. The electronic information resources have acquired a major portion of library collections. The value and use of information resources, particularly e-resources, have increased with the time. Therefore, there is necessity to make study on the different aspects of e-resources and the issues relating to the use of e-resources by users, more particularly by the faculty members of academic institutions. The present study is an attempt to analyse the use of e-resources by the faculty members of colleges affiliated to Bharathiar University, Coimbatore and to find out the problems and constraints faced by the users in accessing the e-resources with some purposeful suggestions for its development.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The scope of the study is limited to the knowledge and usage of e- resources in order to fulfill the academic needs of users. It focuses on the usage of e-resources available in the Arts and Science Colleges, Affiliated to Bharathiar University, Coimbatore. The limitation of this study is only focused 30 Arts and Science Colleges in and around Coimbatore city.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted with the following Specific Objectives:

1. To assess the amount of Knowledge and frequency in the use of the e-resources made by the academic community
2. To identify the purposes for using of e-resources
3. To know the adequacy of information in e-resources
4. To discover the problems encountered by the respondents while accessing and using e- resources
5. To suggest suitable suggestions to improve the e-resources and services for the benefit of users.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been a number of research studies on the use of e-resources, especially in the developed countries. Some of these studies measure usefulness; some have focused on accessibility, while others have combined all these. A review of literature reveals that the teachers and students are the most frequent users of internet. They use internet for teaching, learning and for research purposes.

In USA, several studies have been carried out addressing the issue of who uses the internet and for what. Other studies have focused specially on particular groups. For example some have been focused on by teachers, students and scholars.

Robinson¹ in his study examined Internet use among African-American college students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The respondents were surveyed by using the 43-item survey questionnaire regarding the frequency of Internet use, Internet applications most often used, and other factors to determine if the time spent on the Internet was pathological. The result of the study indicates that most of the African-American college students (76 percent) had used the Internet for more than three years. Use of the Internet for most African-American college students occurred at school (49 percent) or at home (47 percent) and they spent an average of two hours per day on-line. A small percentage of the students spent five to sixteen hours per day on the Internet, which indicates pathological Internet use. For forty-three percent of the students, their primary motivation for using the Internet was to learn and find school resources.

Adeyinka² conducted a survey of the undergraduate's use of internet and its influences on their academic performance at the University of Botswana. The results indicated that 66percent of the respondents' accessed internet 1-5 hour per week. Moreover, most respondents used internet for obtaining course-related information. The results also revealed that internet contributes significantly to academic performance of the respondents.

Asemi (2005)³ did a case study of Medical Sciences University of Isfahan (MUI), Iran. The results of the study showed that all the respondents used the Internet frequently because all faculties had an Internet connection. It was revealed that the researchers of the university were getting quality health information and patient care through the Internet. Fifty-five percent of respondents searched for scientific health information through the Internet because the university library provided access to databases and online journals to students and staff.

Ajuwon (2006)⁴ conducted a study of the physicians' use of the Internet for health information for patient care at the University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan, Nigeria. The findings revealed that 98% of the respondents had used the Internet. A majority (76%) accessed the Internet from cyber cafes. Ninety percent reported that they had obtained information from the Internet for patient care of this number, 76.2% had searched a database.

Chestnutt and Reynolds (2006)⁵ conducted a study of 457 dentists in Wales to identify how patient information on the Internet has influenced the delivery of oral care and the use practitioners make of the Internet. Thirty-nine percent of respondents agreed that information gained from the Internet had led to patients demanding inappropriate care.

The earlier studies had been based exclusively on the analysis of the access data supplied by the publishers, and many facts to give information on the characteristics, preferences and views of the users. Literature studies also show that in many studies researchers made a comparison between print and electronic journals usage. The user community is becoming more and more familiar with these tools and now they have started using them very regularly. But how much of these resources are being used, and what is the impact of this electronic era on the non-electronic era, has to be examined. The main aim of this study is to supplement the results obtained in many earlier studies, which had provided interesting general information on the use of the e-journals packages. The present study is to investigate the use of electronic journals, which are available in Indian institutions, and also to know the impact of use on usage, collection and on library environment. Technical institutions being the first to initiate the use of latest technologies, study of use and impact of electronic resources at these institutions is the need of the hour, the results of which will facilitate other academic institutions to follow.

METHODOLOGY

Keeping in view of the objectives in mind, a well structured questionnaire is designed to collect primary data from the faculty members and research scholars of Arts and science colleges affiliated to Bharathiar University, Coimbatore city. The researchers have undertaken the survey in the month of January 2011, spreading over one month. The data were collected randomly from 30 colleges having research. The questionnaire was distributed to 300 respondents. Ten respondents were selected randomly from each college (Five Faculty Members and five Research scholars) for the study. Then the data were analyzed and interpreted for the outcome and presented in the following paragraphs.

ANALYSIS

STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The distribution of the Respondents according to the status is shown in the Table – No 1

TABLE NO. 1: DISTRIBUTION OF STATUS/ DESIGNATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Status	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Faculty	173	58%
Research Scholars	127	42%
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey

It is clear from the above table that 58 percent of the respondents are of faculty members and rests of them are of Research scholars.

DISTRIBUTION OF FACULTY AND RESEARCH SCHOLARS BY AGE

The distribution of faculty members and research scholars according to their age is shown in Table 2

TABLE NO. 2: DISTRIBUTION OF FACULTY AND RESEARCH SCHOLARS BY AGE

Age of the Respondent	No. of Respondent	Percentage
> 30yrs	118	39
31-40	80	27
41-50	64	21
< 50 yrs	38	13
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey

It is clear from the table No.2 that in case of faculty and research scholars 39 percent of the respondents belonged to <30 age group, 27 percent of respondents belonged to 31-40 age group, 21 per cent of respondents belonged to 41-50, and 13 per cent of respondents belonged to > 50 age group.

FACULTY MEMBERS AND RESEARCH SCHOLARS FAMILIARITY WITH E- RESOURCES

The distribution Status of the respondents according to their familiarity to use E-resources is shown in Table 1.

¹ Robinson, Jannioe W. Internet use among African-American college students: An exploratory study. <http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/fullcit/3156015>.

² Adeyinka, Tella. Univeristy of Botswanan Undergraduate uses of the internt: Impklication on academic performance. *J. Educ. Media Lib. Sci.*, 2007, 45(2), 161-85

³ Asemi, Asefeh. "Information Searching Habits of Internet Users: A Case Study on the Medical Sciences University of Isfahan (MUI), Iran." *Webology* 2.1 (2005) <http://www.webology.ir/2005/v2n1/a10.html#9> >.

⁴ Ajuwon, Grace A. " Use of the Internet for health information by physicians for patient care in a teaching hospital in Ibadan, Nigeria ." *Biomedical Digital Libraries* 3.12 (2006). Available: <http://www.biodiglib.com/content/3/1/12>

⁵ Chestnutt, I.G. and Reynolds, K. "How Has the Internet Affected Dentistry." *British Dental Journal* . 2006. <http://www.nature.com/bdj/journal/v200/n3/full/4813196a.html>

TABLE 3: FACULTY MEMBERS AND RESEARCH SCHOLARS FAMILIARITY WITH E-RESOURCES

Use	No of Responses			Percentage
	Faculty Members	Research Scholars	Total	
Familiar	168 (97%)	98 (77%)	266	88.7
Not familiar	05 (3%)	29 (23%)	34	11.3
Total	173 (100)	127	300	100

Source: Field Survey

It is evident from Table 1 that, 88.7 percent of the faculty members and research Scholars are familiar with E- resources, while 44.37 percent replied negative. It is also observed from the table that out of 173 Faculty Members, 97% of them are familiar with E-resources and out of 127 Research Scholar, 77% of them are familiar with E-resources.

EXPERIENCE IN USE OF E-RESOURCES

Table No.4: Experience in Use of E-resources

Experience in Using Internet	No. of Respondent	Percentage
More than 4 yrs	87	29
2-4 yrs	73	24
1-4 yrs	122	41
Less than a year	18	6
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey

Table No. 4 shows that more than third of the respondents were using E-resources for 1-4 years, whereas 29 per cent of the academic community were using it for more than 4 years and 24 per cent for 2-4 years. Rest of the respondents were using it for less than a year. The inference from the above table is that half of the respondents were using internet on an average for more than 2 years.

FREQUENCY OF USING THE E-RESOURCES

The distribution of faculty members and research scholars according to the frequency of using the E-resources is shown in the Table 5

TABLE NO: 5: FREQUENCY OF USING THE E-RESOURCES

Frequency of Using the Internet	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Daily	73	24
Thrice in a Week	90	30
Once in a Week	64	21
Once in a month	50	17
Rarely	23	08
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey

It is evident from the Table 5 that 30 per cent of the faculty members and research scholars were using E- resources thrice in a week, 24 per cent daily, 21 per cent once in a week, 17 per cent once in a month and the remaining 8 per cent were rarely using the E-resources.

PREVENTING FACTORS ACCESSING THE E-RESOURCES

Table 6 shows the preventing factors which deny the accessibility of the E-resources to faculty members and scholars

TABLE 6: PREVENTS IN ACCESSING THE E-RESOURCES

Prevents	No. of Respondent	Percentage
No Interest	40	13
Lack of IT Knowledge	47	16
No proper internet facility in the institution	105	35
Need training	87	29
Language problem	10	03
Other reasons	11	04
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey

It is clear from the Table 6 that the opinion of the faculty members and Research Scholars regarding preventing factors accessing the E-resources. Most of the respondents (35%) stated that no proper internet facility in the institution is the main impediment to use of E-resources, 29 per cent need training, 16 per cent lack of IT knowledge, 13 per cent no interest is the main prevent to use E-resources.

METHODS OF LEARNING E-RESOURCES

The distribution of methods of learning E- resources by faculty members and research scholars is shown in Table 7

TABLE 7: METHODS OF LEARNING E-RESOURCES

Methods	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Self –study / instruction	197	66
From colleagues/ friends	169	56
Guidance from the library staff	137	46
Guidance from the computer staff	92	31
Formal Courses	103	34

Source: Field Survey

Note: Questions with Multiple Choices

It is evident from the Table 7 that, 66 per cent of the faculty members and research scholars are learning the necessary skills to use E-resources through self-study/ instruction (i.e. by reading various books, journal, tutorials etc.), 56 per cent learned from their colleagues and friends, 46 per cent learned through the guidance from the library staff, 34 per cent are learning to use E-resources through formal courses offered by the university.

PURPOSE OF USING E-RESOURCES

Purpose of using E-resources by faculty members and research scholars is shown in the Table 8

TABLE 8: PURPOSE OF USING E-RESOURCES

Purpose	No. of Respondent	Percentage
To collect subject information	214	71
For publishing articles/ books	118	39
For Communication	261	87
For research work	158	53
For getting current information	118	40

Source: Field Survey

Note: Questions with Multiple Choices

Table 8 shows the different purposes for which the respondents used the E-resources. It is clear from the above table that 87 per cent of the faculty members and research scholars indicate that the E-resources are used for communication purposes, 71 per cent to collect subject information, 53 per cent to do their research work, 40 per cent for getting current information and 39 per cent of the faculty members and research scholars are using E-resources for publishing articles and books.

LOCATIONS OF ACCESSING OF E-RESOURCES

Table 9 highlights the location from where the E-resources were mostly accessed by the faculty members and research scholars.

TABLE 9: LOCATIONS OF ACCESSING OF E-RESOURCES

Locations	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Home	60	20
Library to access E-resources	18	6
Computer Laboratory in campus	97	32
Internet Café	83	28
Departments	42	14
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey

From the above analysis it was observed that a majority of respondents (32 per cent) used Computer laboratory in campus, 28 per cent at the Internet Café, 20 per cent of them accessed the e-resources at their Homes. Only 14 per cent and 6 per cent of the respondents used Department and Library to access E-resources respectively.

RELATIVE FREQUENCY USE OF DIFFERENT E-RESOURCE SERVICES

To know the relative frequency in the use of different E-resources by the Faculty members and Research Scholars, Weightages of 5,4,3,2and 1 are assigned to responses of daily, thrice in a week, once in a week, once in a month, rarely use respectively. Total Weightage is calculated for each E-resources and Mean Weightage is calculated by dividing the total Weightage by the number of Respondents in the sample. Based on the Mean Weightage the E-resources have been ranked. The Distribution of users according to their relative use of different digital resources, total Weightage and ranks are shown in Table 10

TABLE 10: RELATIVE FREQUENCY USE OF DIFFERENT E-RESOURCE SERVICES

E-resource services	Total Weightages	Mean Weightages	Rank
E-mail	1147	3.83	1
Search Engines	1145	3.82	2
World Wide web	1025	3.42	3
Chatting	932	3.11	4
Frequently Asked questions	836	2.79	5
File transfer protocol	649	2.16	8
Bulletin Board Services	831	2.77	6
List Serv/ Discussion group	675	2.25	7

It is clear from the table 10 that the faculty members and research scholars are mainly using E-mail compared to other E- resources and it has got first rank. Followed by this Search Engines, World Wide Web, Chatting, Frequently Asked questions, File Transfer protocol, Bulletin Board services, List serv/ Discussion group, which have got the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth rank respectively for their use.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN USING INTERNET

The distribution of faculty members and research scholars indicating problems faced while using digital resources is shown in table 11

TABLE 11: PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN USING INTERNET

Problems Encountered	Responses	Percentage
Slow access speed	165	55
Difficulty in Finding relevant information	116	38
It takes too long to view download pages	174	58
Too much information retrieved	88	29
Difficulty in using digital resources due to lack of IT knowledge	122	41
Limited access to computers	71	24
Electricity Failure	124	41
Important sites in subject area not known	114	38
Poor computer using skills	60	02
Time slot insufficient	102	34

Note: Questions were multiple choices

Table 11 exhibits that 58 per cent of the faculty members and research scholars stated that it takes too long to view download pages, 55 per cent slow access speed,41 per cent difficulty in using digital resources due to lack of IT knowledge and Electricity Failure, 38 per cent difficulty in finding relevant information and important sites in subject area not known as the main problem to use E-resources.

ADEQUACY OF INFORMATION IN E-RESOURCES

The distribution of faculty members and research scholars indicating the adequacy of information in E-resources is shown in the Table 12.

TABLE 12: ADEQUACY OF INFORMATION IN E-RESOURCES

Opinion	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Always	160	53
Sometimes	122	22
Never	18	06
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey

It is clear from the table 12 that 53 per cent of the faculty members and research scholars indicate the information available in the digital resources always adequate, 22 per cent per cent indicate some time and 6 per cent indicate the information available in the E-resources is never adequate.

NEED FOR IMPROVING SKILLS USING E-RESOURCES

When the respondents were asked to respond if they like to improve their skills in the use of the E-resources, majority of the respondents (90 per cent) expressed their willingness to improve their skills in the use of E-resources.

SATISFACTION WITH THE INTERNET FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE INSTITUTION

Further the respondents were queried regarding their satisfaction with the E-resources provided in their institutions, 49 per cent opined that they were satisfied while 20 per cent were neutral. Only 16 per cent were highly satisfied with the E-resources provided in their institutions. Where as, the rest of the respondents show their dissatisfaction with the E-resources provided in their institutions.

FINDINGS

The Following observations were made from the analysis of the study:

- It shows that 58 percent of the respondents are of faculty members and rest of them is of Research scholars.
- Most of the (88.7 percent) of the faculty members and research Scholars are familiar with E- resources, while 44.37 percent are not.
- The inference from the study is that half of the respondents were using internet on an average for more than 2 years
- About 30 per cent of the faculty members and research scholars were using E- resources thrice in a week, 24 per cent daily, 21 per cent once in a week, 17 per cent once in a month and the remaining 8 per cent were rarely using the E-resources.
- Most of the respondents (35%) stated that no proper internet facility in the institution is the main impediment to use of E-resources.
- Majority (66 per cent) of the faculty members and research scholars are learning the necessary skills to use E-resources through self-study/ instruction (i.e. by reading various books, journal, tutorials etc.),
- About 87 per cent of the faculty members and research scholars indicate that the E-resources are used for communication purposes, 71 per cent to collect subject information, 53 per cent to do their research work, 40 per cent for getting current information.
- Many of the faculty members and research scholars are mainly using E-mail compared to other E- resources and it has got first rank.
- Around 58 per cent of the faculty members and research scholars stated that it takes too long to view download pages, 55 per cent slow access speed 41 per cent difficulty in using E-resources due to lack of IT knowledge and electricity Failure.
- About 53 per cent of the faculty members and research scholars indicate the information available in the digital resources always adequate.

SUGGESTIONS /RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the findings, the focus of the study has been laid on efficient use of electronic resources among the faculty members and all the Research scholars in the study area. Following suggestions/recommendation are derived out of the study for other academic institutions.

- Awareness should be generated about the online journals to obtain up-date information.
- Library should provide the facilities for the user to get familiar with e-resources subscribed by the library. This can be done by the presentations organized by the concerned publishers or vendors.
- Special training programs should be organized for students and faculty member for the maximum use of e-resources so that users can adequately trace relevant information.
- More computers with the latest specifications and multimedia kit should be installed in the library for easy access to faculty, research scholars and students.
- Technical staff or technically trained staff should be appointed to assist the users in accessing the information,
- There should be complete campus networking.
- Problems related to slow connectivity should be over come by upgrading the band width.
- Information regarding the popular and the latest websites with their addresses should be displayed on the notice board in the library and in the computer centre.

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Hoping an appropriate consideration.

With sincere regards

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Sd/-

Co-ordinator