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Internet-Based Resources and Services among Librarians in Tamil Nadu, India

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Introduction

The Internet has spread technological literacy and given people all over the world fast access to vast resources. Internet use isdirectly affecting people, ideas, and behavior. Internet has an impact in many areas, including higher education, where it heralds the development and implementation of new and innovative strategies. Scholars can communicate with each other, as well as accessing news groups, library catalogues, bibliographic databases, and other academic resources.

Literature Review

Becker (1998)1 conducted a study on Internet use by 2,250 teachers from public and private schools in the US. The study revealed that 90% of the teachers had Internet access. More than half of the teachers (59%) had Internet access at home. A majority of the teachers (68%) a used the Internet to

find information resources for preparing their lessons. Singh (1998) conducted a research study on the use of Internet by the librarians in Malaysia. The main findings of the study indicated that 90% of the respondents used the Internet for work related purposes. Most of the respondents were recent users. Laite (2000) surveyed 406 graduate and undergraduate students from Shippensburg University. The survey showed that 57.6% of the undergraduate students used the Internet 1-2 times per week and another 37.1% used it 1-2 times daily. More than 50% of the graduate students used Internet 1-2 times per week and 37.7% used it 1-2 times daily. The survey showed that the most used Internet service was e-mail. A hundred percent of the graduates and undergraduate students used e-mail services. Chandran (2000)4 conducted a study at Sri Venkateshwara University, Tirupathi, which showed that more than 25% of the respondents used the Internet for 2-3 times a week and more than 56% used it for accessing information. The sources used for identifying information about Internet included website itself, journals and magazines, staff and newspapers. A majority of the respondents are used general websites as compared to recreational and discipline oriented websites. Naushad Ali (2000) conducted a study at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The study showed that more than 50% of the study population was satisfied regarding the timings of the Internet service, but were not satisfied with staff's cooperation, and reservation facility. Nicholas et. al. (2003) conducted a study in the UK to examine the use to the web for health information and advice. More than 1300 people were surveyed. The study showed that 66% of the respondents accessed the Internet from home, 28% from work place and the remainder (6%) used a combination of both work place and home. Hanauer et al., (2004) surveyed a diverse community college to assess the use of the Internet by the students for health related information. The survey showed that although all the students surveyed had free Internet access through their community college, yet only 97% of the students reported having access to the Internet., Asemi (2005) shows that all the respondents were using the Internet frequently because all faculties were provided connection to the Internet. It was revealed that the researchers of the university were getting quality information through the Internet. Fifty five percent of the respondents searched for scientific information through the Internet because the university library had provided access to various databases and online journals for all the students and staff.

Methodology

This study attempts to examine the characteristics and Internet using behavior of the library professionals in Tamil Nadu. A questionnaire was distributed personally to the library professionals. 200 questionnaires distributed, and 195 were returned, making the response rate 97.5%.

Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu state situated at the south eastern extremity of the Indian Peninsula. The State can be divided broadly into two natural divisions (a) the coastal plains of south India and (b) the hilly western area. The Tamil Nadu consists of thirty two districts. It is the 11th state in India in area forming 4.11 percent of the Union areas. There has been a rapid growth in the number of institutions imparting education at the college level. Today, there are 32 universities, in addition, there 4 Anna University constituent colleges, 6 government engineering colleges, 1 central government institutions (engineering) 3 government aided engineering colleges, 254 engineering colleges, 135 polytechnics, 526 industrial institutes, 244 arts and science colleges, 27 colleges of education, 15 oriental colleges, 5 physical education colleges and 2 schools of social work.

Objectives

1. To study the frequency of use of Internet resources and tools by library professionals
2. To know how Internet based resources are identified by library professionals
3. To rank the features of Internet resources by library professionals
4. To study the use of search engines and websites by library professionals
5. To know the extent of difficulties in accessing the Internet by library professionals

Analysis

Table 1. Purposes for using the Internet

Purpose	Yes	No
Search for course related material	25 (16.13)	130 (83.87)
Visit websites	92 (59.35)	63 (40.65)
Searching subject database	22 (14.19)	133 (85.81)
Searching catalogs of libraries	12 (7.74)	143 (92.26)
Accessing e-documents	11 (7.10)	144 (92.90)
Accessing e-journals	11 (7.10)	144 (92.90)
For sending and receiving E-mails	142 (91.61)	13 (8.39)
Enjoyment, fun, flay games	75 (48.39)	80 (51.61)
Career, information	43 (27.74)	112 (72.26)
Teleconferencing	08 (5.16)	147 (94.84)
On-line learning	09 (5.81)	146 (94.19)
Downloading programs / files / images	22 (14.19)	133 (85.81)
View moves and pictures	32 (20.65)	123 (79.35)
Listening to music	35 (22.58)	120 (77.42)
Looking for advertisement	33 (21.29)	122 (78.71)
Reading newspaper	68 (43.87)	87 (56.13)
Know more about Internet	102 (65.81)	53 (34.19)
For chatting	85 (54.84)	70 (45.16)

Table 1 shows that the purpose of using Internet. Out of 155, 142 library professionals are using to sending and receiving the e-mail and 59.35 percent are using to visit the websites. And also 65.81 percent of the library professionals are more about Internet.

Table 2. Frequency of Internet use

Purpose	Very frequent	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Look for course related materials	05 (3.22)	10 (6.45)	03 (1.94)	7 (4.52)	130 (83.87)
Visit websites	25 (16.13)	22 (14.19)	23 (14.84)	22 (14.19)	63 (40.65)
Searching subject databases	8 (5.16)	6 (3.87)	-	8 (5.16)	133 (85.81)
Searching catalogs of libraries	5 (3.22)	3 (1.94)	4 (2.58)	-	143 (92.26)

Access to e-documents	4 (2.58)	3 (1.94)	3 (1.94)	1 (0.65)	144 (92.90)
Access to c-journals	3 (1.94)	3 (1.94)	2 (1.29)	3 (1.94)	144 (92.90)
For sending and receiving e-mail	22 (14.19)	38 (24.52)	35 (19.35)	47 (30.32)	13 (8.39)
Employment, fun, play games	12 (7.74)	28 (18.06)	30 (19.35)	5 (3.22)	80 (51.61)
Career information	8 (5.16)	15 (9.68)	18 (11.61)	2 (1.29)	112 (72.26)
Teleconferencing	2 (1.29)	3 (1.94)	-	3 (1.94)	147 (94.84)
On line learning	3 (1.94)	2 (1.29)	4 (2.58)	-	146 (94.19)
Downloading program	5 (3.22)	7 (4.52)	5 (3.22)	5 (3.22)	133 (85.81)
View movies	6 (3.87)	10 (6.45)	15 (9.68)	1 (0.65)	123 (79.35)
Listening to music	4 (2.58)	11 (7.0)	10 (6.45)	5 (3.22)	120 (77.42)
Look for advertisements	4 (2.58)	10 (6.45)	8 (5.16)	11 (7.10)	122 (78.71)
Read newspaper	34 (21.94)	22 (14.19)	6 (3.87)	6 (3.87)	87 (56.13)
Know more about Internet	16 (10.32)	26 (16.71)	28 (18.06)	32 (20.65)	53 (34.13)
Chatting	7 (4.52)	22 (14.19)	25 (16.13)	31 (20.00)	70 (45.16)

Table 2 shows that the frequency of using Internet for various purposes by the respondents. Among the purposes know more about Internet is 1.93 ranges and comes first in position and it is followed by for sending and receiving e-mail, read newspaper, visit websites, chatting with 2, 3, 4 and 5th in position respectively. It could be seen from the above discussion that more number of respondents frequently used the Internet for the purpose of 'know more about Internet', and only limited respondents less frequently used the Internet for the purpose of access to e-journals and e-documents.

Table 3 Frequency of using Internet for resources and tools

Internet resources and tools	Very frequent	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
E-mail	22 (14.19)	38 (24.52)	35 (22.58)	47 (30.32)	13 (8.39)
Mailing lists	15 (9.68)	25 (16.13)	31 (20)	11 (7.10)	73 (47.10)
Use net/ news group	10 (6.45)	16 (10.32)	27 (17.42)	10 (6.45)	92 (59.35)
FTP	10 (6.45)	12 (7.74)	13 (8.39)	12 (7.74)	108 (69.68)
Gopher	8 (5.16)	11 (7.10)	11 (7.10)	9 (5.81)	116(74.84)
Archie	8 (5.18)	9 (5.81)	11 (7.10)	11 (7.10)	116(74.84)

WAIS	7 (4.52)	9 (5.81)	10 (6.45)	11 (7.10)	118(76.13)
Veronica	7 (4.52)	9 (5.81)	10 (6.45)	11 (7.10)	118(76.13)
Finger	7 (4.52)	9 (5.81)	11 97.10)	10 (6.45)	118(76.13)
Telnet	9 (5.81)	20 (12.90)	30 (19.35)	6 (3.89)	6 (3.87)
World wide web	63 (40.65)	50 (32.26)	30 (19.35)	6 (3.89)	6 (3.87)
FAQ	8 (5.16)	9 (5.81)	8 (5.16)	11 (7.10)	119(76.77)
Internet search engineer	40 (25.81)	45 (29.03)	32 (20.64)	18 (11.61)	20 (12.90)

Table 3 shows the frequency of using Internet resources and tools by the respondents tools and services of Internet, like www, Internet search engines, e-mail and mailing lists were used by three-fourth of the library professionals. Its resources and services like FAQ, finger, veronica, WAIS, gopher, Archie, FTP, use net/ newsgroup, mailing lists and telnet were never used at all by a majority.

Table 4 shows that the identification of the Internet based resources by the respondents through various methods. Personal communication waste first preferred source, for identifying Internet based resource and its followed by attending training programs, use of Internet search engine, browse the sites regularly follow up references in print sources, subscribe to mail lists, and system managers staff of Internet services.

Table 4 Identification of the Internet based resources

Methods	Preference							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Personal communication	95 (61.29)	20 (12.90)	9 (5.80)	8 (5.16)	8 (5.16)	7 (4.52)	5 (3.22)	3 (1.94)
By attending training programme	53 (34.19)	25 (16.13)	21 (13.55)	16 (10.32)	9 (5.80)	11 (7.10)	6 (3.87)	4 (2.58)
Follow up reference in print sources	15 (9.68)	21 (13.55)	18 (11.61)	21 (13.55)	35 (22.58)	38 (24.52)	4 (2.58)	3 (1.94)
Use of Internet search engine	28 (18.06)	25 (16.13)	37 (23.87)	27 (17.42)	16 (10.32)	18 (11.61)	2 (1.29)	2(1.29)
Browse the sites regularly	18 (11.61)	21 (13.55)	17 (10.97)	26 (16.77)	18 (11.61)	15 (9.68)	22 (14.19)	18 (11.61)
Subscribe to mail lists	17 (10.97)	15 (9.68)	3 (1.94)	4 (2.58)	4 (2.58)	20 (12.90)	51 (32.90)	41 (26.45)
System management staff of intern serve	2 (1.29)	3 (1.94)	2 (1.29)	7 (4.52)	10 (6.45)	18 (11.61)	51 (32.90)	62 (40)

Table 5. Rating of Internet resources

Features	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Average (rank)

Accessibility	15 (9.68)	59 (38.06)	42 (24.10)	23 (14.84)	16 (10.32)	1.75 (10)
Accuracy	10 (6.45)	45 (29.03)	42 (27.10)	24 (15.48)	34 (21.94)	2.19 (2)
Authority	18 (11.61)	49 (31.61)	44 (28.39)	26 (16.77)	18 (11.61)	1.84 (9)
Availability	17 (10.97)	47 (30.32)	45 (29.03)	27 (17.42)	19 (12.26)	1.89 (7)
Consistency	16 (10.32)	45 (27.10)	49 (31.61)	26 (16.77)	19 (12.26)	1.98 (6)
Easy to use	11 (7.10)	46 (29.68)	49 (31.61)	26 (16.77)	19 (12.26)	2.04 (3)
Flexibility	12 (7.74)	45 (27.10)	49 (31.61)	28 (18.06)	21 (13.55)	2.01 (4)
Permanence	11 (7.10)	52 (33.35)	46 (29.68)	25 (16.13)	19 (12.26)	1.95 (5)
Timeliness	18 (11.61)	46 (29.88)	49 (31.61)	22 (14.19)	20 (12.90)	1.86 (8)
Uniqueness	14 (9.03)	48 (30.97)	45 (27.10)	27 (17.42)	21 (13.55)	1.95 (5)
Usefulness	7 (4.52)	44 (28.39)	43 (27.74)	33 (21.29)	28 (18.06)	2.22 (1)

Table 5 shows the rating of Internet resources by library professionals. The mean values of rating Internet resources were between 2.22 and 1.76, which implies that its resources were rated either very good or good for various features. Usefulness, accuracy, and ease of use are the three features that rate highest.

Table 6. Use of search engines

Search engines	Number	Percentage
123 India	52	33.55
Alta vista	51	32.90
Google	29	18.71
Hotmail	85	54.84
Indya	28	18.06
Khoj	11	7.16
Lycos	8	5.11
Rediff	64	41.29
Search	7	4.52
Sify	38	24.52
Yahoo	118	76.13
Asktems	4	2.58
Krackner	6	3.87
Opentext	3	1.94
msn	3	1.94
Hot bot	3	1.94
Goto	3	1.94
amese	2	1.29

Table 6 shows the use of search engines by the respondents. A

majority (76.13) use Yahoo. 54.84 percent of 41.29 percent of the respondents use hotmail and rediff.

Table 7. Discipline oriented websites used by respondents

Discipline oriented websites	Number	Percentage
Professional / societies/ association	37	88.10
Colleges and universities	36	85.71
Enginery institution	39	92.86
Companies	32	76.19
Data bases	22	52.38
Publishers home pages	13	30.95
Newsgroup	21	50.00
Electronic journals	18	42.86
Full text publication	11	26.19
Reference sources	22	52.38
Mailing lists	31	73.81

Among the 42 respondentswho have been using discipline-oriented websites, nearly all use engineering institution websites. An almost equal number use professional societies and association sites and colleges and universities.

Nearly 70 percent of the respondents find slow access to be a problem, considerable numbers also have problems searching, downloading, and maintaining a reliable connection.

Table 8. Difficulty accessing the Internet

Difficulties	No	Little	Considerable	High	Average
Obtaining connection	46 (29.68)	61 (39.33)	38 (24.52)	10 (6.45)	1.10 (5)
Opening web page	44 (28.39)	72 (46.45)	28 (18.06)	11 (7.10)	1.06 (7)
Browsing	52 (33.55)	41 (26.45)	47 (30.32)	15 (9.68)	1.19 (3)
Searching	45 (29.03)	51 (32.90)	48 (30.978)	11 (7.10)	1.20 (2)
Downloading	50 (32.26)	52 (33.55)	34 (21.94)	19 (12.66)	1.17 (4)
Survey on net	57 (36.77)	45 (29.03)	37 (23.87)	16 (10.32)	1.10 (5)
Reliability	52 (33.35)	56 (36.13)	34 (21.94)	13 (08.39)	1.07 (6)
Slow accessibility	39 (25.16)	49 (31.61)	49 (31.61)	18 (11.61)	1.34 (1)

Table 9. Internet facilities and services to be offered by library

Services	Number	Percentage
Course related materials	140	71.79
Discipline oriented websites	122	62.56
Searching subject databases	103	52.82

Searching on line public access catalyses	75	38.46
Accessing e-documents	82	42.05
Accessing e-journals	78	40.00
Sending and receiving of e-mail	92	47.18
Recreation an entertainment	74	37.95
Career information	109	55.90
Conferencing	62	31.79
On line learning	85	43.59
Downloading progress files images	93	47.69
Newspapers	105	53.85
Electronic document delivery	111	56.92

Table 10 shows the Internet facilities and services to be offered by library of college Among the respondents 195, 71.79 percent of them felt that the library should offer course relative materials, 62.56 percent of them discipline oriented websites, 56.92 percent electronic document delivery services, 55.90 percent career information, 53.85 percent newspapers service, 52.82 percent searching subject databases 47.69 percent downloading progress files and images 47.18 percent sending and receiving of e-mails 43.59 per cent online learning 42.05 accessing e-documents, 40 percent accuracy e-journals and 31.79 conference information services.

Table 10. Reasons for not using Internet

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Don't find it necessary	18	45.00
Don't know, how to use	27	67.50
Lack of facility	21	52.50
Lack of awareness	19	47.50
Lack of time	17	42.50
Not getting what is needed	16	40.00
Fear or anxiety	20	50.00

Table 10 shows the reasons for not using Internet and its services among respondents who did not use it. Twenty-seven lacked skill, while, twenty-one lack facilities.

Findings and Conclusion

The survey found a high rate of Internet use, but also significant problems such as slow response, lack of connectivity, and need for more training.

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