University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal) | Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

11-1-2011

Internet Use by Social Scientists at the Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan: A Survey

Rubina Bhatti
Islamia University of Bahawalpur, dr.rubytariq@yahoo.com

Mahe Bushra Asghar
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur South Punjab, Pakistan

Sarwat Mukhtar
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur South Punjab, Pakistan

Tariq M. Chohan
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur South Punjab, Pakistan

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Bhatti, Rubina; Bushra Asghar, Mahe; Mukhtar, Sarwat; and Chohan, Tariq M., "Internet Use by Social Scientists at the Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan: A Survey" (2011). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. Paper 667.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/667

StatCounter.com RSS Add to Google

http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/

Library Philosophy and Practice 2011

ISSN 1522-0222

Internet Use by Social Scientists at the Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan: A Survey

Dr. Rubina Bhatti
Assistant Professor & Coordinator, M.Phil Programme
Department of Library and information Science
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur
South Punjab, Pakistan

Mrs. Mahe Bushra Asghar
Lecturer
Department of Library and information Science
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur
South Punjab, Pakistan

Mrs. Sarwat Mukhtar
Lecturer
Department of Library and information Science
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur
South Punjab, Pakistan

Tariq M. Chohan
Librarian
The Islamia University Library of Bahawalpur
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur
South Punjab, Pakistan

Introduction

Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan South Punjab, Pakistan

Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan was established in 1975 by an act of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. To pay tribute to the Great Saint Hazrat Bahauddin Zakariya, the name was changed in 1979. The University offers a wide range of programmes: M.A., M.Sc. MBA, M.Com., MCS, M.Phil and Ph.D. It is divided into seven faculties: Faculty of Arts and social Sciences, Faculty of Commerce, Law and Business Administration, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Islamia Studies and Languages, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Veterinary Science (Prospectus, 2009 p.14).

Bahauddin Zakariya University Library, Multan

The library collection support not only every course in the curriculum but also include selected stock of general reference books, periodicals, publications, newspapers etc. Most of the departments have their own departmental libraries situated in their own buildings. The total number of books in the Central and Departmental libraries is 1,66,583. The BZU Library offers online access to latest material through internet and Higher Education Commission Digital Library Pakistan as well. The Internet facilities are provided in the main library, departmental libraries and computer laboratory. The administration of the Library is vested in the Library Committee, which is responsible for efficient management of the Library.

Important research questions:

The present study was conducted to find out the answers of the following questions:

- How social scientist of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan consider the Internet useful and effective for exploring information for teaching, research, recreational and other purposes?
- What are their purposes of seeking information on internet?
- What search engines are used by them?
- What places do they prefer for internet usage and time spent per week?
- What problems do they face in seeking information on internet?

Research Design

A survey questionnaire was applied. It was piloted on 12 social scientists with the purpose to ascertain reliability of the data collection instrument. A comprehensive review of related studies was conducted. The population of the study comprises 70 social scientist from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Department of Economics, Education, History, Geography, Pakistan studies and Gender Studies, Political Science and International Relations, Mass communication, Sociology, Applied Psychology, Philosophy, Multan College of Arts, Undergraduate Studies in Social Sciences) in Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan. Author's friends in Multan helped in distributing and collecting the responses. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics: frequency counts and percentages. Several relevant studies and a few available questionnaires were used to develop a questionnaire with closed-ended questions. It is important to note that the simmilar questionnaire was used to assess infromation needs of faculty members in the Islamia University of Bahawalpur by the same author.

Why Internet?

Libraries in developing countries, Pakistan included have been facing problems of acquiring and providing latest sources of information to foster teaching and research activities in all kinds of academic institutions. Universities are responsible for supporting its faculty, researchers and students in their academic ventures, but the escalating cost of reading materials and space problems are the major obstacles. In the prevailing situation, the Internet has solved the problems of accessing current and relevant piece of information in less time to a great extent. It provides right information to the right user at the right time. It provides access to numerous sources of information and search engines and it eases and increases access to a large amount of data, saves time and money, and gives an opportunity to consult several experts with a single request (via discussion groups), and greater independence from specific times and places for information seeking (Savolainen, 1999).

Review of relevant literature shows that Internet is being utilised in academic institutions worldwide A library is responsible for providing all kinds of information resources in whatever format i.e. book, non-book and electronic. At the same time, it is imperative that users' internet use pattern must be studied together with library usage activities. This paper is an attempt to assess the same that helps in providing relevant collection, services and designing suitable library operations and systems.

Literature Review

A review of the related research was conducted with the purpose that these studies would help the researcher in doing the present study into Pakistani context. It must be noted that present author found these studies by using internet resources due to the unavailability and inadequacy of research material in printed format in the academic libraries of Pakistan. Journal articles and conference proceeding found on the internet proved very useful.

Internet use by the Chinese faculty, researchers, and students was studied by Dong (2003) that showed more men than women used the internet. It revealed that they mostly used e-mail (84.8 percent) and browsed WWW (58.2 percent). They learned to use the internet mainly through self-instruction (46.1 percent) and colleagues or friends (35.7 percent).

Mamtora (2003) evaluated the Internet use by the academics of the University of the South Pacific which pointed that a large majority of the respondents used e-mail to communicate and WWW to seek information. It concluded that the academics required specific training in the use of the internet.

Internet use by 218 faculty members of the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh was analysed by Nasir Uddin in (2003). The study revealed that internet was mainly used for e-mailing (88.07 percent), accessing WWW resources (70.64 percent), and downloading files (55.96 percent). Faculty members mostly used the internet for contacting overseas education and research organizations (74.31 percent), information about publications (68.81 percent), and finding information about higher education opportunities (53.67 percent), and seeking conference information (44.5 percent) and searching library resources (29.36 percent). The least used activities were job-seeking (18.35 percent), and about twelve percent of his respondents had never used the internet. It The least used tools were audio-video (5.5 percent), mailing lists (8.26 percent), and telephone (9.63 percent).

Momani (2003) investigated the purpose, nature, extent, and satisfaction with the use of the internet by the applied science and technology faculty in Jordan. The findings revealed that the internet was considered as an effective tool to search for all kinds of information including research and communications. The respondents mentioned some of the obstacles included: lack of time, lack of access, lack of speed, lack of training, and lack of university support.

In 2006, Al-Ansari assessed Internet use by the faculty members of Kuwait University. This study was designed to investigate the patterns of internet use by the faculty including purposes for use, its impact on teaching and research, internet resources used, and the problems faced while using the internet. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the faculty coming from four colleges of Kuwait University, i.e. Arts, Social Sciences, Sciences, and Engineering. The study revealed that the internet is mostly used for communication, research, and publication by saving time, find up to date information, and cooperate with their colleagues. Slow speed, lack of time, and lack of access from home are the major problems.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Demographics of respondents

An analysis of the demographics of the respondents reveal that 42 male and 28

female social scientists took part in the study. It showed that 12 respondents (17%) hold PhD degree, 17 (24%) M.Phil and 41 (58%) have M.A. in their fields. Of the twelve respondents holding Ph.D, four professors and eight were associate professors. Seventeen respondents' designation was assistant professors and fourty one were lecturers.

Purposes for using internet by social scientists

The data shoed that social sceientists have a variety of purposes for using the internet A vast majority use intenet for for teaching (48%), followed by (31%) for resaerch. Of seventy respondents (34%) use it for doing Mphil and PhD, 25% social sciectists consult inter for guiding research studnets and 17% for writing a resaerch paper for a journal or conference. Frequeccies are presented in Table 1.

Sources of information used on Internet

The responses regarding the use of internet sources revealed that databases, e-journals, online indexing and abstracting services are used by 35%, 34%and 28% respectively. Most social scientists also prefer to use E-books, E-encyclopedias and E-dictionaries. Online workshops are less preferred by the social scientists (07%) in BZ University, Multan. The frequencies of responses are shown in table 2.

Internet Services Utilisation (multiple choice)

E-mail service is being utilised by a large majority (85%) followed by WWW (78%).

Social scientists use Academically-oriented mailing lists, Listservs, and News group 38%, 32% and 47% respectively. Electronic translation service is used by none. Other responses are presented in Table 3.

Time Spent on Internet per Week (single choice)

Time spent on internet per week showed that 28% respondents spend 10-8 hours a week, followed by 6-4 hours by 25%. The lowest percentage of internet usage by 22% social scientists in BZ University is 2-4 hours per week. Other responses are presented in table 4.

Preferred Places for Internet Usage

Social scientists in BZU were asked about their preferred placed of consulting internet resources. 34% use their university main library whereas 31% prefer home for inter usage, this response was received by mainly female respondents may due to cultural problems. In addition, ladies have to look after home and family that is why home is the most suitable place for female social science faculty members. Cyber cafés are used by only 05%. Table 5 can be consulted for detailed responses.

Search Engines Used

Social scietist were asked to indiacte their fvauourite serch engine. Data pointed out that Goggle is widely used search engine by social scientists (68%) followed by yahoo 55%. It is interesting that Infoseek, Altavista are significantly less used whereas WebCrawler is used by none. See table 6 for other frequencies.

Benefits of Internet as perceived by social scientists.

This important question solicited the social scientists opinions regarding the benefits of Internet. The responses revealed that they perceive it very beneficial as 48% think that they have to spend less time in searching for their required information. 35% consider it very useful for accessing distant publications followed by 34% saying fast access to unlimited resources. 31% said that they have to make less effort on internet and for 21% it is useful for developing up-to-date

knowledge. The detail is given in table 7.

Sources of learning the Internet use

The interesting responses revealed through this question. 50% social scientists learn through their personal effort using trial and error technique. 14% online instruction, 11% courses taught at the university, almost 06% help by library staff and 17% by reading books, articles on the internet respectively. About 26% attend refresher & short courses, awareness programmes, workshops etc. outside the University, the reason for going outside the university may be inadequacy of help provided by the University and its library and stated above only four respondents mentioned that they received help from library staff. It is worth mentioning here that there is lack of formal training for library staff in using internet resources for themselves and helping users at the BZ University. 28% learn their own children and 21% get help from colleagues and friends. See table 8.

Difficulties while seeking information

A question was asked regarding the difficulties faced by them while using the internet. Majority (57%) complained for the shortage of computers in the university library and their departments. They demanded for more computers and internet facility so that internet resources and services can best be exploited by them. Respondents were asked to identify any problems that they might have faced while using the internet. 38% pointed out that lack of knowledge and training about internet information retrieving techniques is a major problem. 34% pointed out that the subscription of e-journals is expensive. Lack of awareness, expensive subscription, English language material, slow speed and lack of time are the other problems mentioned by the respondents. Their responses are presented in Table 8.

Conclusion

The study pointed out that that Internet in academic institutions has changed the way social scientists seek, retrieve and use information. Due to fact that the Internet delivers better, faster, more timely communication with colleagues and sources of information social scientists in BZU tend to moving towards internet rapidly. . The data acquired through this study showed a more realistically positive picture of internet use by social scientists than expected. In order to survive in new information era they are willingly ready to cope with the challenges posed by new information and communication technologies. Social scientists is Bahauddin Zakariya University do not rely only on print sources of information any more rather exploiting the internet for teaching, research, doing MPhil and PhD, guiding research students, writing and submitting articles to journals and conferences. Another factor that is leading them towards internet is the inadequacy of latest books, journals and reference material in the university main and departmental libraries. Social scientists understand the value of it for keeping themselves up-to-date and well informed of the latest trends in their fields of interests. Though not totally satisfactorily, but a reasonable number of respondents are aware of the usefulness of E-journals E-books, E-encyclopedias, E-dictionaries, Online abstracting & indexing services, Online bibliographical services and databases for teaching, research and other purposes.

Keeping in view the current responses, it is envisaged that if the internet services and facilities be improved in the BZU, the social scientists would make the more positive and effective use of it. This study has implications for the university authorities, library management and IT section of the BZU Library. The sources of learning internet portray an interesting picture as half of respondent use their personal effort using trial and error technique. Some of them learn from their own children and seek help from colleagues and friends. University and its library give no provision in this regard.

The problems reported include inadequate number of computers, lack of awareness and any formal training, slow speed, lack of time, shortage of latest e-books and e-journals and English language material. These are the indication for Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, South Punjab to take steps to improve the current situation to provide the proper facilities to foster teaching, learning, research plans. It must develop a proper university and library's home page.

Considering the findings of the study it may be suggested that the Bahauddin Zakariya University and its library need to improve it IT infrastructure in order to bring its services and resource provision at par with the countries with developed education and library systems, services, operations and facilities. There is a continuous need to study the composite education, research, information and other demands of all categories of library users. University authorities should facilitate and encourage the users by allocating sufficient budget to main and departmental libraries for maintaining and developing IT infrastructure and facilities.

Tables:

Table 1. Purposes of seeking information on internet by social scientists

	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	Teaching purpose	40	57%
2	Research purpose	22	31%
3	For doing M.Phil and PhD	24	34%
4	Guiding researcher students	18	25%
5	Developing up-to-date knowledge	15	21%
6	For writing a research paper for a journal or conference	12	17%
7	For submitting research papers to national and international journals and conferences online	12	17%
8	Recreational purpose	25	35%
9	Personal purposes	20	28%
10	Seeking scholarships for higher studies	24	34%
11	Seeking job online	02	2.85%
12	Online Chatting	35	50%
13	Others	11	15%

Sources of information used on Internet

Table 2. Sources of information on Internet

	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	E-journals	24	34%
2	E-books	12	17%
3	E-encyclopedias	15	21%
4	E-dictionaries	18	25%
5	Online abstracting & indexing services	20	28%
6	Online bibliographical services	12	17%
7	Online Workshops	05	07%
8	Discussion groups	08	11%
9	Databases	25	35%
10	Others	000	15%

Internet Services Utilisation (multiple choice)

Table 3. Internet services utilisation

	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	E-mail	60	85%
2	Academically-oriented mailing lists	28	38%
3	Listservs	23	32%
4	Newsgroup	33	47%
5	The World Wide Web	55	78%
6	External library Catalogue	0.00	0.00
7	Document Delivery services	12	0.00%
8	Downloading software	0.00	0.00
9	Electronic translation services	0.00	0.00%
10	Telnet connections	0.00	07.00%

11	Others	000	0.00%

Time Spent on Internet per Week (single choice)

Table 4. How Many Hours per week

	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	20-15 hours per week	11	15%
2	15-10 hours per week	13	19%
3	10-8 hours per week	20	28%
4	8-6 hours per week	17	24%
5	6-4 hours per week	18	25%
6	4-2 hours per week	16	22%
7	None	0.00	0.00

Preferred Places for Internet Usage & time spent

Table 5. Preferred Places for Internet usage

	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	University Library	24	34%
2	Workplace	19	27%
3	Computer Lab	15	21%
4	Home	22	31%
5	Cybercafés	03	05%
6	Other	10	14%

Search Engines Used

Table 6. Search Engines Used

	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	Google	48	68%

2	Yahoo	39	55%
3	MSN	15	21%
4	Inforseek	05	07
5	Altavista	03	4.28
6	webcrawler	0.00	0.00%
7	Other	0.00	0.00

Benefits of Internet as perceived by Social Scientists

Table 7. Benefits of Internet as perceived by Social Scientists

	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	Less time	40	57%
2	Less effort	22	31%
3	Useful for accessing distant publications	25	35%
4	Fast access to unlimited resources	24	34%
5	Makes independent in searching all types of resources	18	25%
6	Helps developing up-to-date knowledge	15	21%
7	Faster and easier communication	12	17%
8	Quick Submission of research papers locally and internationally	12	17%
9	Saves from troublesome browsing of print material	18	25%
10	Current awareness service of libraries	20	28%
11	Consulting websites of online bookstores i.e. Amazon.com	0.00	0.00
11	Publisher catalogues and flyers	0.00	0.00
12	Others (please specify)	11	15%

Sources of learning the Internet use (multiple responses)

Table 8. Sources of learning use of Internet (multiple responses)

	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	Personal effort, trial and error technique	35	50%
2	Online instruction	10	14.2%
3	Courses taught at the university	08	11.4%
4	Help by library staff	04	5.71%
4	By reading books, articles on the internet	12	17.1%
5	Refresher & short courses, awareness programmes, workshops etc. outside the University	18	25.7%
6	Help from colleagues and friends	15	21.4%
7	Other (own children, exhibition, etc.)	20	28.5%

Difficulties while seeking information

Table. 9: Difficulties while seeking information

	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	Subscription of latest e-journals is expensive	24	34%
2	English language material	19	27%
3	Lack of awareness of the availability of material	15	21%
4	Shortage of latest e-books	20	28%
5	Information scattered in too many sources	03	05%
6	Lack of time (Overworked)	10	14%
7	Slow speed	17	24%
8	Lack of knowledge about internet information retrieving techniques	28	38%
9	Unavailability of internet facility in the departments	14	20%
10	Shortage of computers	40	57
11	Others (Please specify)	0.00	0.00

References

Al-Ansari, (2006), “Internet use by the faculty members of Kuwait University”,The Electronic Library, Vol. 24, No. 6 pp. 791-803

Dong, X. (2003), "Searching information and evaluation of internet: a Chinese academic user survey", International Information & Library Review, Vol. 35 No.2-4, pp.163-87.

IRISS, (1998) “The Internet Research and Information for Social Scientists (IRISS) conference”, Bristol University, UK

Mamtora, J. (2003), "The efficacy of academic use of the internet at USP", *COMLA Bulletin*, Vol. 1 pp.34-9.

McKie and Guchteneire (2003) “The Internet for Social Scientists”, www.unesco.org/shs/most.

Momani, H.A. (2003), "Evaluation of the nature, extent, and satisfaction with the use of the internet by applied science and technology faculty members in Jordan", PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, .

Savolainen, R. (1999) “The role of the Internet in information seeking: Putting the networked services in context”. Information Processing and Management, 35(6), 765-782.

Nasir Uddin, M. (2003), "Internet use by university academics: a bipartite study of information and communication needs", Online Information Review, Vol. 27 No.4, pp.225-37.