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## A Proposed Electronic Selective Dissemination of Information Through SMS and Email in an Academic Library

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***A Proposed Electronic Selective Dissemination of Information  
Through SMS and Email in an Academic Library***

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## ABSTRACT

In this digital age, information overload is a problem. Information across internet has exploded and filtering information pertaining to individual's interest increases. One method for addressing this problem is through e-Selective Dissemination of Information (e-SDI). It is fast and easy way of disseminating information to library users through the use of email or text messages. This study aimed to determine the preferred means of receiving, the level of effectiveness and challenges encountered in the conduct of e-SDI service at the University Learning Resource Center, Saint Mary's University of Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines using quantitative method of research. Findings revealed that: 1) the respondents preferred text messaging as the mean of receiving information from the ULRC; 2) the level of effectiveness of e-SDI was high; and 3) the pressing problems encountered by the faculty respondents were the slow internet connection and wifi connection, lack of instruction on the use of e-SDI service, and privacy issues on the use of personal data and gadgets.

**Keywords:** *Electronic services in libraries, Information dissemination, Information services, Library management, Library trends*

## ***Introduction***

Information without dissemination is useless because it has a significant role in the society whether in business, education, government, or research. Information, as a basic necessity in the learning and information center, can support the institution best when closely integrated into the academic process. In the field of librarianship, dissemination of information to primary customers is a basic function of a library. It is the responsibility of the library and the librarian to disseminate information for study, teaching and research. Therefore, students, faculty and researchers are entitled to be informed of newly acquired information resources and that they will be able to fully utilize them.

One method for addressing this problem is through e-Selective Dissemination of Information (e-SDI). It is a system that attempts to facilitate users' information retrieval and filtering. The primary purpose is to provide researchers with the latest publications on a specified topic. It is an information alerting service designed to keep individuals informed of new developments in their particular fields of interest by providing at regular intervals a listing of citations. The goal is to deliver new information to users via library blog, library website, social media, text messaging, emailing and others. Clearly, e-SDI could give great benefit to users like saving the users time and effort and allowing them to concentrate on the specific information which relates to their interests (O'Neil, 2001). Its objectives are: 1) providing current information about a predetermined area of discipline; 2) receiving, scanning and providing the right users the information at the right time; 3) notifying users of the current information relevant to users' interest; 4) using various resources to locate relevant information published elsewhere in the world;

5) scanning current materials such as journals, current awareness bulletins and other significant resources; 6) saving users' time, and 7) selecting relevant documents in the users' notice (Ashikuzzaman, 2014).

Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center (SMULRC) aimed to acquire resources that support and advance the various academic programs of the university, the instructional need of the faculty, the reading and learning needs of the students as well as the information needs of the community extension program of the university. To be able to realize these, the University Learning Resource Center (ULRC) provides SDI to its customers. The main thrust of the study was to determine the level of effectiveness of e-SDI services in SMULRC for implementation. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions: 1) What are the preferred means of receiving electronic selective dissemination of information by the faculty respondents in the School of Engineering, Architecture, and Information Technology (SEAIT), School of Accountancy and Business (SAB), School of Teacher Education and Humanities (STEH), and School of Health and Natural Sciences (SHANS)?; 2) What is the level of effectiveness of e-SDI by the faculty respondents?; and 3) What are the problems encountered by the faculty during the conduct of e-SDI at ULRC?; and 4) What recommendations can be proposed in the conduct of e-SDI at SMULRC?

### ***Framework of the Study***

According to Amati, Crestani and Ubaldini (1999), conducting e-SDI needed new methods and new systems to filter or to selectively distribute the progressive electronic information produced nowadays. As to make the users' interests be satisfied, there is

an effective information filtering system that brings and provides exact information to the seekers. The increasing problem in many domains is mainly information services especially on e-SDI. The increasing domain of digital information manually does not suit the users' interest and they end up seeking information automatically to provide their needs.

Moreover, Edewor et al. (2016) stated that, in this technological era, the role of information center and information specialists had changed because of the rapid advancement of technology. Libraries have been pressured to cope with these changes because of the different needs and wants from the users of the library. Thus, libraries should find ways to promote and serve the users effectively. Agaba and Nyumba (2004), as cited by Edewor et al. (2016) expounded that lack of marketing of the library to the users had been a big issue because there are many services and resources in libraries.

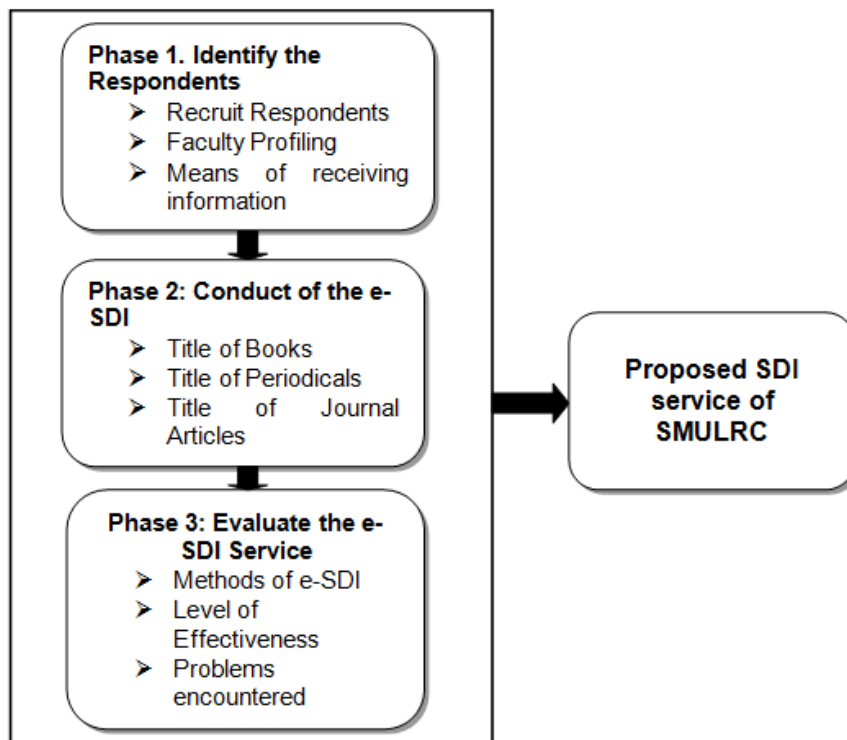


Figure 1. Research Paradigm of the Study

The study consisted of three (3) phases namely: 1) Identify the respondents; 2) Conduct e-SDI; and 3) Evaluate the e-SDI service. In Phase 1, the researchers asked politely the faculty members from the different departments (SEAIT, SAB, STEH, and SHANS) to become as one of the respondents of the study. They were asked to fill up the "User's Profile" bearing their name, sex, age, position and specialization. They were given the options to choose the means of implementing e-SDI either e-mail or text messages. Phase 2 was the conduct of e-SDI wherein the title of books from the different sections of the ULRC such as: Periodicals Section, Business Section, Accountancy Section, Engineering and Architecture Section, Information Technology Section, General Collection, Science and Math Section, Professional Education Section, Filipiniana Section, General Reference Section, Library and Information Science Corner, Nursing Section, Theology/Philosophy Section and Graduate School Section. Titles of books and periodicals were sent to its respective respondents through e-SDI. Phase 3 was the evaluation proper on the conduct of e-SDI to faculty members. The respondents of the e-SDI evaluated the conduct of the service particularly the means of e-SDI service, level of effectiveness and the problems they encountered. These were the basis for crafting proposal for the e-SDI service for SMULRC.

### ***Methodology***

The study used descriptive methods of research using survey questionnaire to describe the processes in conducting e-SDI service for implementation. It was conducted at Saint Mary's University in school year 2017-2018. There were 50 faculty respondents from the different departments of SEAIT, SAB, STEH and SHANS. To

gather the necessary data, a researcher-made questionnaire was used. It was composed of four parts namely: the demographic profile, means of receiving information through e-SDI, level of effectiveness and problems encountered. The questionnaire on the level of effectiveness of e-SDI was adopted from the study of Ashikuzzaman (2014) specifically items 1-7 and items 8-11 from the study of Kawatra (2000).

Table 1 presents the typical demographic profile of the faculty respondents in terms of sex and age.

**Table 1. Profile of the Faculty Respondents of Saint Mary's University**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	23	46%
Female	27	54%
Total	50	100%
Age Range	Frequency	Percent
25 and below	5	11.11%
26-30	2	4.44%
31-35	3	6.67%
36-40	8	17.78%
41-45	10	22.22%
46-50	7	15.56%
51-55	7	15.56%
56 and above	3	6.67%
Total	45	90%
Missing System	5	10%
Total	50	100%

## **Results and Discussions**

### **The Preferred Means of Receiving e-SDI.**

Innovations are part of library management to improve further the quality of services. This step is a risk management style in order to help students achieve their goals. Table 2 shows the preferred means of receiving electronic selective dissemination of information by the faculty respondents in the School of Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology (SEAIT), School of Accountancy and Business



(SAB), School of Teacher Education and Humanities (STEH), and School of Health and Natural Sciences (SHANS).

Table 2. *Number and Percentage of Preferred Means of Receiving e-SDI*

Means of Dissemination	E-mail		SMS/Text		Both		Overall	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Department								
STEH	1	2%	10	20%	8	16%	19	38%
SAB	7	14%	5	10%	4	8%	16	32%
SEAIT	2	4%	4	8%	2	4%	8	16%
SHANS	1	2%	3	6%	3	6%	7	14%
TOTAL	11	22%	22	44%	17	34%	50	100%

The preferred means of receiving e-SDI was thru SMS (44%), followed by using both SMS and email (34%) and plain email (22%). This finding is supported by Pandey (2016) that one way to disseminate information is with the use of email, RSS feeds, voice mail, including instant messaging and text messaging. This suggests that the preferred means of receiving e-SDI by the faculty respondents from the different departments is thru SMS or text messaging. They chose email as the least means of disseminating information because of the poor or slow wi-fi connection.

### ***The Level of Effectiveness of e-SDI.***

Kannappanavar and Swamy (2012) stated that libraries had to start and hold different library services to provide users the right type of information. Similarly, several studies indicated the following: Del Castillo et al. (2009) mentioned that SDI has the ability to give information that is accurate according to the needs of the users; Uzohue and Yaya (2016) mentioned that fast pace in information and communication technology

had affected library services; Connor (1967), as cited by Adetomiwa (2015) noted that SDI strives to provide users an updated information that is related and applicable to their field of specialization.

Table 3. *Level of Effectiveness of e-SDI*

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description
1. Provide current information on a predefined area of interest	3.54	.503	Very High
2. Provide the literature or information to the right users at the right time	3.52	.505	Very High
3. Notify the users on the current information which is relevant to the interest of the users	3.40	.606	High
4. Locate relevant information through varied resources which are published elsewhere in the world	3.40	.571	High
5. Achieve current requirements through the scan of current materials such as journals, current awareness bulletins and other important resources	3.32	.551	High
6. Save time of the users	3.62	.567	Very High
7. Select relevant documents to the notice of the User	3.52	.614	Very High
8. Relevant publications are matched with subject interests of users	3.48	.544	High
9. Selected materials are very much relevant to my teaching or research needs	3.54	.579	Very High
10. Materials are sent to users	3.42	.731	High
11. Dissemination of information is fast	3.34	.658	High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.46</b>	<b>.329</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: 1.00-1.49 (very low), 1.50-2.49 (low), 2.50-3.49 (high), 3.50-4.0 (very high).

Table 3 revealed that the specified purposes of e-SDI with “very high” level of effectiveness were to: save time of the users, provide current information on a predefined area of interest, selected materials are very much relevant to my teaching or research needs, provide the literature or information to the right users at the right time and select relevant documents to the notice of the user. Meanwhile, the following items were identified by faculty with “high” level of effectiveness: notify the users on the current information which is relevant to the interest of the users, locate relevant

information through varied resources, achieve current requirements through the scan of current materials such as journals, current awareness bulletins and other important resources, relevant publications are matched with subject interests of users, materials are sent to users and dissemination of information is fast.

Overall, the faculty indicated that there was a “high” level of effectiveness on the use of e-SDI in disseminating information from books and periodicals. This means that e-SDI can be used to promote new resources and services of the library to faculty and students. It is worthwhile to freely alert users of new publications and inform them with materials applicable in the area of their study and research.

These findings are supported by the study of Schulz & DeGroot (2003) that the users are notified of the new publications which relates to their field of interest and Mondschein (1990) that SDI is used to update users with the latest developments in their field of interest. Moreover, in the written recommendation by a faculty, it was suggested that, for item number 1 which is to provide current information on a pre-defined area of interest, library materials must be sent whenever new resources are available and that the library must make sure that those resources are available for use or circulation. This conforms to Del Castillo et al. (2009) that services of SDI had the ability of giving information that is accurate according to the needs of the users.

### ***The Challenges Encountered in the Conduct of e-SDI.***

Adebayo (2009) stated that libraries are facing new trends and developments in information services to meet the demands of users. Khan and Bhatti (2012), as cited by

Edewor et al. (2016) also added that, in the developed world, libraries are becoming more aware of the need to market their products and services.

Table 4. *Problems Encountered in the Conduct of e-SDI*

Items on <i>Problems Encountered</i>	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description
1. Accessibility of e-mail	2.75	.899	Agree
2. Lack of time to use/open the E-mail	2.93	.764	Agree
3. Slow or poor wifi-connection	3.38	.774	Agree
4. No wifi-connection or internet connection	3.08	.859	Agree
5. Use of technology such as E-mail	2.50	.784	Agree
6. Limited knowledge using E-mail	2.28	.847	Disagree
7. Difficulty in accessing information	2.40	.778	Disagree
8. No personal gadgets to use	2.28	.716	Disagree
9. The service is not advisable	1.98	.660	Disagree
10. Lack of instruction on the use of the e-SDI service	2.88	.853	Agree
11. Privacy issue on the use of personal Gadgets	2.75	.899	Agree
<b>Overall</b>	<b>2.65</b>	<b>.574</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Legend: 1.00-1.49 (strongly disagree), 1.50-2.49 (disagree), 2.50-3.49 (agree), 3.50-4.0 (strongly agree).

Overall, the study revealed that there were problems encountered in the conduct of e-SDI service in the library. The faculty revealed the following problems: 1) slow or poor wifi-connection, 2) no wifi or internet connection; 3) lack of time to use/open the e-mail; 4) accessibility of e-mail; and 5) use of technology such as e-mail. However, it is interesting to note that the item with the highest mean in terms of problems encountered was the problem on slow or poor wifi-connection. This indicates that there are always problems to be encountered when implementing e-SDI service in the library. In the informal interview, the faculty respondents explained that text messaging is easier to access than e-mail because they do not usually open their e-mail accounts due to internet problems. They also aired that they want to make sure that their mobile numbers are kept in private. It was also observed that, during the conduct of the e-SDI,

some respondents did not receive text messages from the ULRC because they changed their numbers without notification.

### ***A Proposed E-SDI for SMULRC***

Considering the results of the survey on e-SDI conducted at Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center, the proposed service is forwarded:

**KRA:** Electronic Selective Dissemination of Information at SMULRC

**Project Title:** Enhancement of SDI of SMU Learning Resource Center

**Outcome:** Effective and Efficient eSDI Service at SMULRC

**Rationale.** Electronic Selective Dissemination of Information (eSDI) is a service that disseminates any information that pertains to the specialization and field of interest of administrators, researchers and faculty. The electronic-SDI service is essential particularly in the teaching, learning and research in an academic setting such as SMU. It plays a significant role in its vision of forming persons exemplifying excellence, innovation and passion for Christ's mission. Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center's Electronic Dissemination of Information aimed to link faculty and library for awareness on selected new learning materials matched with their field of interests. Hence, as part of a progressive University, the role of the library is very important.

**Objectives.** The e-SDI service is generally aimed to provide information and learning materials to administrators and faculty of Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center.

**Specific Objectives.** The following are the specific goals of e-SDI: 1) Increase utilization of learning materials among faculty and students for study, teaching and

research, and facilitate the effective and efficient use of learning resources particularly the new acquisitions among faculty and students.

### **A Proposed Electronic Selective Dissemination of Information Service**

In the proposal, several target strategic activities set to enhance the e-SDI service at SMULRC particularly on email and SMS as a means of delivering the innovative service were forwarded. The target activities focused on two categories with the following strategic activities: 1) Encourage the faculty to use email/SMS as a means of delivering new learning materials in line with their field of study and interest; 2) Conduct profiling of faculty and administrators for e-SDI purposes; 3) Conduct seminar on the use of email/SMS in using e-SDI service; and 4) Implement e-SDI at SMU.

Table 5. *A Proposed Electronic Selective Dissemination of Information Service for SMULRC*

Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Outcomes
1. To innovate the promotion of new learning resource through the use of electronic mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the use of email and SMS as a means of delivering new resources in line with their field of study and interest.</li> <li>• Conduct seminar on the use of email/SMS in using eSDI service.</li> <li>• Implement the eSDI to faculty.</li> </ul>	Academic Deans	Enhanced teaching learning of faculty
2. To enhance the means of delivering new learning resource easier and faster through the use of SMS.		Librarians	
		Faculty	Maximized used of learning resources

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Electronic SDI is a library service that facilitates teaching, learning and research in an academic setting. It aimed to link faculty and library for awareness on selected new learning materials matched with their field of study and interest. Hence, the role of

the library is to promote its newly acquired learning resources for faculty and students aimed to fully maximize their use. It is also seen as an effective means of disseminating information, promoting new resources and services, and alerting users on new publications.

The faculty preferred text messaging as the means of receiving current information from the ULRC rather than the use of email. They indicated that e-SDI had “high” level of effectiveness in disseminating information on the newly acquired books and periodicals which is an innovation in promoting new resources and services. The common problems encountered by the faculty in the conduct of e-SDI were slow or poor wifi connection, no wifi or internet connection, lack of instruction on the use of e-SDI service, and privacy issue on the use of personal information. However, policies and procedures should be crafted and approved particularly text messaging through mobile phones including those who opted to use email only. The conduct of e-SDI service will always be challenged by external forces like the data privacy law. Library professionals must always be on their toes to address such issues and concerns. Therefore, it is recommended that the proposed e-SDI service be implemented because it considered the salient findings of the study.

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