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Winter 12-31-2019

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G, Manjunatha and B T, Sampath Kumar, "E-journals usage among Faculty members and Students: A Survey" (2019). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 3666.

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E-journals usage among Faculty members and Students: A Survey

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Abstract

The main aim of the study is to know the use of e-journals among the faculty members and students in engineering college libraries. The results of the study show that the students and faculty members who participated in this survey are aware of e-journals and majority of the respondents used e-journals for study and project dissertation work. Most of the faculty members and students used e-journals in libraries. The survey respondents opined that the e-journals are easy to access and use as compared to print journals. Thus the study recommends that the Engineering college libraries should focus more in the subscription of e-journals rather than print journals.

Key words: e-journals, Students, Faculty members, Engineering colleges

1. Introduction

Traditional print journals occupied physical library space until the late twentieth century and remain permanent sources of information even today. However, the scenario has changed in the twenty-first century from procurement of print journals to mainly e-format only. Libraries are acquiring e-journals to save space and to provide users 24/7 online access. Scholarly communications have undergone significant transformation as a result of an emerging digital environment (Heath, 2009).

Many publishers are taking advantage of web as a global route through which they offer large number of their publications to the scholarly community at world level. Internet is providing much of free resources like e-books, e-journals and open source software etc. These developments have posed new challenges before libraries to provide the greater information access and improved level of services by using suitable software applications as well as to keep pace with technological change and ever increasing budget pressure (Patra, 2008).

E-journals constitute a vital component of scholarly communications and relevant literature reveals a growing trend of usage of e-journals and databases by students, researchers, and academia for their scholarly activities. Researchers found that the preferred format for users to access journals was

electronic. The acceptance of e-journals has gradually increased especially among students, researchers, and faculty (Bar-Ilan et al., 2003; Borrego et al., 2007; Nicholas and Huntington, 2006; Tenopir, 2003).

Keeping in view the importance of e-journals, this survey has been conducted to know the use of e-journals by faculty members and students. The study also identifies the problems faced by them in among the e-journals.

2. Review of Literature

The review of literature is based on the previous studies conducted by various authors. A large number of studies related to various aspects of use of e-journals in engineering disciplines have been reported in the earlier studies. The emphasis has been given in this chapter to review the literature published in various national and international journals.

Tenopir et al. (2009) sought to examine how faculty members in science, technology, medicine and social sciences. The paper found that the average number of readings per year per science faculty member continued to increase, while the average time spent per reading was decreasing.

E-journals awareness and use among research scholars of the Central Science Library, University of Delhi, was investigated by Ali and Nisha (2011). The findings of the study clearly reveal that more than 60 % of users in the Central Science Library are using e-journals weekly for the purpose of research. Print journals are consulted by the majority of users as compared to e-journals. Keyword is the most popular search method for searching e-journals among research scholars, whereas the date of publication has the lowest percentage among all the options. However, it was found that slow downloading of PDF files is the major problem that would discourage users while using e-journals.

Bhatt and Rana (2011) Study finds many aspects of e-resources use among engineering academics of Rajasthan. It reveals that academic staffs were using many types of e-resources. They were also using the latest sources of information like e-groups, virtual conferences. Using the e-resources, their academic/professional competency also improved. The teaching methodology also involved the e-resources uses and the students' ability was also affected in a positive manner by this methodology. Some problems were also explored in using e-resources. The majority of users were quite satisfied with using e-resources.

Tyagi (2012) in his survey showed that majority of respondents marked that library possessed useful online journals and databases for the scientific community. The data scanned and preserved in document management software play an important role to access relevant information. Awareness among the users about the availability of online journals was found highly satisfactory. Online journals were mostly used for research needs and similarly pharmacy and pharmacology discipline-based journals are used widely.

The result of the study conducted by Ahmad and Panda (2013) revealed that majority of the faculty members are aware and use the electronic information resources. The study confirmed to some extent the lack of knowledge and use of libraries specific resources such as e-theses, patents and CD-ROM database. It is also find that 100% faculty members agreed that e-resources are very useful and important to their work. The findings will be useful for librarians and faculty in highlighting the need to collaborate in integrating information literacy skills.

A study Ahmed (2013) showed that faculty members are not generally satisfied with the current level of university subscribed e-resources. They identified limited number of titles, limited access to back issues, difficulty in finding information, inability to access from home, limited access to computers and slow download speed as major constraints. These constraints do affect e-resources use in the public universities. However, these constraints are mainly related to the poor IT infrastructure and limited access to e-resources, which may also lead to other constraints such as an unwillingness to use the resources regularly and consequently low satisfaction with such resources.

Erdamar and Demirel (2014) study found that those younger than 40, research assistants, lecturers and associate professors used e-sources more commonly; and that increased age and academic title meant decreased frequency of e-source use. Of the respondents, 83.1 percent preferred e-journals to print journals. The most important reasons for the e-journal preference of faculty members who chose this format were easy and continuous access. The most significant finding of this study has been that the majority of faculty members prefer e-journals. Together with this finding, the reasons for user preferences, and the strengths and weaknesses of both e- and print journals should be considered. These findings may contribute to the development of Gazi University's and other universities' digital library system.

Qasim and Khan (2015) study shows that the scientists are more attracted toward e-journals especially on those provided by CSIR-NISCAIR Consortia, NKRC than those available via direct subscription. From this survey, the investigator has been able to find out that almost all the scientists are consulting e-journals from their campus cabin, not only for research purposes but also to update their own knowledge. The infrastructure to use e-journals are superb and there is no technological problem specially hardware and software support with high bandwidth of Internet speed exists here, as CSIR-IGIB uses largest computing facility (four Tflop/s) in Asia outside Japan respondents also identified that there is dire need for training in using e-resources and retrieving pinpointed information from the databases.

3. Objectives of the Study

- a. To find out the awareness of e-journals among the faculty members and students of engineering colleges.
- b. To study the level of satisfaction of users about of e-journals.
- c. To know the problems faced by the faculty members and students in accessing e-journals.
- d. To suggest the suitable recommendations to improve facilities and services related to the use of e-journals

4. Methodology

The survey research method was chosen for the study because it will enable the researcher to collect original data from the selected population under the study. It will also help to measure one or more characteristics of many people at one point in time. Hence a questionnaire has been designed to fulfil the stated objectives. The questionnaire with 13 questions spread over four parts (i) Personal Information, (ii) Use of e-journals, (iii) Importance of e-journals and (iv) Problems accessing e-journals. A total of 220 questionnaires were distributed among faculty members and students. Out of which 198 duly filled questionnaires were received. The collected data were analysed presented in form of tables.

5. Analysis of data and Interpretation

The analysed data is presented in tabular and graphical form. Frequencies and percentages of responses are given in each table. The data collected were analysed quantitatively using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Use of e-journals

Table-1: Use of e-journals

Use of e-journals	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	189	95.4
No	09	4.6
Total	198	100

We tried to determine the awareness among faculty members and students about e-journals. Table-1 shows that the use of e-journals. It can be seen from the table that 95.4% of respondents used e-journals. Only 4.6% of respondents have not used e-journals. This meant that, most of the faculty members and students are aware of e-journal in the college.

Experience in the use of e-journals

Table-2: Experience in the use of e-journals

Experience	No. of respondents	Percentage
1-2 years	127	67.1
3-4 years	19	10
>-5 years	22	11.6
Total	189	100

Table-2 shows the experience in the use of e-journals. It can be seen from the table that 67.1% of respondents used e-journals since 1-2 years. Only 11.6% of respondents used e-journals have used it from more than 5 years.

Place of use of e-journals

Table 3: Place of use of e-journals

Place	No. of respondents	Percentage
Home	43	15.9
Libraries	124	45.9
Cybercafé	13	4.8
Smart phones	99	36.7
Any other	3	1.1

Note: Number given in Parenthesis represents the Percentage

The responses of users with respect to place at which they preferably use the e-resources are given as table-3. It can be seen from the table that 45.9% of respondents used e-journals in the college libraries. 36.7% of respondents used e-journals through their smart phones. Only 15.9% of respondents used e-journals at their home. Some participants do not have accessing e-journals home.

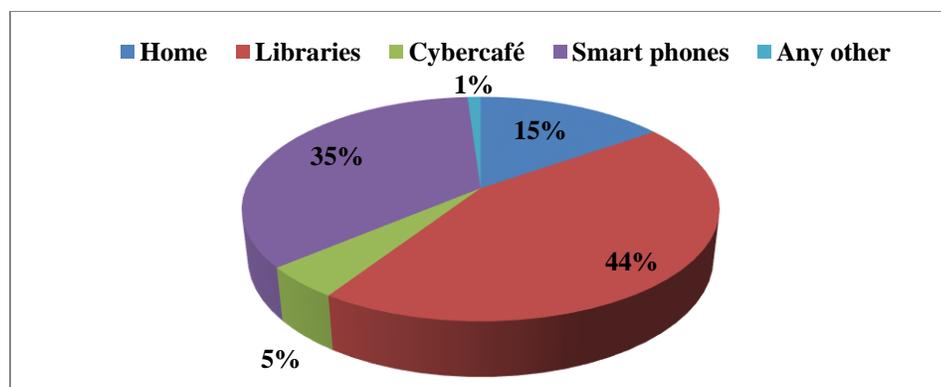


Figure-1: Place of use of e-journals

Purpose of use of e-journals

Table 4: Purpose of use of e-journals

Purpose	No. of respondents	Percentage
For study purpose	124	45.9
To update subject knowledge	47	17.4
For research work	45	16.7
To write articles	14	5.2
For teaching purpose	27	10
For project work	88	32.6
For dissertation work	67	24.8

Note: Number given in Parenthesis represents the Percentage

Seven reasons were listed against which respondents were allowed to choose more than one reasons. The intension was to know the purpose of use of e-journals by the respondents. Majority of users in this study used the e-journals for project and dissertation (57.4%) followed by in support of their study 45.9%.

Frequency of use e-journals

Table-5: Frequency of use of e-journals

Frequency	No. of respondents	Percentage
Daily	49	25.9
2-3 days in a week	35	18.5
Weekly	34	17.9
Once in a month	18	09.5
Occasionally	53	28.1
Total	189	100

Table-5 reveals the frequency of use of e-journals. 28.1% of respondents used e-journals occasionally and 25.9% of respondents used daily. It also shows that only 9.5% of respondents used e-journals once in a month. Thus it can be concluded that most of the users used e-journals occasionally.

Use of various keywords for searching e-journals

Table-6: Use of various keywords for searching e-journals

Keywords	No. of respondents	Percentage
Subject	130	48.1
Title of article	69	25.6
Author	41	15.2
Date of publication	5	1.9
Journals title	45	16.7

Note: Number given in Parenthesis represents the Percentage

The use of search strategy varies from person to person. The respondents were asked to express their opinion on the specific the use of various keywords for searching e-journals on the web. Table-6 shows that the keyword 'subject' is most popularly used by the user (48.1%) which is followed by title (25.6%) and author (15.6%). Only few of them used journal title as a keyword 16.7%.

Use of Preferred file format for reading e-journals

Table 7: Preferred file format for reading e-journals

Preferred file format	No. of respondents	Percentage
HTML	36	19
PDF	128	67.7
Doc	10	5.2
Image	15	7.9
Total	189	100

Table-7 shows the use of preferred file format for reading e-journals. The majority of users (67.7%) preferred to read articles in PDF. 19% of them preferred HTML format. Only 5.2% of respondents preferred Doc. format. The PDF format is preferred by a larger number of respondents indicates that most of e-journals are readily available in the PDF format clearer and they are more lucid as compared to the HTML format.

Opinion about the usefulness of e-journals

Table-8: Opinion about the usefulness of e-journals

Advantages	No. of respondents		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Time saving	85	25	110	58.2
Available at all time	57	18	75	39.6
Easy to use/access	51	19	70	37
Less expensive	54	15	69	36.5
Ability to get overview of document structure	33	09	42	22.2

Note: Number given in Parenthesis represents the Percentage

The survey listed five possible advantages of e-journals. The Students and faculty were requested to indicate the advantages which they consider relevant. It is evident from the table-8 that 58.2% respondents expressed that e-journals save time. Whereas 39.6% of respondents opined that e-journals are available at all time. 37% of respondents opined that e-journals can be accessed very easily. 36.5% of respondents felt that e-journals are less expensive compared to print journals.

Level of satisfaction with e-journals

Table 9: Level of satisfaction with e-journals

Satisfaction level	No. of respondents	Percentage
Very satisfied	54	28.5
Fairly satisfied	58	30.6
Satisfied	65	34.3
Dissatisfied	11	5.8
Very dissatisfied	1	0.5
Total	189	100

Opinion about the of level satisfaction with e-journals is presented in table-9. It can be seen from the above table that, 28.5% of respondents opined that they are very much satisfied with the availability of e-journals. 34.3% of respondents opined that they are only satisfied with the e-journals service provided by their library. Only 6.3% of respondents opined that they are dissatisfied about the e-journals services provided in their college library.

Problems faced while accessing e-journals

Table 10: Problems faced while accessing e-journals

Problems	No. of respondents	Percentage
Low configuration of computer process	57	30.1
Difficult in finding e-journals	34	17.9
Do not shows the specific data	38	20.1
Lack of training/guidance	43	22.7
Lack of computers	62	32.8
Slow downloading/uploading data	41	21.6
Time consuming	18	9.5

Note: Number given in Parenthesis represents the Percentage

Even though the e-journals are a very important source of information for users they faced a numbers of problems while browsing. Majority (32.8%) of respondents mentioned that lack of computers facility in their colleges is the major problem. Some of the other problems are low configuration of computer (30.1%) and lack of training or guidance (22.7%). Majority of respondents also said they had difficulty accessing e-resources with suitable lack of computer and low configuration of computer process.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study investigates the frequency, purpose, and problems of using the e-journals. The most of the respondents have 1-2 years of experience in using e-journals and majority of respondents use e-journals occasionally. Most of the respondents used e-journals in the college libraries. Therefore the college library should organize orientation programs to create awareness about e-journal among the students and faculty members. The majority of respondents used e-journals for study and project/dissertation work. It is also found that majority of faculty members and students preferred to read articles in PDF. It can be seen from the study that the key word 'subject' is most popularly used by the users which is followed by 'title' and 'author' Only few of them used journal title as a keyword.

In this context, the librarian needs to introduce orientation program regarding the use of e-journals and databases in the field of engineering science. Another significant findings of the study are that the lack of computers facility in their college and lack of training or guidance to access the e-journals. Thus the college authority should provide access to e-journals. The frequent training program also should be conducted by the library to educate the user on e-journals usage.

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