E-Resources: A Study of Reading Habits among the Faculty Members in Health Science Institutions

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Abstract - *Electronic Information resources reading is a border term including all the kind of learning possible through the use of computers? Thus, it includes computer based learning materials, i.e. e-journals, e-books, multimedia, discussion forums, e-mail, blogs chats, animations, simulations, games, virtual experiments of foregoing and, learning through the information resources available on the Internet. The present paper examines the use of e-resources among faculty members. A total of 400 well structured questionnaires were distributed randomly among the faculty members of health science institutions taking in to account 15% of the total respondents in each institution. Out of 354 of them responded with the response rate of 88.5%. The results of the study indicate that a majority of respondents i.e. 74.29% of faculty members visit library 'when there is a need. A majority of the faculty members seek information for research work 48.03%, preparing class notes for teaching 47.45% and writing papers and its presentation 47.18%.*

Keywords: Electronic information- resources, Computer, Faculty, User

Introduction

Information is a great phenomenon which has led to man's progress. It is a basic resource for any kind of activities. The scientist, technologists, students, teachers, researchers, professionals require specific information before taking any decision. Health information is basically required by all types of people at all times in the world. Health science covers a very large field that even to provide the barest of information in the various areas is a tough job. But the modern information technology has given the opportunity to access the information on one click.

Today ICT impact is much more in academic library system with higher speed of communication in the learning and research environment. It changes in the behaviour of library users. Libraries are adding new electronic information resources and bringing services for the benefit of users. In the early 21st century higher education has become a competitive enterprise. At present the information and knowledge revolution is very elevated. The increase in information available on the web has affected information seeking behavior due to many electronic resources (e-resources) are available in the library. (Fidel, 1999)[1].

Reading habits often refer to the selection of subject material or preference for a genre literature being read. It is therefore often equated that an individual has developed a reading habit and interests when such activity is repeatedly bring out voluntarily for activities.

Need for the study

Today, information technology has developed rapidly and has had a huge impact on access to information and on information seeking behaviour. The librarian and library staff have to know and examine the criteria of information seeking and information utility by users for providing information services, designing new information systems, intervening in the operation of existing systems, or planning service programs. User studies are one of the interdisciplinary areas of research in library and information science and form a large body of literature in the discipline. This study sought to establish ways of determine, the reading habits among the Faculty Members of Health Science Institutions in Delhi.

Objectives of the study
The major objectives of the study are;
- To find out the purposes of reading e-resources of the health sciences faculty members in the changing environment.
- To assess the purpose for which library electronic resources are used by faculty.
- To find out the time spent for reading e-resources and to find out the where most frequently read e-resources.
- To identify the problems faced by faculty members while reading e-resources.
- To examine the faculty members opinions about accessibility of electronic information sources.
- To identify the preference of search engine for information seeking.

Scope and limitations of the study
The study designed to investigate the reading habits of health sciences faculty in the electronic information age. It is focused on reading habits of electronic resources among the health science faculty members. The study is confined to faculty members working in 14 health science institutions in Delhi represented the target population for this study.

Methodology

A survey research method used to carry out this study because of its large population. For this purpose in pilot study, 400 members of faculty were selected randomly from various health science institutions in Delhi taking in to account 15% of the total respondents in each institution. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 400 faculty members, out which a 354 responded with the response rate of 88.5%.

Data analysis and Interpretation

Table -1: Respondents Designation and Gender wise Distribution

Respondents	Male	Female	Percentage
Assistant Professor	74	69	40.39
Associate Professor	61	33	26.55
Professor	60	57	33.06
Total	**195 (55.08)**	**159 (44.92)**	**100.0**

Table 1 presents gender-wise responses to the questionnaire. Among the faculty members, 195 (55.08%) are male followed by female 159 (44.92%). It reflects the fact that there are more male faculty members in health science institutions as compared to the female faculty members.

Purpose of reading e-resources

Table -2: Purpose of reading e-resources

Purpose	Designation			
	Professors	**Associate Professors**	**Assistant Professors**	**Total**
General awareness	8 (6.84%)	11(11.7%)	13 (9.09%)	32 (9.03%)
Preparing class notes for teaching	21 (17.95%)	18 (19.14%)	20 (13.99%)	59 (16.66%)
Preparing /supplementary lectures	10 (8.55%)	4 (4.26%)	11 (7.69%)	25 (7.06%)
Research work	33 (28.20%)	23 (24.47%)	36 (25.19%)	92 (25.98%)
Preparing answer to questions	7 (5.98%)	5 (5.31%)	14 (9.79%)	26 (7.35%)
For writing papers and presenting papers	18 (15.39%)	10 (10.64%)	7 (4.89%)	35 (9.88%)
For guiding research students	12 (10.25%)	3 (3.19%)	11 (7.69%)	26 (7.35%)
Reading /thinking purpose	3 (2.57%)	9 (9.58%)	19 (13.29%)	31 (8.76%)
Discussions	3 (2.57%)	4 (4.26%)	3 (2.09%)	10 (2.84%)
For recreational purpose	2 (1.70%)	7 7.45%)	9 (6.29%)	18 (5.09%)
Total	**117**	**94**	**143**	**354**

The data depicted in the table shows that majority of the member of faculty read e-resources for the purpose of research work i.e. 92 (25.98%) followed by 59 (16.66%) for preparing class notes for teaching.

Frequency of visit to Institute library

Table-3: Frequency of visiting library of respondents

Frequency	Designation			
	Professors	**Associate Professors**	**Assistant Professors**	**Total**
Daily	3 (2.57%)	5 (5.32%)	2 (.39%)	10 (2.83%)
Once on a week	8 (6.84%)	3 (3.19%)	4 (2.79%)	15 (4.25%)
More than once in a week	22 (18.80%)	13 (13.83%)	17 (11.89%)	52 (14.69%)
Fortnightly	3 (2.57%)	0	3 (2.09%)	6(1.69%)
Once in a month	2 (1.7%)	2 (2.13%)	4 (2.79%)	8 (2.25%)
When there is need	79 (67.52%)	71 (75.53%)	113 (79.95%)	263 (74.29%)

From the above table it is realized that a majority 263 (74.29%) respondent's visit library when there is a need for seeking information.

Time spent in the library for reading

Table-4: Time spent in the library for information gathering (per visit)

Time spent	Frequency	Percentage
Up-to 10 minutes	14	3.95
Up to 30 minutes	8	2.26
30 - 60 minutes	54	15.25
1 – 2 hour	177	50.00
More than two hour	101	28.54
Total	**354**	**100.00**

Table-4: illustrates the amount of time spent by faculty members in the library for gathering information. It is realized that a majority 177 (50.00%) respondents will spent 1 – 2 hour in the library for gathering information.

Information sources or methods to updating knowledge

Table -5: Information sources or methods to updating knowledge

Sources/Methods	Faculty Members	Percentage
Reading current issues of print journals/magazines	101	28.53
Reading latest books in the field	86	24.29
Browsing current issues of electronic Journals	51	14.41
Searching online databases	31	8.76
Browsing websites of institutes/organizations	16	4.52
Accessing e-books	9	2.55
E-mail alerts from publishers	7	1.98
Through awareness services like CAS & SDI	4	1.13
Interaction with colleagues and experts	5	1.41
Attending conferences, workshops etc.	34	9.60
E-mail discussion groups	8	2.25
Other methods	2	0.57
Total	**354**	**100.00**

From the above table 5 it is realized that a majority 101 (28.53%) respondents use current issues of print journals/magazines as a information source to updating knowledge.

Opinion about accessibility of electronic Information resources

Table -6: Opinion of accessibility of electronic information resources

Opinion	Designation			
	Professors	Associate Professors	Assistant Professors	Total
Easier	62 (52.99%)	42 (44.68%)	64 (44.75%)	168 (47.46%)
About the same (same amount of time with or without electronic sources	35 (29.92%)	38 (40.43%)	32 (22.38%)	105 (29.66%)
More difficult (takes more time to gather and sort of information)	20 (17.09%)	14 (14.89%)	47 (32.87%)	81 (22.88%)
Total	**117**	**94**	**143**	**354**

From the above table it is realized that a majority 168 (47.46%) of the faculty members felt that accessing e-resources for reading purposes was easy; about 29.09% felt that they could gather the same information without e-resources within the same time frame. This also confirms that a large number of faculty members are well-versant with the usage of e-resources.

Expectation when they perform search

Table -7: Expectation of faculty members when they perform search for information

Expectation	Number of Faculty Members	Percentage
Full text	98	27.68%
Abstract /summary	44	12.43%
Index	11	3.12%
Whatever is available	201	56.77%
Total	**354**	**100.00**

Survey faculty members were also asked about their expectations when they performed a search for information using the various options available. From the above table it is realized that a majority 201 (56.77%) respondent's expectation is whatever is available.

Location of accessing information

Table-8: Place of accessing electronic information resources

Location	Designation			
	Professors	Associate Professors	Assistant Professors	Total
From Library	39 (33.33%)	26 (27.65%)	55 (38.46%)	120 (33.89%)
From Computer centre	3 (2.57%)	4 (4.26%)	12 (8.39%)	19 (5.38%)
From Department	67 57.27%)	57 (60.64%)	39 (27.28%)	163 46.04%)
From Ho	8 (6.83%)	7 &.45%)	37 (25.87%)	52 (14.69%)
Total	**117**	**94**	**143**	**354**

Table 8 elaborates that a majority 163 (46.05%) of the respondents have located department for accessing electronic information resources followed by library 120 (33.89%).

Languages preferred for reading material

Table-9: Language preferred for reading material

Languages	Respondents	Percentage
English	344	97.17
Hindi	3	0.85
French	2	0.57
Other	5	1.41

Analytical study showed that 344 faculty members (97.17%) preferred to have the reading material in English language as against Hindi, French and other languages.

Use of search function for information gathering

Table-10: Use of search function(s) for information seeking

Search function (s)	Respondents	Percentage
Keyword search	113	31.92
Title search	54	15.26
Author search	39	11.02
Subject search	125	35.31
Boolean operators	23	6.49
Total	**354**	**100.00**

On a query on the usage of the search function for accessing information, we find that about 35.31% opined that they use the 'subject search' function, followed by 31.92% use 'keyword search'. 15.26% who use 'title search' function and 11.02% use 'author search' function. Table 13 illustrates the use of search function percentage.

Use of computer based services

Table-11: Use of computer based services

Services	No. of faculty members	Percentage
Use OPAC	91	25.70
Search CD-ROM Databases	108	30.51
Search Online databases	77	21.76
Browse Internet	78	22.03
Total	**354**	**100.00**

It is noted from the table-11 that majority 108 (30.51%) of respondents use the CD-ROM databases, 91(25.70%) members search using OPAC.

Problems faced while accessing e-resources

Table-12: Problems faced while accessing e-resources

Types of problems	Designation			
	Professors	**Associate Professors**	**Assistant Professors**	**Total**
Unavailability of required/latest information	5 (4.27%)	8 (8.51%)	10 (6.99%)	23 (6.49%)
Material is not available	4 (3.42%)	5 (5.32%)	5 (3.49%)	14 (3.95%)
Incomplete information materials	13 (11.12%)	7 (7.44%)	12 (8.39%)	32 (9.04%)
Sources are very expensive/located far away	11 (9.40%)	9 (9.57%)	8 (5.59%)	28 (7.90%)
Language barrier	10 (8.55%)	5 (5.31%)	9 (6.29%)	24 ((6.78%)
Technical problems (system hangs, server-down time, speed etc.)	10 (8.54%)	6 (6.38%)	17 (11.89%)	33 (9.32%)
Lack of training in using electronic resources/products	14 (11.96%)	12 (12.78%)	11 (7.69%)	37 (10.46%)
Information scattered in too many sources	16 (13,67%)	7 (7.45%)	30 (20.99%)	53 (14.97%)
Choosing appropriate database	19 (16.24%)	16 (17.02%)	27 (18.89%)	62 (17.52%)
Lack of time	15 (12.83%)	19. (20.22%)	14 (9.79%)	48 (13.55%)
Total	**117**	**94**	**143**	**354**

Methods use to resolve problems while accessing e-resources

Table-13: Methods use to resolve problems while accessing e-resources

Methods	Respondents	Percentage
Make use of more than one library	9	2.54
Prefer an individual, independent work	73	20.62
Take support of my colleagues	49	13.84
make use of search engines on Internet	112	31.64
Make efforts to learn internet search skills	33	9.32
Consult more and more sources	47	13.28
Learn how to use electronic resources	31	8.76
Total	**354**	**100.00**

The comfort level in the methods of resolving issues are presented in table 13. It is realized that a majority 112 (31.64%) of respondents make use of search engines on Internet followed by 73 (20.62%) prefer an 'individual, independent work'.

Casebeer[2] found the Physicians' Internet use patterns at School of Medicine. Alabama University, that nearly all the Physicians have access to the Internet, knows how to use it and

access it for Medical Information. Internet's importance to Physicians currently is in the area of professional development. A particular patient problem was the most common reason for seeking information. The credibility of the source, quick and 24 – hour access to information and ease of searching were most important to physicians.

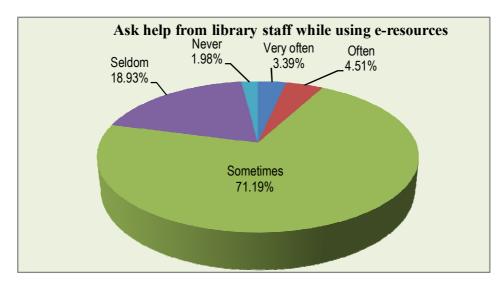**Ask help from library staff when using the e-resources**

Figure14: Help asked by faculty members when using e-resources

The question was asked regarding how often, you need help when using the electronic resources. The response to the question it is revealed that a majority 71.19% of respondents' mentioned that 'Sometimes' they asked for help from library staff.

Preference of Search engines

Table-14: Use of search engines for information seeking

Search Engines	Frequency	
	Faculty Members	Percentage
Google	307	86.73
Yahoo	33	9.32
AltaVista	3	0.85
Gopher	2	0.56
MSN	2	0.56
Lycos	5	1.42
Excite	2	0.56
Total	**354**	**100.00**

Above table-14 shows that majority 307 (86.73%) respondents use Google as the main search engine followed Yahoo 22 (9.32%). Use of other such search engines by the faculty members is found to be relatively low and even below the desired rank. The research found that among the faculty members 'Google' is the most popular search engine.

Satisfaction level in finding information needs through e-resources.

Table-15: Success in finding information needs through electronic resources

Satisfaction level	Faculty	Percentage
The information that I got is relevant	73	20.62
The information that I got covers the scope of my topic	135	38.13
The information that I got is up-to-date	104	29.38
Got a lot materials from my search	42	11.87
Total	**354**	**100.00**

As far as information sought through e-resources is considered, majority of faculty members as reflected in Table 15 shows impact of e-resources on the information gathering habits. It is realized that 135 (38.13%) claim that by using e-resources, they had access to information as it covered the scope of their topic.

Preferred reading habits

Table-16: Preferred reading habits

Habits	Faculty Members	Percentage
Conversing with experts located outside institute	12	3.39
Conversing with co-workers or other experts in institute	19	5.37
E-mailing co-workers or other experts	9	2.54
Discussion lists/LISTSERV	5	1.41
Scanning journal titles or citations	58	16.38
Reading articles/books	117	33.05
Attending conferences/colloquia/workshops	44	12.43
Searching electronic databases	42	11.87
Reading electronic journals	48	13.56
Total	**354**	**100.00**

It is observed from the table 16 that out of the total respondents (i.e., 354 respondents) comprising of faculty members under the study, 117(33.05%) of respondents have given 1st priority for reading articles /books,

Conclusion

Rapid development of ICT, as well as the expansion of e-resources, have change many aspects of information resources, services & library environments. The e-resources are available in different formats. It helps and support to faculty members to carry in out the efficient manner. They are available anytime, anywhere and anyplace. The present study may useful in making constructive decision to allocate budget to library to purchase electronic resources and make available in the library.

References

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