

Use Pattern of Internet by Engineering Professionals: A Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses about the use pattern of internet by the engineering professionals in Annamalai University, Annamalainagar. The relevant data collected from the students registered for Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech.) & Master of Technology (M.Tech.) of various graduate and post graduate degree programmes and teachers at the Annamalai University, Annamalanagar. The sample was random in the sense that the sample of the present study consisted of teachers and students selected randomly from the University under study. It found that It is evident from Table 7 that 68.3% of the respondents use the Internet primarily for the educational purpose, followed by 61.7% respondents for the research purposes, further followed by 43.3% for the communication purposes, 30.0% of the respondents also admitted that they use Internet for entertainment purposes.

Keywords: Internet ,; Use pattern; search Engine

Information is a vital resource for any kind of activity and it is more so in the field of advance scientific research, where new methods, new techniques, new instruments, new products are discovered everyday. Scientists need to keep pace with the information explosion, they need to interact with the peers in their respective fields, they need to know their competitors and their achievements. The Internet is one of the sources which may help in such situations and which is comparatively cheaper and faster. A connection to internet gives a user a real time access to online databases, library catalogues, software archives, full text reports/journals and many other kinds of information. The Librarian has to play a major role of making sure that the people use not only traditional means but also digital systems to the best effect.

Infusion of technological elements in creative pursuit leads to the emergence of a new technology which becomes a part of varied spheres at varying speed over different routes. Today it appears that each new advance in technology, centres around new ways to store, retrieve and transmit information. The PC can now deliver all types of information i.e. text, still images, graphics audio, etc. More particularly, the PCs have the ability to present all types of information in two different ways; for example in an integrated way and in an interactive way. It is quite clear that qualitative changes in the nature of information storage and retrieval have taken place. Internet has come in a big way for retrieval of enormous output of information combining the concepts of time, space and precision.

Internet is virtually taking the responsibility of controlling the problems like collection, organization, storing, retrieval and dissemination that are faced by the revolution of information. This networks range from small PCs to large corporate systems. Internet is a world wide networks formed by the cooperation inter connection of computing networks possessing global remote control in strong, retrieving and offering exhaustive and efficient service of large collection of information on any topics/ subject of one's choice. Internet is a data web, a network of information and ideas, a world wide conduit connecting people. It is generally mentioned as network of networks.

Need of the Survey

The university provides Internet facility to both teachers and students, it can be presumed that the facility is being utilized for academic purpose. However, it becomes necessary to conduct a study to determine whether, it is being utilized fully for academic activities or it is also utilized for other purposes such as entertainments and also to comprehend its positive and negative aspects as perceived by the users while they are using it.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are :

- (i) To know that purpose of using internet.
- (ii) To study the pattern of Internet use by the teachers and students.
- (iii) To identify the different purposes for which the Internet is used by the teachers and students.
- (iv) To study the various Internet services used by the respondents on the Internet for various activities such as teaching, learning and research.
- (v) To identify the problems faced by the respondents while using the Internet in the university under study.
- (vi) To find out the user satisfaction with the Internet facilities provided in the university.
- (vii) To ascertain the users feedback on Internet.
- (viii) To suggest the ways and means for popularization of optimum use of Internet services.

Research Methodology

The application of research methodology is the prime step to be adopted by the scholar for conducting the study. Hence a questionnaire was designed. The students registered for Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech.) & Master of Technology (M.Tech.) of various graduate and post graduate degree programmes and teachers at the Annamalai University, Annamalanagar. Keeping in view, the objectives of the study of the questionnaire method has been employed to collect the data for the present study and selected the sample population. Random sampling method has been used. The sample was random in the sense that the sample of the present study consisted of teachers and students selected randomly from the University under study. A well structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. Besides survey, the related literatures were also reviewed for strengthening the study. The primary

and secondary sources were also consulted and reviewed. The data thus collected were tabulated and analyzed by using statistical technique i.e. percentage for finding out the use of Internet by the teachers and students in the University.

Review of Related Literature

According to Scientific American (1997), “the Internet is not a digital library. But if it is to continue to grow and thrive as a new means of communication, something very much like traditional library services will be needed to organize, access and preserve networked information. Even thus, the net will not resemble a traditional library, because its contents are more widely dispersed than a standard collection, consequently, the librarians classification and selection skills must be complemented by the computer Scientists ability to automate the task of indexing and storing information. Only a synthesis of the differing perspectives brought by both professional will allow this new medium to remain viable”.

Thakur and Kar(1997) stated in his article on “Information superhighway and its impact in library and Information services that is library science, once thought to be a rather dusty field, is now a not bed of Internet activity. Internet is truly emerging as a powerful medium for obtaining information on a variety of subjects and publications on-line. This is the most helpful source today for obtaining the latest information which may still be months away be appear in the print form”.

During the review of related literature, it was experienced a plenty of literatures are available for study. Due to paucity of time, it was not possible for me to carry out intensive and extensive study. How ever, the literature includes articles on the topic and books have been consulted and reviewed to present the best possible text and for further study in the area.

ANALYSIS OF DATA INTERPRETATION

The sample method has been used for the present study consisting teachers and students from the university under study. At least 10 respondents (i.e. 05 teachers and 05 students) were randomly selected from each branch of the university for study. The data thus collected were tabulated and analysed by using statistical technique for finding out the user of Internet by the teachers and students in the University.

Table - 1: Status – wise distribution of study population

Status	No. of Respondents
Teachers	30
Students	30
Total	60

In order to make analysis of use of Internet in IIT, the questionnaire distributed to teachers and students. Table 1 shows the students of respondents 30 each from teachers and students from the University. Thus responded 60 in total of the University both teachers and students.

Table -2 : Branch-wise distribution of respondents.

Branches	T	S	Total
Chemical Engineering	5	5	10
Computer Science & Engineering	5	5	10
Electronic Engineering	5	5	10
Civil Engineering	5	5	10
Textile Technology	5	5	10
Mechanical Engineering	5	5	10
Total	30	30	60

Abbreviation : T - Teachers S - Students

The table – 2 gives the description of branch-wise distribution of questionnaire and the total 10 each from every disciplines which includes teachers and students responded and collected from them for analytical study.

Table - 3 : Experience of Internet Use

Experience of Internet Use	T	%	S	S	Total	%
Less than 1 year	3	10.0	9.	30.0	12	30.0
1 – 2 years	9	30.0	9	30.0	18	30.0
2 – 4 years	12	40.0	8	26.7	20	33.3
More than 4 years	6	20.0	4	13.3	10	16.7
Total	30	100.0	30	100.0	60	100.0

It can be inferred from the table 3 that 33.3% of the academic community have 2-4 years of experience in using Internet, followed by 1-2 years of experience in using Internet with 30.0% response 20.0% respondents have started using the Internet for less than 1 year. Where as 16.7% respondents have more than 4 years of experience in using Internet. The analysis clearly indicates that on an average majority of the respondents have more than 2 years of experience in using Internet.

Table – 4 : Frequency of Internet Use

Frequency of Internet Use	T	%	S	S	Total	%
Daily	14	46.7	11	36.7	25	41.7
2-3 times a week	10	33.3	10	33.3	20	33.3

Once in a week	3	10.0	6	20.0	9	15.0
2-3 times in a month	2	6.7	3	10.0	5	8.3
Once in a month	1	3.3	-	-	1	1.7
Total	30	100.0	30	100.0	30	100.0

In order to assess the frequency of using Internet services, the respondents were asked to indicate any one out of five categories of time lag. It has been found that 41.7% of the respondents use the Internet daily, 33.3% use it 2-3 times in a week, 15.0% once in a week and 8.3% 2 – 3 times in a month. Only 1.7% use the Internet once a month.

Table – 5 : Place of Internet Use

Place of Internet use	T	%	S	S	Total	%
At Institute	29	96.7	25	83.3	54	90.0
At Home	21	70.0	17	56.7	38	63.3
At Other place	10	33.3	12	40.0	22	36.7

A majority of the respondents i.e. 90.0% reported that they access the Internet from the university, while 63.3% also access it from home. Another 36.7% also use the other places such as cyber cafes etc. for accessing the Internet. This indicates that though the respondents have their preferences many of them use multiple access venues, as they find it convenient. The use of the Internet seems to have become pervasive and not confined to specific place or venue.

Table - 6 : Methods of Learning Internet Skills

Methods of Learning Internet Skills	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Trial and Error	26	86.7	21	70.0	47	78.3
Guidance from Colleagues and friends	18	60.0	23	76.7	41	68.3
Training Offered by College	-	-	6	10.0	6	10.0
Self instruction	21	70.0	12	40.0	33	55.0
External Courses	-	-	5	8.3	5	8.3

Table 6 shows that the most popular method of acquiring the necessary skills to use Internet is via trial and error method. A majority of the respondents (i.e.78.3%) used this method to learn the Internet, followed by guidance from colleges and friends (68.3%) responses 55.0% respondents acquired skill by self instruction method, 10.0% of the users learnt the Internet through training offered by the college and 8.3% through external courses.

Table - 7 : Purpose of Internet use

Purposes of Internet use	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Research	20	66.7	17	56.7	37	61.7
Education	21	70.0	20	66.7	41	68.3
Entertainment	6	20.0	12	40.0	18	30.0
Communication	12	40	14	46.7	26	43.3

The respondents were asked to indicate their purposes for using the internet. It is evident from Table 7 that 68.3% of the respondents use the Internet primarily for the educational purpose, followed by 61.7% respondents for the research purposes, further followed by 43.3% for the communication purposes, 30.0% of the respondents also admitted that they use Internet for entertainment purposes.

Hence it can be inferred that a majority of the respondents use the Internet for educational purposes.

Table – 8 : Use of Internet Service

Internet Services	T	%	S	%	Total	%
E-mail	30	100.0	30	100.0	60	100.0
w w w	29	96.7	28	93.3	57	95.0
Telnet	9	30.0	6	20.0	15	25.0
FTP	8	26.7	2	6.7	10	16.7
Archie	4	13.3	1	3.3	5	8.3
List Servers/ Discussion Groups	6	20.0	3	10.0	9	15.0
BBS	11	36.7	8	26.7	19	31.7
FAQ	16	53.3	15	50.0	31	51.7
Chatting	17	56.7	25	83.3	42	70.0

Table 8 depicts the use of Internet services, E-mail has been chosen as the most popular Internet service with 100.0% response, followed by www with 95.0% response. The use of other Internet services in order of preference is Chatting 70%. Frequently Asked Question (FAQs) 51.7%, Bulletin Board Services 31.7%, Telnet 25%, FTP 16.7%, List Serves/Discussion Group 15% and Archie 8.3%.

Table - 9 : Ways to Browse information from Internet.

Ways	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Type the web address directly.	12	40.0	9	30.0	21	35.0
Use search engines	26	86.7	19	63.3	45	75.0
Use subscription databases	2	6.6	-	-	2	3.3

Table 9 shows that 75.0% of the respondents use search engines to browse information from the Internet, 35.0% also report that they type the web address directly for browsing information. Only 3.3% indicate that they use subscription database.

Table – 10 : Favourite Search Engine

Search Engine	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Google	25	83.3`	22	73.3	47	78.3
Yahoo	12	40.0	17	56.7	39.0	65.0
Altavista	7	23.3	9	30.0	16	26.7
Lycos	6	20.0	4	13.3	10	16.7
Rediff	14	46.7	7	23.3	21	35.0
Khoj	1	3.3	2	6.7	3	5.0
Not specify	-	-	2	6.7	2	3.3

Table 10 shows that Google is the most preferred search engine with 78.3% response, followed by Yahoo and Rediff with 65.0% and 35.0% response respectively. Other search engines are gaining popularity slowly but Google and yahoo are reigning in providing the information on Internet.

Table - 11 : Perceived Positive Aspects of Internet

Positive Features	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Communication with others	20	66.7	17	56.7	37	61.7
Abundance of Information	9	30.0	7	23.3	16	23.7
Acquiring Language	5	16.7	4	13.3	9	15.0
Friendship through chatting	-	2	6.7	2	3.3	

Table 11 indicates that 61.7% of the respondents find communicating with others as one of the major positive aspects of the Internet. 26.7% of the respondents feel that they find abundance of information on a specific subject field on the internet. 15% admit that they can gain proficiency in language and 3.3% also feel that they can make friendship through chatting.

Table - 12 : Perceived Negative Aspects of Internet

Negative	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Waste of time	9	30.0	4	13.3	13	21.7
Internet addiction	1	3.3	2	6.7	3	5.0
Misuse	6	20.0	1	3.3	7	11.7
Pornographic sites	19	63.3	13	43.3	32	53.3
Viruses and backers	23	76.7	15	50.0	48	80.0
To slow	11	36.7	17	56.7	28	46.7

Data presented in table 12 reveal that a majority of the respondents i.e. 80.0% perceive viruses and hackers as one of the major negative aspects of Internet use followed by pornographic sites with 53.3% response 46.7% users find slow speed a big hurdle in getting the required information. Some of the respondents (i.e. 5%) also admit that a person may become addict to Internet.

Table - 13 : Problems faced by the users

Problems faced by users	T	%	S	%	Total	%
The allotted time slot is insufficient.	19	63.3	25	83.3	44	73.3
Difficulty in finding relevant information	3	10.0	10	33.3	13	21.7
Electricity failure	2	6.7	19	63.3	21	35.0
Improvement sites in the subject area are not known	5	16.7	10	33.3	15	25.0

Table 13 depicts the problems faced by the users in surfing 73.3% of the respondents find the allotted time for surfing the Internet as insufficient, 35.0% opinion that they face the problem of electricity failure in the college 25% of the users do not have knowledge of the important sites in their subject and 21.7% find it difficult to get the relevant information from the Internet.

Table - 14 : Users satisfaction with Internet Facilities

Satisfaction	T	%	S	%	Total	%
Fully satisfied	8	26.7	11	36.7	19	31.7
Partially satisfied	12	40.0	10	33.3	22	36.7
Least satisfied	2	6.7	9	30.0	11	18.3
No comments	8	26.7	-	-	8	13.3
Total	30	100.0	30	100.0	60	100.0

Table 14 shows that only 31.7% of the respondents feel fully satisfied with the services rives, 36.7% partially satisfied, 18.3% least satisfied and 13.3% have not expressed any view regarding the service. However, it depicts that majority of them are found satisfied with the services extended by the University. Only a few expressed least satisfied and they are needed to be convinced for the services available for them to be utilized. Those who expressed no views about the existing services, are to be impressed upon for making use stating essentiality and importance for their studies. The findings of the tables has been discussed as found during the analysis of data in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION

There are opinions that the University must facilitate some sort of training, orientation at the very survival level so that most of the teachers as well as students aspiring for higher study may make use of it maximum others opined that the trained staff can be a great help and therefore, they should assist the Internet user. It was also opined that if it is possible to ensure maximum power supply to optimize the benefits of Internet services. Internet has changed the notion of library from walled place into a virtual library. The growth of Internet has been global and continuous and is growing at the rapid

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