Use of Electronic Resources in Degree College Libraries in Chandigarh

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ABSTRACT

The electronic resources (e-resources) available in a library play a prominent role in facilitating access to required information to the users in an easy and expeditious manner. The e-resources, like CD-ROM databases, online journals, online books, OPACs, and the internet, are slowly replacing the importance and usage of print media. A study of 11 degree colleges in Chandigarh, which have students and teachers strength of over 30000, was conducted. For the purpose of the study, a sample selected was 770 which included 60 students and 10 teachers from each of the colleges, respectively. The objectives of this study was to know the usage of e-resources and services by the users of degree college libraries in Chandigarh; find out the impediments encountered by the users while accessing and using the e-resources; and suggest measures to take full advantage of IT to make degree college libraries more digitally resourceful and for providing information services data from the users–teachers and students–to know the impact of e-resources. The data collected was analysed using simple percentage technique.

Keywords: Electronic resources, bibliometric study, accessing e-resources

1. INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) has revolutionised every walk of human society. Large scale computerisation, invention of the internet and influx of world wide web has made extensive and fast dissemination of information and turned the world into a global village. Academic libraries have a long history, starting with the chained and closed-access libraries of earlier times to the present-day hybrid, digital, and virtual libraries that use the latest technology for provision of information through various services. Today, these libraries are surrounded by networked data that is connected to vast ocean of the internet-based services to make desired information sources accessible to the academic community–students and the faculty alike.

The electronic resources (e-resources) available in a library play a prominent role in facilitating access to required information to the users in an easy and expeditious manner. The e-resources, like CD-ROM databases, online journals, online books, OPACs, and the internet, are slowly replacing the importance and usage of print media. It is imperative that one should be familiar with the use and exploitation of e-resources for their quick and effective usage for promotion of academic excellence and research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of sources have been consulted and the content was gone through to identify the related studies on the present topic of research. Some of the studies relevant to the present survey are:

Dillon[1] discussed that understanding the factors that influence user acceptance of information technology (IT) was of interest both to researchers in a variety of fields as well as procurers of technology for large organisations. It was concluded that current research offers insights that could support the derivation of reliable predictions of user acceptance.

Hiller[2] discussed that the University of Washington libraries has conducted triennial faculty and student library surveys since 1992. The results revealed significant variation within and between user groups concerning library satisfaction, use, priorities, and importance. These large-scale surveys had proven costly and time-consuming to design, administer, and analyse.

Sivaraj & Esmail[3] demonstrated and elaborated the various aspects of the internet use, such as frequency of the Internet use, methods used for accessing the internet resources, the frequently-used places for the internet access, purposes for the internet search and use of the internet services, ways to browse the internet, problems faced and satisfaction level of the students, faculty members, and research scholars with the internet facilities provided at the Bannari Amman Institute of Technology.

Doraswamy[4] made an attempt to determine the present status of knowledge and use of digital resources. It was observed that use of digital resources is still inadequate among the engineering faculty of the universities in the developing countries.

Kanniyappan[5], *et al.* conducted a survey at Anna University Library, Chennai to find out the use of different types of e-resources and services and the impact of these resources on the academic development of faculty members. The study also highlighted the problems faced in using the e-resources and success rate of satisfaction in getting the required information on e-resources/ services.

Sujatha & Mudhol[6] in their study demonstrated and elaborated the various aspects of electronic information sources (EIS) use such as frequency and purpose of EIS use, frequently used EIS, methods of learning to use EIS, benefits of EIS use, constrained faced in the use of EIS, and the satisfaction level of users in the use of EIS.

Rajput[7], *et al.* in their study made an attempt to know the use of online access catalogue by the users. The study revealed that the tool is useful and at the same time respondents felt that there must be someone near the OPAC to help in retrieving the required documents. They also examined the utilisation and satisfaction of users about OPAC and highlighted the suggestions made by the users for the further improvement.

Koovakkai[8] reported the user satisfaction scale developed by him for measuring the user satisfaction of academic libraries. The scale can be adapted and used for measuring user satisfaction in other types of libraries as well. Satisfying the users was prime concern of every modern library as it was mandatory part of the libraries to measure the satisfaction of the users in order to provide better services.

Joteen Singh[9], *et al.* undertook a survey on the use of the electronic information focusing on the internet services by the users of Manipur University Library and examined the utilisation, purpose, difficulties and satisfaction level of users about the internet-based e-resources services provided by the library.

Chowdappa[10], *et al.* depicted the extent of dependency of users of educational and research institutions of Mysore city on the electronic/digital media. The responses of 1000 users and the critical evaluation of 24 subject experts under Delphi study have been gathered to render valid findings and suggestions. The attempt clearly showed the degree of the use of digital information resources vis-à-vis the conventional print media.

Patil & Parameshwar[11] in their paper explained about the e-resources and their use by the faculty members and research scholars in the Gulbarga University, Gulbarga. The paper revealed that the e-resources available in the Gulbarga University Library were helpful in fulfilling their information needs. There was need to train the faculty members and research scholars in using the e-resources.

Natarajan[12], *et al.* conducted a survey of 117 faculty members and research scholars on the use and user perception of e-resources in Annamalai University, which revealed that despite the availability of wide range of e-resources, the frequency of their use was low. The reasons identified for this were lack of time, lack of awareness, lack of subject coverage, and slow downloading.

3. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The scope of the study was limited to the knowledge and usage of e-resources by the users of degree college libraries in Chandigarh. It focused on the e-resources and services available in these libraries.

3.1 Objectives

- To know the usage of e-resources and services by the users of degree college libraries in Chandigarh

- To find out the impediments encountered by the users while accessing and using the e-resources

- To suggest measures to take full advantage of IT to make degree college libraries more digitally resourceful and for providing information services

4. METHODOLOGY

As part of the study, a structured questionnaire was designed to elicit data from the users–teachers and students–to know the impact of e-resources. There are 11 degree colleges in Chandigarh, which have students and teachers strength of over 30000. For the purpose of the study in hand, a sample selected was 770 which included 60 students and 10 teachers from each of the colleges, respectively. The questionnaires were randomly distributed and the filled in questionnaires were collected from the students and teachers from each of the 11

colleges. The data collected was analysed using simple percentage technique.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Knowledge of Information Technology

A question was asked to know the status on the IT knowledge of the users of the libraries of the degree colleges in Chandigarh. In response to this question, 199 (25.84 %) users indicated that their status on the knowledge of IT being 'Average', while 389 (50.52 %) mentioned as 'Good'. Only 182 (23.64 %) users had 'Very Good' knowledge of IT. (Table 1).

Table 1. Knowledge of information technology

Status	Response received	Percentage
Very Good	182	23.64
Good	389	50.52
Average	199	25.84
Total	770	100

5.2 Knowledge of E-resources

From Table 2, it is seen that majority of the users, i.e, 612 (79.48 %) had knowledge of e-resources, while 158 (20.52 %) indicated that they did not know about the e-resources.

Table 2. Knowledge of e-resources

Category	Response received	Percentage
Yes	612	79.48
No	158	20.52
Total	770	100

5.3 Sources of Accessing E-resources

The users were asked to mention the sources they used to access the e-resources as shown in Table 3. It is clear from the table that 432 (56.1 %) users favour search engines as source of accessing e-resources, while 255 (33.12 %) users found the source in the form of OPAC. The websites of universities and institutions as a source to access the e-resources got the attention of 209 (27.14 %) users. It is evident from the analysis that the majority of the users found the search engines an easy way to get access to e-resources.

Table 3. Sources of accessing e-resources (*n*=770)

Source	Response received	Percentage
OPAC	255	33.12
Search engines	432	56.10
Websites of universities and institutions	209	27.14

5.4 Types of E-resources Accessed

Table 4 shows the types of e-resources accessed by the users to seek information for their needs. The e-books were preferred by 364 (47.27 %) users, followed by e-journals, which were accessed by 302 (39.22 %) users.

The bibliographic databases and the CD-ROM databases were the other e-resources accessed by 243 (31.56 %) users and 226 (29.35 %) users, respectively.

Table 4. E-resources accessed (*n*=770)

Type	Response received	Percentage
Electronic journals	302	39.22
Electronic books	364	47.27
Bibliographic databases	243	31.56
CD-ROM databases	226	29.35

5.5 Frequency of Using E-resources

The usage of the e-resources amongst the users is yet to pick-up as is evident as shown in Table 5. Very few users frequently accessed the e-resources–94 (12.21 %) users for CD-ROM databases, 118 (15.32 %) used bibliographic databases and 144 (18.70 %) used e-journals.

However, it was found that e-books were accessed frequently by 199 (25.84 %) users. While these e-resources had found favour by a few more users who could access them sometimes. However, it is very clear from the Table that majority of the users never used e-resources.

Table 5. Frequency of using e-resources (*n*=770)

E-resources	Frequently (%)	Sometimes (%)	Never (%)
Electronic journals	144 (18.70)	158 (20.52)	468 (60.78)
Electronic books	199 (25.84)	165 (21.43)	406 (50.72)
Bibliographic databases	118 (15.32)	125 (16.23)	527 (68.44)
CD-ROM databases	94 (12.21)	132 (17.14)	544 (70.65)

5.6 Purpose of Using E-resources

The purpose for which the e-resources were used by the users, as shown in Table 6, indicated that majority of the them, i.e., 448 (58.18 %) and 442 (57.40 %) used e-resources to keep themselves updated on their subjects of interest and for career development and growth, respectively.

A total of 377 (48.96 %) users favoured e-resources for the purpose of academic assignments, while, only 283 (36.75 %) for preparing for competitive examinations.

Table 6. Purpose of using e-resources (*n*=770)

Purpose	Response Received	Percentage
For academic assignments	377	48.96
For learning to prepare for competitions	283	36.75
To keep up-to-date on subjects of interest	448	58.18
For career development and growth	442	57.40

5.7 Problems in Accessing E-resources

The users were asked to indicate the problems they encountered for accessing e-resources as shown in Table 7. The majority of the users, 445 (57.79 %) agreed that lack of IT knowledge and skills to make use of e-resources followed by 389 (50.52 %) users who thought that limited access to computers was the major problem for not able to use the e-resources. While 252 (32.72 %) users agreed that with using e-resources often distracts from work being the problem, the majority of them 518 (67.27 %) disagreed with this and 321 (41.69 %) felt that too much information was the problem they faced while accessing the e-resources.

Table 7. Problems in accessing e-resources (*n*=770)

Problem	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Too much information is retrieved	321 (41.69)	449 (58.31)
Lack of IT knowledge and skills to effective utilise services	445 (57.79)	325 (42.21)
Using e-resources often distracts from work	252 (32.72)	518 (67.27)
Limited access to computers	389 (50.52)	381 (49.48)

5.8 Use of Automated Information Services

Table 8 indicates the awareness and use of automated information services provided by the library. It was found that the majority of the users, i.e., 425 (55.19%) used the circulation services followed by reference services with 372 (48.31 %) users. Just 48 (6.23%) users made use of selective dissemination of information service.

Table 8. Use of automated information services (*n*=770)

Automated service	Response received	Percentage
Circulation service	425	55.19
Reference service	372	48.31
Bibliographical service	78	10.13
Current awareness service	197	25.58
Selective dissemination of information	48	6.23
Newspaper clippings	110	14.28

5.9 Training for Accessing E-resources

Table 9 shows the areas of training as required by the users to access the e-resources. 550 (71.43 %), the majority of the users, indicated that they required training for learning more about the internet and search engines in order to access and make use of e-resources. Training in information retrieval skills got the attention of 169 (21.95 %), while 162 (21.03 %) users wanted to improve their OPAC searching. Overall, majority of the users indicated that they should be trained for accessing e-resources.

Table 9. Areas of training required (*n*=770)

Areas of training	Response received	Percentage
Learning more about the internet and search engines	550	71.43
Information retrieval skills	169	21.95
OPAC searching	162	21.03

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The users of the college in particular the students, are loaded with assignments and learning on their own in the present day competitive academic environment. Information seeking and gathering could be a challenging task to these users with limited resources and services available in a college library. The internet has attracted the attention of the users as an easy source for accessing information and e-resources as is evident from the study. Yet, only a sizeable number of users could frequently seek information from e-resources. Most of the users access e-resources for updating their knowledge on their respective subjects and for academic assignments.

A majority of the users found that limited access to computers being the problem to use e-resources and indicated their willingness to get trained to learn more about using the internet and e-resources.

The college library should play a pivotal role in facilitating the students and the teachers alike in the use of the internet and e-resources and other library and information services. The college library should organise awareness and training programmes and seminars to educate the users on seeking information from e-resources and to maximize the use of library resources and services. As there will be growing dependence on the internet by the users for their information needs, the college library should strive to have the facilities and resources required.

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Mrs Jaspal Kaur Bhatia has been working as Librarian at DevSamaj College for Women, Sector 45, Chandigarh for the last 28 years. Her areas of interests include library management, digitisation and digital libraries, and promotion of usage of libraries. She has published 10 papers in books and journals and edited one volume of conference proceedings. She has been associated with Chandigarh Librarians' Association and Chandigarh Libraries' Consortium for Advancement of Librarianship in Chandigarh.