

Print vs e-Journal and Information Seeking Patterns of Users: A Case Study of SPJIMR

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ABSTRACT

The developments in information technology have made drastic changes in the way the information is collected, stored, retrieved, and distributed. Electronic journal is one of the products of information and communication technologies. The advancement of e-journal during recent years has given librarians a powerful new resource to support learning and research. With availability of both forms of journals in the library, it has become necessary to compare and evaluate effectiveness of e-journals and print journals from users' and librarians' point of view. The paper discusses a case study done at SP Jain Institute of Management and Research to find out the information-seeking patterns of the library users. The paper also discusses advantages and disadvantages of e-journals and suggests that printed and e-journals are complimentary to each other.

Keywords: e-journals, information and communication technologies, printed journals, SPJIMR

1. INTRODUCTION

Journals in a library play vital role in distributing nascent facts and primary information to users. They publish articles and papers on recent research and development, particularly in the ever changing fields of management, science, and technology. Advent of electronic journals (e-journals) during recent years has given librarians a powerful new resource to support learning and research. Lot of journals, in all fields, both printed as well as electronic, are currently available electronically via web. Availability ranges from table of contents to the full text. Some journals only exist in their online format and others have both printed as well as electronic versions¹. The impact of e-journals on library collection, services, and administration is complex.

Electronic version of journals changes the publication system entirely. They provide easy access to a journal and thereby save time. Keyword search ability, accessibility at the time of publication, etc., are some of the features of e-journals. Despite various advantages and popularity, e-journals have failed to replace or displace printed journals and act more as supplement to printed

journals. Today most of the e-journals appear as parallel version of their print counterparts².

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR) is one of over 320 constituent institutions of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. It is rated among the top 10 B-schools in the country. SPJIMR library is one of the central place of knowledge in the institute and is an essential component of the SPJIMR's outstanding research and education mission. With modern collection of knowledge resources and innovative information services, it plays an important role for students, faculty, and the surrounding community in their intellectual pursuits. As various research projects are carried out in the institutes, journals play vital role in the library collection. The library subscribes to 150 print journals. It includes 100 Indian journals and nearly 50 international journals specific to the academic and research needs of the users. With the advent of the information and communication technologies (ICT), SPJIMR library started providing electronic access to a wide variety of resources including full-text articles and journals.

SPJIMR library offers electronic access to more than 2350 journals, which include not just traditional scholarly journals but also more popular journals, through its online database and their print counterpart. Library is subscribing to various databases like EBSCO, ISI Emerging Market, CMIE Prowess, etc. With availability of both forms of journals in the library, it became necessary to compare and evaluate effectiveness of e-journals and print journals from user and library point of view. A case study to evaluate and compare the services of journals in both formats was conducted at SPJIMR library.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Scope of the present study was confined to the SPJIMR library and its services. The study was further limited to the small sample of 125 library users including faculty, students, and research associates. Moreover, the study's applicability was also limited to the fact that sample journals were selected from among a group of highly-used titles available in print and electronic format and its users. The results will help collection developers in designing suitable policy and assess the technical intricacies faced by the library staff in providing effective e-journal services. It will also help in designing the efficient infrastructure requirements for managing journals in both the formats.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✂ To assess and compare the use of printed journals with e-journals.
- ✂ To assess issues relating to the management of e-journals.
- ✂ To assess the technical difficulties faced by the users in utilisation of e-journal services.
- ✂ To suggest measures to improve the existing e-journals facilities in SPJIMR library.

5. METHODOLOGY

To fulfill the above objectives a simple survey was conducted and a detailed and well structured questionnaire was designed and distributed to the selected 125 users of SPJIMR library. Out of 125 respondents, 90 were students, 10 research associates, and 25 faculty members.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

6.1 Format Preference

The format preference of journals by the respondents is shown in the Table 1. Respondents were asked about their preferred formats for journals. A substantial majority (70 per cent) of users wanted journals available in both electronic and print forms. A small percentage (21 per cent) preferred electronic only access, while even fewer (8 per cent) wanted only print version.

6.2 Information Seeking Patterns of Users

Users use journals in different ways like browsing, checking references, photocopying or printing, reading related articles, reading entire journal, or reading instructions to author. Information seeking pattern of users varied with different media. (Fig. 1)

Figure 1 shows that in case of e-journals, maximum number (69 per cent of the respondents) use journals by way of browsing, 26 per cent by checking references, 7 per cent by printing or photocopying, 31 per cent by reading related articles, 3 per cent by reading entire journals while only 2 per cent by way of reading instruction of authors. Whereas in case of print journals 25 per cent of respondents use journals by way of browsing, 30 per cent by checking reference, 30 per cent by printing/photocopying, 12 per cent by reading entire journal, and only 2 per cent by way of reading instruction of authors. Maximum number of respondents (52 per cent) use print journals by way of reading related articles. From above data it is clear that e-journals are mostly used by browsing on computer and very few readers read it by taking prints. It is also observed that for reading entire journal users mostly prefer print version of the journal rather than e-journal.

6.3 Frequency of Use

The data regarding the frequency of use of journals in both formats indicate the awareness of the users towards the journals. Figure 2 categorises the users based on the frequency of use, i.e., daily, weekly, monthly and infrequently.

Figure 2 reveals that in case of e-journals, while 30 per cent referred infrequently and 13 per cent referred

Table 1. Format preferences of users

Respondents	Print	Electronic	Both	No Opinion
Faculty	04 (16%)	03 (12%)	18 (72%)	00 (00%)
Research associates	00 (00%)	01 (10%)	09 (90%)	00 (00%)
Students	06 (07%)	22 (24%)	61 (68%)	01 (01%)

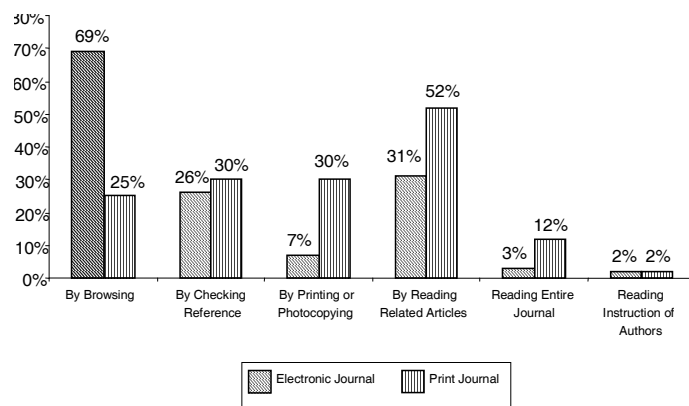


Figure 1. Information-seeking patterns of users.

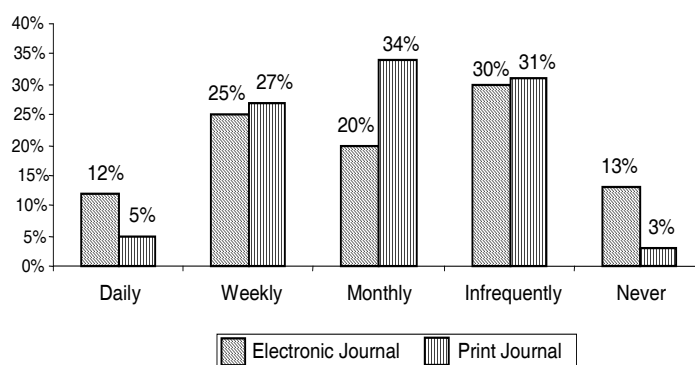


Figure 2. Frequency of use.

never, 12 per cent daily, 25 per cent weekly and 20 per cent monthly. Where as in case of print journals, 34 per cent referred monthly, 5 per cent daily, 27 per cent weekly, and 31 per cent infrequently. Only 3 per cent respondents never referred print journals. Figure 2 depicts that majority of users still not use e-journals regularly may be due to inconvenience to use and unawareness about electronic version.

6.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of e-journals

Most of the literature describing the recent growth in electronic journals emphasise three important factors; money, technology and convenience, and speed. Even though greatest paradox of print journal is that they act more like archival and legitimising tools than as communication tools, e-journals have the ability to re-establish the communication purpose of scholarly publications, without losing their archival or legitimising values. Table 2 shows why users like e-journals. It shows that most of the respondents (76 per cent) like e-journals because of their timely access, 46 per cent for access to their contents, 50 per cent for provision of hyperlinks to contents outside the journal article, 61 per cent for the electronic search capabilities, and 47 per cent for the

multimedia contents, which these journals provide. Remote computer access attracted 36 per cent of the respondents.

Table 3 explains that most of the respondents (31 per cent) dislike the e-journal because it is more difficult to browse, 17 per cent concerned about copyright issues, 11 per cent disliked it because it requires special infrastructure facility as compare to print journal and

Table 2. Advantages of e-journals

Features	Respondents
Timely access	76%
Access to the same content	46%
Hyperlink to content outside the journal (XE journal article)	50%
Electronic search capabilities	61%
Remote computer access	36%
Articles are displayed clearly and in easy-to-read format	32%
A user-friendly interface	21%
Contains multimedia information	47%
Can be used simultaneously by more than one user	17%
Other reasons	36%

Table 3. Disadvantages of e-journals

Features	Respondents
Need special infrastructure facility	11%
Are more difficult to browse than paper journal	31%
Result in excessive printing	11%
Require promotion and training	06%
Cause more concern about copy right issue	17%
Do not have sufficient journals and time coverage	10%
Other reasons	01%

results in excessive printing, 10 per cent respondents think that institute do not have sufficient e-journals and 6 per cent dislike e-journals just because it requires promotion and training to access it.

7. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the various observations and considering users opinion regarding the improvement in e-journal facility, the following suggestions are made.

- ✘ Orientation/awareness programmes should be conducted at regular intervals for the use of e-journals.
- ✘ List of the journals available in the library should be publicised by displaying it on library noticeboard and on library website to increase the use of e-journals.
- ✘ Users should be informed regularly about the new e-journal/s subscribed by the library.
- ✘ To increase the interest among users regarding the journals, content pages should be distributed to users through e-mail.
- ✘ Library homepage should give users access to the individual journal's homepages by hyperlinks, which will help them in avoiding the hassle of remembering the password or the URL.
- ✘ Workshops and seminars should be conducted and popular lectures should be arranged in every department.
- ✘ Different levels of user education programmes should be arranged for faculty, researchers, and students.
- ✘ The library staff should cooperate with the users and help them in overcoming the technical difficulties faced while using e-journals.
- ✘ Proper training should be provided to the library staff about the use of various databases, e-resources, and

internet operations available in the library which will in turn help them to train the users.

8. CONCLUSION

Electronic journals opened up many exciting opportunities and potentials for academic libraries. e-journals have both advantages and disadvantages. Librarians need to be able to identify and balance the factor that would make e-journals a success in their libraries. Looking at the present situation of information explosion and competency in acquiring it, it is on the part of the library staff to create more awareness about the e-journal availability among the users and provide them a friendly environment so that they can make a better use of the facility. The staff in the library requires training in handling the e-journals and users need an orientation for using them. Library staff should be provided proper training, which will help them acquiring more sophisticated searching and retrieval skills. The librarians' role has to be redefined in view of technological developments keeping in mind the best interest of users and retrieval efficiency. Study shows that most of the users choose to use the journal in both formats, print journals are still as popular as e-journals. Therefore, even in this digitisation era, e-journal may not completely replace the existing print version but both will compliment each other to meet the needs of the users.

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