

## Use of Library Portal by Research Scholars and Faculty Members at Kuvempu University: A Survey

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### ABSTRACT

The main objective of this present study is to provide a detailed usage statistics of the Kuvempu University library portal during the academic year 2011-2012. The study examined the usage of library portal by research scholars, and faculty members of various science departments of Kuvempu University. The study investigated, and observed the factors like attitude and perception towards library portal, purpose of use, benefits of using the library portal. The study also identified the difficulties faced by respondents while using the library portal. The study shows that 85 % of respondents used the library portal. Research is the major reason for which majority (70 %) of respondents use the library portal. 75 % of the respondents opined that the portal has provided more efficient access to electronic resources (e-resources). 48.33 % of respondents have partially agreed with the information reflected on the main page of the portal. Low speed connectivity is a major problem found from this study. Based on the findings, the study suggests: proper training to the users as well as library staff, marketing of resources and services through advertisements, and display of printed guides, announcements of new e-resources, more high-speed computers for further improvement of library portal. This study would assist the library administrators in developing a more complete understanding of users information needs.

**Keywords:** Library portal, kuvempu university, ICT, digital library

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Information is considered as product. It is saleable, and there is a constant market for it. Like all other products, to be saleable, information has to be what the customer want and in a form that they can easily use. It is also self-regenerating i.e. having given/sold it the giver/seller and the recipient both retains it, and this process can on forever. In the age of information technology (IT) information seekers do not wish to spend their most of time in searching information. Information generators (authors, associations, publishers, government, institutes, researchers, etc.) want to marke their products/intellectual properties. Libraries, information centers, data warehouses keen to provide access and marketing (awareness) of their resources for their users/clients/stakeholder. For all above aspects, the portal is like a boon for an individual or community of group. Basic concept behind the portal technology is to save the time of information seekers while searching their require information. Thus, portal

is playing an important role as an agent, which transforms the library into a leaning organisation between actual users and library resources<sup>1</sup>. Library portals are a sub-set of web portals which are organised gateways that help to structure access to information found on the internet<sup>2</sup>.

In this study attempt has been made to examine the level of usage of library portal by research scholars and faculty members of various departments under the faculty of science at Kuvempu University. Further, the study intended to investigate the attitude and perception towards library portal of Kuvempu University.

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many investigations have been carried out on library portals in the earlier days. Bhatnagar<sup>3</sup> explores the web-based services, its necessity and its popularity among users, with their advantages and disadvantages, Samyuktha<sup>4</sup> illustrated the features and proactive role of the campus portal of the

University of Madras in enhancing the quality of research; Jange<sup>5</sup>, *et al.* analysed the library web portals of academic institutions in Karnataka in order to enhance the effective use of library websites to become more user friendly for information access; Kanamadi & Kumbar<sup>6</sup> discussed the library portals and the web-based library services expected at management institutes in Mumbai City, and explores the availability of institute website, importance, and extent of the library details hosted on the institute website; Das & Jeevan<sup>7</sup> in their study evaluated e-portal providing access to e-book such as Elsevier, Science Direct, Project Gutenberg, Digital library of India, University of Virginia Library (E-Text century), and Batlleby.com, using twenty selected parameters; Sunil & Sudheer<sup>8</sup> address the newly emerging paradigm of scientific knowledge distribution and collaboration by describing the existing technological solution of websites, adopted by online communities of practice, for maintaining the knowledge portals in the library and Information services; Fatima & Ahmad<sup>9</sup> found that the majority of the respondents gave average value to their library with regard to portal provision of course material and useful links, and also majority of the respondents expressed that they needed instructions and help for the effective utilisation of resources on the library portal.

### 3. KUVEMPU UNIVERSITY LIBRARY PORTAL

The University library came into existence with the establishment of the Kuvempu University on 29 June 1987. The library acts as a nerve centre catering to the academic and research needs of the students, the researchers, and the faculty members of 38 post-graduate departments covering Science, Social Science, and Humanities, engaged in higher pursuit of knowledge. The Kuvempu University library has been shaped as a centre of excellence, for academic and research pursuits by keeping itself open to the changes brought in by information and communication technologies. At present the library has a collection of 70,000 books, 4,124 back volumes of periodicals, 470 theses. The library is actively participating and contributing for the success of UGC's INFLIBNET and INFONET activities, and availing the benefits of these programmes for the benefit of its users.

### 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has the following objectives to:

- Assess the awareness about usage of library portal by the research scholars and faculty members.
- Know the purpose and frequency of use of library portal.
- Identify the type of information sources and

services used by the research scholars and Faculty members through library portal.

- Collect the user's opinion regarding usefulness and adequacy of contents or resources on library portal.
- Identify the problems faced by the users in using library portal.
- Give necessary suggestions to improve the effectiveness of library portal.

### 5. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The main purpose of this present study is to give an overview of the use of library portal by the research scholars and faculty members at Kuvempu University. The focus group of study is limited to research scholars and faculty members excluding students from Science departments of Kuvempu University during the academic year 2011-2012. Total 150 questionnaires were distributed. Among them 120 (80 %) questionnaires were received back from 60 research scholars and 60 faculty members.

### 6. METHODOLOGY

A structured questionnaire has been used as a data collection tool for the present study. These questionnaires have been distributed personally to the research scholars and faculty member of various departments under science discipline at Kuvempu University. The collected data has been analysed with the help of SPSS (12.0) package and presented in the form of tables and graphs.

### 7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 7.1 General Information

The study population consisting of research scholars and faculty members from different departments under the faculty of science. Table 1 gives detailed information of the distribution of questionnaires to both respondents.

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents**

S. No.	Gender	Research scholars (%)	Faculty members (%)
1.	Male	42 (70 %)	42 (70 %)
2.	Female	18 (30 %)	18 (30 %)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>60 (100 %)</b>	<b>60 (100 %)</b>

#### 7.2 Library Portal Usage

The library portal usage by users depends upon the nature of their information requirements, nature of library collection, and services, etc.

Looking at the response rate of respondents on the frequency of library portal, it can be said that

the research scholars are most frequent users than faculty members. It may be due to dependency on library portal to meet the informational requirements for perusing their research and their extent of involvement in research activities.

The study found that library portal is used by 85 % of both respondents while 73.33 % of both respondents usage library portal on dialy basis (Table 2).

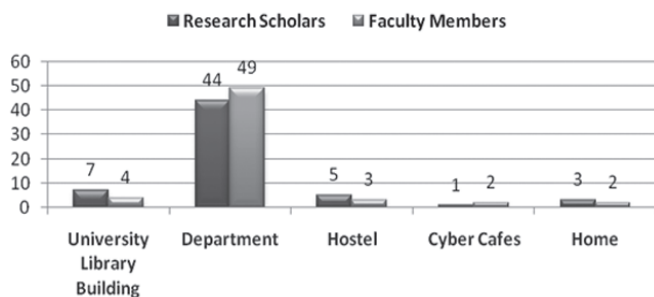
**Table 2. Frequency of usege of library portal**

S. No.	Frequency	Research scholars (%)	Faculty members (%)
1	Daily	28 (46.66 %)	16 (26.66 %)
2	Weekly	20 (31.74 %)	27 (45 %)
3	Fortnightly	3 (5 %)	3 (5 %)
4	Monthly	3 (5 %)	1 (1.66 %)
5	Occasionally	6 (10 %)	13 (22.95 %)
<b>Total</b>		<b>60 (100 %)</b>	<b>60 (100 %)</b>

It is noted that there are different locations for accessing the library portal such as within the library, in department, in hostel, in cyber cafes, at home and so on. The response of the research scholars and faculty members about accessing the library portal was tabulated.

It is visible that 7 (11.66 %) research scholars accessed the library portal within the library building, followed by 44 (73.33 %) in the department, 5 (8.33 %) in the hostel, 1 (1.66 %) in cyber cafes, and 3 (5 %) accessed at their home.

Further the study also indicates that 4 (6.66 %) faculty members accessed the library



**Figure 1. Library portal access points.**

portal within the library building, followed by 49 (81.66 %) in the department, 3(5 %) in the hostel, 2 (3.33 %) accessed in cyber cafes, and 2 (3.33 %) accessed at their home. It is found that, 77.5 % of respondents accessed the library portal in their department only (Fig. 1).

**7.3 Purpose of Using Library Portal**

The purpose of using library portal differs from one user to another. The users may use the library portal for various purposes such as, research work, to find reference information, to use e-journal and databases, to download full-text articles, etc.

Table 3 reveals the purpose for which the library portal is being used. The breakdown of analysis shows that majority of Research Scholars (43.33 %) used the library portal obviously for research purpose followed by use of e-journals and download full-text articles (16.66 % each).

It can be observed from the above analysis that 70 % of respondents use the library portal for the purpose of research activities. Further, research being an important endeavor in any university and library as catalyst for supporting all of its activities, it is necessary to made available the needed informational resources and services by the library for the benefit of its users.

**7.4 Use of Resources and Services**

A library being a service oriented institution it offers different sources and services for its users in order to fulfill their requirements. Users may use these sources and services by visiting the library or by using its portal. Some of the resources and services available through the university library portal are listed under this study and respondents were requested to indicate the usage of sources and services and their frequency.

Table 4 indicates use of resources available through library portal. It is evident from the table that research scholars and faculty members were highly satisfied with the ease of use of sources available through library portal.

**Table 3. Purpose of using library portal**

S. No.	Purpose	Research scholars (%)	Faculty members (%)	Total (%)
1.	For Research Purpose	26 (43.33 %)	16 (26.66 %)	42 (35 %)
2.	Reference information	5 (8.33 %)	8 (13.33 %)	13 (10.83 %)
3.	Databases access	5 (8.33 %)	3 (5 %)	08 (6.66 %)
4.	Electronic-journals access	10 (16.66 %)	13 (21.66 %)	23 (19.16 %)
5.	Full text articles download	10 (16.66 %)	15 (25 %)	25 (20.83 %)
6.	Other information	4 (6.66 %)	5 (8.33 %)	09 (7.5 %)
<b>Total</b>				<b>120 (100 %)</b>

**Table 4. Use of resources available through library portal**

S. No.	Information sources	Research scholars (%)	Faculty members (%)	Total (%)
1.	Web-OPAC	12 (20 %)	7 (11.47 %)	19 (15.83 %)
2.	e-journals	24 (40 %)	25 (41.66 %)	49 (40.83 %)
3.	e-databases	9 (15 %)	8 (13.33 %)	17 (14.16 %)
4.	e-books	4 (6.66 %)	2 (10 %)	6 (5 %)
5.	Current journals	6 (10 %)	2 (3.33 %)	8 (6.66 %)
6.	Publications	4 (6.66 %)	6 (10 %)	10 (8.33 %)
7.	Virtual library	5 (8.33 %)	6 (10 %)	11 (9.16 %)

Table 5 indicates the use of services provided through library portal. It is observed that of the total 60 research scholars 41(68.33 %) while 42 (70 %) used web & e-mail services. On the other hand 25 (41.66 %) faculty members used reader guidance/ user orientation program, followed by 24 (38.33 %) of current awareness service, while 55 (91.66 %) respondents used web & e-mail services. The study also observed that remaining 48.88 %

of both respondents did not used the services available through their library portal.

### 7.5 User Perception Towards Library Portal

In the current era the users are fully dependent on the resources and services available through the library portal. The respondents were expressed their opinion about information available on the library portal by checking most of the statements mentioned in Table 6.

**Table 5. Use of services provided through library portal**

Information Services	Research scholars		Faculty members		Total	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Reader guidance/ user orientation program	41 (68.33 %)	19 (31.66 %)	25 (41.66 %)	35 (58.33 %)	66 (55 %)	54 (45 %)
Current awareness services	42 (70 %)	18 (30 %)	23 (38.33 %)	37 (61.66 %)	65 (54.16 %)	55 (45.83 %)
Reference services	54 (90 %)	6 (10 %)	37 (61.66 %)	23 (38.33 %)	91 (75.83 %)	29 (24.16 %)
New arrivals display	49 (81.66 %)	11 (18.33 %)	30 (50 %)	30 (50 %)	79 (65.83 %)	41 (34.16 %)
Inter library loan	8 (13.33 %)	52 (86.66 %)	3 (5 %)	57 (95 %)	11 (9.16 %)	109 (90.83 %)
Press clipping services	13 (21.66 %)	47 (78.33 %)	5 (8.33 %)	55 (91.66 %)	18 (15 %)	102 (85 %)
Open access	52 (86.66 %)	8 (13.33 %)	28 (46.66 %)	32 (53.33 %)	80 (66.66 %)	40 (33.33 %)
Campus wide network management	19 (31.66 %)	41 (68.33 %)	36 (60 %)	24 (40 %)	55 (45.83 %)	65 (54.16 %)
Digital library	41 (68.33 %)	19 (31.66 %)	41 (68.33 %)	19 (31.66 %)	82 (68.33 %)	38 (31.66 %)
On-Line public access catalogues(OPAC)	37 (61.66 %)	23 (38.33 %)	12 (20 %)	46 (76.66 %)	49 (40.83 %)	71 (59.16 %)
Electronic learning resources centre(ELRC)	30 (50 %)	30 (50 %)	13 (21.66 %)	47 (78.33 %)	43 (35.83 %)	77 (64.16 %)
Web & e-mail services	42 (70 %)	18 (30 %)	55 (91.66 %)	5 (8.33 %)	97 (80.83 %)	23 (19.16 %)

**Table 6. User opinion about library portals benefits**

Benefits of library portal	Research scholars		Faculty members		Total	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
One point access to all library services and resources	44 (73.33 %)	16 (26.66 %)	17 (28.33 %)	43 (71.66 %)	61 (50.83 %)	59 (49.16 %)
Improves customisation of research tools by users	41 (68.33 %)	19 (31.66 %)	15 (25.59 %)	45 (75 %)	56 (46.66 %)	64 (53.33 %)
Enables customisation of research tools by users	32 (53.33 %)	28 (46.66 %)	10 (16.66 %)	50 (83.33 %)	42 (35 %)	78 (65 %)
Improves educational scholarly resources access and usage	57 (95 %)	3 (5 %)	31 (51.66 %)	29 (48.33 %)	88 (73.33 %)	32 (26.66 %)
Provides more efficient access to e-resources	52 (86.66 %)	8 (13.33 %)	38 (63.33 %)	22 (36.66 %)	90 (75 %)	30 (25 %)
Improves services efficiency of the library	44 (73.33 %)	16 (26.66 %)	19 (31.66 %)	41 (68.33 %)	63 (52.5 %)	57 (47.5 %)

The present study identified some of the benefits of library portal. It is found from the above table that among the total respondents under the study, 44 (73.33 %) research scholars have opined that portal provides one point access to all library services and resources, followed by 41 (68.33 %) research scholars state that portal improves customisation of research tools, 32 (53.33 %) scholars agreed that it enables customization of research tools, 52 (86.66 %) scholars agreed that the portal provides more efficient access to e-resources and 44 (73.33 %) scholars are accepted that the portal improves service efficiency of the library.

Further the data also reveal that 17 (28.33 %) faculty members have opined that portal provides one point access to all library services and resources, followed by 15 (25 %) stated that portal improves customisation of research tools, 10 (16.66 %) faculty members expressed that it enables customisation of research tools, 38 (63.33 %) respondents agreed that the portal provides more efficient access to E-resources and 19 (31.66%) respondents are accepted that the portal improves services efficiency of the library. The remaining 25 % of research scholars and 58.33 % of faculty members did not accept the benefits covered under the study. It is interesting to know the response rate of respondents that majority of them identified the portal provides more efficient access to e-resources.

**Table 7. Extent of information reflected on main page of library portal**

S. No.	Opinion	Research scholars (%)	Faculty members (%)
1.	Completely	40 (41.66 %)	16 (26.66 %)
2.	Partially	16 (26.66 %)	42 (70 %)
3.	Not at all	2 (3.33 %)	1 (1.66 %)
4.	Cannot say	2 (3.33 %)	1 (1.66 %)
<b>Total</b>		<b>60 (100 %)</b>	<b>60 (100 %)</b>

Table 7 depicts the extent of information reflected on main page of library portal. It is found that 40 (41.66 %) research scholars have completely agreed that information clearly found on the main page, followed by 1 (1.66 %) respondents have partially agreed with the information reflected on main page of the portal, 2 (3.33 %) respondents not at all agreed, and 7 (11.66 %) respondents couldn't express their opinion about the information reflected on the main page the library portal.

On the other hand 16 (26.66 %) faculty members have completely agreed that information clearly found on the main page, followed by 42 (70 %) respondents have partially agreed with the information reflected on main page of the portal, 1 (1.66 %) respondents not at all agreed, and 1 (1.66 %) respondents couldn't express their opinion about the information reflected on the main page the library portal.

### 7.5 Problems in Navigating the Portal

One of the main objectives of this study was to identify the problems faced by the users in using the library portal. To meet this objective the respondents were asked to indicate their problems related to this study. The data collected related to the problems in use of library portal are represented in the following Tables 8.

It is identified from this study that 20 (33.33 %) research scholars found difficulty in the organisation of web page, followed by while 37 (61.66 %) respondents state that the webpage takes much time to navigate the needed information. It is also found that 25 (41.66 %) respondents state that there is a lack of availability of needed information, while 25 (41.66 %) found difficulty in locating desired information.

On the other hand 13 (21.66 %) faculty members found difficulty in the organisation of webpage, while

**Table 8. Problems faced in navigating the library portal**

Problems	Research scholars		Faculty members		Total	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Difficulty in the organisation of webpage	20 (33.33 %)	40 (66.66 %)	13 (21.66 %)	47 (78.33 %)	33 (27.5 %)	87 (72.5 %)
The terminology is used on the site is not clear	19 (31.66 %)	31 (51.66 %)	16 (26.66 %)	44 (73.33 %)	35 (29.16 %)	75 (62.5 %)
Takes much time to navigate the needed information	37 (61.66 %)	23 (38.33 %)	18 (30 %)	42 (70 %)	55 (45.83 %)	65 (54.16 %)
Lack of availability of needed information	25 (41.66 %)	25 (41.66 %)	14 (23.33 %)	46 (76.66 %)	39 (32.5 %)	71 (59.16 %)
Difficulty in locating desired information	25 (41.66 %)	25 (41.66 %)	18 (30 %)	42 (70.7 %)	43 (35.83 %)	67 (55.83 %)
Difficulty in downloading materials	39 (65 %)	21 (35 %)	16 (26.66 %)	44 (73 %)	55 (45.83 %)	65 (54.16 %)
Lack of site map or search options	25 (41.66 %)	25 (41.66 %)	14 (23 %)	46 (76.66 %)	39 (32.5 %)	71 (59.16 %)

18 (30 %) respondents state that the webpage takes much time to navigate the needed information. It can be said that study that 4.23 % research scholars and 74.04 % faculty members did not find any problem in navigating the library portal.

**7.7 Training and Development**

It is important for every library to conduct library orientation courses to educate their users in utilising the sources and services available through their library portal. The respondents were requested to furnish the details regarding the need for training and development programs about the usage of library portal.

It is evident from Table 9 that 15 (25 %) of research scholars and 44 (73.13 %) of faculty members needed training/guidance about the usage of library portal. Remaining did not prefer training/guidance about library portal. It is observed from this study that majority of research scholars were aware about the usage of library portal.

**Table 9. Need for training/guidance about library portal**

S. No.	Response	Research scholars %	Faculty members (%)
1.	Yes	15 (25 %)	44 (73.33 %)
2.	No	45 (75 %)	16 (26.66 %)
<b>Total</b>		<b>60 (100 %)</b>	<b>60 (100 %)</b>

**8. FINDINGS**

The major findings of this study are:

- 85 % used of library portal by both respondents, while 73.33 % of both research scholars and faculty members used library portal daily.
- Research scholars found to be the most frequent users of library portal than faculty members.
- More than two third (77.5 %) of the respondents accessed the library portal from their respective departments.
- Research is the major purpose for which majority (70 %) of respondents use the library portal.
- Among total respondents, 18.61 % of research scholars and 33.61 % of faculty members never use sources available through the library portal.
- Significant proportion of the respondents i.e. 40.83 % were satisfied with quality of e-journals available on the library portal.
- It was observed that 35.47 % of research Scholars and 43.09 % of faculty members expressed their opinion that they never used services available through library portal.
- More than half of the respondents (56.66 %) found the information from library portal more than what they expected, while 24.69 % of research scholars and 60.60 % faculty members

did not find their needed information on the library portal.

- 75 % of the respondents opined that the portal has provided more efficient access to e-resources.
- 48.33 % of respondents have partially agreed with the information reflected on main page of the portal.
- 55 (45.83 %) of both respondents opined that they faced problems while using the library portal as it takes much time to navigate the webpages and also found difficulty in downloading the information materials.
- Finally, it was found that 15 (25 %) of research scholars and 44 (73.13 %) of faculty members felt the need for training/guidance regarding the usage of library portal.

**9. SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the findings, the study made the following suggestions for further improvement of library portal.

- Proper training should be provided for faculty members for using the resources and services offered through the library portal by means of conducting orientation programmes from time to time.
- More high-speed computers/terminals should be made available in the library for better access.
- Adequate training should be provided for the library staff for updating and maintaining the library portal.
- Announcements should be made by the library about the availability of new e-resources or additions of new databases for the users of the library.
- Library should provide the facilities for the user to get familiar with resources subscribed by the library.
- Special training programs should be organised for faculty members and research scholars to enhance usage level of resources and services so that users can access and use the relevant information effectively.
- Problems related to slow connectivity should be overcome by upgrading the bandwidth of the internet.

**10. CONCLUSIONS**

The study examined the use and perception towards library portal by research scholars and faculty members of science departments of Kuvempu University. Looking at the responses of the respondents, it was found that significant proportion of them faced difficulty in navigating the library portal for

needed information. They also pointed out the need for updating the portal by way of inclusion of new resources from time to time. At the same time the study also pointed out need for more terminals with high bandwidth for speedy access to resources through the portal. Finally, most of the respondents are of the opinion that the library has to conduct orientation and short term training programme for increasing the level of awareness and use of library portal. The present study would definitely provide a clear picture on various factors associated with the use of library portal and also assist the library administrators in developing a more complete understanding of users information needs.

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