

Chapter 7

Use of E–Resources by Social Scientists in Tamil Nadu, India

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ABSTRACT

E-resources is defined as a resource which requires computer access or any electronic product that delivers a collection of data, be it text referring to full text bases, electronic journals, image collections, other multimedia products, as a commercially available title that has been published with an aim to being marketed. Over the past few years, a number of techniques about related standards have been developed which allow documents to be created and distributed in electronic form. The e-resource on magnetic and optical media has a vast impact on the collections of university libraries. The study shows that majority of the respondents—82.59% of respondents having 1-2 years' experience, followed by less than one year (11.08%), 3-5 years (3.48%), and only 2.85% of respondents stated more than five years—have experience of using e-resources.

INTRODUCTION

Today E-resources became essence of every intellectual activity of higher education. Realizing the Importance of the E-resources most of the universities in India liberally investing to provide access to these resources to support learning, teaching and research. Although information in electronic format was created with the advent of the

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computer in the 1950s, it was not until the early 1960s that the first database suitable for searching was developed. Electronic Resources are mushrooming online, on the Web and in CD-ROM format. The emergence of information and communication technologies (ICT) during last two decades have profoundly impacted all walks of life including teaching and learning and research. This has led to development of reading materials in electronic format which is available to readers online through the Internet.

E-resources in collaboration with Internet have become a sign of modern age being an invaluable tool for teaching, learning, and research. The library and information landscape has transformed with the onset of the digital era and today traditional libraries have changed their roles to serve as 'Knowledge Centers' with priority on value added electronic information services. Academic and research institutions are focusing on how best they can facilitate research by canalizing specific information services which compliment as cutting-edge technology. With the advent of globalization in the realm of education, there has been an information explosion. Most of the science and technology, academic institutions as well as R & D Organizations have changed their contemporary outlooks towards the functions, operations and services. The traditional environment has been rapidly changing to an electronic one and the demand for Internet and e-resources among the academic and research community has increased manifold over the years being the most popular source of undertaking research. However, the literature review reveals that, there is a dearth of studies on use of e-resources and internet in context of academics, researchers and students not only in India but also across the globe.

The present decade has been dubbed as the information age. While this concept is not a new phenomenon especially when viewed against its historical perspective, the revolution in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and particularly the internet, is exerting profound effects on information-based services. The proliferation of new technologies opens a number of challenges for teaching, learning and research. Notable among these are those associated with the adoption and institutionalization of these emerging technologies in teaching, learning, and research. As a result, in the last few years, there have been many initiatives to enhance the developed and developing countries capacity to harness this technology in reshaping their educational sectors in ways that are consistent with current knowledge societies.

A stage has arrived where bulk of reading materials in printed form is being digitized and made accessible commercially by publishers in the form of databases. During the last decade several databases of journals, books and other scholarly materials have been subscribed to by libraries and made available to their scholars. Academic Institutions and scholar societies are producing their research output digitally and making them available to public freely through their institutional repositories.

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