Chapter 19
Awareness and Use of E–Resources among Library and Information Science Distance Learners at Alagappa University:
A Study

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ABSTRACT

E-resources are mushrooming online and in other formats. This phenomenon is due to the rapid advancement of information technologies, including the Internet and digitizing techniques. The extent of e-resources (including e-journals, e-books, etc.) is spiraling, although no exact number is available. These changes significantly enlarge the size of the electronic resources pool. Electronic resources have become one of the most important aspects of a digital library. The study reveals that slightly over one-third of the respondents (40%) spent less than 2 hours on the Internet per session, followed by those having 2-3 hours per session (29.17%). The study also shows that of the total of 120 respondents, 30.83% search documents with the help of the library Website.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet provides access to practically unlimited sources of information, and search engines are continuously being advanced to provide efficient ways to help users find what they want. The Internet increases access to a large amount of data, saves time and money, gives an opportunity to consult multiple experts with a single request via discussion groups, and greater independence from specific times and places for information seeking. Technology has penetrated all areas of life, and using IT has its unique work procedures and approaches. Libraries use IT to provide better service and satisfy diverse user needs. Traditional libraries have been transformed into digital/virtual libraries in which books, journals and magazines have changed into e-books, e-journals, and e-zines. This has increased the global dissemination of information. Electronic resources are now easily accessible even in the remote areas. Electronic resources solve storage problems and make the flood of information a bit more manageable.

Today we are living in an age of information. Information is proving to be a dynamic and unending resource that affects all disciplines and walks of life. Over last decade, electronic resources have become increasingly substantial components of academic library collections. This is due to the continuous development of IT and its impact on library collection development policies. Users now require precise and exhaustive information within a short time. With the growing popularity of e-resources, traditional libraries are gradually migrating from print sources to e-resources; providing access to information is now more important than owning it. This has compelled libraries to rethink their strategies. Applications of Information Communication Technology in libraries have provided many opportunities for e-resource development and dissemination in the manner that users prefer. Among e-resources, e-journals and e-books are mostly in demand.

The quality of higher education in India requires ongoing changes and development in the teaching-learning process. Faculty members in universities need to let go of the concept of a textbook-oriented lecturing system. Countries with advanced education systems have developed extensive teaching-learning strategies, and plan to train their students for a wider marketplace by means of lectures, seminars, workshops, and Web-based tutorials. Faculty in India must identify and use new teaching strategies designed to support the teaching, learning, and research goals of the university. A further inducement for such change has been the explosion and proliferation of information in its various formats, changing patterns of information-seeking and retrieving. Hence, there is a need for investigating Internet usage in this changing higher education environment. This is the first attempt to study the use of the Internet and e-resources by the University's students and research scholars. Its findings should help the University in its plans and programmes related to e-learning, and identify and strengthen pertinent resources and services of its libraries.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Parameshwar and Patil's (2009) paper noted that a large portion of users in the university are aware of the Internet, but many do not have adequate knowledge of techniques and applications to best use it. A few users of the university still have no knowledge about the Internet and related applications. For this purpose, there is need for effective use education, to develop awareness and knowledge of the users. More efforts by librarian at Gulbarga University are needed to educate users to effectively take advantage of the Internet and its applications.

Agarwal and Dave (2009) studied the use of the Internet by the scientists and research fellows of Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur, Rajasthan. It was assessed on the basis

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