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Use of Web Based Information Services in the Selected University Libraries in Tamilnadu: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

In this study an attempt is being made to highlight the access to web-based Information services in the Selected University Libraries in Tamilnadu. University Libraries, particularly in recent past are providing some of notable information services that can be accessed via the university library websites are use of electronic sources for information, Web based Information resources used, Use of Search Engine and Purpose of using Internet and so on

KEYWORDS : Information Service, Electronic Sources, Use of Search Engines, Web Based Services.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries and Information Centres have been employing web based information resources and services to satisfy the diverse information needs of their users. Library services, CD-ROM databases, online databases, web-based services, and a variety of other electronic media are replacing the traditional services of libraries. It also points out the need for assessing the impact of the Web based Services in the University Libraries on the users of the libraries. University Libraries launch their websites with a view to provide services to users without their physical presence.

SAMPLE SIZE

Printed questionnaire has been distributed in person to the respondents of four identified Universities in Tamilnadu. With regard to the users, of universities, 400 questionnaires selected universities in Tamilandu are distributed. Of which, 301 were filled in and received and therefore response rate is 75.25 percent.

INFORMATION AND LIBRARIES

Information can be regarded as the currency of the new age. Though the gold, silver and gems have been regarded as valuable commodities down the ages, in the contemporary age of knowledge explosion, information has ascended to the peak in the field of value. Information has become a strategic raw material and a dominating factor in all managerial aspects like goal setting and planning, decision making, and communicating. Scientific research with eventual development is heavily influenced by Information Communication and Technology developments.

E-RESOURCES AND LIBRARIES

The letter 'e' has completely changed the face of libraries particularly higher academic libraries in terms of resources, facilities and services with the economy, accuracy and usability. The importance of Electronic Publications is that they:

- Tend to allow grated flexibility of access to materials which is critical in the virtual library environment
- Can allow remote access
- Access at any time, day or night
- Can allow simultaneous access by multiple users and
- Can permit linking between one part of a publication and another or indeed, between different publications.
- Eliminate the problem of missing late or stolen documents and the need for binding of materials.

E-SERVICES IN HIGHER ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The vast amount of information on internet can be utilized through the various services offered. These services are usually offered by the service provider. The general services available on internet are:

- Library that heavily draws on e-resources and hence little or no printed materials and support staff, and
- A more traditional library that has a significant position of the collection transformed into the e-form

Cataloguers are also moving into new roles as they attempt to provide enhanced access to the new sources. They not only process books, but also CD-ROMs, computer discs and multi-format items. Time and efforts of library staff can be saved for classification and cataloguing of books by accessing some of the large libraries OPACs spread all over the globe and develop one's own online catalogue. Duplicate efforts of technically processing the same can be avoided. The request for Inter-Library Loan (ILL) can be sent via e-mail and the photocopies may be sent by post, fax, via e-mail after scanning the documents. The library professionals can be easily provide reference and information services by accessing and searching on-line catalogues of other libraries, even downloading a lot of available information in e-mail and get them transferred through e-mail.

WEB ENABLED LIBRARY SERVICES

Dissemination of information or communicating information is mainly an important function of any library. Communication is the process of transmission and acquisition of information. In other words it can be said that communication of information means the transfer of information from creator to its user. This is possible by the way of the following services. They are Current Awareness Service, SDI Service, Online Reference Service, Documentation Delivery Service, CD-ROM Servers, INTERNRT Access, Indexing Abstracting Databases, Library Portal Service, Federated Search, Alert Service, Digital Library Services, and Web OPAC Service.

UNIVERSITY PROFILES IN TAMIL NADU

- Alagappa University
- Bharathidasan University
- Madurai Kamaraj University
- University of Madras

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To use of electronic sources for information in the selected Universities of Tamilnadu.
- ✓ To use of Web based Information resources in the selected Universities of Tamilnadu.
- ✓ To Use of Search Engine in the selected Universities of Tamilnadu.
- ✓ To Purpose of using Internet in the selected Universities of Tamilnadu.
- ✓ To identify the e-Resources and Web Resources those are made available in the University of Tamilnadu.

TABLE – 1

DETAILS OF THE UNIVERSITIES

Name of the University	URL	Year of Establishment
Alagappa University	www.alagappa university.ac.in	1990
Bharathidasan University	www.bdu.ac.in	1982
Madurai Kamaraj University	www.mkuniversity.org	1966
University of Madras	www.unom.ac.in	1857

TABLE – 2
TOTAL NUMBER OF USERS SELECTED AS SAMPLE AMONG THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES SURVEYED

University	No. of institutions	Questionnaire Distributed	Responses Received
Tamil Nadu	04	400	301 (75.25%)

There are 400 structured questionnaires have been distributed four selected Universities of Tamil Nadu states, 125 questionnaires have been randomly distributed to the respondents in each University which include the faculty members (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor) and Research Scholars. Of which, 301 (75.25 percent) filled responses received from the four selected universities of Tamilnadu.

TABLE - 3
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS IN SELECTED TAMILNADU UNIVERSITIES

Name of the Universities	Number of Respondents	Percentage
University of Madras	88	29.24
Madurai Kamaraj University	85	28.24
Bharathidasan University	65	21.59
Alagappa University	63	20.93
	301	100.00

The distribution of respondents between surveyed Universities of Tamilnadu state found on percent of the sample. Of which, University of Madras has the highest stake of 29.24 percent which is followed by Madurai Kamaraj University with 28.24 percent of respondents, Bharathidasan University and Alagappa University were stake of 21.59 percent and 20.93 percent.

TABLE – 4
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS – GENDERWISE

Respondents	Gender		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Professor	12	04	16	5.32
Associate Professor	30	10	40	13.29
Assistant Professor	52	19	71	23.59
Research Scholar	129	45	174	57.81
Total	223	78	301	100.00

It is found from the above table that male are dominated with 223 respondents while the rest is of female 78 respondents. Between the categories of the respondents, Research Scholars are major group with 129 respondents which is followed by 52 Assistant Professors, 301 Associate Professors and 12 respondents in the Professor cadre.

TABLE - 5
USE OF ELECTRONIC SOURCES FOR INFORMATION

Use of electronic source of information	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Research Scholar	Total
Online Databases	12	35	54	138	239
Blogs	08	32	49	124	213
Social Networks	06	28	35	109	178
Wikipedia	04	24	33	92	153
CD-ROM Databases	03	21	28	85	137
Websites	04	19	22	68	113

The trend of use of electronic information sources among the surveyed respondents found significant difference. A majority of the respondents 239 have used online databases, which is followed by Blogs 213, CD-ROM databases 137 used by the respondents. Between the categories, the same trend is prevailed in terms of the use of online databases, Blogs, social networks, Wikipedia, websites, and CD-ROM Databases. Among the Research Scholars and Assistant Professors, more number of Assistant Professors (54) and Associate Professors (35) are preferred Online databases, while the Research Scholars (138) are highest preferred.

TABLE - 6
WEB BASED INFORMATION RESOURCES USED

Web Based Information Resources Used	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Research Scholar	Total
e-Journals	14	34	66	156	270
e-Books	11	30	59	132	232
Research Articles	10	24	51	122	207
Research Reports	06	19	42	110	177
Patents and Standards	06	14	35	98	153
Bibliographic Information	04	14	28	91	137
Project Reports	04	12	21	98	135
Fellowships/ Scholarships	05	09	25	85	124
Educational Sites	03	11	18	74	106
Course materials	08	13	17	48	86

It is found that a majority of the respondents preferred e-Journals 270, e-Books 232, Research Articles 207, and Research Reports 177; comparatively a minor group of respondents used the web based access to course materials 86 and Educational Sites 106. Among the research scholars, e-journals 156 and e-Journals 132 and Research Reports 122 are the web resources highly accessed.

TABLE - 7
USAGE OF SEARCH ENGINES

Which of the following Search engine mostly used	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Research Scholar	Total
Google	16	40	71	174	301
Yahoo	14	34	65	165	278
Altavista	12	30	38	124	204
Rediff	10	28	35	110	183
Hotmail	09	22	26	98	155
others	12	19	30	86	147

Use of various major search engines among the respondents revealed that the surveyed respondents have been using Google (301) while Yahoo (278) is a preferred search engine, which is followed by Altavista 204, Rediff 183, and Hotmail 155. Between the categories, Google is most preferred by professors 16, while research scholars were highly preferred Google 174. There is variation between the groups exist in terms of use of various search engines.

TABLE - 8
PURPOSE OF USING INTERNET

Purpose of Using Internet	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Research Scholar	Total
Research	12	39	62	162	275
Communication	10	34	58	158	260
Education	09	29	51	134	223
Entertainment	09	27	48	131	215
Others	05	21	29	119	174

It is revealed that a majority of the respondents are using internet for Research 275 and for Communication 260 which is followed by the purpose Education 223, Entertainment 215 and others 174 to access internet. Between the categories, Research Scholars 162 and Assistant Professors 62 are preferred Internet access for the purpose of Research than the other categories.

CONCLUSION

Web based resources access and information services among the selected Universities in Tamilnadu are encouraging and Consumption of Time towards accessing e-resources and web based library services are need to be addressed to enhance the exploitation of web environment. The study also could observe that there is a significant difference exist between the respondents in terms of research experience and no significant difference among library users towards gender wise research experience, use of electronic sources of information, usage of search engines, frequency of accessing e-resources and time spent on accessing e-resources.

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