

Use of E-Learning Resources by Dental Undergraduates of University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

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Electronic learning resources (E-resources) play a vital role in the provision of information by libraries at present. These are changing library usage patterns and academic libraries spend an increasing amount of annual allocation to subscribe to the E-resources. The impact of the updated usage patterns and the trend on E-resources have demanded interest among academic libraries to measure E-resources usage. The study aimed to find out the use of E-resources for academic purposes by the Dental Undergraduates in four academic years at the University of Peradeniya (UOP). Survey method was applied and a self-administered online questionnaire was distributed in January 2020 with ethical approval (ERC/FDS/UOP/I/2020/02). Out of the 280 undergraduates, a total of 175 responded. Data was analysed using SPSS 21. The study revealed that e-books (46%), e-databases (23%) and e-journals (19%) were the E-Learning resources often used by the Dental students. PUBMED CENTRAL (30%) and OXFORD (22%) were the mostly used academic databases. The majority (87%) used Google and 10% used Yahoo as search engines for accessing E-resources. The results further indicated that 19% accessed E-resources to gain general information while 20% accessed to get answers to a specific topic and 18% to watch and download videos. The study showed that all the students had their own electronic devices and 26% accessed through mobile phones. However, slow speed on the internet (71%), inadequacy of computers & hardware (48%) and the lack of materials (66%) related to Sri Lanka were the problems encountered by the respondents. Pearson correlation indicated a significant positive association between the students' perceptions of the usefulness of E-resources and their GPA values ($r=.988$, $N=141$, $p < .001$). Upgrading the existing internet facilities, the provision of free access to all the databases off-campus and the introduction of more training sessions on E-resources are recommended as future developments.

Keywords: Use of E-resources, Dental students, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka