

USAGE OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES AND GUIDES PROVIDED IN THE LIBRARY WEB PAGE BY THE ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS

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Introduction

Electronic information plays a major role as a source of information for academic communities in universities to support teaching, learning and research processes. Print forms of information sources such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, monographs, journals, newspapers and other types are being replaced by electronic counterparts. Readers sometimes prefer the e-version to print version due to various types of facilities such as searching, linking to other sources etc., The electronic information sources are accessible through the internet. The libraries subscribe to these e-resources and make them available to their patrons.

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the usage of e-resources by students and staff of universities around the world, as well as in Sri Lanka and at Peradeniya. Sivathanan and Velampy (2013) examine the use of electronic information in research and academic performance of university teachers. A case study in Jaffna University showed that the usage of e-resources has a strong positive association with academic performance of university teachers. In a study conducted by Chamara and Bodinayake (2015) on awareness and usage of e-resources of academic staff in Kelaniya University found that the academic staff members of Faculty of Science showed the highest awareness and usage of e-resources whilst the lowest was in the Faculty of Humanities. Dharmaratne (2014) concluded that the Arts academics underutilize the e-resources and services due to lack of awareness. Previous studies have shown the importance of e-information usage in academic activities and various reasons why academics are not using them effectively. The present study was conducted to find out the usage of e-resources given in the library web page by academics of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Peradeniya.

The Web Development Committee of the University of Peradeniya decided to redevelop the university website in 2010. At this time, the library website was also developed according to the standards set by the University Web Committee. It was uploaded to the internet in May 2011. The electronic information provided by the library website was also arranged in a different format. The new site contains resources categorized according to their method of access to the library. The Digital library was also set up in 2011 and introduced to the web in the same year. The new library website has the online catalogue, e-resources (databases, INASP/PERI resources, free resources, websites) and the digital library. E-resources provided by an academic library are generally considered as more authoritative and credible than the information found via surface web and therefore the resources were carefully selected to be included in the library web page. The University Grants Commission consortium databases were not introduced at the inception of this study and therefore those were not included in this study.

Methodology

All the teaching staff categories attached to seventeen departments of the Faculty of Arts were selected for the study. The population was 216. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample from all seventeen departments and within the department the questionnaires were distributed randomly. 75% of the total population was selected for the sample. A structured questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. The questionnaire had closed-ended questions as well as a few open-ended questions. The response rate was 51.23%. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods.

Results and Discussion

The respondents age groups were 20-25 (10.8%), 26-30 (31.3%), 31-40 (18%), 41-50 (20.5%), 51-60 (15.7%) and above 60 (3.61%), The majority of the respondents fall into the age group 26-30 years (31.3%).

The frequency of visits to the library web page was once a week 46%, once in two weeks 18%, once a month 19%, once in six months 11%, once a year 25% and 4% do not visit.

58% of the academics were aware of the Digital Library in the library web page. 40% were not aware and 2% did not answer the question. 18%

of the staff members use Annual Research Sessions, 40.9% use UoP journals, 26.5% use UoP Research and 6% use UoP Theses communities. 87.95 % of respondents have answered that they like to deposit their articles in the Digital Library. Only 4.8% respondents said that they do not wish to deposit their articles. 7.2% had not responded. Some of the suggestions given by the respondents were to conduct awareness programmes on digital library and to divide the content according to the subject.

81.9% of academic staff members use the subscribed e-journal databases given through the library web page. 78.31% (65 respondents) use JSTOR and 8.43 % use EBSCO. 67.69% of the 65 respondents use JSTOR for undergraduate teaching and 33.84% for postgraduate teaching and 90.76% for research work. 58.5 % JSTOR users use browse option and 72.3% users use search option to find information. Only 6.2 % respondents had set up their own accounts and 1.5 % use alert services provided by the publishers. 42.16% respondents said that the databases provided through the library web page are sufficient. 34.93% said that they need more databases. 22.89% had not responded. The suggested databases were Emerald, Data star, Dialogue, ERIC and Blackwell Synergy.

INASP/PERI resources are provided by an organization called International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications. Symposium Journals (32.53%) and University of Chicago (30.12%) are the mostly used INASP/PERI resources.

Open access journals and repositories are considered as free resources. 39.75% of respondents are aware about the open access concept. Wiley open journals (15.67%) and Sage open (21.68%) are the most used free e-journals given through the library web page.

The computerized library catalogue provides two interfaces for users to search for resources in the library. The intranet interface is accessible only within the library and the Online Public Access Catalogue is provided through the library web page. 83.13 % of respondents use the catalogue via intranet. 54.21% respondents can find the resources by themselves. 8.4% can find their own information but sometimes get the

help of a colleague. 10.8% can find their own information but sometimes they get the help of the library staff. 63.85% of respondents use the online catalogue provided in the library web page.

53.01% of the respondents said that they need training to use the computerized catalogue and 57.83% said that they need training to use e-journals.

Conclusion

Majority of the academic staff members visit the library web page more than once a month. Therefore they are familiar with the contents of the library web page. More than half of the respondents use the Digital Library and collections. Majority of the respondents are willing to deposit their articles in the Digital Library. JSTOR is highly used by academic staff members of the Faculty of Arts and they mainly use it for research work. The personalized services provided by the publisher like my account and setting alerts are used to a lesser extent by the staff members. The results show that the open access journals are not very popular among the academics. They prefer to use the open access journals published by reputed publishers than the other databases. More than half of the staff members have asked for training on OPAC and e-journals. Demonstrations and hands on training are the most effective ways to increase the awareness of e-resources. These training methods will be successful only if the academic staff members can find time to attend these programmes with their busy schedules. Leaflets, brochures and video clips also could be used to increase the awareness of e-information.

References

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