INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF SCHOLARS OF THE KERALA VETERINARY AND ANIMAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY ON ELECTRONIC RESOURCES: AN ONLINE SURVEY

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the information seeking behaviour of the Faculty, Research Scholars and P.G. Students of Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Pookode, Wayanad District of Kerala. The objective of the survey was to investigate the use of digital information by the students and scholars of Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University for seeking information and particularly to know how they access E-Resources. A well-structured online questionnaire designed and randomly distributed to forty selected respondents amongst the Faculty, Research Scholars and P.G. Students of Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. From the selected population thirty three filled in questionnaires were received.

Keywords: E-Resources Information Seeking Behavior, KVASU, Library Users.
1. INTRODUCTION

Information seeking is the course of action engaged by humans to enhance their state of knowledge. It is a high level cognitive process that is part of learning or problem solving. Libraries have a long history, starting with the chained and closed-access libraries of earlier times to the present-day hybrid, digital, and virtual libraries that use the latest technology for provision of information through various services. According to Wilson (2000), the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with manual information systems such as a newspaper or a library, or with digital set up like World Wide Web. The abundance of web based information has affected information seeking behavior of individuals. Today, libraries and other information centers are encircled by massive amount of networked data to fulfill the information needs of the academic community i.e. students and faculty as well. Students reported the top three ways that access to electronic resources have improved their academic careers: access to a wider range of information, faster access to information, and easier access to information (Ray and Day 1998). The field is nourished with various e-tools such as OPAC/ WebOPAC, online / offline proprietary or open-source databases, abstracts and indexes, e-books , e-journals, consortium based memberships, Search engines like Google, Alta Vista, Bing, ASK, AOL, WebCrawler, Lycos, Dogpile, etc. The present study focuses to provide an overview about the users’ awareness, importance, purpose and satisfaction of using electronic resources amongst the academic community of Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (KVASU).

2. LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SYSTEM OF KERALA VETERINARY AND ANIMAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

The primary mission of all constituent libraries of Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University is to support the educational and research programs of the University by providing physical and intellectual access to information, consistent with the present and the anticipated educational and research functions. The secondary mission is, to serve as a resource center for the scholars and scientific community of the Veterinary and Animal Husbandry field. The KVASU Library Information System offers Web-oriented services, Online and Offline content searches, Reference and Referral Services, Circulation Service including Inter Library Loan and Document Delivery Service, CAS & SDI display of recent additions of periodicals and books, Literature search, Internet Browsing, Consultancy Service, user guidance & education etc. The College Libraries have been using library management software ‘Koha’ and digital library software such as DSpace and Greenstone for the effective management and information transfer. Besides the conventional documents; all libraries have e-books and e-journals and online access to the Consortium for e-Resources in Agriculture (CeRA) for facilitating accessibility of select scientific journals related to agriculture and allied fields to all researchers in the “National Agriculture Research System” (NARS). The CeRA offers about 3679 Foreign/Indian Journals of leading scientific publishers for full text article access or on article request. The subscription of “Wiley online library” provides access to 12 leading international journals of Veterinary and Animal Science discipline and 121 e-books.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rajeev M (2008) seeks to examine the patterns of use of patient care resources available on the Internet and via other electronic resources, the information literacy
skills of the dentists, and the problems they encounter when using the Internet and electronic resources. The purpose of the case study was to assess the satisfaction of the researchers using the Internet and electronic resources tools, and whether they can take the place of printed reference materials. Nicholas D (2009) observed that students constituted the biggest users in terms of sessions and pages viewed, and they were more likely to undertake longer online sessions. Undergraduates and postgraduates were the most likely users of library links to access scholarly databases, suggesting an important “hot link” role for libraries. Thanuskodi S (2012) evaluates the use of electronic resources and services in terms of use and user satisfaction in Supreme Court Library. Results of the study showed that senior advocates have specialized themselves in criminal law. The study reveals that 3-4 hours of access to internet is quite common among the respondents of government advocates and junior advocates. Priyadarshini et.al (2015) observed that the e-resources subscribed by the library were widely used by the scholars i.e 80.6% PG students and 93.3% faculty were depending freely available e-resources in the world wide web, whereas 70% Ph.D. scholars preferred the use of e-journals. The findings of the study revealed that digital information available through CeRA, e-books, Springer link, CABI, Wiley and Elsevier and other e-resources subscribed by the library were widely used by the respondents. Gupta and Sharma (2015) in their study on use of Digital Information Resources and Services by the students of central library, IIT Mumbai exposed that 64.1% students interested to use print and digital resources as well. The majority of research scholars (88.9%) were using e-resources for literature search whereas 83.9% undergraduate respondents and 79.3% postgraduate respondents were using the digital information resources with the intention to collect the course materials. The study showed that the main purpose in depending electronic information services to collect the research material by 92.9% research scholars and 82.9% postgraduate respondents whereas the undergraduate students (83.9%) were interested in digital information services to know the location and availability of reading materials. The study showed that 51.5% of the respondents were satisfied with the available digital information resources and services available with their institute. The study conducted by Gupta and Sharma (2016) among students of IIT, Chennai shows that majority of students visit the library. 64.7% of the respondents prefer to use print as well as digital resources. 79.7% respondent's purpose of using digital information resources is to collect the study material whereas 83.8% respondents purpose of using digital information services is to know the availability of material. The central library is widely used by majority of respondents (57.8%) to use Digital Information Resources and Services. 64.5% respondents are satisfied with the available Digital Information Resources and services.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To evaluate the awareness of users about the available e-resources and services.
- To find out the incidence of digital information usage.
- To know the importance of Digital Information Resources and Services amongst the scholars of Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University.
- To study the location of access to congregate information
- To identify the most dependable search engine, consortium membership and full-text database appropriate for Veterinary and allied sciences field.
- To find out the problems faced by the scholars while using Digital Information Resources and Services
- To find out the users satisfaction for the use of Digital Information Resources and Services.
5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The area of study covers limited population of post graduate students, research scholars and the faculty members (Library Users) of the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Pookode, Wayanad District, Kerala.

6. METHODOLOGY

Simple random survey method was used to collect primary data from the academic community of Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Pookode, Wayanad, Kerala. A structured online questionnaire (Appendix-A)\(^1\) was prepared and distributed through online to randomly select forty active library users of the University, out of which 33 have responded and the response rate was 82.50%. The collected data is presented in the form of figures and analyzed by using a simple percentage.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Figure (1) shows the response of KVASU library users. A total of 33 opinions were collected through mail from the academic community library users of Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. It is observed that out of 33 feedbacks received; 22 (66.7%) respondents were male and 11 respondents 11 (33.3%) were female.

**Figure 1: Gender Wise Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure (2) reveals the interest expressed in using electronic resources by the same population. It is observed that, all the 33 respondents i.e. 100% have expressed their interest in using electronic resources.

**Figure 2: Interest of Electronic Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As per Figure (3) 20 (60.6 %) respondents were using e-resources exclusively for their course work, 29 (87.9%) were using e-resources for updating their subject knowledge, 25(75.8% ) were utilizing the e-resources facility for the accomplishment
of their project works and 7 (21.2%) users were observed in using it for other purposes.

Figure 3: Purpose of E-Resources

According to Figure (4), 27 (81.8%) users have been using e resources daily and 6 (18.2%) users enjoying the benefits of the facility once in a week. Figure (5) shows that all the 33 (100%) respondents have been depending libraries of University for fulfilling their information requirements. While 20 (60.6%) of the users also approach their departments, home 20 (60.6%) and 14 (42.4%) also depends computer centre for accessing in e-resources.

Figure 4: Frequency of using E-Resources

Figure (6) reveals that 26 (78.8%) respondents had the opinion that the e-resources are being very important information provider in an academic institution concerned and 7 (21.2%) opinioned that it is important.
Figure 6: Importance of E-Resources in Academics

![Bar chart showing importance levels of e-resources in academics.]

All the respondents had been using e-journals and online databases. Usages of e-books from the population were 84.8% and CD/DVD ROM (offline databases) usage 27.3%. Only 3 (9.1%) users had been using other types of e-documents. Figure (7)

Figure 7: Types of E-Resource Used by Students

![Bar chart showing types of e-resources used by students.]

Figure (7) reveals that 32(97%) depend on search engines and keywords, while 31(93.3%) contingent upon website for information retrieval. Figure (9) is the result of analysis the searching methods. It is observed that all the 33 (100%) respondents had been using Google as their main information resource tool followed by AltaVista 22 (66.7%), Yahoo 18 (54.5%), and Dogpile 15 (45.5%) preferred Google searching. The other methods of searching had been conducting 18(54.5%) respondents.
All the respondents were preferred by the Science Direct, the online journal service of Elsevier Science followed by Springer Link 32(97%), Pubmed 27(81.8%) and ASCE Journals 11(33.3%). It was observed that 32(97%) had been satisfied with the information from other databases and e resources. Figure (10).

It was evident that all the 33 respondents have been satisfied with the e resources available with the academic institution on the World Wide Web. They have been utilizing the e-resources professionally and efficiently. Figure (11).

8. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Electronic information resources and Services are effectively being used by the faculty, research scholars, and postgraduate students of Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. The findings of the study reveal that all the respondents showed their interest in electronic resources. Majority of the respondents (87.9%) depends the
digital resources for updating their subject knowledge followed by completing project work (75.8%) and for course work (60.6%). All the scholars had been predominantly using e-journals and on-line databases to cater their information needs followed by the usage of e-books (84.8%). The respondents showed less interest (27.3%) to CD/DVD-ROMs and other off-line databases. It is found that 97% of the respondents were depending Search engines and Keywords (97%) to persuade knowledge requirements while 93.3% depends known Websites directly for prompt accession of information by avoiding the normal delay due to the web-crawling of search engines. The Google Chrome (100%) followed by Altavista (66%), Yahoo (54%) and Dogpile (45%) were found as popular search engines amongst the scholars. The Elsevier’s information solution “Science Direct” are being used by all the respondents whereas 97% respondents were using Springer Link followed by 81.8% PubMed and 33% ASCE journal users. Respondents showed their interest and dependence on the ICAR e-journal consortium CeRA and the open access journal website DOAJ. The study reveals that the respondents had been quiet aware of the importance of Digital Information Resources and Services. It essential that more budget allocation should be set aside for the procurement of e-resources and services to level up with the advancements towards the research and development in Veterinary and allied sciences. For the optimum utilization of these resources and services library users should be made familiar with the system and more orientation and training program should be organized.

REFERENCES


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