USE OF WEB BASED INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES

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Abstract

Information is a vital component of the modern society. It is the base of the developmental activities of the society. Library and information centers are the main repositories of information and web based delivery of information resources are the main services of most of these centers. The present study is basically a survey. A questionnaire was administered and distributed among the randomly selected 75 students of Engineering, Management and Medical streams. The main purpose of this study is to find out the use of web based information resources and services and to find out what kinds of problems faced by them in this era of Information and Communication Technology. An attempt has also been made to know the satisfaction level of the users from the web based resources and the services.

Keywords: Web-based Information Resources, Survey, Engineering, Management, Medical Library & Information Centers.

1.Introduction

Information has now become an integral part of our modern society. In this era, the information needs of almost every person have been increased in manifolds, which are based on the correctness, instantaneous and beyond the constraints of time and place. Pick and choose is the most common phenomena in addition to pin pointedness of information and quality of resources. In regard to educational information resources, users centered delivery of information services is the new challenge of today's institutional library & information systems.

The emergence of Internet, especially World Wide Web, is becoming the new technique of delivery of information resources and services, and which has led a revolution in the libraries & information centers. In this web based environment, the information resources and services can be accessed and delivered as and when required, therefore, the services of the libraries are not confined with the four walls, but are integrated into local, regional, national and international networks. Nancy Harinya & Jill E. Foust have defined web-based information resources as that which can provide curriculum support to students for whom physical access to the library is difficult and time consuming" (Tannery & Foust, 2002).

The ultimate goal of the libraries & information centers is to satisfy the users' requirements by providing more value added services and by providing better information services can only enhance the image of the libraries & information centers and also the status of library & information science (LIS) professionals in the society. This can only be achieved if the LIS professionals are well acquainted modern techniques of information delivery and university libraries have the good infrastructure to deliver web based information services to the right user at the right time. Maness Jack M. describes that, "the library's services will change, focusing more on the facilitation of information transfer and information literacy rather than providing controlled access to it" (Maness, 2006).

Libraries are mainly entrusted with a host of predetermined tasks like acquiring, organizing, preserving, retrieving and disseminating information to the users. Right from the ancient times to the present Internet era, the primary objective of a library has always been this. However, the way this purpose has been achieved has drastically changed (Kanamadi & Kumbar, 2006a).

The modern institutional libraries & information centers have developed their web portals, which are largely enabled with latest communication devices, and being used for multitasks. They are providing various types of services to new students, as well as other old members of university libraries.

The best way to ensure that the access and outcome of information services is timely, convenient and equitable is to develop web-based services that mirror and improve traditional in-house and telephone services. This clear understanding of the Web as a service delivery method and not just as a digital brochure results in a project development path leading to both self-services and live, librarian mediated services offered online.

2. Literature Review

Kanamadi and Kumbar (2006b) in his paper has discussed the library portals and the web-based library services expected at management institutes in Mumbai City, Maharashtra State, India. The paper explores the availability of institute website, importance and extent of the library details hosted on the institute website. This survey reveals that the lack of interest of users in library website is because of the inadequate and static information being made available on it. This case study also reveals about the services users expect to access through the Internet at their convenience. Suggestions are provided at the end on how to make library portal more informative in order to attract more and more users. Malik and Mahmood (2009) conducted a study among students and analyzed the web search behavior of them. The results of the study revealed that students use the Web for everything and especially for academic tasks, prefer particular favorite search engines, though the reasons they give for their preferences are common across almost all search engines. Vahida and Vishwa (2008) have discussed in their paper that, "medical libraries use web 2.0 technologies inadequately and inharmoniously". The study shows that there are scattered, disorganized and uncontrolled sources of information that are leading to issues relating to webliography control. They found that in this condition, as the popularity of these resources among public increased the doubt and worry in professionals. Bhat and Kumar (2008) conducted a study and results revealed that the scholars used more print journals references in the scholarly e-journals as compared to web references. They found that limitations and instability are major problems with the web sources. To access the web sources continuously, it still has a problem that may affect the use of web based sources among the scholars. Kattimani (2010) has studied that knowledge of library users towards various quality parameters such as websites, standard and Web OPAC which are excellent. The enhancement in search strategy among the library users is critical to access the quality information resources. The library is determined in providing the quality information to its community. The librarian is interested in the feedback from the users about the resources and services of the library. The evaluation of the library services helps in the modification of its practices in accordance with the needs of its customers.

Dutta (2008) explained in her research paper that access to e-journals consortia approach to develop information resources in libraries was productive, especially when budgetary constraints were alarmingly high. She concluded that libraries should seriously think and

reinitiate e-journal consortia movement for maximum utilization of information resources at a reduced cost, reduced time and reduced space.

3. Need

Due to the emergence of latest technologies in the field of library and information science, the delivery of web based information resources and services are highly in demand to fulfill the information needs of academic community of a college i.e. teachers, students and researchers. It is revealed from the literature review that most of the libraries have designed their web sites and some are on the way to design the web based information services. Colleges are also spending a good amount of their budget on web based information resources like e-journals, consortia based sources, e-databases etc. It is, therefore, important to know that up to what extent this new phenomena and culture of information delivery and access is in use and how much useful are these services in user point of view?

4. Objectives

The main objectives of the study are as under:
- To find purposes of accessing web based information resources;
- To know the preferences of searching desired information and information resources;
- To find the methods of learning to how to access the web based information resources;
- To find the impact of web-based information resources on the academic pursuits and career of the respondents;
- To find the major barriers in accessing the web based information resources and services

5. Methodology

A pre-defined questionnaire was designed to collect the data from the respondents of all the three subjects i.e. Engineering, Medical and Management using the random access method. The investigators personally visited the places of study to collect the data in month of October 2014. Seventy five students (25 each from all the three subjects) were the respondents of the study. The convenient method was used to get fill in the responses and respondents were also interviewed to fill the gap, if any.

6. Scope

Scope of study is limited to the following:
- Students of Engineering and Management Departments of the MIMIT, Malout, Punjab, India
- Students of Guru Gobind Singh Medical College & Hospital, Faridkot, Punjab, India

7. Data Analysis

Table 1: Purposes of Access of Web based information resources

Purpose	Respondents from Engineering Stream	Respondents from Management Stream	Respondents from Medical Stream	Total	Percentage
Searching of document/Information	10	12	14	36	48.0
Get an overview of literature in specific field	09	08	05	22	29.4
Keep up-to-date with development in special area	06	05	06	17	22.6

Total	25	25	25	75	100

Table 1 depicts that the respondents of engineering, management and medical sciences accessed the web-based resources for various purposes. The study reveals that 48% of the respondents use the web based information resources for searching the document/ information. 29.4% of the respondents were of opinion that they use web-based information resources for getting an overview of literature and 22.6% of the respondents preferred to use web-based information resources to keep themselves up-to-date.

Table 2: Preferences of Searching Desired Information

Preferences	Respondents from Engineering Stream	Respondents from Management Stream	Respondents from Medical Stream	Total	Percentage
Author	07	08	14	29	38.7
Title	06	05	04	15	20.0
Accession Number	04	03	05	12	16.0
Subject	03	04	01	08	10.7
Keyword	0	01	00	01	01.3
Type of publication	01	0	00	01	01.3
Publisher	02	02	01	05	06.7
Date of publication	0	01	00	01	01.3
Others	02	01	00	03	04.0
Total	25	25	25	75	100.0

Table 2 shows the searching preferences of respondents. It can be inferred that 38.7% of the respondents preferred author-wise searching of documents while searching web based information resources, 20% title-wise, 16% accession number-wise and 10.7% subject-wise respectively. Other categories of searching preferences were ranged from 1.3% to 6.7%.

Table 3: Information Resource

Preferences	Respondents from Engineering Stream	Respondents from Management Stream	Respondents from Medical Stream	Total	Percentage
Bibliographic databases	04	05	06	15	20.0
Online library catalogues	05	06	08	19	25.4
E-journals	11	08	03	22	29.3
Preprints	02	03	02	07	09.3
Proceedings	03	02	04	09	12.0
Others	00	01	02	03	04.0
Total	25	25	25	75	100.0

Table 3 highlights preferences in the use of web based information resources among the respondents. The study shows that 29.3% of the respondents preferred e-journals, 25.4% online library catalogues, 20% bibliographic databases and 12% preprints respectively. Only 4% of the respondents indicated that they preferred other information resources than mentioned in the table 3.

Table 4: Methods of Learning to How to Access Web-based Information Resources

Methods	Respondents from Engineering Stream	Respondents from Management Stream	Respondents from Medical Stream	Total	Percentage
Guidance from colleagues	06	06	11	23	30.7
Guidance from library staff	10	11	03	24	32.0
Self learning	03	02	08	13	17.3
Guidance from computer staff	04	04	02	10	13.3
External resources	02	02	01	05	06.7
Total	25	25	25	75	100.0

The respondents were asked to indicate the methods of how they have learned to access the web based information resources. Table 4 indicates that 32% of the respondents got guidance from library staff and 30.7% learnt from their colleagues. 17.3% of the respondents have learnt how to access the web based information resources through their personal experience or self-learning process. 13.3 % of the respondents have taken guidance or training from computer professionals. Only 6.7 % of the respondents have indicated that they learnt to use web based information resources from external sources.

Table 5: Influence on Academic Career

Methods	Respondents from Engineering Stream	Respondents from Management Stream	Respondents from Medical Stream	Total	Percentage
Access to up to date information	08	09	07	24	32.0
Easier access	09	06	07	22	29.3
Faster access	07	08	02	17	22.7
Access to wide range of information	01	02	09	12	16.0
Total	25	25	25	75	100.0

Table 5 shows the influence of web based information resources on the academic career of respondents. The study shows that 32% of the respondents indicated that web based information resources have enabled them to access up-to-date information of their respective subjects. 29.3 % of the respondents find it easy to get the desired information. 22.7 % of the respondents are of opinion that they can access information in faster manner by using the web based information resources and services. 16% of the respondents also indicated that web based information recourses provide them wide range of information.

Table 6: Impact on Academic Pursuits

Response	Respondents from Engineering Stream	Respondents from Management Stream	Respondents from Medical Stream	Total	Percentage
Agree	19	20	16	55	73.3

Disagree	03	02	07	12	16.0
No comments	03	03	02	08	10.7
Total	25	25	25	75	100.0

The respondents were asked to indicate whether their work would suffer without web based information resources. The results revealed that 73.3% of the respondents were agreed that their academic work will be suffered. On the other side there were 16% of the respondents were totally disagreed with the statement. Only few numbers of the respondents have not given any comments with 10.7% responses.

Table 7: Barriers in Accessing Web-based Information Resources

Barrier	Respondents from Engineering Stream	Respondents from Management Stream	Respondents from Medical Stream	Total	Percentage
Language	02	03	06	11	14.7
Limited access to computer terminals	04	05	03	12	16.0
Lack of IT knowledge	03	06	03	12	16.0
Bulk information	16	11	13	40	51.3
Total	25	25	25	75	100.0

Table 7 shows the major barriers to search, locate, access and use of web based information resources generally faced by the respondents. It is evident from table 7 that majority of the respondents felt the bulk of information available on the web is the major hindrance in searching and accessing of desired information. 16% of the respondents indicated that they have limited access to the computer terminals, which is also a barrier in accessing web based information resources and almost similar number of the respondents also indicated that they required more training to know how to access web based information resources. There are 14.7% of the respondents who have indicated that they have language as the major barrier for accessing web based information sources.

Conclusion

The web-based information resources and services are the dire need of the modern society. These resources have many advantages to the users and can play pivotal roles in the development of information based society. The institutions of higher learning are spending huge amount on the subscription of these resources. There is a need that all the barriers coming in the way to access of these resources should be eradicated for proper utilization of these resources for the development of society.

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