

Use of Online journals : A Study of Science Faculty and Research Scholars in the Kashmir University

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Abstract

The study surveyed a randomly chosen sample from a population of 272 in eight scientific disciplines in the University of Kashmir. The survey sought to determine use of online journals. Print versions are also used wherever both versions are available.

Keywords: User Survey, e-Journals, Online Journals, Kashmir University

1. Introduction

On-line journals are mushrooming with the appearance of Internet. The quantity of online-journals is growing larger and has become a quite visible entity in serial publication. Today most of the online journals appear as parallel version of its print counterparts and more and more publishers are making their journals available in electronic format. The science disciplines have already embraced the Internet as main place for publishing journals and archiving papers. Massive databases are available to scholars in the sciences containing both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed articles. Online journals are cost effective, provide better access to information and allow far interactivity between reader and author. However, they rely on technology, which is often unreliable, and is still not accepted fully by the academic community.

In this study, we examined the use of the journal literature that was available to users. The paper reports on the findings of a survey instrument distributed to faculty and doctoral scholars to determine the use of online journals and reasons for using online databases.

2. Objectives

The study was carried out to achieve following objectives:

- ◆ To understand the use of journal literature in changing scenario of the University of Kashmir;
- ◆ To understand preference of journal literature in changing scenario; and
- ◆ To ascertain reasons for using online journals

3. Methodology

The survey was designed to assess online journal use. The survey population consists of research scholars and members of the faculty of science departments of the Kashmir University. The discipline chosen for the study include Biochemistry, Biotechnology, Chemistry, Zoology, Botany, Environmental Sciences and Pharmacy. Each person was randomly selected for this study. The survey instrument was a questionnaire and e-mail messages were also sent to some respondents.

One hundred and thirty six questionnaires were distributed in total, out of which 69 were received back. We tried to keep questionnaire as short as possible, questions and offered answers were clear and unambiguous. The first section contains questions about the respondent. The second section contains questions about use of electronic journals. Along with the questionnaire, we prepared a short introduction to motivate the users to fill questionnaire.

4. Results of the Survey

Table.1 Population of faculty and Doctoral students

Faculty/Doctoral students	Population
Professor	29 (10.66)
Reader	38 (13.97)
Lecturer	50 (18.38)
Teaching Assistant	11 (4.0)
Ph. D Scholars	51 (18.75)
M.Phil. Scholars	93 (34.19)

*Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Table2. Responses of Faculty and Doctoral Students

Category	Total No.	Questionnaire Sent	Responded
Faculty	128 (47.05)	64 (50)	30 (46.87)
Scholars	144 (52.94)	72 (50)	39 (54.16)
Total	272	136 (50)	69 (50.73)

Table.3 Frequency of the use of print journals

Category	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Irregular	Never	No opinion
Faculty	6 (20)	9 (30)	12 (40)	3 (10)	- (-)	- (-)
Scholars	10 (25.64)	11 (28.20)	13 (33.33)	02 (5.12)	- (-)	3 (7.69)
Total	16 (23.18)	20 (28.98)	25 (36.23)	05 (7.24)	- (-)	3 (4.34)

At the question "How often do you use print journals"? We received the following answers: Journals are used daily by 23.18%, weekly by 28.98% and monthly by 36.23%. The most numerous are those who use them monthly.

Table. 4 Frequency of the use of electronic journals

Respondents	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Infrequently	Never	No opinion
Faculty	11 (36.66)	14 (46.66)	2 (6.66)	3 (10.0)	- (-)	- (-)
Scholars	18 (46.15)	10 (25.64)	8 (20.5)	3 (7.69)	- (-)	- (-)
Total	29 (42.02)	24 (34.78)	10 (14.49)	6 (8.69)	- (-)	- (-)

We received following answers when the same question was made about electronic format. The most numerous are those who use them daily 42.02%, followed by weekly users which are 34.78%, monthly by 14.49%, however, 8.6% use them infrequently.

Table.5 Preference of media

Respondents	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Infrequently	Never	No opinion
Faculty	11 (36.66)	14 (46.66)	2 (6.66)	3 (10.0)	- (-)	- (-)
Scholars	18 (46.15)	10 (25.64)	8 (20.5)	3 (7.69)	- (-)	- (-)
Total	29 (42.02)	24 (34.78)	10 (14.49)	6 (8.69)	- (-)	- (-)

Table.5 Shows the response rate of respondents when asked 'which of the following formats do they recommend'. Paper or Electronic. 46.37% recommended electronic version, which is higher.

**Table.6 Table showing preference of media
(When both versions are simultaneously available)**

Category	Paper	Electronic	Both	No reply
Faculty	3 (10.0)	7 (23.33)	18 (60.0)	2 (6.66)
Res. Scholars	9 (23.07)	11 (28.20)	15 (38.46)	4 (10.25)
Total respondents	12 (17.39)	18 (26.08)	33 (47.82)	6 (8.69)

Table.6 Shows the response rate of respondents when asked about their 'preference of format when both versions are present.' The results indicate that respondents show preference for both the formats which is 47.82%

Table.7. Frequency of the online journals regularly consulted

Category	1-5	5-10	10-20	Never	No
Faculty	8 (26.66)	14 (46.66)	5 (16.66)	- (-)	3 (10.0)
Scholars	9 (23.07)	21 (53.84)	7 (17.94)	- (-)	2 (5.12)
Total	17 (24.63)	35 (50.720)	12 (17.39)	- (-)	5 (7.24)

Table 7. Shows that average 5-10 e-journals are regularly consulted

Table8. Reasons for using on-line journals (Faculty Response)

Reasons	Positive	Negative	No Opinion
Available before print version	27 (90)	0 (0.0)	3 (10)
Access to full content	26 (86.6)	0 (0.0)	4 (13.3)
Access from different locations	28 (93.33)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.66)
Ease of use	24 (80)	2 (6.66)	4 (13.33)
User friendly interface	28 (93.35)	1 (3.33)	1 (3.33)
Reliable Access	26 (86.66)	3 (10)	1 (3.33)
Subscription Costs	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)

Table 9. Reasons for using on-line journals (Scholars Response)

Reasons	Positive	Negative	No Opinion
Available before print version	36 (92.30)	0 (0.0)	3 (7.69)
Access to full content	34 (87.17)	1 (2.56)	4 (10.25)
Access from different locations	34 (87.17)	0 (-)	5 (12.82)
Ease of use	30 (76.92)	5 (12.82)	4 (10.25)
User friendly interface	34 (87.17)	2 (5.12)	3 (7.69)
Reliable Access	38 (97.4)	0 (-)	1 (2.56)
Subscription Costs	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)

Table 10. Reasons for using on-line journals (Cumulative Response)

Reasons	Positive	Negative	No Opinion
Available before print version	63 (91.3)	- (-)	6 (8.6)
Access to full content	60 (86.9)	1 (1.4)	8 (11.5)
Access from different locations	62 (89.8)	- (-)	7 (10.1)
Ease of use	54 (78.2)	7 (10.1)	8 (11.5)
User friendly interface	62 (89.8)	3 (4.3)	7 (10.1)
Reliable Access	64 (92.7)	3 (4.3)	2 (2.8)
Subscription Costs	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)

At the question about what are the reasons for adopting e-journals, it was possible to choose more than one answer and add something else. 64 respondents (92.7%) pointed out reliable access. 63 respondents (91.3%) finds them available before print version. 62 respondents (89.8%) finds them user friendly and chose access to from different locations. 60 respondents (86.9%) chose access to full content while 3 respondents (4.3%) believe that e-journals waste users time with unfriendly interface.

5. Summary and Discussion

The results obtained from this study clearly show the high acceptance and use of online journals, although most of the respondents prefer print version in the situation where both version are available.

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