Digital Information Literacy of Post Graduate Students of Visva-Bharati: A Survey

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Abstract

Digital information literacy, as the recent concept of information literacy enable to the user of digital recourse to access, collect, evaluate, synthesis and use the required information at the right time in the right way and in right form. Objective is to determine the literacy of using digital resources of the postgraduate students of Visva-Bharati, the first central university of independent India. The target group selected for this study is postgraduate students of four departments of Palli Samgathana Vibhaga of Visva-Bharati. Questionnaire method (containing 19 questions) is used for this study. Questions focussed on computer skills, familiarity of digital resources, requirement of training on use of digital resources, types of digital resources used, purpose of using digital resources, preferable search engine, skill in search using Web-OPAC, awareness about Copyright and IPR Issues, problem faced in using digital resources, etc. Overall, it was found that the respondents are moderately satisfied in using computer. Majority of the respondents are familiar with the use of digital resources but they require training for using digital resources effectively and efficiently. Most of the respondents are not aware of copyright and IPR issues of using digital resources and face problems using digital information resources due to difficult to find relevant information.
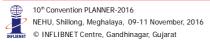
Keywords: Information Literacy, Digital information, Information Explosion, Postgraduate Students, Central University, Visva-Bharati

1 Introduction

According to Kemp (1976), information is considered as the fifth need of man ranking after air, water, food and shelter. User of information need not come physically to the library to use print formats but can stay at home or elsewhere and access digital information resources and services via Internet. In this information age, with the development of information and communication technology (ICT), vast amount of information is being generated that we are confronted with information explosion, information pollution and exponential growth of information which in turn make people to be confused about the information need, information access and information sources. To meet this challenge, people should be information literate who has the skills in seeking information at the right time in right way in right form, processing and using information are required (Sinha, 2016).

Information literacy (IL) can be defined as the ability of an individual to recognise the need for information and to locate, evaluate and use effectively and efficiently the needed information. In the era of technological revolution and proliferation of literature, IL is of great importance. Information is now available through several media and most of the information available is unfiltered, making the choice and evaluation much complex (Sinha, 2006).

ALA (1989) defines IL as the ability to recognise when information is needed and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate and use information effectively. A person can be called as information literate when he is able to find, use and synthesis information by him. Library literacy, media literacy, computer literacy, research literacy and critical thinking skills are all part of IL (Bruce and Candy, 2006).

2   Scope and Limitation

The use of information, both the form of print and digital, is an important basis for academic progress and development. Considering this, the scope and limitation of the present study is confined only to study the information literacy level of the postgraduate students of the Palli Samgathana Vibhaga (PSV) of Visva-Bharati. Since, the postgraduate students are the user of information both in the form of print and digital, they need to be acquainted with the nascent information sources from Internet beside the traditional sources of information. Thus, the scope of this study is to measure the information literacy level and necessary competencies of the postgraduate students of PSV.

3   Objective

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

i)   To ascertain the type of information required by the users.

ii)   To find out the literacy level to search, locate, use and evaluate the information, their sources and types

iii) To know the acquaintance level of the postgraduate students with different ICT tools and techniques

iv)   To find out whether Internet supplements library resources among the users.

4   Background

Visva-Bharati is a pilgrimage for education and culture that reflects the Tagorean ethos of making a complete human being out of everyone. In May 1951, Visva-Bharati was declared to be a Central University and 'An Institution of National Importance' by the Act XXIX, 1951 by the Parliament of India. It was granted the status of a unitary, teaching and residential University (Visva-Bharati, 2015).

Palli Samgathana Vibhaga (PSV), one of the eight Bhavanas of Visva-Bharati, was established at Sriniketan by Rabindranath Tagore in 1922 with the primary objective to bring back life into villages making the rural folk self reliant, self-respectful, acquainted with the cultural tradition of their own country and competent to make efficient uses of modern resources for the improvement of their physical, intellectual and economic conditions. PSV consists of four departments-

5   Scope and Limitation of the Study

The universe of the study consists is conducted in 4 departments of PSV viz, Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension, Silpa Sadana, Palli Charcha Kendra and Social Work of the university under study.

6   Methodology and Administration of Tools

A well structured questionnaire, which constitutes the primary source of data was adopted for this study. Out of a total of 100 questionnaires distributed to the postgraduate students of PSV of Visva-Bharati, 92 filled in questionnaires were personally collected and 2 questionnaires were rejected due to inadequate information. Thus, data obtained under various facets of the study from 90 finally selected questionnaires were classified, tabulated and finally logical interpretations were made. Among

these 90 selected respondents, 48 were male and 42 were female students.

7   Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis of data under each variable of this study is presented for interpretation in Table 2 to Table 18. Percentage method is used to derive the findings.

7.1 Number of Respondents

Table 2: Number of Respondents

Distributed	Respondents		Non-respondents		Rejected		Finally Selected	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
100	92	92.00	8	8.00	2	2.00	90	90.00

Statement of respondents is shown in Table 2, which shows that this study finally analyse 90 (90.00%) respondents after taking various aspects under consideration.

7.2   Computer Skill

Table 3: Computer Skill

Skills	Respondents	%age
MS-Office/MS-Word	33	36.64
Fundamentals/Preliminary	26	28.94
Internet	13	14.44
Multimedia	8	8.88
Programming	6	6.66
All the above	4	4.44

Distribution of students according to their computer skill is shown in Table 3, which depicts that 33 (36.64%) have knowledge of MS-Office/MS-Word, 26 (28.94%) have knowledge of computer fundamentals/preliminary. 13 (14.44%) have the skill of Internet followed by 8 (8.88%) of multimedia skill and 6 (6.66%) of programming skill. It is also observed that only 4 (4.44%) have all the above skills.

7.3   Satisfaction in Using Computer

Table 4: Satisfaction in Using Computer

Satisfaction	Respondents	%
Moderately satisfied	46	51.12
Very satisfied	24	26.67
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	10.00
Moderately dissatisfied	8	8.88
Unable to judge	3	3.33

Proficiency of using computer depicts that 46 (51.12%) respondents are moderately satisfied, 24 (26.67%) are very satisfied. It also reveals that one tenth of the respondents, i.e. 9 (10.00%) replied that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied in using computer and 3 respondents are unable to judge their satisfaction in using computer.

7.4   Familiarity with Digital Resources

Table 5: Familiarity of Digital Resources

Response	Respondents	%
Familiar	68	75.55
Not familiar	22	24.45

From the Table 5, it is observed that 68 (75.55%) are familiar with the use of digital resources, while 22 (24.45%) respondents replied in the negative.

7.5 Training on Use of Digital Resources

Table 6: Training on Use of Digital Resources

Response	Respondents	%
Yes	22	24.45
No	68	75.55

Table 6 depicts that only 22 (24.45%) have undergone any formal training of using digital resources, but 68 (75.55%) respondents answered in negative.

7.6 Methods of Learning to Use Digital Resources

Table 7: Methods of Learning to Use Digital Resources

Response	Respondents	%
Library	39	43.34
Faculties	19	21.11
Friends	10	11.11
Computer Schools	9	10.00
Himself/Herself	9	10.00
Others	4	4.44

Table-7 shows methods of learning to use digital resources. It is observed that, 39 (43.34%) respondents learnt to use digital resources from the library staff, followed by 19 (21.11%) from their faculties, 10 (11.11%) from their friends, 9 (10.00%) each from the computer schools and himself/herself and only 4 (4.44%) learnt from others

7.7 Views on Need of Training

Table 8: Training on Use of Digital Resources

Response	Respondents	%age
Yes	81	90.00
No	9	10.00

Table-8 shows training on use of digital resources. most of respondents i.e. 81 (90.00%) require training for using digital resources, while only 9 (10.00%) respondents do not require training for using digital resources.

7.8 Types of Digital Resources Used

Table 9: Types of Digital Resources Used

Source	Respondents	%age
Internet	24	26.67
E-article	18	20.00
Digital library	15	16.67
E-thesis	13	14.44
E-journal	11	12.23
E-book	6	6.66
E-databases	3	3.33

Types of digital resources used shown in Table 9 reveals that 24 (26.67%) respondents use Internet and 18 (20.00%) E-articles. But all other types of digital resources are used by a small group of respondents.

7.9   Frequency of Using Digital Resources

Table 10: Frequency of Using Digital Resources

Frequency	Digital Resources				
	CD-ROM/ DVD-ROM	Internet	Online Databases	E-Journals	OPAC
Daily	2 (2.22)	40 (44.44)	3 (3.33)	14 (15.55)	28 (31.12)
Once a week	6 (6.67)	30 (33.33)	19 (21.12)	29 (32.23)	33 (36.66)
Twice a week	13 (14.45)	16 (17.79)	29 (32.23)	13 (14.45)	18 (20.00)
Thrice a week	30 (33.33)	1 (1.11)	24 (26.66)	11 (12.22)	9 (10.00)
Rarely	39 (43.33)	3 (3.33)	15 (16.66)	23 (25.55)	2 (2.22)

[N.B.: Figure in parenthesis indicates percentage.]

Table 10 shows the distribution of respondents according to their frequency of using digital resources. It is evident that 39 (43.33%) students use CD-ROM/DVD-ROM rarely, 30 (33.33%) thrice a week, 13 (14.45%) twice a week, 6 (6.67%) once a week and only 2 (2.22%) daily. Most of students (40, 44.44%) use Internet daily, 30 (33.33%) once a week, 16 (17.79%) twice a week, 3 (3.33%) rarely and only 1 (1.11%) thrice a week. About 29 (32.23%) use online database twice a week, 24 (26.66%) thrice a week, 19 (21.12%) once a week, 15 (16.66%) rarely and only 3 (3.33%) daily. It is also found that majority of students (33, 36.66%) use OPAC once a week, 28 (31.12%) daily, 18 (20.00%) twice a week, 9 (10.00%) twice a week and 2 (2.22%) rarely.

7.10 Purpose of Using Digital Resources

Table 11: Purpose of Using Digital Resources

Purpose	Respondents	%age
Learning	59	65.56
Preparation of notes	48	53.33
Research	44	48.89
Getting current information	41	45.56
Up-to-date subject knowledge	33	36.67
Writing articles	28	31.11

The purpose of using digital resources is placed in Table-11. It appears from Table 11 that majority of students (59, 65.56%) indicate that digital resources are used for their learning followed by 48 (53.33%) in preparation of notes, 44 (48.89%) for research, 41 (45.56%) for getting current information, 33 (36.67%) for up-to-date knowledge, and 28 (31.11%) for writing articles.

7.11 Use of Storage Device

Table 12: Use of Storage Device

Storage Device	Respondents	%age
CD-ROM	16	17.78
DVD-Rom	14	15.56
Pen drives	60	66.66

It is observed that majority of the respondents (60, 66.66%) use pen drive as storage device, 16 (17.78%) use CD-ROM and 14 (15.56%) used DVD-ROM.

7.12 Use of Search Engines

Table 13: Use of Search Engines

Search Engines	Respondents	%age
Google	58	64.46
Yahoo	12	13.34
Altavista	8	8.88
Bing	6	6.66
Others	6	6.66

It is observed most of the respondents (58, 64.46%) use Google while 12 (13.34%), 8 (8.88%), 6 (6.66%) responded in favour of Yahoo. Altavista, Bing respectively. It is also observed 6 (6.66%) respondents use other various engines.

7.13 Skill in Search Using Web-OPAC

Table 14: Skill in Search Using Web-OPAC

Response	Respondents	%age
Yes	68	75.55
No	22	24.45

It is observed that most of the respondents (68, 75.55%) are competent and have necessary skills to search books, journals and articles using Web-OPAC and 22 (24.45%) do not have necessary skills in searching Web-OPAC.

7.14 Awareness about Copyright and IPR Issues

Table 15: Awareness about Copyright and IPR Issues

Response	Respondents	%age
Yes	19	21.11
No	71	78.89

It appears from Table 15 that most of the respondents (71, 78.89%) are not aware about copyright and IPR issues, while only 19 (21.11%) are aware about it related to the digital information resources.

7.15 Problem Faced in Using Digital Resources

Table 16: Problem Faced in Using Digital Resources

Problem	Respondents	%age
Difficult to find relevant information	28	31.11
Too much information retrieved	23	25.56
Difficult in accessing computer or Internet	21	23.13
Difficult to use digital resources due to lack of ICT knowledge	12	13.34
Not compatible	6	6.66

Table 16 shows that 28 (31.11%) respondents feel difficulty in finding relevant information, 23 (25.56%) face problem much more information, 21 (23.13%) feel difficulty in accessing computer or Internet, 12 (13.34%) in using digital resources due to lack of

ICT knowledge, and 6 (6.66%) feel digital resources not compatible.

7.16 Sources of Internet Connection

Table 17: Sources of Internet Connection

Problem	Respondents	%age
Library	40	44.45
Computer lab	21	23.33
Department	20	22.22
Cybercafé	9	10.00

It is observed that most of the respondents (40, 44.45%) use Internet at library, 21 (23.33%) at computer lab, 20 (22.22%) at department and only 9 (10.00%) at cybercafé (Table 17).

7.17 Evaluation of Digital Resources by the Respondents

Table 18: Evaluation of Digital Resources

Parameter	Respondents	%age
Coverage	56	62.23
Authenticity	12	13.33
Usability	9	10.00
Objectivity	7	7.78
Accessibility	6	6.66

From Table 18, it is found that majority of the respondents (56, 62.23%) face problem of coverage, 12 (13.33%) authenticity, 9 (10.00%) usability, 7 (7.78%) objectivity and 6 (6.66%) accessibility in using digital resources.

8. Findings

Major findings of the study are:

1) More than one third of the respondents know to work with MS-WORD or MS-EXCEL, but many of them do not have fundamental skills or skills of using Internet properly.

2) More than half (51.12%) of the respondents show moderately satisfaction in using computer.

3) Majority of the respondents (75.55%) are familiar with the use of digital resources.

4) Only about 24.45% respondents have undergone any formal training of using digital resources.

5) Most of the respondents (43.34%) responded that library is the best place for learning to use of digital resources.

6) 90.00% responded that they should require training for using digital resources effectively and efficiently.

7) 44.44%, 31.12%, 15.55%, 3.33% and 2.22% postgraduate students use Internet, OPAC, e-journals, online databases, CD-ROM daily.

8) Most of the respondents (65.56%) use digital resources for their learning purposes.

9) Pen drive is felt easy to use as storage device to majority of the respondents (66.66%).

10) Majority of the respondents (64.46%) prefer to use Google as search engine.

11) 75.55% respondents have skills of searching various documents using Web-OPAC.

12) It is pathetic to mention that, majority of the respondents (78.89%) are not aware of copyright and IPR issues of using digital resources.

13) Respondents face problems using digital information resources due to difficult to find relevant information (31.11%) followed by too much information retrieved (25.56%), difficult in accessing computer or Internet (23.13%), lack of ICT knowledge (13.34%) and not compatible (6.66%).

14) Library is source of Internet connectivity to the majority of the respondents (44.45%).

15) Coverage of the digital resources (62.23%) creates problem of evaluation of digital resources followed by authenticity (13.33%), usability (10.00%), objectivity (7.78%) and accessibility (6.66%).

9. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study illustrates about the elements of information literacy in using digital resources and/or services of the postgraduate students of Palli Samgathana Vibhaga of Visva-Bharati.. Based on the findings of the present study, the following suggestions may be recommended for improving the efficient and effective use of digital resources among the students.

1. University library or library attached to the respective departments should come forward towards increasing digital literacy among the students by organising user-friendly training and/or orientation programmes at regular levels.

2. Awareness of the students should also be generated on digital information resources to get current information and/or to meet the satisfaction of information needs.

3. At regular intervals, evaluation of information literacy of using digital resources and/or services should be conducted.

4. Awareness should be created about copyright and IPR issues among the students regarding use of digital resources.

5. Plenty of hands-on experience should be encouraged among the students in using digital information resources.

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