WEB BASED INFORMATION SERVICES : A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The present paper discusses the importance of the web based Information resources with specific reference to e-books, e-journals and UGC Info-net. It also highlights the various web based information services used by the Faculty, Research Scholars and Students of Sri Padmavathi Mahila University. It was observed through personal experience faculty could enhance their participation in national and International conferences manifold by availing E-mail facility.

Key words: Web based information sources, Information Services, Search Engines.

1. Introduction

The services available on Internet have been increasing day by day, which has become channel for communication where text, sound and graphics are easily available. The Internet offers a wealth of information to the users. It is a source of up-to-date information and assistance related to education – teaching and research in science and technology, social sciences and humanities, in medical sciences biotechnology, management and computer sciences. Many organizations set up an 'INTRANET.' This is the network used in the internet to communicate and share information across the organization. In universities INTRANET can be useful for instant information among the faculty members, research scholars, students and administrations with in the campus.

The first publicly accessible Internet service in India was established on 15th August 1995, when Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) launched its Gateway Internet Access Service (GIS) Initially the GIAS was available only in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore and Pune. Now the Internet has been expanded. The next couple of years should witness an exponential growth, both in the number of Internet users and in the quality of the service.

2. Studies

Petre and Gunn (1998) surveyed the use of Internet with a self-selecting sample of 445 users. They reported that female Internet users were more likely to volunteer to participate in research and the proportion of female Internet users was growing rapidly. There was a significant relationship between high Internet use and positive attitudes towards the Internet with both self-reported depression and introversion.

Previc (1998) reported that teenagers liked to use cyber cafes because of their social dimensions, regardless of their access to the Internet at home or in the school.

Kiesler et.al., (2001) reported that Internet use predicted better outcomes for extroverts and those with more social support but worse outcomes for introverts and those with less support. Many people have integrated the Internet into their ordinary lives to their advantage. But, Levy (2002) remarked that Internet is creating an isolationist society where Internet users spend more and more time online and less time in social interactions. Of the 4113 adults from 2689 households surveyed 25% of the respondents were found spending more than five hours a week online and said they spend less time with family and friends or socialize outside the home; 60% watch less television and 33% spend less time reading newspaper.

Internet provides a wealth of information to library and information centers and it also provides free access to variety information sources such as online e-books, e-journals both full texts, abstracts and contents depending on the publishers policy, e-news letters and so on.

2. Web based Information Resources

These resources are also known as Internet Information resources. These are categorized as below.

1. Websites

2. Portals

3. On line course

4. e-books

5. e-journals

6. Special Internet Groups

7. Virtual conferences

8. Web links

9. Web catalogs

10. On line bookshops

We have noted that e-books are very useful source for academic and research pursuits, teaching and serving the stake-holders effectively and efficiently. The librarians can provide satisfactory services using e-books.

3. Free On line Information Sources

Internet is becoming a primary communication medium for all types of information resources. Large number of information resources on the Internet is available freely.

Online information sources are referred to be free when access to the sources are not dependent on a subscription or membership in an organization or a publishers. Among the freely available online information sources which are identified by the author.

Electronic Books

(http://www.geocities.com/ghosh tbd/inf3.ltml/) This section provides link to some organizations and universities who have taken initiatives to provide free access to thousands of online e-books free of charges.

Gutenherg Project on Electronic Books

Online (http://www/promo.net/pg) in this site is free of charge. The site has browsing facility by author, and by title, university of virginia's E-book library (http://etext/lib/virginia/edu/ebooks/ebooklist.html)

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The e-book is the 21st century reader's companion, it enables user to carry every where books and can be read on all types of computers including hand held devices. E-books also contain audio, video and dynamic hyperlinks. E-books can be delivered immediately from any where in the world by downloads, e-mail file attachment, on diskette or CD-ROM. Compared to printed books e-books are faster, cheaper, searchable and also have the facility to print, copy and paste, make annotations, highlight and hyper linking.

E-Journals

Online Electronic Free Journals (http://www.geocities.com/ghoshtbdpnl.html)

Nearly 624 online electronic journals are identified and linked in the above mentioned URL. Out of 624 journals, 351 journals are available in full text Subject wise freely available journals in full text are as under.

Subjects	No. of Journals (Full Text)
Agriculture and Food Science	1
Mathematics	28
Business and Marketing	13
Education	16
Law	5
Life Science	5
Medical and Pharmacy	149
Sociology and Social Studies	13

In addition to full text journals, abstracts of journals are also available free of charges.
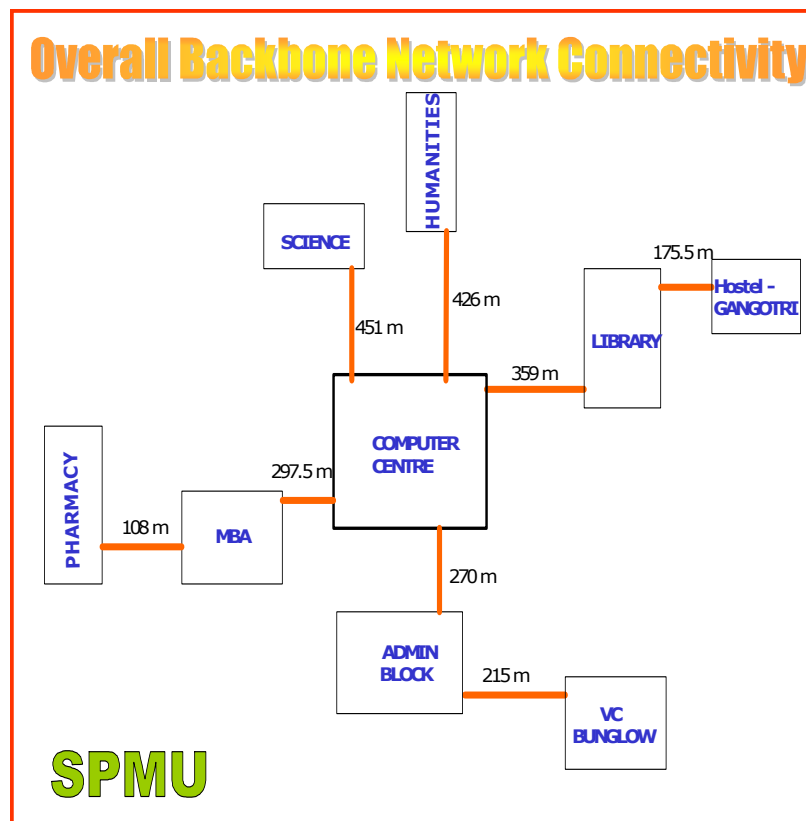
Database

(http://www.geocities.com/ghosh tbd/dbase html) Nearly 29 databases are available free of charges.
It contains online public access catalogue for Books and Journal Articles.

e-journals

We are in the digital information age, where information is produced, stored and disseminated in the form of bits and bytes. The traditional print journals are now produced in electronic format. Internet plays an important role in making these electronic journals available to the end users on their desktop computers. There are numerous advantages in publishing journals in the electronic format, both to the publisher and to the reader. Internet offers lower cost of distribution of electronic journals.

4.   UGC Inflibnet and UGC – Infonet Programmes

Under UGC Inflibnet Programme, Sri Padmavathi Mahila University Library has fully computerized all of its operations using SOUL Software. Under UGC Infonet Programme SPMVV Campus Networking has been completed. University Faculty, Research Scholars and Students are accessing electronic journals through UGC Infonet Programme.

Overall Backbone Network Connectivity

HUMANITIES

SCIENCE

175.5 m

Hostel – GANGOTRI

426 m

LIBRARY

451 m

359 m

COMPUTER CENTRE

PHARMACY

297.5 m

108 m

MBA

270 m

ADMIN BLOCK

215 m

VC BUNGLOW

SPMU

4.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To know about the awareness of computer and Internet literacy among the university community of SPMVV,

2. Evaluate the preference of e-mail services used by the respondents,

3. Evaluate and measure the users opinion on UGC Info-net program,

4. Highlight the significance of campus networking for enabling the optimum utilization of Internet and web based information services,

5. Assess the nature of all types of uses, their changing needs of information sources and types of IT based services required to satisfy them,

6. Develop the w.w.w to its greatest potential for service to students research scholars and staff of the university,

7. Find out the level of satisfaction with the internet based services,

8. Find out frequency of use of search engines for Internet surfing and

9. Find out problems faced by the users in surfing Internet.

5.   Methodology

The present study has been made by surveying and observing the different web based information sources and services used by Faculty, Research Scholar and PG Students of Sri Padmavathi Mahila University using questionnaire method. In this study, the mode of collection of data its presentation, analysis and interpretation are presented in the form of tables and graphs.

Table : 1. Distribution of Questionnaires

S.No.	Category	No.of questionnaires Distributed No	No.of Questionnaires Received No	Rate of Response %
1.	Faculty Members	30	25	84
2.	Research Scholars	48	46	96
3.	PG Students	36	27	75
	Total	114	98	86

Table 1. Shows that of the total 114 questionnaires distributed, 90 responded. The response from Research Scholars was the highest (96%) followed by that from Faculty and last PG Students. This is because RS make use of web information for their research and Faculty use web information for personal research and class room teaching. Students have no time to spend due their tightly packed academic scheduled. Even then 75% have responded which needs appreciation.

Table : 2. Using E-mail Service

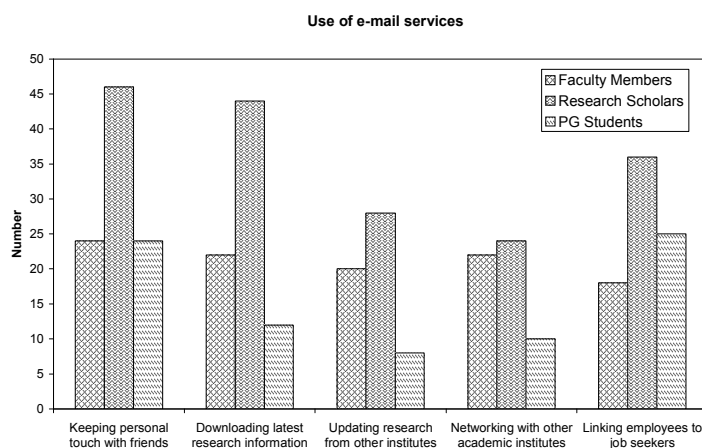| S.No.	Item	Faculty Member	Research Scholar	PG Student	TotalNo
1.	Keeping personal touch with friends	24	46	24	94
2.	Downloading latest research information	22	44	12	78
3.	Updating research from other institutes	20	28	8	56
4.	Networking with other academic institutes	22	24	10	56
5.	Linking employees to job seekers	18	36	25	79

Use of e-mail services

Table 2 shows that almost all the faculty members are using E-mail service for exchange of ideas with friends, downloading the research information and networking with other institutions. 96% of the research scholars using E-mail service for downloading the latest research information from the web. 100% of the research scholars and 88% of the PG Students are utilizing the E-mail services for keeping touch with friends.   E-mail facility is being availed by majority of the users all over the world. It was observed through personal experience that faculty could enhance their participation manifold in National and International Conferences by availing E-mail facility.

Table : 3. Using UGC – Infonet Service

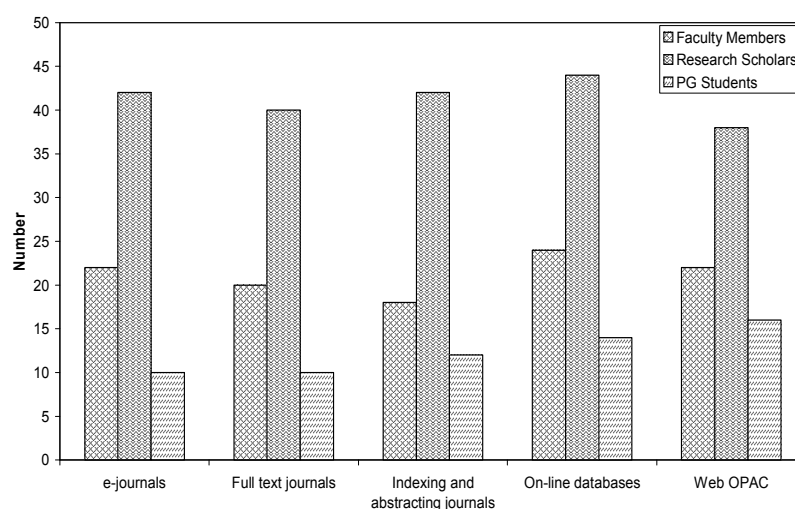| S.No.	Item	Faculty Member	Research Scholar	PG Student	Total No
1.	e-journals	22	42	10	74
2.	Full text journals	20	40	10	70
3.	Indexing and abstracting journals	18	42	12	72
4.	On-line databases	24	44	14	82
5.	Web OPAC	22	38	16	76

Using of UGC - Infonet Service

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Table 3 reveals that most of the Research Scholars and Faculty Members are utilizing the UGC Info-net services for their Research and Project Works. The PG Students are less in number compared that of Faculty and Scholars.

● UGC – Info-net will be a boon to the higher education systems in several ways,

● UGC – Info-net will be a resource for faculty and Research Scholars for tapping the most up-to-date information,

- UGC – Info-net will be a tool to distribute education material and Journals to the remotest of areas,

- UGC – Info-net will form a medium for collaboration among teachers and students, not only within the country but also all over the world, and

- UGC – Info-net will be an intranet for University Automation,

Table : 4. Using Search Engines

S.No.	Item	Faculty Members	Research Scholars	PG Students No	Total No
1.	Yahoo	24	46	24	94
2.	Google	22	44	22	88
3.	MSN Search	14	22	8	44
4.	AOL Search	8	16	5	29
5.	Terra Lycos	4	11	4	19
6.	Alltavista	18	24	12	54
7.	Askjeeves	—	——	—	—
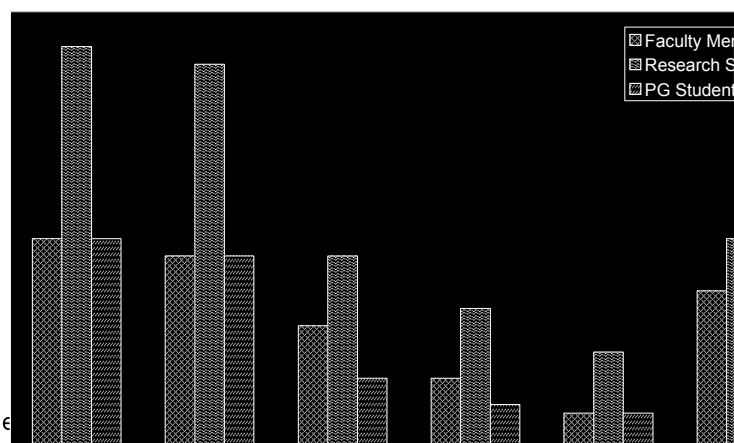
Table 4 reveals that Yahoo, Google and MSN are the freque... and research scholars and PG Students

Automated methods for retrieving information on the web can be broadly grouped as search tools or search services. Search tools employ robots for indexing web documents. Search services provide users a layer of abstraction over several search tools and databases and aim at simplifying the web search. People use search engines for finding information on the web. A Search engine is an information retrieval system, which is used to locate the web pages relevant to user queries. A web search engine contains indexing, storage, querry processing, spider and user interface subsystems.

Search engines are the major portals for users of the web, with 71% of the web users accessing search engines to locate other web sites. There are approximately 3,200 search engines on the web. The author has selected the seven mostly used search engines namely Google, Yahoo and MSN etc., for the study.

6.1 Opinion about the UGC - Infonet

And Web based Information Services.

1. Most of the users opinion that the Internet motivates them to be active learners.

2. Internet provides the information which is unavailable any where else,

3. Internet is the fastest and cheapest mode of accessing learning material, and

4. Most of the faculty and scholars expressed satisfaction over the benefits derived from the use of UGC Info-net.

6.2 Problems faced while using the Information through web.

- Some important documents which are placed in web are 'read only' The authors when they place them on web it becomes a public document and should be allowed copying with due rights to author.

- Some foreign journals are not full text. They are available only as abstracts. In case full text is available there is no print provision.

- Respondents expressed that Internet is slow to access with in the university campus.

- Respondents also expressed that there is no guarantee that free Internet resources will continue to provide its services. They disappear at any time. Another problem is the change of URL usually.

- Of late people face (especially women) sexual exploitation at Internet pubs. The Students felt that more Internet access with in campus will solve the problem.

6.3 Suggestions

- All Students should be trained to use UGC Info-net, Internet and e-library facility,

- Each head could assign 25 marks for an assignment using web based information service,

- All faculty must also be trained at least for 2-3 days in use of such facilities, and

- Research Scholars should be provided special training for using / accessing free web-based information services.

## 7.	Conclusion

Internet and World Wide Web are boon to Information users, as every piece of Information of the libraries and Information Centers is a click away to any person in the world, at any time, at any where. The World Wide Web can be a great means to accomplish research on many topics. However, it is to be remembered that the web complements, but does not replace other source of information. To use the web effectively, one should be highly selective which information is to be chosen and use the web as another tool to aid in research, but not as the only information source. By and large, the survey reveals that the Faculty, Research Scholars and P.G Students expressed immense satisfaction over the benefits derived from the use of UGC Infonet and web based services.

## 8.	References

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