
Awareness and use of Online Journals by the Faculty Members, Researchers and Students in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Jamia Millia Islamia University: A Survey

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Abstract

This study reports the result of a survey conducted at Jamia Millia Islamia University (JMIU) to determine the extent to which users are aware and make use of online journals. The study also examines the search pattern of online journals. A questionnaire was distributed among the Faculty members, Research scholars and Post-Graduate Students to collect desired data. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to the selected sample of Faculty of Natural Sciences; 70 valid samples were collected. The study found that the majority of users are aware about the availability of online journals. 60% of respondents want to use online version of journals whereas a few want to use printed journals. Majority of respondents use online journals for their research work. 70% of respondents take printout before using online journals. It was found that users faced problem when using online journals. They are also interested to take training to use online journals.

Keywords: Natural Sciences, Jamia Millia Islamia library, Usage- e-resources, User study

1. Introduction

With the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), particularly the Internet, there has been a shift from traditional print journals to online journals. The number of peer-reviewed online journals increased by over 570 times between 1991 to 2000. Print journal refers to conventional print editions published and distributed as paper copies and online journals refer to journal editions available online through computer networks (Internet). The journal editions available online through Internet are also called electronic journals [1].

The emergence of the Internet, particularly the World Wide Web, as a new medium of information storage and delivery represents a revolution which will have a lasting impact on the publishing and information delivery system in the 21st century. An increasing number of publishers are using the Internet as a global way to offer their publications to the international community of scientists and technologists. An electronic only news paper on the web, The Nandi Times received 5.5 million accesses (clicks) daily 1999 [2]. It is estimated that about 2500 online journals are available free of cost over the Internet. Accept these about 3700 online journals of various publishers are subscribing by the Central Library of Jamia Millia Islamia University [3].

Online Journals

Online journals are simply serial publications in which the end products are made available in digital format and whose contents may or may not be peer-reviewed. Basically Internet is used for the

dissemination of the online journals. After a print-run of some 340 years, the scholarly journals have now assumed a parallel digital life. By the turn of the century, 75 % of academic journals were offering online editions, and more than a 10000 peer reviewed journals existed in digital form (2/5). In Feb 2004, out of total number of 43,500 journal titles listed in Ulrich's periodical directory, over 34,500 were online periodicals of all types [4].

Definitions

There is no universally accepted definition of online journal. Some call it a "paperless journal," some people say "virtual journal," and some say it is an "electronic journal." Online journals are available through online hosts such as DIALOG at high costs they are not likely to be part of library collections. An online journal allows remote access. It can be used simultaneously by more than one user. It provides timely access. Online journals supports different searching capabilities and saves physical storage. An online journal is a serial publication, often scholarly that is made available in digital format and distributed over the Internet. Considering articles within each year, and averaging each year from 1990 to 2000, online articles were cited 4.5 times more often than offline articles [5]. The experts in these fields gave the definition of online journals on the basis of production, distribution, etc.

According to Ali's Glossary of Library and Information Science, "An online journal is a publication, often scholarly, that is made accessible in a computerized format and distributed over the Internet." [6].

2. Significance of the Study

In the present era of information explosion-more and more publications are becoming Web-concerned. Most of the science and technology libraries have changed the contemporary outlook towards functions and services. The environment is rapidly changing to an electronic one. The investigators decided to conduct this study for measuring the usage of online journals by Faculty members, Researchers and Post-Graduate Students in Faculty of Natural Sciences, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi.

3. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To find out the awareness of users' about available online journals.
2. To study the purpose and utilization of online journals.
3. To find out the frequency of using online journals.
4. To find out the hindrances and problems faced by the users while accessing and using online journal.
5. To study the level of satisfaction of users about availability and coverage of online journals.
6. To study the preferred format for using online journals.

7. To study the satisfaction level of users about infrastructure to support the access of online journals.
8. To ascertain whether orientation/ training programme are necessary to use, locate and search online journals.
9. To suggest suitable recommendations to improve facilities and services related to the use of online journals.

4. Methodology

Keeping in view the above objectives in mind, a structured questionnaire was prepared to collect data from the users of online journals in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi. Questionnaire contains various questions pertaining to the awareness and use of online journals. For this purpose a total of 120 questionnaires were distributed among Faculty members, Researchers and Post-Graduate Students of the Faculty of Natural Sciences. Out of 120 questionnaires distributed, 70 valid questionnaires were collected and then data was analysed, tabulated, interpreted and presented in form of this paper.

5. Scope and Limitation

The present study covered the Faculty members, Research Scholars and Post-Graduate Students in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi. The Faculty of Natural Sciences include six departments i.e. Physics, Chemistry, Biosciences, Mathematics, Geography and Computer Science.

6. Results

6.1 Population Study

Personal detail section of the questionnaire provides information regarding the sex and different qualifications as can be seen from Table-1. It is shown in table - 1a, 68.57% of population studied were males and only 31.43% of total were females, who can use online journals available through library for different purposes.

Table - 1a

Gender	Number	
	Distribute (120)	Receive (70)
Male	79 (65.83%)	48 (68.57%)
Female	41 (34.17%)	22 (31.43%)

Table - 1b shows that 50% of the respondents were Research Scholars, 41.43% Post-Graduate Students and only 8.57% were faculty members.

Table - 1b

Academic Status	Number	Percentage
Post Graduate Students	29	41.43%
Research Scholars	35	50%
Faculty Members	6	8.57%

6.2 Awareness of Online Journals:

Table - 2 reveals that 87.5% of the male users were aware about the online journals whereas only 81.8% of female respondents were aware about the availability of online journals. It can be seen that male respondents are more aware about online journals than females.

Table - 2

Gender	Aware	Not Aware
Male	42 (87.5%)	6 (12.5%)
Female	18 (81.8%)	4 (18.2%)

6.3 Preference Level of Using Online Journals:

The result reveals that 60% of respondents want to access only online version of journals whereas only 27.14% users want to read from printed journals but 12.86% respondents want to use both online and printed journals.

Table - 3

Type	Number	Percentage
Online	42	60%
Print	19	27.14%
Both	9	12.86%

6.4 Use of Online Journals:

When respondents asked whether they use online journals or not, majority of respondents replied yes. Table - 4 shows that 93.48% males were using online journals whereas only 86.4% of females were use online journals for the different purposes.

Table - 4

Gender	Use	Not Use
Male	43 (93.48%)	3 (6.52%)
Female	19 (86.4%)	3 (13.6%)

6.5 Purpose of Using Online Journals:

From the table - 5, it is clear that most of the respondents i.e.58.57% use online journals for their research work. 57.14% of respondents use online journals for studying their course work. 32.86% of respondents use online journals for update subject knowledge and 27.14% respondents use for writing papers. 18.57% of users using online journals for other works like exams, etc. and only 15.71% respondents use online journals for teaching.

Table - 5

Purpose	Number	Percentage
For Studying Course Work	40	57.14%
For Update Subject Knowledge	23	32.86%
For Teaching	11	15.71%
For Research Work	41	58.57%
For Writing Papers	19	27.14%
Any Other Works	13	18.57%

Note: Because of multiple choice options the percentage is exceeds more than 100.

6.6 Frequency of Using Online Journals:

It is observes from the analysis that 40% of respondents access online journals everyday, 30% of respondents access 2 - 4 times a week, about 12% respondents use once a week. About 19% of respondents use online journals occasionally.

Table - 6

Frequency	Number	Percentage
Everyday	28	40%
2 - 4 times a Week	21	30%
Once a Week	08	11.43%
Occasionally	13	18.57%

6.7 Location for Accessing Online Journals:

When respondents were asked to indicate the preferred location to access online journals, 45.71% (table - 7) of respondents chose the Central Library, about 39% accessed at the Department Library, 37.14% accessed at the Computer Center and 20% accessed from other place where they got facility to access online journals.

Table - 7

Location	Number	Percentage
Central Library	32	45.71%
Department Library	27	38.57%
Computer Center	26	37.14%
Other Places	14	20%

Note: Because of multiple choice options the percentage is exceeds more than 100.

6.8 Linking Pattern of Online Journals

Many of the respondents search online journals through linking facility available on the library website as well as many through the search engines. Some of them also link through the publishers' website and through the online journals website. Table - 8 shows how respondents search online journals.

Table - 8

Linking	Number	Percentage
Links through library website	29	41.43%
Links through publisher's website	12	17.14%
Links through Search Engines	38	54.29%
Links through Online Journals website	15	21.43%

Note: Because of multiple choice options the percentage is exceeds more than 100.

6.9 Using Pattern of Online Journals

Respondents were asked to indicate how they use the content of online journals? It was observed from analysis that majority 70% of respondents take printout before using online journals. 68.57% download the content in storage devices and 25.71% of respondents use on the computer screen.

Table - 9

Use Pattern	Number	Percentage
On Computer Screen	18	25.71%
Download in Storage Devices	48	68.57%
Take Printout	49	70%

Note: Because of multiple choice options the percentage is exceeds more than 100.

6.10 Formats of Online Journals

Online Journals are available in two major formats PDF and HTML. It was observed from the analysis that 68.57% (48 of 70) of respondents preferred PDF format for using online journals, whereas 12.86% (9 of 70) of respondents preferred HTML format. 18.57% (13 of 70) having no preference.

Table - 10

File Formats	Respondents	Percentage
HTML	9	12.86%
PDF	48	68.57%
No Preference	13	18.57%

6.11 Difficulties of accessing Online Journals

Through online journals have become a common source among the academic and research communities, the majority of users (67.14%) stated (table - 11a) that they have difficulties to use online journals. The specific problems faced by the users are given in table - 11b. It was observed that majority of respondents are not satisfied with availability of enough journals in their respective subject.

Table - 11a

Problem Faced	Yes	No
No. of Respondents	47 (67.14%)	23 (32.86%)

Table - 11b

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Not many Online Journals available in my subject	32	68.09%
Coverage on OJ is not suited to my research area	23	48.94%
No assistance provide by the Information Professionals	12	25.53%
Lack of training	13	27.66%
Time Consuming	5	10.64%

Note: Table - 11b is a supporting of Table - 11a. Hence data has been calculated only by the option "Yes" (i.e. total no is 47) of the same.

6.12 Satisfaction Level about Infrastructure provided by the Library for accessing Online Journals

A question was asked to know the satisfaction level of infrastructure among the users for accessing online journals. It was observed that majority of respondents are satisfied with the infrastructure provided by the library for accessing online journals at different levels whereas only 32.86% of respondents are not satisfied with the same.

Table - 12

Level	Number	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	12	17.14%
Satisfied	14	20%
Average	21	30%
Not Satisfied	23	32.86%

6.13 Need of Orientation/ Training Program

To a further question as to whether they would like to receive orientation/ training programme to use online journals. 27.14% respondents said that they do not want any training whereas majority 72.86% of respondents replied in the affirmative. The results obtain were given in table - 13.

Table - 13

Need of Orientation/ Training Programme	Yes	No
No of Respondents	51 (72.86%)	19 (27.14%)

7. Major Findings of the Study

- ◆ Majority of users use online journals everyday.
- ◆ Frequency of usage of online journals is increasing day by day.
- ◆ In comparison to male respondents, female respondents are more interested in accessing online journals for different purposes.
- ◆ Majority of users are aware about online journals.
- ◆ Majority of the users want to use only online version of journals.
- ◆ 58.57% of users use online journals for the research work.
- ◆ 57.14% of users use online journals for studying their course work.
- ◆ 45.71% of users accessing online journals at the Central Library.

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- ◆ 54.29% of users link online journals through the search engines.
 - ◆ 68.57% of users interested to read online journals in PDF format.
 - ◆ Major portion 68.57% of users download online journals in storage devices for read them later.
 - ◆ 67.14% of users faced problems while using online journals.
 - ◆ 67.14% of the respondents satisfied with the infrastructure provided by the library to access online journals.
 - ◆ 72.86% respondents needed training or orientation programmes to frequently use online journals.

8. Suggestion

Based on the findings of the study the following suggestions are made:

- ◆ The authority must conduct training programmes for users regarding how to use online journals and online databases.
- ◆ Awareness should be created to use online journals and online databases to fulfill information needs.
- ◆ More computer terminals should be installed in the library for the benefit of users.
- ◆ There is need to include more number of online journals in various disciplines.
- ◆ More fund should be given to acquire online journals.
- ◆ Information professionals have to help users to create awareness and use of online journals.

9. Conclusion

From the above study it is observed that online journals have become the vital part of information for various needs. Online journals are the most important for the research community. It is proceed that online journals saves time of the users. Lack of training among users and proper infrastructure in the library is a major de-motivating factor in the use of online journals. This study helps the librarian to know the importance of online journals and it helps them to improve the services related to online journals.

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