Online Journals and Databases: A Study of Use and Awareness among Academics at Main Library, I.T., B.H.U.

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Abstract

Remote access to online catalogues and bibliographic data bases has altered library use patterns over the past decade. Library statistics shows fewer patrons entering the library as more resources become available online and patrons given access from their desktops. This paper descries the use of online journals and databases and their awareness among researchers of IT-BHU. In this case study, a survey was conducted using questionnaire, to collect the data. This paper examines the researcher's awareness and use of online journals and databases available through UGC-infonet, INDEST and university library. Finally, it highlights the suggestions given by the user's for improvement of online resources.

Key words: E-resources, UGC-Infonet, Usage Study

1.   Preamble

Not many year's ago, most libraries, acquisitions were limited to books, serials, microforms, and audiovisual materials. Today library patrons expect access to virtual documents as well as to physical items, and the concept of library "collection" is being redefined. Leased electronic resources are made available to patrons without being acquired for the library. Intangible resources, such as the full text of articles, are provided through "pay per view" arrangements and are used or taken away by patrons without ever being added to the library's collection. A "collection" commonly extends beyond resources the library owns to include all the resources to which it can provide access.

Remote access to online Catalogues and bibliographic databases has altered library use patterns over the past decade. Library statistics shows fewer patrons entering the library as more resources become available online and patrons given access from their desktop. Many academic institutions are currently building substantial collections of full text journals and continue to increase access to various online databases. Increased access to computer's the internet, online databases and full text journals, necessitates reassessing online use patterns, user awareness and characteristics. The value of information resources increases by their use and therefore it is important to know the usage of online resources.

2.   Institute of Technology and its Library

The Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University came in fullfledged existence in 1971. Previously this was known as Banaras Engineering College (BENCO), established in 1919 by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya. Since its formation, the Institute of Technology has not only

developed to become a premier education institution producing graduate engineer's with sound scientific and technological background, but has grown into a Centre which provides versatile postgraduate training and conduct advanced research in Engineering Technology.

Main Library at Institute of Technology is housed in approx. 17,990 sq. feet area. The print collection of the library consists of approximately 1,03,300 books, bound volume of periodicals, standards, reports and patents. Library provides access of more than eight thousand online journals licensed through INDEST, UGC-Infonet and university library. Except UGC-Infonet online database, library provide access of web of science.

3. Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the use of online journals and databases licensed through UGC-infonet, INDEST and library by the M.Tech students, Research Scholars and faculty member's of Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University. An additional objective is to know the purpose of visit to the library, familiarity with online journals, databases and internet use, satisfaction and awareness regarding online journals and databases, most used online journals and databases, awareness about user awareness programme and suggestion for subscription model for library.

4. Methodology

In order to collect the comprehensive and relevant data for the study, the questionnaire method was used. The questionnaire included 14 questions: closed, multiple choice, partially open and open questions. The questions were designed to study the following groups of variables.

- ◆ purpose of visit the library, familiarity with internet, frequency of use of online resources. (journals and databases)
- ◆ Awareness, use, most preferable online resources. (Journals & databases.
- ◆ satisfaction with content, coverage and infrastructure
- ◆ preference of online and print, suggestion for a model subscription for library.
- ◆ ways of getting updated and need for training/instructions.

The questionnaires were personally distributed to 75 M.Tech. students, Research scholars and faculty members of different departments and schools of Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University. Out of 75, 64 questionnaires were received. The data were tabulated and analyzed with Microsoft Excel and calculator.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Purpose of use of Library

It has been found from the data that all the respondents are using the library and the purpose of visiting the Library vary from person to person. From the figure (1) it is clear that 59.371%

respondents visit the library for issue/return of books, 50% user's visit library for consulting books and print periodicals, while 43.75% visit the library for using internet facility. It has also been found that maximum faculty member's visit the library for Issue/Return of books (90.91%) while majority of M.Tech students and Research scholar's visit the library for using internet.
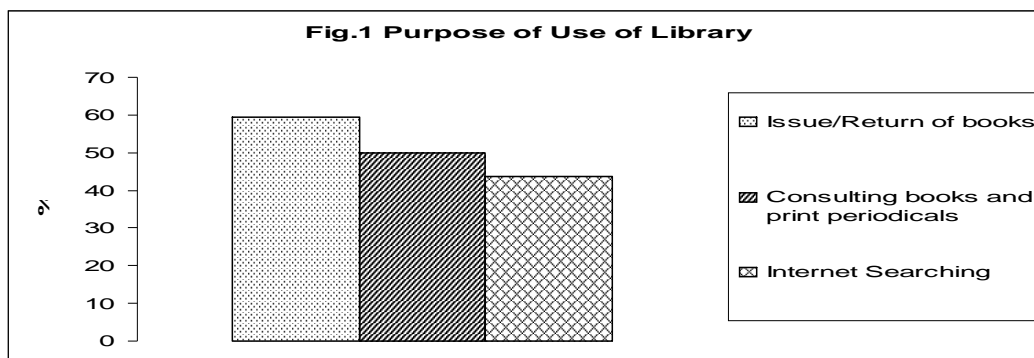
Fig.1 Purpose of Use of Library

Figure-1

5.2   Experience in using internet
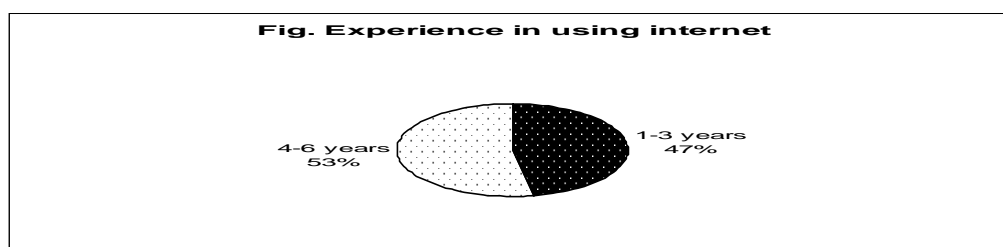
Fig. Experience in using internet

Figure-2

Figure (2) shows most of the users (53.13%) are using internet from 4-6 year's, while 46.88% are using internet from 1-3 year's.

5.3   Frequency of using online journals and databases

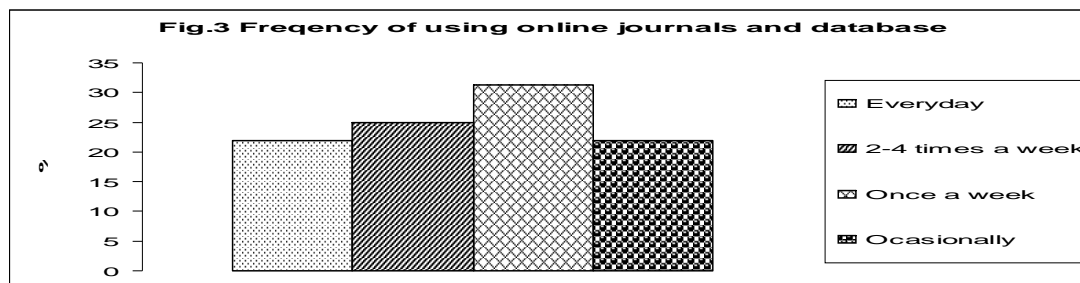**Fig.3 Freqency of using online journals and database**

Figure-3

As shown in the figure (3) only 21.87% respondents access online journals and databases everyday, 25% access 2-4 times a week, 31.25% once a week and 21.87%. indicated occasionally.
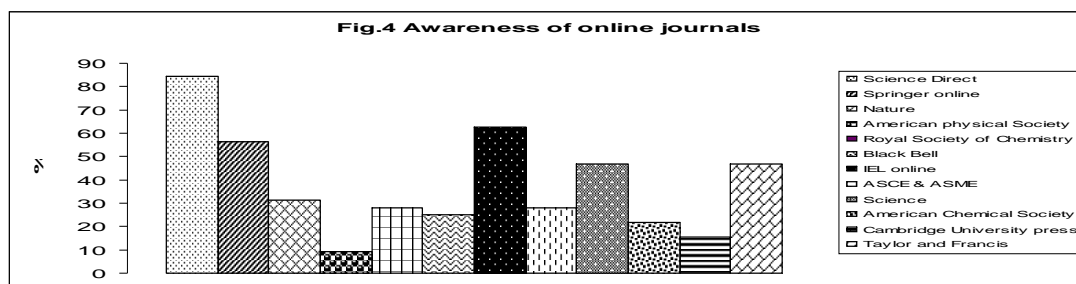
5.4   Awareness of online journals

Figure-4

Figure (4) shows that Science Direct (84.37% and IEL online are the two most popular online journal packages about which researcher's and faculty member's are aware. Springor links. (56.25%), Taylor and Farncis (46.87%), Science (46.87%, Nature (31.25%), Royal Society of Chemistry (28.12%) are the other important journals indicated by respondents which are licensed through UGC-infonet.
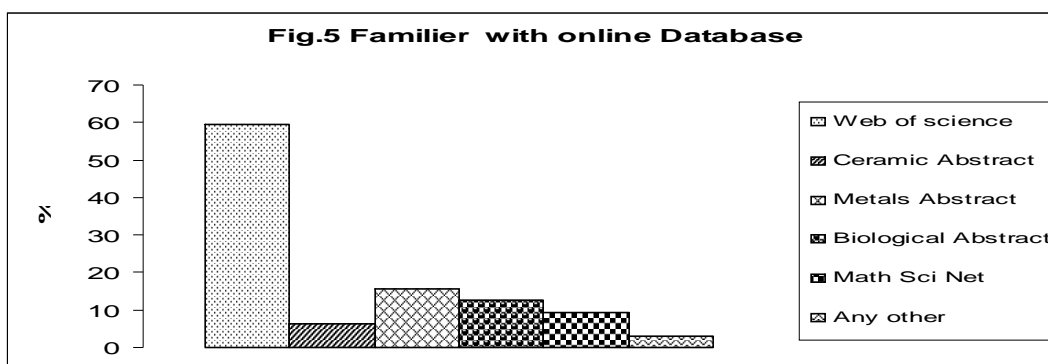
5.5   Familiarity with online database

Figure-5

Figure (5) depicts that highest no. of respondents (59.37%) are aware of web of Science which is subscribed by the university. It is followed by (15.62%) Metals Abstracts, (12.5%) by Biological Abstracts and (9.37% math sci Net, (6.25%) Ceramic Abstracts respectively.

5.6 How usually locate and access online resources
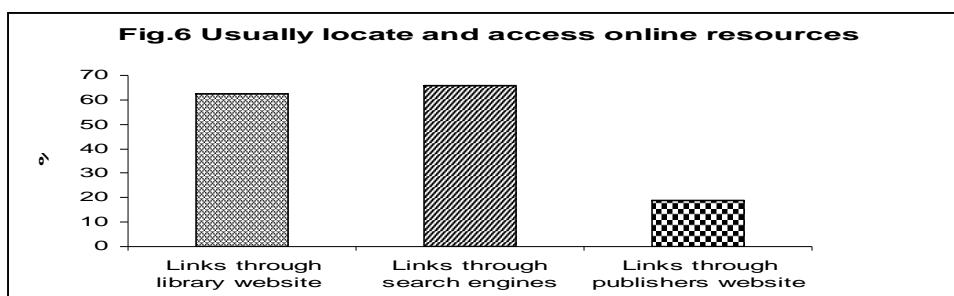

Fig.6 Usually locate and access online resources

Figure-6

It has been clear from the figure no. (6) that Search Engines (65.62%) is the first preference of users for locating their online resources, while 62.50% user's locate their online resources through library website and 18.75% through publisher's website.

5.7 Mostly used and useful online journals and database
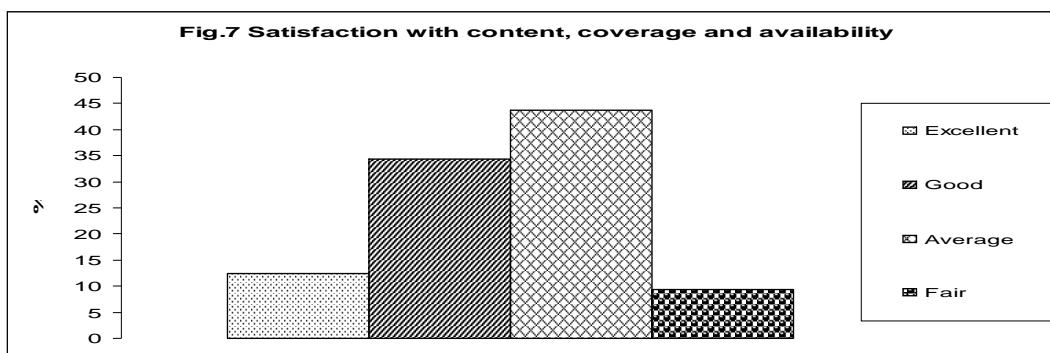
Table-1

Mostly used and useful online journals and databases

Online Journal/Database	No of respondents	Percentage
Science Direct	32	50
IEL online	18	28.12
Springerlink	10	15.62
ASCE	6	9.37
ASME	6	9.37
Nature	2	3.12
Science	4	6.25
Web of Science	2	3.12
SciFinder	6	9.3
Cambridge University press	2	3.12
Taylor & Francis	8	12.5
Royal Society of Chemistry	4	6.25
American Chemical Society	4	6.25

Table (1) shows that Science Direct (50%) is the most used and useful online journal for Engineering field Researcher's and faculty member's. IEL online (28.12%), Springerlink (15.62%), Taylor and Francis (12.5%), ASCE and ASME (9.37%), Royal Society of Chemistry (6.25%) and Science (6.25%) are the other journals which are Mostly used and useful for respondents. Only

two databases Scifinder (9.3%) and Web of Science (3.12%) is mostly used and useful database for Engineering researcher's.

5.8   Satisfaction with content coverage and availability in their subject area

Fig.7 Satisfaction with content, coverage and availability

All 64 respondents answered the question on satisfaction with existing online journal and databases. Fig (7) shows that 43.75% respondent's indicated average, 34.37% indicated good, 12.5% indicated excellent and 9.37% indicated fair about satisfaction with content, coverage and availability in the subject area.

5.9   Satisfaction with Infrastructure

87.50% respondents answer the question of satisfaction with infrastructure. Out of 87.50% response, 71.87% were satisfied with library infrastructure and 15.62% were not satisfied with library infrastructure. Out of 87.50% response 56.25% were average satisfied, 12.5% were satisfied, 9.37% were highly satisfied and 6.25% gives no opinion. Maximum percentage of respondent who were not satisfied with library infrastructure specifies the reason limited time provide by the library.

5.10   Preference between Printed and Online

Respondents were asked to give their view on online and print journals. Out of 93.75% responses, 62.50% indicated that online may be the substitute of print in near future and 31.25% indicated that online cannot be substitute of print. They were also asked to suggest a subscription model for library. Maximum 59.37% respondents suggest 70% online and 30% print subscription model, while 28.12% respondents suggest only online subscription and 12.5% suggest to replace print by online in phase.

5.11   Means of getting updated and need for training/instructions

We received 87.50% answers on the question of attending training or user awareness programme. Out of 87.60% responses 62.5% indicated that they have not attended such types

of programe and 25% indicated that they have attended. Out of 93.74%, response, 78.12% respondents like to attend training/user awareness programe and 15.62% does not want to attend such type of programe.

6.   Discussion

Over half of the respondents (62.50% indicted that they have not received any training on the use of online journals and databases. Such a phenomenon reflects on the following:

♦ Past awareness campaigns were not well attended probably because researchers invited to participate were not fully aware of the benefits of the training programme and;

♦ New academic staff are yet to receive some training.

This also calls for the need for the library to hold more rigorous campaigns and training sessions online journals and database awareness and usage.

Experience in using internet among academic staff seems to be still limited. Only 53.13% of the respondents indicated that they have at least 3 year's experience in internet use. Frequency of using online journals and databases among academic staff also seems to be still limited. Only 21.87 % respondents indicated that they are using online resources daily. As mentioned earlier on, such a figure, shows that online journal and database use is a practice that is still in its infancy. With that in mind, it is pointed out that academics need more training and exposure to online journals and databases.

Science Direct topped the list on high uses particularly because it has been on the scene for quite sometime and large subject coverage. IEL online, Springer online and Taylor and Francis which are multidisciplinary online journals, also had high usage. A major reason for that could possibly be the fact that all these online journals cover Engineering and Technology subject field. The usage of online database is very poor in compression to online journals. A major reason for that could possibly be the fact that the researcher are not aware about the benefits of online databases.

Most of the respondents (71.87%) were satisfied with supporting infrastructure to access on live journals and databases. Only 15.62 % respondents were not satisfied with infrastructure due to the reason of limited time provided by the library. More than 62.5% respondents indicate that online may be the substitute of print and 59.73% suggest the, 70% online % 30% print subscription model for the library. An another interesting fact came that most of the respondents indicated that they locate and access online journals and databases mostly (65.62%) through search engines, although all the online resources are listed and linked on library webpage.

7.   The way forward

1.   Some more awareness and training campaign programme is required. With the help of experts from the online publishing agency. Awareness can be enhanced through the following means;

- Publishing online journals and database subscription in the university news letter;
- Informing Head of the Departments and faculty members of latest developments concerning online journal and database subscription by E-Mail;
- Posting updates on the libraries webpage on the institute   website;
- Delivering some lectures and presentation on online journal and databases awareness in the library;
- Inviting faculty members, Research scholar's and M.Tech. Student's for some one -on -one session with library staff.

2. It is also important to point out that there is need to co-opt some of the online journals and databases that participant showed interest in but are not included in the list of journals the library subscribes to. These are;

- Willey-inter science
- Back files of existing online journals
- Number of user license should be increased (IEL online)

3. Library should be open for longer duration of time & sufficient number of personal computer should be available during library hours.

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