Effectiveness of UGC-Infonet A Case Study of Jaipur Centre

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Abstract

Mention about e-journal consortium. Assess the use of UGC-Infonet at Rajasthan University, Jaipur; Conclude to implement the opinions and suggestions of the users for improving the system.

Keywords: UGC-Infonet, E-Consortium, Users Study

1.   Introduction

Libraries and Information Services (LIS) in India realise that they can no longer be self-sufficient in respect of their own information resources to provide for the growing needs of their users. This comes especially after access to the Internet and the large number of information resources available on the World Wide Web (WWW). The LIS are increasingly being called upon to provide more relevant, up-to-date and timely information to a wide range of users. To satisfy the varied needs they require availability and accessibility to a variety of information resources and formats (such as digital full-text, sound, graphics, images, multimedia and hypertext, as well as print documents). Unfortunately, there is a dearth of information resources in the libraries and similar information services. In India the libraries suffer from inadequate funding or stringent budget cuts. This has affected the level of services offered to users both in terms of quality of collections and the degree of staff support provided. In this situation only a few libraries can afford to have a wide range of information resources. Obviously, under the circumstances, it would not be cost-effective to duplicate information resources in the country. Resource sharing or networking between the different LIS seems to be the only solution to the lack of resources and lack of access to resources.

University Grants Commission (UGC) has initiated a programme called the UGC-Infonet E-Journals Consortium, to provide online access to electronic journals and databases in all disciplines to the universities in India. All universities which come under the purview of UGC will be beneficiary members of the programme. The scheme would be gradually extended to colleges as well. The programme is being executed by Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre, Ahmedabad, an autonomous institution under the UGC. The UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium, one of the important activities of the INFLIBNET Centre provides current as well as archival access to more than 4,500 core and peer-reviewed journals and three bibliographic databases from 23 publishers and aggregators in different disciplines. Access to various electronic resources have formally commenced from January 1, 2004, initially for 30 universities. Since 2004, so far 120 Universities out of 171 that come under the purview of UGC have been provided differential access of subscribed e-resources covering

almost all subject disciplines including arts, humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, chemical sciences, life sciences, computer sciences, mathematics and statistics, etc.

The programme aims increasing accessibility of electronic resources to the universities. It will go a long way in mitigating the severe shortage of periodicals faced by university libraries for several years. The E-Journals programme is a cornerstone of the UGC-INFONET effort, which aims at addressing the teaching, learning, research, connectivity and governance requirements of the universities. The programme has been made possible due to the close and understanding cooperation between the UGC, ERNET, INFLIBNET, and national and international publishers. A bouquet of e-journals was presented to the nation by His Excellency the President of India Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam on 28th December 2003 during the concluding day of UGC's Golden Jubilee Celebrations.

We present this study with an assumption that UGC-Infonet e-journal consortium which looks at the digital initiatives in a more proactive way which will after all serve the ultimate objectives of serving the community at large and meeting the information needs without any barriers. This will spread the message of Dr S.R. Ranganathan in his *Five Laws of Library Science* that the primary aim of any library (digital or non-digital) is to meet the requirements of the readers and to provide them with the resources they really need to use.

2. Objectives

The objectives of study are:

- ♦ To assess the accessibility of users to the e-consortium,
- ♦ To ascertain the preferred journals of the users,
- ♦ To measure the level of satisfaction of users to the facilities rendered by the UGC-Infonet,
- ♦ To know the frequency of access to the consortium,
- ♦ To aware of the problems being encountered by them from the system; and finally
- ♦ To draw opinions and suggestions from the users towards improving the accessibility of the e-journals

3. Scope

The scope of the present study is limited to:

- ♦ Infonet e-journal consortium
- ♦ Major users of the Rajasthan University Library
- ♦ Facility/service of the Infonet

4. Methodology

The study has been worked out by using a questionnaire as a tool for collecting data from 100 different types of users. Stratifying the users as Teachers, Research Scholars and Staff of the Rajasthan University. The present study will help in understanding the awareness of the users about

the various services of the UGC-Infonet. The questionnaire has been distributed so that all groups of users are represented to the sample so selected. The findings of the present study are based purely on the response returned by the users. The questionnaire was administered to 100 respondents and pursued personally to get their response.

5. Sample Characteristics

The table 1 below provides the data about the number of users and their categories under the study:

Table1. Users under study

Category	No.	Gender				Knowledge of Internet				Awareness about e-consortium					
		Male	%	Female	%	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%	Can't Say	%
Teacher	55	43	78	12	15	43	78	12	22	10	18	20	36	13	24
Research Scholar	30	21	70	9	13	24	80	6	20	5	17	9	30	10	33
Staff	15	10	67	5	8	10	67	5	33	0	0	5	33	5	33
Total	100	74	74	26	35	77	77	23	23	15	15	34	34	28	28

In table1 majority of them claimed to have the knowledge of internet access. However, present study reveals that in most of the respondents the awareness of the Infonet consortium was not found.

6. Accessibility

The following table 2 shows the access to e-journal consortium by different groups of users.

Table2: Access of Internet

Frequency							
Users	Total	Daily	%	Weekly	%	Sometime	%
Teacher	43	24	55.81	5	11.63	14	32.56
Research Scholar	24	10	41.67	4	16.67	10	41.67
Staff	10	6	60.00	0	0	4	40.00
Total	77	40	51.95	9	11.69	28	36.36

N=77

Source: Questionnaire

Access of internet by the groups of users was found to be good.

7. Awareness about e-consortium

The awareness about e-consortium can be understood from table 3 as given below:

Table3: Awareness about e-consortium   N=77

Users						
Response	Teachers	%	Research Scholar	%	Staff	%
Yes	10	23.3	5	20.8	0	0
No	20	46.5	9	37.5	5	50
Can't Say	13	30.2	10	41.7	5	50
Total	43	100	24	100	10	100

Source: Questionnaire

Most of the users were not aware about the Infonet e-consortium and the number of users who access the e-consortium was very low.

8. Purpose of use of Infonet/University Site

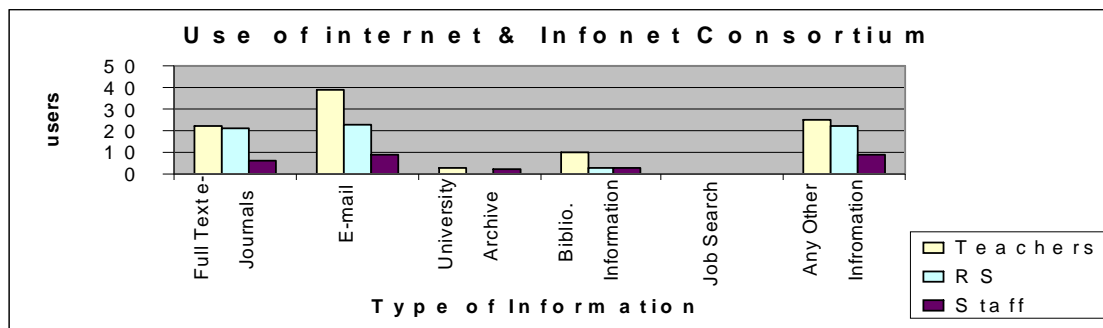Most of the users logon internet for e-mail and access other information as shown in Figure. 1

Figure. 1

9. Question of Satisfaction with the e-consortium

The service and e-consortium render by the Infonet was found to be as follow: N=77

Users						
Response	Teachers	%	Research Scholar	%	Staff	%
Yes	10	23.3	5	20.8	0	0
No	20	46.5	9	37.5	5	50
Can't Say	13	30.2	10	41.7	5	50
Total	43	100	24	100	10	100

Source: Questionnaire

It was alarming to note that 46.5 % teachers surveyed have shown their dissatisfaction while only 23.3% have expressed their satisfaction. Almost 30% replied can't say, which negatively indicates that either they were not aware of the e-resources or they never utilized the services of UGC-Infonet. Similarly 37.5 % research scholars surveyed have shown their dissatisfaction while only 20.8% have expressed their satisfaction. 41.7% research scholars surveyed replied can't say. It means they encountered problems in the use of E-resources that were made available to them. The major problems they include the following;

- ♦ They do not know about e-recourses
- ♦ Illiteracy of ICT and its knowledge
- ♦ Problems in selection of desired title of journals
- ♦ Provision of up to date information
- ♦ Required Journals are not Subscribed
- ♦ Can not access full paper
- ♦ Dak Portal Service is not effective
- ♦ Mostly Articles are always in lock
- ♦ Current Database is not available
- ♦ Elsevier & Springer Journal should be made available on site

10. More preferred Journals

Users more preferred format of journals is shown in table 5

Table 5: Preferred Journals   N=77

Journals					
Users	Total	E-Journal	%	Printed Journal	%
Teacher	43	15	34.88	28	65.12
RS	24	14	32.56	10	23.26
Staff	10	3	6.98	7	16.28
Total	77	32	41.56	45	58.44

Source: Questionnaire

Almost teachers and staff preferred printed journals except the research scholar. They were hesitant in using e-recourses which shows that teachers feel some problems in accessing the e-recourses. They need some basic training.

11. University website Layout

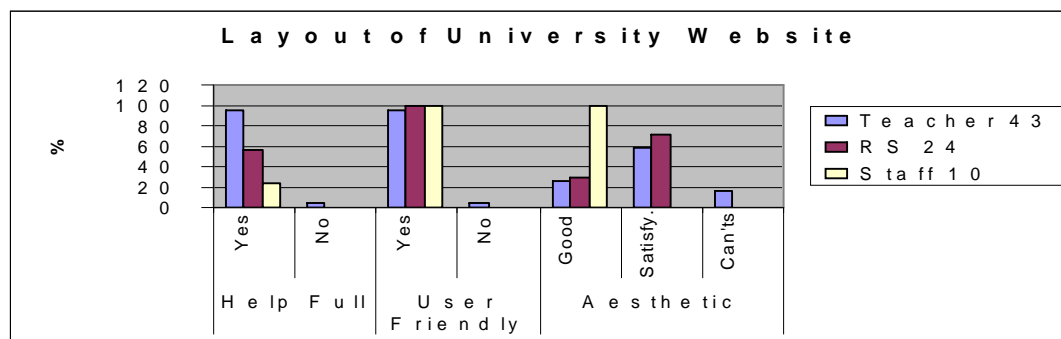We also investigated the usefulness of Rajasthan University website as shown in figure: 2

Layout of University Website

Figure 2

12.   Towards improving the E-consortium service

According to the users opinion as shown in table 6 training required for improving the infonet service of the university can be improved by the following points:

♦ Regular conduct of user's education programme for e-journals consortium

♦ Making the users aware of the e-journals available

♦ Circulate a guidelines on the access to e-journal

Table 6: Need training to using Infonet   N=100

Training required for using Infonet e-Resources					
Users	Total	Training required		Training Period		
		Yes	No	Half a day	full day	2 days
Teacher	55	48	7	6	6	36
RS	30	26	4	0	10	16
Staff	15	13	2	0	8	5
Total	100	87	13	6	24	57

Source: Questionnaire

Some important journals should be made available on Infonet for improving the services. The list of journals needed by the users as follow:

List of Journals

1	All India Law Reporter	11	Int. Political Science Review
2	Business Review	12	Jr. of Demography
3	Charted Accountant	13	Jr. of Health Economics
4	Energy related Journal	14	Management Accounting

5	Fluid Dynamics Journal	15	Marg
6	Food properties related journal	16	Political Studies
7	Harward Business Review	17	Sarvekshan
8	Heat Transfer Journal	18	Stats Database
9	Indian Economic Journal	19	Supreme Court Cases
10	Indian Jr.of Public Adm.	20	Vikalp

13.   Conclusion

The findings of the present study draw us so many clues about the implementation of the Infonet e-consortium at Rajasthan University. Major problems encountered by the users toward access to e-consortium and lack of awareness of e-recourses at Infonet available. The opinion and suggestion for the improving of the system required to convert into reality by the Rajasthan University so that the significance of Infonet may be accountable.

References

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