

Dominant Issues/Expectations Among E-Journal Users: A Study of User Experiences at University College of Engineering, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada

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Abstract

The paper makes a critical attempt at analysing pertinent issues emanating from the e-journals usage perspective as experienced by final year students of B. Tech. as well as M. Tech. University College of Engineering, JNTU, Kakinada. A structured questionnaire throws up all the desired data out of a sample size of 100 students. A majority of the students rank high on the awareness level in relation to the availability of e-journals in the library. Interestingly, valuable inputs provided by library staff, peers, and faculty in general, is found as the biggest contributing factor to this higher level of awareness. Further, analysis puts the tag of 'most favoured place' to the central library as far as access to e-journals is concerned. Research requirements stand at the top of the e-journals' search priorities among students. However, typical problems/snags, such as lack of uniform accessibility and abysmally sluggish downloading rate dampen the user spirits. Even though, widely perceived as a highly productive source of information by students, yet the students do not rate themselves as serious users of e-journals. They consider up-gradation of skills as a serious and urgent necessity. Besides, half of the students register satisfaction with the availability of e-journals in the library. However, a sizeable majority exudes optimism about the usefulness of users' awareness programmes and look forward earnestly to such programmes.

Keywords: User Studies, Electronic Resources, Engineering College Libraries

1. Introduction

E-journals are widely regarded as the most productive source of information for research and development. In fact, e-journals are virtual engines that propel research activities to achieve critical mass. Researchers find this source most attractive as well as conducive to their area of activities. Moreover, a wide spectrum of users considers e-journals critical to their pursuit of quality education, and knowledge acquisition and sharing. In recent times, explosion in information technology (IT) has resulted in an increase in the availability of e-journals for all types of users in libraries across the world. The publishers and subscription agents have shown better business acumen and maturity enabling greater availability of journals. However, the libraries are suffering from a shared paranoia, based on the premise that e-journals flourish at the expense of traditional print resources. In fact, IT and particularly internet, is real catalyst in this migration from print to electronic. Journals made available through internet are referred to as online editions as opposed to print editions published and distributed as hard copies. A study like the present one is primarily focused on enlisting user survey and their observations/results to better existing library services, introduce novel services, promote cost-effective models, set effective evaluation parameters for libraries, and above all, optimise user satisfaction.

JNTU (Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University) was originally 'The College of Engineering, Vizagpatnam' at the time of its establishment in 1946. Kakinada has a rich political literacy and cultural heritage passed on through generations. The college has made rapid strides since its formation and is playing a pivotal role in the technological advances of the region.

The R&D activity in the College got a boost with the procurement of modern and sophisticated equipment under Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) schemes. Now, the college has five U.G Programmes and Nine P.G Programmes. In addition the college helps unemployed under-employed diploma and degree holders in Engineering to improve their qualifications through its continuing education programmes. The college has plans to provide an e-class room for each of engineering department. The college follows a continuous method of evaluation for internal assessment and external mode for end-examinations under semester system.

2. Baba Saheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Library, JNTU Kakinada

The Central Library began its existence in 1946. Since then, it has grown in size and content along with JNTU College of Engineering, Kakinada. All these years, it has been the life line for the academic activity of the institute. At present, it stands as a model library. The Central Library services the academic needs of about 3000 UG and PG students, research scholars, and nearly 177 faculty members, technical and administrative staff of the institute. The Library resources stand at about 70000 volumes including text books and reference books.

The book collection has been supporting the teaching, research, development, and other professional activities of these departments. The demands of the ever-growing research areas in multiple disciplines are being catered with the help of latest volumes, in almost all fields of engineering, science, technology, and general areas. The library presently occupies a spacious two storied building. The college library provides special services like current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, along with the normal services like reference, referral, literature searching, and bibliographic data services.

3. Statement of The Problem

The problem selected for the present study is entitled "Dominant Issues/Expectations among E-Journals Users: A Study of User Experiences at University College of Engineering, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada".

4. Aims and objectives of the Study

- ◆ To examine the awareness of e-journals among the engineering students.
- ◆ To know the place from where engineering students access e-journals.
- ◆ To find out the purpose of using e-journals.

- ◆ To examine the problems while using e-journals.
- ◆ To know the level of satisfaction with the available e-journals.
- ◆ To examine the need for conducting user awareness programmes in using e-journals.

4. Methodology

To conduct this study, survey method through questionnaire tool was used. The present study was conducted on a sample of a total number 100 final year B. Tech. & M. Tech. students of University College of Engineering, JNTU Kakinada. Copies of questionnaire were distributed to 100 engineering students in the month of August, 2012. However, 95 of them responded and the same have been used for analysis.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Awareness of e-journals

Table 1 shows the distribution of engineering students according to their responses with regard to awareness of available e-journals.

Table 1: Awareness of e-journals

Awareness	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
Yes	88	92.63
No	7	7.37
Total	95	100.00

It is evident 92.63 percent of the engineering students are aware of availability of e-journals in the library and only 7.37 percent of them expressed ignorance. It concludes that most of the students are aware of the e-journals available in the library.

5.2 Source of information about e-journals

The classification of engineering students according to the sources from which they know the availability of e-journals is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Source of information about e-journals

Sources	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
Library staff	72	75.79
Friends/Faculty	20	21.05
Others	4	4.21

(Multiple answers were permitted)

It is evident that 75.79 percent of the engineering students know the availability of e-journals from the library staff, 21.05 percent of them from friends and faculty, and 4.21 percent of them from other sources.

5.3 Place for Accessibility of e-journals

The distribution of engineering students according to the places from which they access of e-journals is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Place for accessibility of e-journals

Sources	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
Central Library	86	90.53
Main Compute Centre	69	72.63
Departmental computer centre	39	41.05

(Multiple answers were permitted)

It is evident that 90.53 percent of the students are accessing e-journals from their Central Library, 41.05 percent of them from departmental computer centres, and 72.63 per cent of them from main computer centre. It concludes that the majority of the students are accessing the e-journals from the Central Library and main computer centre.

5.4 Purpose of using e-journals

A question was put to the students to indicate the purpose for which they are using the e-journals. The replies given by them are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Purpose of using e-journals

Purpose	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
To update the knowledge (general)	65	68.42
For research (project work)	90	94.74
For study (exams)	45	47.37
To write papers (articles)	78	82.11

(Multiple answers were permitted)

It can be seen that 94.74 percent of the students are using e-journals for their research work. It is evident that another 68.42 percent of them are using e-journals for updating their knowledge, 47.37 percent of them use for regular studies, and 82.11 percent of them for writing papers.

5.5 Problems in using e-journals

A question has been put to the engineering students to indicate the level of problems they faced in using the e-journals. The replies given by them are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Problems in using e-journals

Level of problems	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
Major problem	43	45.26
Minor problem	32	33.68
No problem at all	20	21.05
Total	95	100.00

Majority of the students (45.26%) have indicated that they are facing major problems in using e-journals, where as 33.68 percent of them are facing minor problems, and only 21.05 percent of them are facing no problems. This clearly indicates that library needs to organise training programmes in regular intervals in order to reduce the problems of the engineering students. The library staff also needs to help the students till they become familiar with the use of e-journals. The specific problems faced by the students in accessing e-journals are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Types of problems in using e-journals

Type of problems	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
Internet connectivity	32	42.67
There is no access from my desktop	73	97.33
Downloading is very slow	62	82.67
Lack of training	59	78.67
Other problems (Power cuts. UPS Down etc)	43	57.33

(Multiple answers were permitted)

It is evident that the problems faced by the majority of the students are:

‘There is no access from my desktop (97.33%)’, ‘Downloading is very slow (82.67%)’, ‘Other problems (power cuts, UPS down, etc) (57.33%)’, ‘Lack of training (78.67%)’, and ‘Internet connectivity (42.67%)’.

5.6 Value of Information Access through e-journals

The distribution of students according to their value of information access through e-journals is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Value of information access through e-journals

Information Accessed	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
Most helpful	52	54.74
Helpful	32	33.68
Least helpful	11	11.58
Total	95	100.00

Out of all, 54.74 percent of the students indicated that e-journals are 'Most helpful', and 33.68 percent of them indicated that e-journals are 'Helpful' whereas, the remaining 11.58 percent of them indicated access as "Least helpful".

5.7 Skills Regarding the use of e-journals

The classification of engineering students according their skills for accessing the e-journals is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Skills regarding the access of e-journals

Skills	No. of students	Percentage (%)
Expert	27	28.42
Moderate	58	61.05
Beginners	10	10.53
Total	95	100.00

It is evident that 61.05 percent of students consider themselves as having 'Moderate' skills in accessing the e-journals. About 28.42 percent of them consider themselves as 'Expert', whereas 10.53 percent of them feel they are 'Beginners'.

5.8 Level of Satisfaction with e-Journals

A question was asked to the students to indicate the level of satisfaction with the availability of e-journals subscribed by the library. The replies given by them are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Level of satisfaction with e-journals

Level of Satisfaction	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
Satisfied	61	64.21
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22	23.16
Dissatisfied	12	12.63
Total	95	100.00

It is evident that more than half of the engineering students (64.21%) are satisfied with the availability of e-journals in University College of Engineering, 23.16 percent of them are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 12.63 percent of them dissatisfied. So, there is a need to improve the satisfaction levels of the engineering students using e-journals.

6. Need of User Training

On asking whether they need any awareness programme in using the e-journals, replies given by them are tabulated in Table 10.

Table 10: Need of user training

Need of User Training	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
Yes	83	87.37
No	12	12.63
Total	95	100.00

It is evident that majority of students (87.37%) felt that awareness programme is essential for using e-journals, and 12.63 percent of them responded negatively in this regard.

7. Findings

1. Most of the engineering students (92.63%) are aware of the availability of e-journals in library.
2. Majority of the engineering students are able to know the availability of e-journals in library from library staff (75.79%) and friends/faculty (21.05%).
3. Most of the engineering students (90.53%) are accessing e-journals from central library.
4. Most of them (94.74%) are accessing the e-journals relating to their research work.
5. Majority of them (45.26%) replied that they are facing major problems in accessing e-journals. The main specific problems faced by them are 'There is no access from my desktop' and 'Downloading is very slow'.
6. Most of the engineering students (54.74%) indicate that e-journals are most helpful and 33.68 percent are helpful in their research work.
7. Majority of the engineering students (61.05%), consider themselves as moderate regarding the skills of use for e-journals.
8. More than half of the engineering students (64.21%) are satisfied with the availability of e-journals in library.
9. Most of them are getting assistance from the library staff members in using the e-journals but they have indicated that user training programme is essential in using e-journals.

8. Suggestions

1. A considerable percentage of the students (12.63%) are dissatisfied with the e-journals available in Engineering College Library for their information needs. Hence a survey needs to be conducted to know the specific e-journals required by them so that steps can be taken for their subscription.
2. To enhance speed bandwidth needs to be increased, as most of the students felt that information downloading is slow.

3. To provide e-journals facility efficiently and effectively the number of computers must be increased in the central library as well as in the departmental labs in the campus.
4. The authorities should organise regular workshops to enhance usage of e-journals.
5. Users' studies should be conducted to know about e-information needs of users as well as problems that they are facing while searching information.
6. Most of the students (87.37%) replied that the training programmes in using e-journals are essential. Hence, regular training programmes are required to be arranged in the use of e-journals for users for new students and faculty members.

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