

Usage of Electronic- Resources in Academic Libraries and Role of Information Literacy

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Abstract

In today's world electronic resources (e- resources) have become very popular, and libraries are no exception. Today, the academic libraries are procuring more and more e-resources for their libraries. This paper is a literature review on usage of e-resources in academic libraries. It gives an overview of the relationship of e-resources with information literacy. It also gives a brief overview of the importance of information literacy on e-resources in academic libraries.

Keywords: E-Resources, Usage of E-Resources, Information Literacy

1. Introduction

The academic system largely relies on teaching, learning and research. Eternally, education depends on information resources. These resources are the driving forces and factors for making a society an educated one. The educated society can exist only when information is stored, shared and utilised properly. In an academic arrangement, both 'education' and 'library' are inseparable – indivisible concepts, working for the promotion and evolution of teaching, learning and research for greater use of academia (Rao & Choudhury, 2009).

Devi & Devi (n.d) noted that electronic publishing has led to a new era of communication and information sharing. It creates opportunities for users and better prospects for authors and publishers. Many of the electronic books or electronic publishers' web site freely permit and encourage readers to provide feedback on works, often directly to the author rather than to the publisher. Nevertheless, users may establish their

own accounts, charge services to credit cards or pay by prearranged method, and have requested material delivered directly to them through fax, e-mail, etc. Today, libraries of all kinds have been spending larger and larger shares of their budgets to adopt or gain access to electronic resources from publishers and vendors. This is due the fact that e-resources have enabled libraries to improve services in a variety of ways. Most importantly, most e-resources come equipped with powerful search-and-retrieval tools that allow users to perform literature searches more effectively and efficiently. Moreover, since most relevant e-resources are now available through the web, users can have desktop access to them 24 hours a day. The users can also navigate directly from indexing databases to the full text of an article and can even follow further links from there. The emergence of e-books and e-journals followed the widespread adoption and use of electronic mail, list servers and discussion groups to disseminate information quickly to large audiences.

2. Types of E- resources

E-resources are those electronic products that deliver a collection of data, from text referring to full



text basis, e-journals, image collection, and other multimedia products and numerical, graphical or time based, are commercially available till that has been published with an aim to being marketed. These may be delivered on CD-ROM, via the Internet and so on (Devi & Devi, n.d). Some of the common types of e-resources are e-books, e-journals, indexing and abstracting databases, reference databases (like dictionaries, directories, encyclopaedias, etc.), statistical databases, e-audio/visual resources, CD-ROMs, etc.

3. Literature Review

Different people and groups of people have studied on works relating to e-resources. The literature review gives a broader outlook of it. Some of the works that have been done are reviewed and given below.

According to the study done by Sharma (2009), use of e- resources is very common among teachers and research scholars of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University and majority of the teachers and research scholars are dependent on e-resources to get the desired and relevant information. But practical use of e-resources is not up-to the worth in comparison to investments made in acquiring these resources and infrastructure and training programmes should be revised as per requirements.

In the study conducted by Ansari (2010), it was found that majority of the academics have computer skills that facilitate the use of electronic resources, although a majority have little knowledge of electronic resources, which was not a positive aspects of the findings. Mostly users use both electronic and printed resources, or only printed resources. Electronic resources are used for research and for preparation of lectures. Nearly all

respondents were satisfied or quite satisfied with the available resources but they regard them as less reliable. Lack of knowledge and lack of facilities are the main reasons for not using electronic resources.

Bhatia (2011) stated that the internet has attracted the attention of the users as an easy source for accessing information and e-resources as is evident from her study. However, she also verified that only a sizeable number of users could frequently seek information from e- resources. Most of the users access e-resources for updating their knowledge on their respective subjects and for academic assignments. Furthermore, the college library should organise awareness and training programmes and seminars to educate the users on seeking information from e-resources and to maximize the use of library resources and services.

Habiba & Chowdhury (2012) confirmed in their study a large number of e-resources are made available in Dhaka University Library (DUL). Their study also revealed that, a majority of the users use e- resources for their learning purpose and that the e- resources materials are available for users to use to their satisfaction. Nevertheless, the authors stated that DUL lack infrastructure facilities. Therefore, DUL should arrange more training programmes for users, appoint trained professionals with ICT skills and accommodated users opinions on subscribing new e- journals.

Adeniran (2013) notified that the use of electronic resources had tremendous impact on the academic performance of the undergraduate students of Redeemer's University. However, there was a need for the users to acquire more skills in the use of electronic resources.

Okite-Amughoro, Makgahlela & Bopape (2014) in their study substantiated that despite the availability of electronic information resources (EIR), the postgraduate students at Delta State University, Araka, lacked training on how to access EIR to use them efficiently and effectively for academic research. Furthermore, the authors stated that students must acquire the necessary skills to find, select and use the different information resources. Orientation and training on the use of ICT and how to access the various databases should be extended to newly- registered students in every field of study at the institution.

Akussah, Asante & Adu-Sarkodee (2015) brought forward that in their study all the four constructs (satisfaction level, preferred database, time and frequency, and level of awareness) of the electronic resources indicated a significant positive relationship with usage among the users. The authors also recommended among others that the institution in question should adopt more dynamic marketing strategies in order to inform and create awareness of the existence of the electronic resources, which can include fresh student's orientation, faculty seminars, mailing list to users, circulars, memorandums, selective dissemination of information and word of mouth.

According to Adeleke & Emeahara (2016), the low level of usage of e-resources, especially full text databases, among postgraduate students in the University of Ibadan revealed that they need to be more competent in using communication technologies, including computers and associated skills such as desktop publishing, database management, programming, and web page design to navigate in an electronic environment. Significant relationship between information literacy skills and

use of electronic information resources was established from result of the findings. It is evident that postgraduate students need to be assisted by stake holders to acquire the needed electronic information literacy skills, provide unmediated access to effectively use and benefit from the myriads of electronic information resources available to them to improve the quality of their academic and research work.

4. Role of information literacy

Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognise when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information (ACRL, 2000). The importance of information literacy is increasing in this electronic environment. With the coming up of e-resources in libraries, users are likely to build up their information literacy skills.

It can be said that from the above literature reviewed, information literacy plays a pivotal role in enhancing the usage of electronic resources in academic libraries. However, most of the users do not use their full potential in retrieving information from electronic resources due to lack of information literacy skills. Finding and making use of the required information from the electronic environment needs information literacy. There are certain principles which information literate persons have. Therefore, students especially the beginners should be guided by the librarians, staffs or faculties how to locate the correct information needed and to be able to apply that information to solve their problem. Information literacy skills like technology skills and critical thinking should be taught to the students so that they can locate and use the required information efficiently and easily. Information literacy

necessitates the student's skill to know when there is need for information, how and where to get the information and using such information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

Today's libraries are not just traditional libraries, they have developed into Information Centres which are collecting, organizing electronic learning resources/digital objects to provide access to the end users. The role of library professionals has also changed in order to provide best services to the end users, from traditional ways to electronic modes which the younger generation wants and also demands.

Students need information for a variety of activities and the e-resources can meet their purposes. There is a daily explosion of information resources and the challenge of using these resources effectively and responsibly. In using the e-resources, students lack skill in locating and evaluating information, which impedes its effective use. Therefore, libraries should organise orientation programmes in the beginning of each session where the users can be taught how better they can access e-resources and be familiarised to the electronic environment. Also the faculty can help the students on how to access e-resources which are available in the library as well as those that are not subscribed by the library.

5. Conclusion

Since Information technology has become very fast, information can easily be accessed by just one click through various searching, linking facility. Users' preference towards e-resources is rising and their demand for providing electronic information services in the library is increasing. Therefore libraries in particular are concerned in building and purchasing e-resources. But one of the challenges that librarians are facing in this electronic era is how to make the

users known of the availability of the e-resources and the skills to acquired appropriate information from the collection of e-resources. Hence, information literacy plays a vital role in this electronic era.

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