

Awareness and Use of Digital Collection by Scientists - A Study in RRL, Bhubaneswar

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Abstract

By considering the opinion of the scientists as the best means of evaluation of the collections of a library, the authors have conducted a survey of the opinion of the scientists of the Regional Research Laboratory, Bhubaneswar in order to find out the budget allocation on electronic publications, use of CD-ROM databases and preferences of computerised library services like on-line, CD-ROM and INTERNET services for their research purposes. For effective management of information, the library administration should take into consideration the opinion of the scientists and provide E-mail and INTERNET based services to the users. In order to have sharing of resources, the authors have suggested a network of libraries and information centres in the city of Bhubaneswar.

Introduction

The information explosion as a natural outcome of vast amount of research and the increase in the number of users and varieties of their needs have made the special libraries highly complex and specialised in terms of collection and services. In recent years the concept of library collection has changed from quantity to quality and paper-based to digital. It is important to conduct users survey and evaluate from time to time the adequacy of the library budget, its collection, its usefulness and need for Information Technology (IT) facilities and on-line information retrieval services.

Objectives of the study

By considering the opinion of the scientists as the best means of evaluation of the collections of a library, this study has been conducted in the Library of the Regional Research Laboratory, Bhubaneswar (RRL-Bhu), a specialised library having users of different specialisation i.e. chemical engineering, chemistry, mining, materials, geology, metallurgy etc, to find out the awareness of the scientists towards the use of digital collection within the library. Altogether 125 questionnaires are distributed

to the scientists while using the library, out of which 96(77%) are taken as the sample. The data is supplemented by other records of the library and the annual reports of the Institution for the previous five years.

The main objectives of this study is to find out

- Utilisation of library budget;
- Needs & requirements of users;
- Type of collections/sources used/preferred;
- Demands for literature searches and databases;
- Demands for digital collections;
- Awareness and need for online/CD-ROM/Internet-based Library & Information services; etc.

Findings

Budget on electronic publications

The distribution of the budget of the Institution from 1991-92 to 1996-97 is provided in Table 1. It can be noted from the Table that about 80% of the budget is used for procurement of foreign journals, chemical abstracts and CD-ROM databases. The rest 20% is used for procurement of books and Indian journals and other documents like photocopies of articles translations, patents etc.

Table 1

Library Budget & Expenditure for the year 1991-1992 to 1996-1997

Years	Total Library Budget (Rs. in lakhs)	Foreign Journals (CD-ROM Databases)	Chemical Abstracts	Indian Journals Books Micro-documents, etc.
1991-92	33.56	23.00	5.10	5.46
1992-93	24.00	12.00	5.23	6.77
1993-94	28.00	13.00	5.40	9.60
1994-95	32.00	15.50	6.20	10.30
1995-96	38.00	20.00	6.80	11.20
1996-97	46.00	30.37 (2.00)	7.35	8.27

Use of CD-ROM databases

The preferences of the scientists to the use of the types of collection of the library is provided in Table 2. majority of the scientists gave first preference to the use of CD-ROM databases, followed by reference books and conference proceedings. Their second preference was, however, to the use of conference proceedings. It is further revealed that most of the users demanded the procurement of photocopies of articles, patents, translations etc. selected from different secondary proceedings and CD-ROM databases.

Table 2
Type of Primary Collection Used

Sources	Preference				
	1	2	3	4	5
Books/Conf.Proc.	39	56	01	Nil	Nil
Journals & CD-ROM databases	57	38	01	Nil	Nil
Abstracting / Indexing Journals	62	21	13	Nil	Nil
Reference Books	52	29	15	Nil	Nil
Photocopying of Articles and Reprints	31	05	44	26	Nil
Translation	Nil	Nil	09	48	29
Reports	Nil	02	67	21	06
Standards/Specifications	Nil	Nil	Nil	36	60
Patents	Nil	Nil	27	39	30

The preference of scientists towards the type of library services (Table 3) indicated their choice to on-line, CD-ROM and INTERNET services for their research purpose. Each one considered that the computerisation of library and information activities to be vital for their research activities.

Table 3
Demands for Library & Information Services

	Preference				
	1	2	3	4	5
Books/Conf.Proc.	39	56	01	Nil	Nil
Literature Searches (On-Line, CD-ROM & INTERNET)	61	25	10	Nil	Nil
CAS/SDI etc.(Manual)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	96
Translation/Photocopying	35	55	06	Nil	Nil
Document Delivery Bibliographical	Nil	07	47	42	Nil

Conclusion

This sample study provided the clue that the awareness of the scientists towards electronic databases particularly CD-ROM databases, computerisation of services and networks like INTERNET makes them dependent on these type of publications and services. For effective management of information, the library administration should take into consideration the opinion of the scientists and provide E-mial and INTERNET based services to th users. Networking of all the libraries and information centres in the city of Bhubaneswar shall be highly useful in order to have sharing of resources.

References

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