Users' Perception of Electronic Resources of Assam Agricultural University (A.A.U), Jorhat: A Survey

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Abstract

Electronic resources are becoming an integral part in day-to-day life as well as in academic field of higher educational institution. Nowadays, the users are increasingly depending on electronic resources for in different fields like educational, domestic or business purposes. The present study is focused on the use of electronic resources by the students of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat (AAU). The survey method and random sampling technique has been used. The questionnaire tool has been used to collect the primary data where 150 questionnaires were distributed among different categories of the student. Equally 50 questionnaires per category has been distributed to Under Graduate (UG), Post Graduate (PG) and Ph.D students categories of AAU. Out of 150 questionnaires, 104 duly filled-in questionnaires were received from the respondents. From the study, the finding revealed that 83.65% of the total number of respondents areaware of e-resources.

Keywords: Electronic Resources, Information Searching, Information Management System, Academic Library, Information Centre, Multimedia, Online e-resources,Offline e-re sources, Assam Agricultural University

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the electronic resources are considered as most important aspect in every sphere of life. In the ICT era, users are expected to use electronic resources. Evaluation of Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) made possible for faster and quicker access to information at global level.The electronic materials totally altered the way of information searching and their utilization activity in education level, especially in higher education institute.

The electronic resources are those resources which are available in electronic format that provides the information which are generally accessible over the internet and these resources are stored on differentstorage media, like, CD-ROM, online databases, online public access catalogue (OPAC) including other networked information resources. They also provide access to current information as these are often updated frequently.

Electronic resources have variety of media that can help the library information management system in efficient and effective acquisition, organization and dissemination of information. 24/7 access to electronic resources helped the information centres to break down the barriers of time and space. Using the variety of electronic resource and its tools and techniques, academic libraries and information centre are able to generate and disseminate various kinds of information products and services.

2. Overview of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat

The Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat is a State University in the North East region which was established on April 1969, under the Assam Agricultural University Act, 1968. Before the establishment of the University, there were altogether 17 research schemes/project in the state under the Department of Agriculture. By July 1973, all the research project and 10 experimental farms were transferred by the Government of Assam to the Assam Agricultural University which is already inherited the College of Agricultural and located at Barbheta, Jorhat and College of Veterinary Science at Khanapara, Gauhati. Additionally, there are 7 colleges and different regional centres all over the Assam under AAU. The Assam Agricultural University provide different degree programmes viz. B.Sc, M.Sc, PhD on Agriculture, Home Science, Fishery Science, Sericulture, Horticulture , etc.

3. Literature Review

The literature review conducted for the research was mainly focused on the research question, trying to identify, appraise, select and synthesize all the high-quality researches on the topic of the article.

Baldwin and Pullinger (2000) examined the reader's value in printed and electronic journals based on the experience of the Super Journal project. The finding reveals that electronic journals will not replace the library, but allow journal articles to be available more quickly.

Liu (2005) studied the changes in reading behaviour in the digital environment over the past ten years. The finding of the study revealed that with an increasing amount of time spent reading electronic documents, a screen-based reading behaviour is emerging. On the other hand, readers will continue to use printed media for much of their reading activities, especially in-depth reading. So, the traditional pattern has not yet migrated to the digital environment when people read electronic documents as of 2005.

Bashorun et al. (2011) studied the user perception of the electronic resources by the academic staff of the University of Ilorin. The data was collected through electronic resources user perception survey (ERUPS). The study revealed that the use of electronic resources by the academic staff was not at the expected level.

Jotwani (2014) studied about the trends in acquisition and usage of electronic resources at Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) libraries at Kharagpur, Bombay, Gauhati and Roorkee and also analysed the usage of these resources during 2004-2005. The finding reveals that IIT libraries spend a significantly large portion of their budget to acquire e-resources in response to the increase in their acceptance by academic community.

Soman and Sudhier (2015) studied about the use and awareness of internet resources by visually-impaired students in Kerela. The author studied the user experience and perception of using of different types of electronic information source by the scientists, pharmacopoeia associates and scientific assistants. The study revealed that 59.46% of visually challenged students are aware of internet resources and assistive technologies that help them to access information.

4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

- ❖ To find out the use and awareness of electronic resources among the different categories of students (UG, PG, PhD) of Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat;

- ❖ To know the purpose of using electronic resources by the students of AAU;

- ❖ To identify the constraints faced by the students of AAU while accessing electronic resources;

- ❖ To assess the satisfaction level of the students with the e-resources facility provided by the university; and

- ❖ To know the impact of usage of electronic resources over the print materials.

5. Methodology

For the present study a survey method was used. For collecting the primary data, from different categories of the students (UG, PG and PhD) of AAU, the questionnaire tool was used where the random sampling technique is applied. 150 questionnaires have been distributed to different user categories, Under Graduate (UG), Post Graduate (PG) and PhD students. Out of which 104 duly filled-in questionnaires were received where 69.33% was the total response rate of the study. The collected data was analyzed by calculating percentages and was presented in tabular form and charts and for analysis the data Microsoft Excel was used.

6. Data analysis

On the basis of the responses received from the respondents, the data was analysed using some statistical method and interpreted the data.

6.1 Category-wise distribution of the respondents

The researcher has distributed 50 questionnaires each to three different user categories. It was observed from the study that 98% of the respondents from the UG category have responded the questionnaire and 60% of the respondents from the PG has duly filled-in the questionnaire distributed and 50% respondents from the PhD category. So, 69.33% was the total response rate from the respondents of the present study.

6.2 Gender wise distribution of respondents

According to gender-wise distribution of the respondents, majority of the respondents of UG (55.11%) and PhD (56%) are female respondents, where it was observed from the study that the respondents of PhD are equal in gender-wise distribution. It was further observed from the study that out of the total number of respondents, that 53.85% respondents are female where 47.15% of the respondents are male.

6.3 Awareness of e-resources

The researcher investigated that how many respondents (UG, PG, and PhD) are aware of the electronic resources. It is found from the study that out of the total 49 respondents of UG, 77.55% are aware of the e-resources and 22.45% are not aware of e-resources. Out of 30 respondents of PG, it is found that 93.33% respondents are aware of e-resources and 6.67% are not aware of e-resources and from the total number of respondents of PhD (25), 76% are aware of e-resources and 24% respondents are not aware of e-resources. So, it was observed from the study that 83.65 % of total respondents are aware of e-resources and 16.35%

of total respondents are still not aware of e-resources.

6.4 Use of e-resources

From the present study, it was observed that there are some users who are not aware of electronic resources but they are still using it. Accordingly, the result was found that all the respondents taken for the study are using the e-resources for different purposes at different intervals of time according to their needs.

6.5 Frequency to access e-resources

The researcher investigated the frequency distribution of accessing the e-resources by the respondents. It was observed from the study that 22.12% of the total numbers of respondents are using the e-resources daily, 29.81% of the respondents are using the e-resources 2-3 times a week, 26.92%

of the respondents are using the e-resources 2-3 times a month, and 21.15% of the respondents are using the e-resources once in a month.

6.6 Place of accessing e-resources

The researchers find out the different places from where the respondents are accessing the e-resources. The place of accessing the e-resources varies with the need of information the respondents are looking for.

It was observed from the study that majority of the respondents taken for the study are accessing the e-resources from university library (50.96%) followed by accessing the e-resources from home with 38.46%, and 22.11% from the department. It was also observed that 17.31% of the respondents are accessing the e-resources from other places according to their needs and requirements arise.
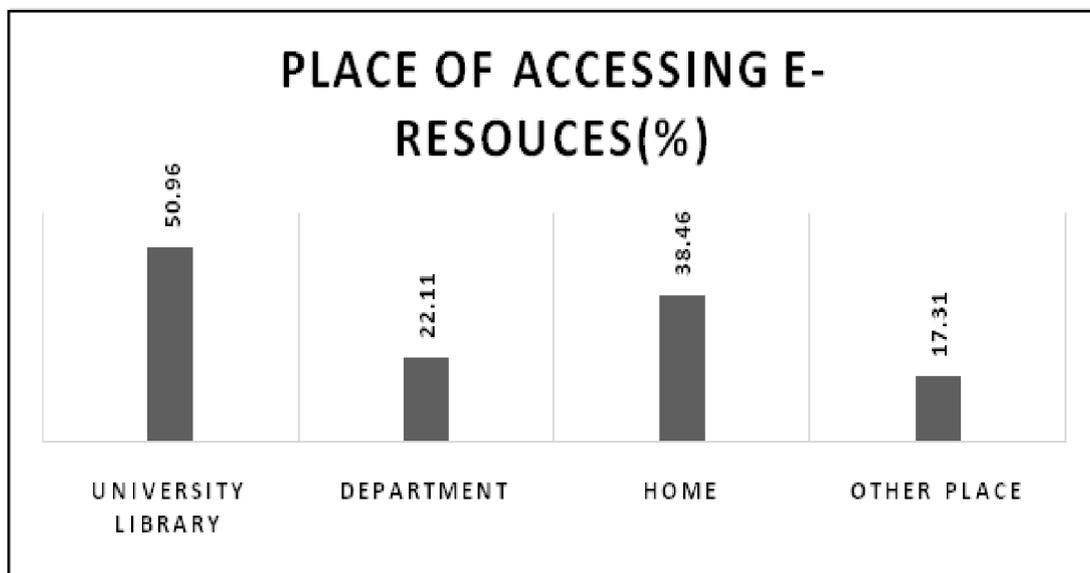

Figure 1

6.7   Purpose of using e-resources

The researchers know the purpose of using e-resources by the different categories of users taken for the study, i.e., UG, PG and PhD. There are some purposeswere selected for the study. There is no hard-and-fast rule that a user can access the resources for only one purpose. According to the needs of the users' requirement the purpose of accessing the e-resources varies. It was observed from the study that majority of the respondents taken for the study are using the e-resources for academic purpose (77.88%), followed by project works with 56.73%, then for general information with 52.88%. 36.53% of the respondents are using the e-resources for writing articles, and 34.61% of the respondents are using it for seminar presentation. It was further observed that 15.38% of the respondents are using the e-resources for the preparation of class teachings and exchanging ideas. It was also observed that there are 12.5% of the respondents who are using the e-resources for several other purposes.

6.8   Problems faced while using e-resources

In the age of ICT, people can access the information very easily according to their needs. And sometimes it is seen that while accessing information the users face certain problems. For the present study, the researcher has brought out 9 different lists of problems which they may face while using e-resources.So, it was observed from the study that the majority (31.73) of the respondents views that slow internet speed is the problem while they access e-resources, followed by 24.04% with limited access to computer, then by technical problem with 21.15%, takes time to download/view the page with 19.23%, only abstract of the article is accessible by 12.5%, followed by difficulty in finding the relevant information by 11.54% of the respondents, and so on.
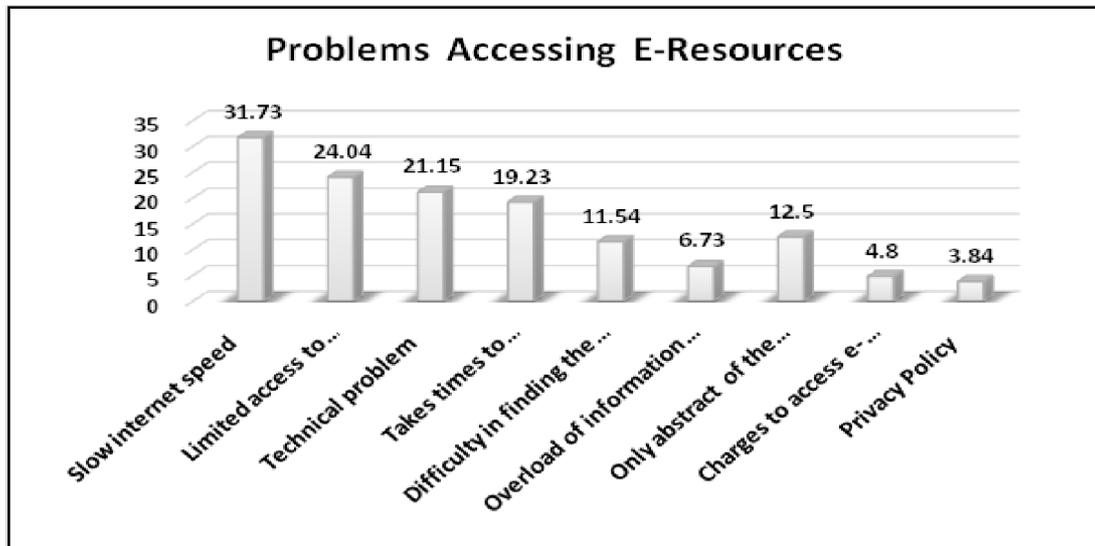

Figure 2

6.9   Types of e-resources mostly preferred

There are different types of e-resources available in the present age, such as, e-journals, e-books, online databases, internet resources, etc. The researchers investigated the different types of e-resources which are mostly preferred by the different categories of the respondents taken for the study. It was observed from the study that majority of the respondents (51.92%) use the internet resources in comparison to that of other e-resources, followed by websites (49.04%), then e-journals (48.08%), e-books (37.5%), online databases (25%), and so on.
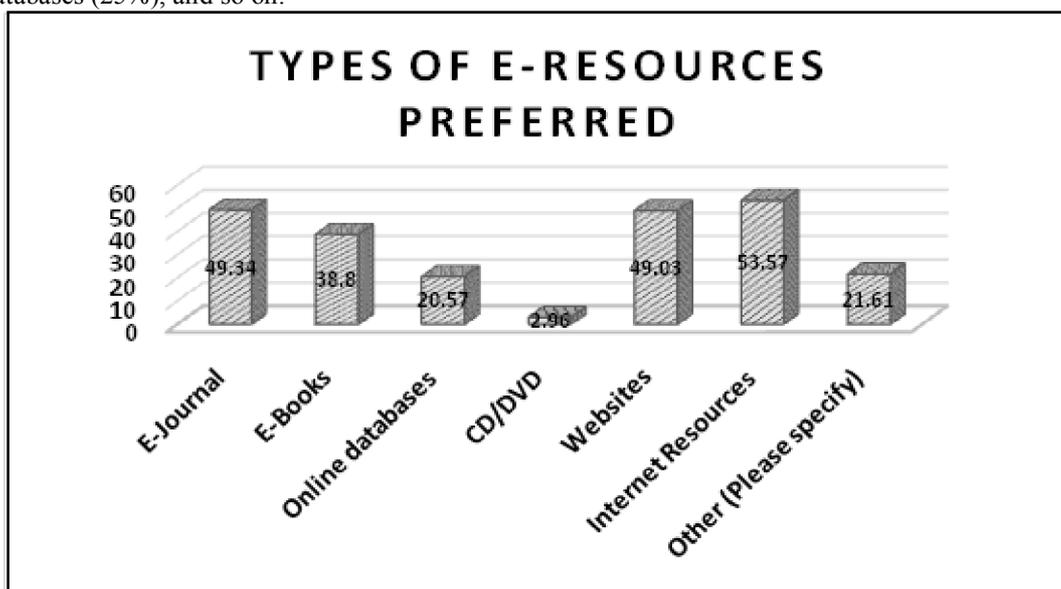
3.85% of the respondents feel that e-resources are rarely useful. While it was observed from the study that there are no respondents who finds that e-resources are not useful at all.

6.11 Level of satisfaction using e-resources

The present study attempts to find out the level of satisfaction using the e-resources by the students' community of AAU. It was observed from the study that majority (64.42%) of the respondents feels satisfaction while using the e-resources, and 14.42% of the respondents opine that they are highly

Figure 3

6.10   Opinion about e-resources

We know that the present age is popularly known as electronic age because it has made the users easily access the information they need. So, it was observed the majority of the respondents (54.81%) opined that e-resources are very useful, and 41.35% of the respondents opine that e-resources are useful, and

satisfied with the e-resource, and 13.46% of the respondents finds the e-resources as partially satisfied, where 7.69% of the total respondents opine that they are not satisfied with the e-resources.

7. Findings of the study

The major findings of the study are as follows:

❖ 69.33% was the total response rate of the present study.

❖ It is revealed from the study that there are 16.35% of the respondents are still not aware of the e-resources where all the respondents, i.e. 104, taken for the study are using the e-resources for different purposes at different intervals of time according to their needs.

❖ It is found from the study that 29.81% of the respondents are frequently using the e-resources for 2-3 times a week.

❖ It is revealed from the study that majority (50.96%) of the respondents are accessing the e-resources from the university library.

❖ It is found from the study that majority of the respondents (77.88%) are accessing the e-resources for academic purpose.

❖ It is found from the study that majority of the respondents (31.73%) are facing the slow internet problem as the main barriers while accessing the e-resources.

❖ It is revealed from the study that the respondents taken for the study are using the different types of e-resources for different purposes where it is found that majority of the respondents (51.92%) are using the internet resources followed by websites (49.04%), and e-journal (48.08%).

❖ 54.81% of the respondents opine that e-resources are very useful to them for their different purposes.

❖ It is also revealed from the study that 64.42% of the respondents are satisfied with the e-resources.

8. Conclusion

Electronic resources are regarded as one of the most important aspect in the modern world. It needs to be utilised properly. The library professionals should make aware the users about the e-resources they are providing for them by conducting several programs like library orientation and trainings, etc., they should assist the users in accessing the e-resources. The study brought out that there are users who are still not aware of the e-resources but still using it. So, it is very much necessary to make the users aware about the e-resources and provide training programs to the users which will help them in better understanding and accessing the e-resources.

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