

Availability and Use of E-Journals among Self-Financing Engineering Colleges in Tamil Nadu: A Select Study

G. Sasireka¹, S. Gopalakrishnan² and R. Karpagam³

¹CK College of Engineering and Technology, Cuddalore - 613 007, Tamil Nadu, India

²University Library, Anna University Chennai - 600 044, Tamil Nadu, India

³Anna University Chennai - 600 025, Tamil Nadu, India

Email: sasireka_mlis@yahoo.co.in

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Abstract

This paper attempts to deal with librarians' opinion regarding the usage of electronic journals by the users of selected engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu. This study attempts to find out the familiarity, preference and utility of e-journals by the users of engineering colleges. Analysis and interpretation are mainly from the information collected through questionnaire cum interview method. This paper provides few suggestions for the effective use of e-journals among engineering college libraries.

Keywords: Academic Library, E-journals, E-resources, Usage Study, User Survey

1. INTRODUCTION

The electronic sources of information are becoming more and more important for the academic community for their teaching and research. Electronic journals have revolutionized the scholarly and scientific communication since their inception in the late 1980s. The exponential growth of e-journals over the last five years were popular among scientific information providers, publishers, libraries and information centers. Current developments in e-journals and their institutional licensing and subscriptions arrangements clearly indicate a rapid revolution.

The libraries first began tracking electronic journals in 1991 and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) published its first directory of electronic journals, which indicated that only seven of 110 online journals and newsletters were peer-reviewed titles [1]. By 2000, the number of refereed electronic journals had dramatically increased to over 4,000. During this decade it can be seen that libraries and information centers are transitioning into hybrid journal collections from traditional print journal collections. The resulting hybrid journal collections provide access to either as print-only, or electronic-only, or in both print and electronic formats. Further it facilitates access to selected journals, full-text journal articles from aggregator databases.

The users of e-journals, especially academic libraries, are more concerned about the means and methods in handling with those publications because it necessitates at most care in subscribing to these scholarly journals. This situation has given rise to study how users utilize the e-journals. This paper mainly focuses to identify the librarian's opinion about the e-journals of their users. This study has been limited to select engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu.

2. E-JOURNALS

An electronic journal simply seems to be serial publications, where the end products are available in digital format and whose contents may or may not be peer-reviewed. Two media, such as CD-ROM and the internet, are used for dissemination of these e-journals. According to Ali [2], "an electronic journal is a publication, often scholarly, that is made available in a computerized format and distributed over the internet." Rich and Rabine [3] define the "electronic journal as a periodical literature that is made available as an individual title via an electronic medium, typically the World Wide Web." To-day the majority of the publishers provided electronic journals and offer them as special services via databases (e.g.) Science Direct (Elsevier), Springer Link (Springer).

3. RELATED STUDIES

A number of studies on the use of e-journals in academic libraries have been carried out during last ten years. The two CALIBER International Conferences 2008 and 2009 focused mainly on electronic resources and their usage in libraries.

Boyce, *et al* [4] examined the impact of electronic journals and changing pattern of reading habit of scholars over the past decade. It has been identified by Watson [5] this study explained an the majority of libraries are migrating to electronic format of e-journals from their print journal subscriptions. Rogers [6] pointed out that there has been an increased use of e-journals than that of print journals among faculty and graduate students at Ohio State University. Raza and Upadhyay [7] in their study states that Aligarh Muslim University researchers are satisfied with e-journal available in the library related to their subject of research. Also many research scholars are consulting e-journals from their departments and computer centers. Their responses said that e-journals not only for research purposes but also to update their own knowledge.

Liu [8] pointed out that electronic sources are more heavily used by students of Computer Science Schools, Business Schools and LIS than those in Social Sciences. Researchers spend less time per article reading. There is a strong correlation between the print and electronic journals use has been identified by Rowlands [9]. Further he points out that researchers are spending less time in retrieving their requirements in electronic formats, which indicates that the researchers are technically proficient in searching and employ a range of coping strategies to navigate e-resources.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are to find out the librarians opinion on using the e-journals and library usage in the Self-financing engineering colleges. The main objectives of the study are :

- i To identify the use of print journal Vs. e-journal collections in the self-financing engineering college libraries in Tamil Nadu;
- ii To identify on preference and purpose of the e-journals felt by the users;
- iii To know the level of satisfaction of users on e-resources;
- iv To identify the difficulties encountered by the users, while using the e-journals;
- v To identify the ways and means in development of the services of e-resources in the library.

5. METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire has been administrated to the librarian of engineering colleges under study in order to examine the opinion on use of e-journals by the users. This study attempts to find out the familiarity, preference and utility of e-journals by the users of engineering colleges. Among the 90 questionnaires circulated among the selected engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu 64 responses (71.11%) were received.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data thus collected have been further analysed. The Demographic characteristics of respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic Details

Sl.No.	Description	Nos.	%
1	Sex		
	Male	43	67.2
	Female	21	32.8
2	Age		
	21 to 30	7	11.0
	31 to 40	24	37.5
	41 to 50	23	35.9
	Above 50	10	15.6
3	Year of Establishment		
	1991–1995	9	14.1
	1996–2000	23	35.9
	2001–2005	24	37.5
	After 2006	8	12.5
4	Type of Institutions		
	Self-Financing Colleges	58	90.6
	Private University	6	09.4

The majority of the respondents were male (67.2%) compared to female. Majority respondents for the both gender belongs to the age group of 31-40 is 24 (37.5%), and it followed by 41- 50 age group (35.9%).

Year of establishment of the institution is detailed in Table-1. Between the year 1996-2000 the number of institutions has increased, and majority (90.6%) of the institutions belongs to the self financing wing, rest of the six colleges belong to private university.

The preference between print and electronic journals have been analysed and the same is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 User Preferred Form of Journals

S.No	Preferred Form	Respondents	%	Use of E-journals
1	Print only	16	25.0	-
2	Electronic only	15	23.4	15
3	Both equally	33	51.6	33
	Total	64	100	48

Table 3 Frequency of Use of E-journals

S.No.	Frequency	Respondents n=48	%
1	Daily	12	25.0
2	Once in a week	17	35.4
3	Once in a Fortnight	9	18.8
4	Once in a Month	8	16.6
5	Rarely	2	04.2
	Total	48	100

Table 4 Average Time Spent by the Users on Use of E-Journals

S.No.	Frequency	Respondents n=48	%
1	One Hour	16	33.3
2	Between 1 - 2 Hour	19	39.7
3	Between 2 - 3 Hour	10	20.8
4	Above 3 Hour	3	6.2
	Total	48	100

From the Table 2, it can be seen that 33 respondents (51.6%) preferred both print and electronic version equally where as 15 (23.4%) preferred electronic journals. Altogether only 48.75% of the libraries under study were using e-journals. These 48 users view alone further taken up for the study. Therefore the 'n' value is taken as 48 for the remaining part of the study.

Further frequency of use of e-journals among the e-journal users (i.e. n=48) has been identified and the same is shown in Table 3.

35.4% of the respondents use e-journals once in a week. Only 4.2% of the respondents use e-journals rarely. Average time spent by the users in a day on e-journals has been identified and the same is show in Table 4.

Nearly 66% of the respondents spent more than one hour on use of e-journals. On an average 1½ hours has been spent by the users on a day. Similarly the purpose of e-journal has been identified and the same is show in Table 5.

Table 5 Purpose of Using E-Journals

S.No.	Purpose	Respondents n=48	%
1	Course Related	23	47.9
2	Teaching Related	15	31.3
3	Research Related	7	14.6
4	Projects, for Writing Articles, to Update Knowledge, etc.	3	6.2
	Total	48	100

47.9% of the respondents use e-journals for preparing their course and faculties (31.3%) spend enough time in using digital library. Most of the users may not be aware about the e-resources. The aware were created among different methods. The same may be obtained and the same is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Method of Communication about E-Journals

S.No.	Method	Respondents n=48	%
1	Through Circulars/ Announcements	24	50.0
2	Lecturer/Orientation Program	6	12.5
3	Through Library Staff	18	37.5
	Total	48	100

50% of the institutions notified the new arrivals through circulars, announcements and notice boards and 37.5% of library staff informed the users about new arrivals. Orientation program have also been organized.

Table 7 Librarian's Opinion Regarding User's Satisfaction on E-journal

S.No.	Satisfaction Level	Respondents	%
1	Excellent	11	22.9
2	Good	17	35.4
3	Moderate	14	29.2
4	No opinion	6	12.5
	Total	48	100

Attempts were made to know the satisfaction level of the users of e-journals. The responses received from the librarians are presented in this Table 9. The overall satisfaction of the use of e-journals is good 17 (35.4%). Few respondents feel no opinion of impression.

Librarians have given opinion on problems faced by the users while using e-resources is detailed in this Table 8, Most of the users (31%) users face problems when accessing e-resources due to slow speed of internet connectivity and 25% of users felt overload of information on the internet, and 16.7% users said that they face problem during down loading. Only 13 (27%) users opined that they face problem due to lack of training on use of e-resources.

Table 8 Difficulties Encountered by the Users

S.No.	Difficulties Encountered	Respondents	%
1	Slow Speed/ Connectivity/PCs & Others	15	31.3
2	It Takes Too Long to View/Download Web Pages	8	16.7
3	Overload of Information on the Internet	12	25.0
4	Lack of Knowledge / Training on Use of Web resources	13	27.0
	Total	48	100

7. FINDINGS

The following are major findings of the present survey:

- i 35.4% respondents use e-journals once in a week.
- ii 66.7% of users spent more than one hour on use of e-journals.
- iii 47.9% of respondents use the e-journals is regard to related to course and faculties (31.3%) spend enough time in using digital library.
- iv 50% of the institutions notified new arrivals through circulars, announcements and notice board.
- v The overall satisfaction of the use of e-journals (35.4%) is good. Few respondents feel no opinion of impression.
- vi Most of the users (31%) face problems when accessing e-resources due to slow speed of internet connectivity. Only 27% users opined due to lack of training.

8. SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of the response and opinion given by the respondents some of the important suggestions have been made which will help the effective use of the e-journals.

- i The library should organize regular workshops for enhancing usage of e-journals and for helping the users in accessing, downloading and printing of journal articles.
- ii User study should be conducted for users need and for identifying the user's problem. Feedback systems may help to observe the use of e-journal.
- iii College libraries should initiate action to popularize the concept open sources, virtual, electronic, and digital libraries among the users through orientation / user education programs.
- iv Various methods need to be explored in order to make the e-resources visible. Traditional methods such as personal visits and training workshops need to be continued.
- v Printed brochures, posters, newsletters do create awareness and provide the much needed publicity.

9. CONCLUSION

Majority of academic community use electronic information sources still most of the users prefer print sources as well as electronic information sources. So many problems are facing by Faculties and Students but overall maximum users are satisfied with the use and accessibility of e-journals. Finally the impact of promotional activities needs to be measured regularly by examining usage statistics, surveys and conducting user meets.

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