



Evaluation Of E- Information Resourcesby Users In Health Science Libraries: A Study

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Abstract:

A survey to evaluate the preference of researchers of reference by the medical students of Karnataka revealed that majority of medicos prefer e-resources for their work and nearly 30% prefer to use both printed and e- resources and a few have no specific preference. There is an increasing trend and shift towards the electronic resources for reference and the libraries have to cope with this change.

1.Introduction

Electronic resource is the term used to describe the electronic information resources available from a computer desktop, the information resources which are available in the electronic form is called as electronic information resources.

The libraries with their traditional holdings in print format are now being added with electronic information resources in various formats like CD-ROM and DVD-ROM databases, On-line databases, E-journals and plenty of Internet or Web resources. The content of these sources varies from bibliographic or factual to full text.

Advances in Information Technology have brought about many changes in libraries. Informational professionals have to switch over to new methods and techniques for handling information. In this context the role of information professionals is becoming very challenging. The optical storage technology has brought a sea of change in information storage and retrieval systems. Library collections are growing multifold and electronic information resources are becoming vague. Almost entire gamut of primary, secondary and tertiary information resources hitherto embodied in print format are now available in the form of electronic databases. The Internet and its World Wide Web (WWW) have provided a platform to access information from remote databases. As a result, information resources available on web are increasing. In this changing scenario of handling information, the role of information professional is very crucial, as he has to act as a bridge between information and its end users. Information professionals have to coordinate and manage the task of introducing the users to electronic information resources.

Whitlatch (2001) suggests that at the outset of any reference service evaluation that the purpose of the evaluation is clear. The primary purpose of this 2002 digital reference evaluation was to prepare for the creation of a real-time digital reference service. Based on this evaluation, Southeastern was able to better implement a real-time digital reference service. As both digital reference services (asynchronous and synchronous) continue to grow, evaluation will need to be an ongoing process.

J B Hill [et.al] (2003) in their study "Digital Reference Evaluation: Assessing the Past to Plan for the Future" said that historically, libraries have routinely evaluated their reference services both quantitatively and qualitatively. With the increasing volume of digital reference transactions, there is a need to modify and apply to digital reference, the same evaluation techniques that have been used successfully in the evaluation of traditional reference service. At Southeastern Louisiana University, a recent evaluation

of the library's Ask a Librarian digital reference service included an unobtrusive observation of current practice through a detailed examination of archived reference transactions, as well as an assessment of future needs through a survey of users. Through this evaluation, it was possible to assess the effectiveness of the library's e-mail reference service, as well as to plan for the implementation of a new real-time digital reference service.

Kumbar, Mallinath [et.al] (2005) In their study title "Use of Electronic Resources by Research Scholars in CFTRI, Mysore: A Study, said that more and more electronic resources should be provided to the research scholar to retrieve relevant and up to date information and in order to improve the efficiency of the research scholar towards access to electronic information the library staff should provide orientation programmes and evaluate the electronic resources provided to users.

2.Importance Of Electronic Resources

Electronic media and resources have been played pivotal role in information transfer, providing education to build up the society on different sectors. The electronic environment has created significant role for health science and science librarians. The development of technological innovation has increased new vistas in recording the information/knowledge in variety of forms. The new e-resources have extended lot of benefits to use more effectively. However, examination of new methods of organizing, storing and retrieving information in e-resources has become necessary.

3.Characteristics Of Electronic Resources

- Electronic resources can be used from anywhere without one even it is stored geographically far.
- Several users can use the same database or e-records at the same time.
- Information stored electronically is very flexible.
- Collections of information resources stored in electronic form are now less bulky than paper versions.
- Electronic resources are quite different from paper documents.
- Access to content using standard web browsers.
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4.Collection Development Of Electronic Resources In Medical Library

There is increasing interest among users to access electronic resources to their daily needs. According, different methods are adopted in order to build well organized E-resources

- By acquiring e-resources i.e. e-books, (including e-reference sources), e-journals, e-newspapers etc.,
- By retrospective conversion i.e. to convert existing materials vize-paper, manuscripts etc. into electronic form.
- By providing access to web sites through the internet
- By consortium and resource sharing

5.Types Of Electronic Resources

Electronic Resources are referring to information resources, which are recorded in the electronic form. An academic library collection generally consists of the following types of electronic resources.

5.1.E-books

E-books are the electronic version of printed books. Apart from textural matters, the e-books consist of hyperlinks, search facilities and multimedia capabilities.

The e-reference sources viz dictionaries, encyclopedia, maps, directories, and handbooks; etc. are available online on the internet as well as have CD-Rom versions also.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/bv.fcgi/call=bv.view.showto&rid=cmed.toc&depth=2>

5.2.E-journals

A journal contains scholarly articles relating to current information on research and development in a particular subject field. An e-journal is processed, published and distributed all over the world by electronic network. E-journals are available in the electronic medium some are available DC-ROM, some are available only on online and some may be both in electronic and print media.

e.g. Annals of Neurology

<http://www3.interscience.wileg.com/cgi-bin/jhome>

5.3.E-Thesis And E-Research Reports

A thesis is a type of research report, which provides results of such a project, which has been carried on for obtaining an academic degree. A thesis presented in an electronic medium is an e-thesis similarly; a research report published in electronic medium is an e-research report.

5.4.E- newspapers

The newspapers are on of the early industries which made use of the information technology in active like news gathering transmission, typeseting pagination and achieves the online versions of newspaper are generally referred as e-newspapers.

e.g. The Hindu, Frontline, The Sport star

5.5.E-databases

E-databases can accessible on web or on CD-ROM. Database generally provides records; references or citations to work that have been published in a particular subject area. They may over a wide range of publication the following are the books, journal articles, research papers, conference papers, theses, reviews.

e.g. 1. Cochrane Database <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/>

2. Medline Plus www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus

5.6.E-Abstract And Index

E-abstract and index can accessible on web or by CD-ROM. Abstract generally provides the summary and citations of the studies or work.

e.g. Biological Abstracts

[http://web5.silverplatter.com/webspirs/start.ws?customer=\(64283&database=\(bscd\)](http://web5.silverplatter.com/webspirs/start.ws?customer=(64283&database=(bscd))

5.7.E-bibliography

Bibliographic details of medical sciences are now available in electronic form. The Electronic Bibliography is accessible through web site and CD-ROM.

e.g. PUBMED <http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entre3/aver/fcgi?DB=pubmed>

PubMed is a Bibliographic database of the national library of medicine, USA that includes over 15 million citations from health and other

5.8. CD-ROM databases

CD-ROM databases are increasing day by day in almost all fields due to their many advantages in information storage and retrieval. Majority of publishers of books and journals, on-line vendors and various learned societies are bringing out new titles in CD format with powerful, user-friendly retrieval software. Electronic information resources in CD format include abstracting and indexing services, encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, yearbooks, back volumes, patents, standards and many other reference works.

5.9. DVD-ROM databases

The advent of DVD- Digital Video Disc or Digital Versatile Disc, with its 17 GB of high data storage capacity, has made it possible to include more multimedia elements like video and sound and to integrate many reference sources on a single disc. “The other features like higher quality of sound and video, higher rate of data transfer, data security etc., are making DVD more viable option than CD-ROM. But, at present due to some problems like lack of standards among the manufacturers of DVDs and drives, need for extra hardware on PCs and their higher prices are making the growth of DVD technology slow”

5.10. Online Databases

The recent growth of Internet and the popularity and ease in use of Web are making libraries to subscribe to online information services. The online database services like Dialog (KR Information) and STN are now moving towards being webcentric. The usage of online databases against their CD-ROM counterparts has to be evaluated and decided on the basis of cost effectiveness and timeliness. Few Online information services are KR Science Base and STN. The KRScienceBase, which includes information sources like BIOSIS, CA Search, Elsevier Science Publishers, Reuters, NTIS etc. The STN international provides a complete collection of in-depth databases in science and technology which gives quick, direct links to the literature, patents and chemical catalogues. Chemical Abstract Service, producer of the world’s largest and most comprehensive database of chemical information, offers several databases on STN like CAPLUS, INSPEC, MEDLINE, SCISEARCH, TOXLIT etc.

6.Objectives Of The Study

The main objectives of the study are

- To study the use of different types of electronic resources by users.
- To determine the purpose and utilization of the electronic resources by users.
- To know the familiarity of database use by users.
- To ascertain the user's preference of search engine.
- To find out the hindrance and problem faced by the research scholars while accessing and using electronic resources.

7.Hypothesis

It is proposed to test and to verify the following two hypotheses in regard.

- There is no significant statistics in utilizing the electronic resources and services, who use/do not use the library facilities and hindrance in accessing the Electronic resources.

8.Methodology

In order to collect the comprehensive and relevant data for the study, the questionnaire method and interview method was used. List of questions were formulated keeping in view, the objective of the study. The questionnaires were personally distributed to 500 users of the some health science libraries in Karnataka. Out of which 376 questionnaires were received. Later collected data was tabulated and analyzed.

9.Sources Of Data

- Journal Articles
- E-journals
- In-house report of Health science libraries
- Internet Browsing- Google.com and Medical College web site.

10.Observation

Of the 500 candidates at different levels of studies in medical science only 376 responded positively and remaining left unanswered of these 110 prefer to refer printed journals while 229 prefer electronic media and about 37 prefer both for their reference (Table-1) Among the respondents to the kind of electronic reference 229 prefer e-

journals, followed by online database reference by about 73 and remaining on stored information (Table-2)

Sl.No	Type of resource	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	Printed Journals	110	29.25
2	Electronic Journals	229	60.90
3	Both	37	9.84

Table 1: Preference of Primary Sources Gathering E-Information

Sl.No	Type of Electronic Resources	Respondents	Percentage
1	E-Journals	229	60.90
2	CD-ROM Database	34	9.04
3	Online Database	73	19.41
4	Other	40	10.63

Table 2 : Type of E-resources Referred

11. Discussion

The health science Libraries are meant for serving the Researchers, Students, Teaching Staff and non-teaching staff and to cope up with the objectives of parent body. The present study revealed Electronic sources are the primary source of preference for gathering information, 60.90% of the total respondents prefer gathering information through electronic sources as compared to 29.25% are using prefer majorly print based sources. 9.84 % of the respondents prefer using both types of information sources for gathering information equally. 60.90% of the total respondents preferred electronic journals where as 29.56% respondents shown their likeness for online databases. It is clear from the above table that all electronic resources are preferred by the users of health science libraries. Though there is preference for electronic resources nearly 30% of the medicos also prefer to refer printed journals.

The dramatic and swift changes in information management have given a new face-lift to most of the libraries. The users, who form the integral part of information system, have to be given due importance in achieving the pinnacle of success. New strategies and vistas have to be explored from time to time for user education and instruction

programmes. A methodological approach for better and optimum use of electronic information resources must be adopted.

The electronic environment has created significant role for health science and science librarians. The development of technological innovation has increased new vistas in recording the information/knowledge in variety of forms. The new e-resources have extended lot of benefits to use more effectively. However, examination of new methods of organizing, storing and retrieving information in e-resources has become necessary as there is an increasing trend towards e-references by medical students (Babu Prasad.K.C 2012)

Health Science libraries/information centers in the days to come up have to provide their broad based service package in the midst of stiff competition. With the increasing expectations from users, greater effective and efficient electronic resources has to be provided the same time greater accountability and rising cost the need for evaluation is a must. Every Library has to do evaluation on medical electronic information provided on the internet and web frequently. So the better services, authentic, quicker information can provide and can identify the problems of the users in using electronic information.

I have made an effort to study the usage and difficulties in accessing electronic resources provided by health science libraries and suggested some recommendations to improve the conditions of electronic resources and services to meet the increasing demand for e-resources particularly by the researchers.

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