
Study on the Awareness and Usage of Web-Based Library Resources and Services among the Faculty and Students of Murshidabad University

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Abstract

The study examines the awareness and usage of web-based library resources among faculty and students at Murshidabad University. Data was collected from 182 users through a structured questionnaire. The most frequently used services were online document availability, access to databases and electronic journals, online lists of new arrivals, and indexes to journal articles. The study suggests that university libraries must improve their online inter-library loan services, electronic document delivery services, and real-time chat with the library.

Keywords

Murshidabad, Library Resources and Services, University Library, Web-Based Technology etc.

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INTRODUCTION

The World Wide Web and its linked technologies have distorted different aspects of the world, including business, education, research, and communication. The development and usage of the Internet and web technologies have greatly influenced the traditional methods of offering library resources and services. Users' demands and opportunities have also evolved significantly. With the continuous growth of web technology, libraries and information centers are expected to be more responsive in providing services to users and making them technologically proficient. Web technology has revolutionised information processing, storage, and retrieval systems in libraries, partly moving library resources to the virtual world of the Internet. Users can now access library resources from anywhere and submit queries anytime. Terms such as web-based library services, digital library services, electronic library services, and internet-based library services are all related to providing library services through the web. Due to their popularity, significant attention has been given to web-based resources and services in libraries. Web technology has changed how information is processed, stored, and retrieved in libraries. Libraries and their resources have transitioned to the virtual world of the Internet, allowing users to access library materials from anywhere. With web technology, users can now submit queries to the library at any time and from any location worldwide. Terms such as Web-Based Library Services, Digital Library Services, Electronic Library Services, and Internet-Based Library Services all have similar meanings (Bhatnagar, 2005). Due to their popularity, web-based information services in libraries are receiving significant attention from users (Krishnamurthy and Chan, 2005).

WEB-BASED LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Web-based library resources and services refer to integrated access to library resources and services through the library website. According to White (2001), web-based library services are "an information access service in which users ask questions via electronic means, such as email or web forms." Madhusudhan (2012) states that "Web-based Library Services means library services provided using the internet as a medium and the library website as a gateway with the help of an integrated library management system." This study examines the web-based library services offered by Murshidabad

University Library in different sections and their utilization by users. The study aims to understand the types of web-based library resources and services used by library users and how they are utilized. Additionally, it aims to highlight user opinions on web-based library resources and services and their expectations in the web environment.

REVIEW OF THE STUDY

The review of related studies shows that web-based library services aim to create user-friendly online platforms and help library users make the most of these services (Peterson, 2001). These services are adaptations of existing technology-driven library services (Arora, 2001), tailored for the web environment, and include new web-specific services (Moyo, 2004). Web-based interactive reference services provide quick, reliable information, guide library research, and address inquiries about library resources and services (Xue-Ming, Bao 2003). Libraries and librarians are vital in designing, enhancing, and delivering user-centred information services and resources (Li, 2006). Academic libraries are increasingly integrating Web 2.0 applications into their services compared to other types of libraries (Xu et al., 2009). LIS professionals need to recognize the significance of web-based library services and prioritize providing these to library users (Mirza et al., and Khalid 2009). Despite their potential, the widespread use of web development technologies for mainstream web information services in academic libraries is not yet common (Preedip et al., 2011). To meet their objectives and goals, libraries should extensively use traditional library tools and web-based services, such as web forms, chat, and video conferences (Zarei et al., and Zahra 2011). Additionally, there is an urgent need to develop dynamic library websites, incorporate relevant Web 2.0-based services, apply semantic technologies and ontologies, provide multilanguage support content, and adopt next-generation internet (Madhusudhan, M & Nagabhushanam, and V 2012).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Considering the study's objective and literature review, the following research objectives were recognised to assess the web-based library resources and services obtainable by the Murshidabad University Library:

1. To examine the accessible web-based library resources and services in diverse sections of the Murshidabad University Library.

2. To learn the usage of web-based library resources and services by users and the occurrence of their visit to the library website.

3. To recognise the issues encountered using web-based library resources and services.

4. To suggest a new approach for efficiency by web-based library resources and services in academic libraries.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives mentioned above, the study listened carefully to web-based library resources and services, which include reference, acquisition, circulation, cataloguing, periodicals, interlibrary loan/document delivery, and other web-based library resources and services. A survey was conducted involving 200 respondents from Murshidabad University Libraries, including faculty and students from various departments. The selection of respondents was based on a stratified random sampling method.

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

The survey responses to 17 questions were tabulated, graphed, and qualitatively analysed. Based on the responses gathered from the questionnaires, the data were analyzed and interpreted in the subsequent sections.

Web-Based Library Resources Usage Study

Population Characteristics:

- Survey distributed to 200 respondents, 182 completed and returned, 91% response rate.
- Majority were male (52.74%), female (47.26%), and aged 26-35.

Faculty of Discussion Forum and Professional Associations:

- 57.14% members of discussion forums, 64.83% members of professional associations.

Web-Based Resources Awareness and Access:

- Over 92.3% aware of library's web-based resources.
- Most accessed resources at library, 18% through departments, and from homes, hostels, and internet cafes.

Mode of Access and Navigation:

- Over 33% used IP-based network, 28.57% Wi-Fi, 16.5% individual user ID.
- Most used search engines as navigation mode.

Preferred Version of Library Resources:

- Most preferred electronic resources (70.32%), 28.58% only electronic or online resources (28.58%).

Frequency of Usage:

- 58.24% daily, 27.47% 2-4 times a week, 10.99% once a week, and 3.3% occasionally.

LEVEL OF FAMILIARITY WITH THE USAGE OF WEB-BASED LIBRARY RESOURCES

To determine how familiar library users are with web-based library resources, respondents were asked to assess their familiarity with using web-based library resources. A majority of respondents reported being familiar with web-based library resources. The study found that 63.7% of the respondents are familiar with web-based resources, followed by 24.1% who are very familiar, 10% who are somewhat familiar and only 2.2% who are unfamiliar with web-based resources. The study indicated that the majority of respondents are familiar with the usage of web-based library resources.

USAGE OF WEB-BASED LIBRARY SERVICES

Web-based library services in university libraries significantly impact service quality. These services are divided into seven sections: reference, acquisition, circulation, cataloging, periodicals, interlibrary loan/document delivery, and other miscellaneous services. The table below provides data on respondents' use of web-based library services in different sections of the university library.

Table 1 - Usage of Web based Library Services

Description	Faculty	Students	Total (n=182)
Reference Services			
Electronic document delivery service	40	46	86 (47.25%)
Web-based reference tools	44	62	106 (58.24%)
Electronic current awareness service	26	54	80 (43.96%)
Virtual reference desk/Ask-a-librarian	26	44	70 (38.46%)
Acquisition			

Services			
Online list of new arrivals	72	54	126 (69.23%)
Online status of items (on order, processing etc)	34	56	90 (49.45%)
Provision of alert services for new additions	36	48	84 (46.15%)
Online acquisition policies	32	34	66 (36.26%)
Online purchase requests	20	38	58 (31.87%)
Bibliographic databases	42	70	112 (61.54%)
Electronic indexes	44	56	100 (54.95%)
Circulation services			
Online availability of a particular document	80	68	148 (81.32%)
Online circulation (issue/return)	24	46	70 (38.47%)
Online reservation of document	20	30	50 (27.47%)
Online status of reserved documents	16	30	46 (25.27%)
Patron account status online	30	36	66 (36.26%)
Online renewal of loan document	8	20	28 (15.38%)
Alert services through e-mail(reminder)	36	64	100 (54.95%)
Online posting of overdue details of the user	12	44	56 (30.77%)
Online circulation policies	42	34	76 (41.76%)
Cataloguing/OPAC			
Web OPAC	64	52	116 (63.74%)
Access to Online databases	74	76	150 (82.42%)
Search multiple catalogues (federated search)	40	54	94 (51.65%)
Periodical Services			
Electronic journals (subscribed)	76	62	138 (75.82%)
Electronic journals (UGC-Infonet/	66	74	140 (76.92%)

e-shodhsindhu digital library consortium)			
Electronic article delivery	50	52	102 (56.04%)
Index to journal articles	70	62	132 (72.53%)
Article alert service	22	38	60 (32.97%)
Web-based table of contents	70	46	116 (63.74%)
Inter-Library Loan/Document Delivery			
Online Inter-Library Loan services	10	16	26 (14.29%)
Electronic document delivery service	22	32	54 (29.67%)
Other Services			
Online library news	58	32	90 (49.45%)
Online staff list & contact addresses	46	46	92 (50.55%)
Online Feedback Form	34	40	74 (40.66%)
Online subject gateways	50	40	90 (49.45%)
Online Institutional Repository	50	44	94 (51.65%)
Library forums (e-mail based)	30	48	78 (42.86%)
Online general library policies	38	48	86 (47.25%)
Web-based FAQ	22	44	66 (36.26%)
Web-based user education/virtual library tours	14	38	52 (28.57%)
News Clipping Services	16	34	50 (27.47%)
Chat with Library/Real Time Services	10	20	30 (16.48%)

The data in Table 1 shows that the majority of faculty and students use web-based reference services in various categories. 58.24 per cent of respondents use web-based reference tools, followed by 47.25 per cent who use electronic document delivery services. Additionally, 43.96 per cent and 38.46 per cent of respondents use electronic current awareness services and virtual reference desk/ask-librarian, respectively.

Most respondents (69.23 per cent) browse the list of new arrivals under acquisition services. Online bibliographic databases are preferred by 61.54 per cent of respondents, followed by the online status of items, electronic indexes, provision of alert services for new additions, online acquisition policies, and online purchase request services. Most respondents (81.32 per cent) prefer to check the availability of a specific document online. Furthermore, 54.95 per cent of respondents use alert services via email, 41.76 per cent prefer to know circulation policies online, and 38.46 per cent use online circulation data (issue/return). Additionally, 36.26 per cent prefer to check patron account status online. Notably, 82.42 per cent of respondents prefer to access online databases, while 63.74 per cent search Web OPAC and 51.65 per cent visit the library website to search multiple catalogues with a single command. Among web-based periodical services, 76.92 per cent and 75.82 per cent of respondents prefer to access subscribed e-journals and journals of the e-shodhsindhu digital library consortium, respectively. Index to journal articles is preferred by 72.53 per cent of respondents, followed by a web-based table of contents by 63.74 per cent, electronic article delivery by 56.04 per cent, and article alert service by 32.97 per cent. Fewer respondents show interest in online inter-library loan and electronic document delivery services. Only 16.48 per cent of respondents used to chat with the library/real-time services, which is the least used service.

Table 2 - Web-based Library Resources and Services

Description	Faculty	Students	Total (n=182)
Web-based library resources and services will save my time			
Strongly Agree	36	22	58 (31.9%)
Agree	52	60	112 (61.54%)
Uncertain	0	4	4 (2.2%)
Disagree	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	2	6	8 (4.4%)
Web-based library resources and services improve my ability to do research purpose			
Strongly Agree	44	38	82 (45%)
Agree	36	50	86 (47.25%)
Uncertain	10	4	14 (7.7%)
Disagree	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Web-based library resources and services enable			

me to be more productive			
Strongly Agree	34	32	66 (36.26%)
Agree	46	46	92 (50.55%)
Uncertain	10	14	24 (13.19%)
Disagree	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Web-based library resources and services adequately meet my information requirements			
Strongly Agree	36	20	56 (30.77%)
Agree	48	52	100 (54.9%)
Uncertain	4	14	18 (9.9%)
Disagree	2	6	8 (4.4%)
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Web-based library resources and services are efficient			
Strongly Agree	26	26	52 (28.57%)
Agree	44	52	96 (52.77%)
Uncertain	16	14	30 (16.49%)
Disagree	4	0	4 (2.2%)
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
I find the Web-based library resources and services useful			
Strongly Agree	36	24	60 (32.96%)
Agree	52	54	106 (58.24%)
Uncertain	0	6	6 (3.3%)
Disagree	2	8	10 (5.5%)
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the web-based library resources and services			
Strongly Agree	12	16	28 (15.38%)
Agree	64	50	114 (62.63%)
Uncertain	10	18	28 (15.38%)
Disagree	4	8	21 (6.6%)
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
The library web-based library resources and services are my first choice for information			
Strongly Agree	12	14	26 (14.29%)
Agree	52	50	102 (56%)

Uncertain	22	18	40 (22%)
Disagree	4	8	12 (6.6%)
Strongly Disagree	0	2	2 (1.1%)
I will be using more of the web-based library resources and services in the future			
Strongly Agree	24	30	54 (29.67%)
Agree	60	46	106 (58.24%)
Uncertain	6	14	20 (10.2%)
Disagree	0	2	2 (1.1%)
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
I would recommend the web-based library resources and services to others			
Strongly Agree	20	24	44 (24.17%)
Agree	70	52	122 (67.03%)
Uncertain	0	16	16 (8.8%)
Disagree	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
I will say positive things about the web-based library resources and services to others			
Strongly Agree	22	8	30 (16.48%)
Agree	66	76	142 (78.02%)
Uncertain	0	6	6 (3.3%)
Disagree	2	2	4 (2.2%)
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0

The participants expressed their belief that they can complete their teaching and research work more efficiently using web-based library resources and services. They believe it has a positive impact on their research and teaching. Table 2 displays the respondents' opinions on using web-based library resources and services. The respondents were asked to express their views on eleven statements. The findings revealed that 61.54% agreed and 31.9% strongly agreed that web-based library services save time. Over 92% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that web-based library resources and services enhance their research capabilities, while the remaining respondents found this unpredictable. When asked if web-based library resources and services make users more productive, over 85% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The same percentage also agreed or strongly agreed that these services adequately meet their information needs. Around 80% of the respondents believed that web-based library resources and services are

efficient. A significant majority (86%) agreed that these services are useful. Regarding satisfaction, 71% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while the rest disagreed or found it unpredictable. When considering if web-based library resources and services are the primary choices for accessing information, 56% of respondents agreed with this statement. Moreover, more than 90% of the respondents expressed their intention to use more web-based library services and recommend them to others. Additionally, 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would speak positively about these services to others, while the rest either disagreed or found it unpredictable. Table 1 show that the majority of respondents hold a positive opinion about the web-based library resources and services provided by the Murshidabad University Library.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE WEB-BASED LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Respondents were asked to advise ways to progress and strengthen the web-based library resources and services offered by the Murshidabad University Library. The respondents provided several major suggestions to enhance the web-based library resources and services:

1. Regular updates of the library web pages and user-friendly library websites.
2. Implement an effective online circulation system for issuing, returning, renewing, and reserving materials.
3. Improvement of bandwidth and wireless internet connectivity.
4. Inclusion of more hyperlinks to web-based library resources and services.
5. Availability of all back-volumes of journals online.
6. Implement digital literacy programs and additional web-based tutorials to aid users in utilising the web-based library resources and services more effectively.
7. Effective real-time chat with the library for assistance.
8. Conducting orientation programs and workshops on web-based library resources and services.
9. Improvement of subject gateways.
10. Application of mobile-based library resources and services.

The survey revealed that web-based library resources and services have greatly simplified professional life and become necessary for academic and research activities. However, some respondents were unaware of the web-based library resources and services due to the lack of awareness and orientation programs.

As a result of the survey and data analysis, the researchers recommended the following practical suggestions for strengthening the web-based library resources and services:

1. Conduct orientation and user education programs on web-based library resources and services.
2. Update the library website frequently to utilise library resources and web-based services better.
3. Develop a dynamic library website compatible with Web 3.0 and 4.0 technologies.
4. Provide features such as library wikis, instant messaging, RSS feeds, online reference services, virtual library tours, web-based tutorials, and discussion forums to enhance web-based library resources and services.
5. Develop mobile-friendly web-based library resources and services.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effective use of web-based library resources and services in the Murshidabad University Library. As the internet becomes more prevalent worldwide, web-based library resources and services are expected to become more widespread and advanced. Libraries must develop effective web-based library resources and services while maintaining their primary goal of serving and educating users to find, evaluate, and utilise information efficiently. The study reviewed the use of web-based library services in eight categories: reference, acquisition, circulation, cataloguing, periodicals, interlibrary loan, document delivery, and miscellaneous services. The study's results revealed that the most commonly used services included searching for the availability of specific documents online, access to online databases and electronic journals, an online list of new arrivals, and an index to journal articles. Additionally, respondents preferred search alert services through email (reminders), web-based table of contents, Web OPAC, web-based reference tools, and online library news. The survey showed that the university library lacks online Inter-Library Loan services, electronic document delivery service, and real-time chat with library staff, which are effective tools for user interaction and communication with the library staff to enhance the utilisation of library web resources. Most respondents indicated that web-based library services are their preferred choice for information and expressed satisfaction with them, stating that they intend to use more of them in the future. The findings also revealed that the surveyed university library has not yet developed effective web-based information

literacy programs and user education programs to promote using web-based library resources and services. Librarians may need to take a leadership role in meeting these challenges and providing improved web-based library resources and services to their current technology-savvy users.

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