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## Evolving User Ethos and Institutional Dynamics in University Libraries: A Study of PG Students and Scholars in Karnataka

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**Sudhakara N**

Research Scholar (Full-Time),  
Dept of Library and Information Science,  
Bangalore University, Bengaluru-56.  
email: [sudhakam241@gmail.com](mailto:sudhakam241@gmail.com)

**K. G. Jayarama Naik**

Professor,  
Dept of Library and Information Science,  
Bangalore University, Bengaluru-56.  
email: [kgjrnaik.1964@gmail.com](mailto:kgjrnaik.1964@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*Students and researchers in higher education now use library resources differently due to the incessant digitalisation of academic libraries. This issue focuses on researchers and graduate students at public and private university libraries in Karnataka and seeks to understand how various institutional factors have shaped their library use habits. It examines how Users' decisions, actions, and morals have changed in response to shifts in education and technology. The structured survey approach was used to acquire the data. Twelve first-year postgraduates, 50 second-years, 34 full-time research scholars, and 19 part-time scholars made up the 115 participants. There were 56 from public universities and 59 from private ones. Findings point to a rise in the use of digital resources, diversity in library patron participation and use patterns, and the impact of patron needs and institutional support on patron usage patterns. It suggests how academic libraries might adapt to their patrons' evolving requirements and encourage long-term participation in the information society.*

### Keywords

Academic libraries; digital resources; institutional leadership; library ethos; user behaviour

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## 1. Introduction

Academic libraries have been greatly impacted by the rise of digital technology, which has altered not just the kinds of services and materials available, but also the expectations of digital library patrons. Rather than being a static repository for printed materials, academic librarianship has transformed into a dynamic biohybrid that provides easy access to both digital and print materials. Social responsiveness, ethical behavior, and active participation from users are important and should be prioritized. The concept of an ethos, which represents the norms of behavior and social conduct that influence academic speech and conduct, is fundamental to the shift in focus. Ethical information usage, collaborative benchmarking, and a behavioral propensity toward library visits and digital resource and information services are all components of a constructive user interface ethos. The philosophy, organizational, and ethical foundations of the library's leadership, the culture of the institution, and the ethos of professional service to the patrons all contribute to the library's service ethos, which in turn impacts the variety of services offered and the value patrons get from using the library.

The use of resources and the development of the institution's leadership are its most crucial aspects. The performance of university libraries in the area is decisively influenced by several factors, the most crucial of which are integrated within-system control and focused, balanced methods of technoscientific planning. Managing the libraries themselves is also an essential consideration. Unconventional ideas. The growing need for affordable digital solutions, driven by tighter budgets, is forcing libraries to rethink their purpose more often than ever before. Because of this, many are clearly not using the services, and those who do use them have trouble getting to them. As the lecture came to a close, I went over the key points about university library advancements that required more research.

## 2. Objectives

- To examine the evolving ethos and behavioural patterns of postgraduate students and research scholars in their use of library resources and services
- To assess the extent to which technological advancements and economic factors have impacted the ethos of library resources and services

- To investigate the influence of institutional leadership on the transformation of organizational ethos within university library environments.
- To analyse the interaction between professional ethics and personal values in shaping the organizational ethos of university libraries.

The libraries of the selected public and private colleges in Karnataka are the subject of this study. These institutions represent a wide range of academic practices and institutional structures. This research is becoming more and more essential due to the shift in user behavior and institutional attitudes that is being forced by the expanding digitalization of higher education in India. Policymaking, career advancement, and the continuing discussion over academic library digitization and associated ethical duties may all benefit from this study's findings.

### 3. Literature review

#### **Theoretical background on library ethos and digital transformation**

The concept of library ethos, which encompasses a user's digital ethos, ethical obligation, and institutional identity, is starting to replace separate models of library custodianship, spatial and custodial presence, and direct and individual services. According to (Lankes, 2011), library ethos and patron ethos are complementary, supportive, and interdependent. The academic library community has come to see the transition to digital resources as a paradigm shift that might affect the values held by both library patrons and the library itself. "Knowledge as a resource is now a democratic commodity, a library respecting user autonomy" (Tenopir et al., 2013). The library is a living, breathing space. It is a hub of digital gadgets that facilitate advanced interdisciplinary investigation, collaborative cooperation, and blended learning. According to Joint (2005). Achieving a responsive stance that is both integrated and fair requires a combination of technological advancements with a focus on policy, ethics, and morality.

#### **Studies on user behaviour in digital library settings**

Changing library roles for students and researchers has been widely discussed. Remote access systems, databases, and electronic journals have supplanted libraries for many users (Joo & Choi, 2015; Tenopir et al., 2012). Users used to rapid accessibility and convenience expect digital resources and mobile-

friendly sites to be accessible 24/7. An Indian study shows that many doctoral and postgraduate students seek internet help with research, writing, and literature reviews (Thanuskodi, 2011). Institutional digital infrastructure and literacy gaps persist. These discrepancies affect the consistency and quality of user interaction. User information and communication technology (ICT) competence, access to online education, and institutional backing all have a role in how often and how thoroughly users engage with digital libraries (Kumar & Singh, 2019).

#### **Impact of institutional leadership and professional ethics in libraries**

There is more to the job of the head of an academic library than just overseeing the library's operations. In addition to encouraging innovations, the new responsibilities of these roles call for ethical caretaking and forward-thinking. Strategic alignment of library objectives with higher institutional purposes, adoption of a client-focused service design, and promotion of ethical behaviors among Users are some of the successful management strategies outlined by Hernon and Rossiter (2007). Confidentiality, trust, equitable access, and impartial information are professional ethics that arise at the crossroads of the public, the internet, and libraries.

Library directors in developing nations, like India, often confront obstacles such as insufficient funding, bureaucracy, and a lack of uniform policy (Ramesha & Kumbar, 2004). Most digital efforts rely on library managers to push for staff training, technology adoption, and new service delivery methods. Users engage with the library via systems rather than staff interfaces, making the professional ethos of illumination, service, and collaborative leadership increasingly important in digital contexts.

### 4. Research methodology

#### **Research design**

Examining how postgraduates and research researchers feel about digital academic libraries throughout time, this study takes a descriptive, analytic, and eclectic method. Digital I. posture, use patterns, and the e, and use posture that accompany the behavior may be systematically recorded via the use of a descriptive approach. Analysis of digital usage, student interactions, institution-student engagements, and user behavior all work together. The study's methodology went beyond standard educational and behavioural research methods by investigating the causes of participants' actions.

**Population**

The intended audience consists of full-and part-time graduate students and academics from a few private and public colleges in Karnataka. These Users play a significant role in the region's academic library user community. The ever-evolving nature of technology and the dynamic nature of the academic environment have a significant impact on their user behavior and expectations.

**Sampling method and size**

Data was gathered using a technique called selective sampling. This method involves selecting research participants who best match the study's objectives. The goal was to find Users who will use libraries in person and online (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). 115 survey participants were allocated as follows:

- 56 from state universities
- 59 from private universities

Different academic levels and kinds of institutions led to focused user perceptions.

**Tool used**

The researchers' structured questionnaire included multiple-choice and Likert items. This section of the survey examined active and passive library use, awareness and satisfaction, ICT proficiency, institutional support, professional ethics, compliance, respect, and open adherence to library rules and policies. Researchers utilised expert materials to assess the clarity and relevance of the survey instrument.

**Data collection and analysis techniques**

Physically and remotely accessible self-administered questionnaires were used to obtain primary data. I assigned numeric codes to replies and uploaded them to statistical instruments to simplify data processing and analytics.

I used descriptive statistics, such as percentages, mean scores, and frequency counts, to describe respondents' characteristics. I then used cross-tabulations and the chi-square test to examine correlations among user factors such as qualification, library type, and engagement to understand library use. I understood digital libraries by evaluating users' attitudes about the institution's surroundings.

**5. Results and analysis**

This part comprises empirical data from 115 respondents, including research scientists and postgraduate students from public and private universities in Karnataka. An examination of

academic rank and institutional affiliation is used to understand changing user ethos in academic libraries. The research also demonstrates how user characteristics and institutional structures influence libraries' digitisation efforts and usage patterns in the new environment.

**Basic details**

This section provides data from 115 postgraduate students and researchers from private and government universities in Karnataka. Patternized data on academic library users' institutions and professional affiliations may help explain their shifting priorities. Further analysis may reveal how organisational structures and user attributes affect the use of digital library resources and services.

**Table 1:** Respondents' breakdown by institution type

Type of university	No. of respondents	Percentage
State University	56	48.7
Private University	59	51.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 shows that public universities employed 48.7% and private institutions 51.3%. Both sorts of colleges participate reasonably. This balance allows the educational methods and corporate principles of public and private universities to be evaluated. The percentage of equivalency also facilitates cross-sectional investigation of institutional differences in leadership, digital infrastructure, and user support services.

**Table 2:** Level of education of participants

Academic status	No. of respondents	Percentages
I Year PG student	12	10.4
II Year PG student	50	43.5
Full time scholar	34	29.6
Part time scholar	19	16.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Among the categories that provided responses, 43.5% are second-year postgraduate students and 29.6% are full-time research researchers. Part-time students make up 16.5% of the sample, with first-year postgraduates making up the smallest subset at 10.4%. Based on this ratio, it can be inferred that the

sample was primarily composed of more experienced users of library information centre sources, who likely possess a greater number of print and online academic materials than less experienced users. The presence of academics and students Data from this sample will be useful for studying library patrons' actions, involvement, and expectations over the academic career.

In terms of the demographics of the sample, 57.4% were female and 42.6% were male. This is the fourth breakdown of the genders in the sample, and it seems that more and more women are going to graduate

school and doing research, particularly in the humanities and social sciences

**Table 3:** Respondents' gender breakdown

Gender	No. of respondents'	Percentages
Male	49	42.6
Female	66	57.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4:** Usage Rate of Various Digital Tools of Respondents

Type of digital resources	Responses	Very frequently	Frequently	Uncertain	Occasionally	Not at all used	Total
University websites	N	49	58	3	4	1	115
	%	42.6%	50.4%	2.6%	3.5%	0.9%	100.0%
University library web portal	N	45	38	25	5	2	115
	%	39.1%	33.0%	21.7%	4.3%	1.7%	100.0%
Government web portals	N	35	35	40	4	1	115
	%	30.4%	30.4%	34.8%	3.5%	0.9%	100.0%
E-books, E-reports	N	39	48	22	5	1	115
	%	33.9%	41.7%	19.1%	4.3%	0.9%	100.0%
E-journals, E-magazines	N	31	56	24	2	2	115
	%	27.0%	48.7%	20.9%	1.7%	1.7%	100.0%
E-news papers	N	25	42	41	4	3	115
	%	21.7%	36.5%	35.7%	3.5%	2.6%	100.0%
ETDs electronic thesis & dissertations	N	18	37	54	4	2	115
	%	15.7%	32.2%	47.0%	3.5%	1.7%	100.0%
E-patents	N	26	37	42	6	4	115
	%	22.6%	32.2%	36.5%	5.2%	3.5%	100.0%
Indexing - abstracting databases	N	26	44	35	7	3	115
	%	22.6%	38.3%	30.4%	6.1%	2.6%	100.0%
Full-text databases	N	27	53	29	3	3	115
	%	23.5%	46.1%	25.2%	2.6%	2.6%	100.0%
Digital references sources	N	22	30	50	9	4	115
	%	19.1%	26.1%	43.5%	7.8%	3.5%	100.0%
Institutional repository	N	17	35	52	3	8	115
	%	14.8%	30.4%	45.2%	2.6%	7.0%	100.0%
Subject-specific portals	N	15	32	55	9	4	115
	%	13.0%	27.8%	47.8%	7.8%	3.5%	100.0%
digital academic lecture videos	N	19	30	57	5	4	115
	%	16.5%	26.1%	49.6%	4.3%	3.5%	100.0%
CDs/DVDs	N	7	28	65	9	6	115
	%	6.1%	24.3%	56.5%	7.8%	5.2%	100.0%
Digital recreational resources	N	13	29	59	9	5	115
	%	11.3%	25.2%	51.3%	7.8%	4.3%	100.0%
Online job sites	N	24	38	45	4	4	115
	%	20.9%	33.0%	39.1%	3.5%	3.5%	100.0%

According to the respondents, Table 4 shows the percentage utilization of different digital resources. Researchers found that participants seldom used web-based lecture videos and academic portals, but often used digital resources including university websites (93% utilization) and e-journals (75.7%). These findings point to an excess of digital tool use and a preference for more structured use.

**Table 5:** The aims of utilising digital technologies by academic users

Purpose	No. of responses	Percent
To study/learning	107	93.0
For preparing assignments	84	73.0
For searching the literature for	70	60.9

research		
For update subject knowledge	72	62.6
To write research papers	62	53.9
For career development	58	50.4
To understand the multidisciplinary approach of the subject	46	40.0
To complete the project work	76	66.1

Digital resources are used for many purposes, as seen in Table 5. The majority of respondents use digital resources for studying and learning, with a further 66.1% using them for project work and 60.9% for literature reviews. As a result, it's clear that academic activities include easily accessible digital resources and meet research and curricular objectives.

**Table 6:** The extent of the respondents' awareness concerning several digital resources.

Type of digital resources	Responses	Extremely aware	Aware	Uncertain	Not aware	Not at all aware	Total
University websites	N	55	59	1	0	0	115
	%	47.8%	51.3%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
University library web portal	N	39	61	14	1	0	115
	%	33.9%	53.0%	12.2%	0.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Government web portals	N	32	50	33	0	0	115
	%	27.8%	43.5%	28.7%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
E-books, E-reports	N	38	54	21	2	0	115
	%	33.0%	47.0%	18.3%	1.7%	0.0%	100.0%
E-journals, E-magazines	N	34	56	25	0	0	115
	%	29.6%	48.7%	21.7%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
E-news papers	N	28	40	45	0	2	115
	%	24.3%	34.8%	39.1%	0.0%	1.7%	100.0%
ETDs electronic thesis & dissertations	N	23	30	57	5	0	115
	%	20.0%	26.1%	49.6%	4.3%	0.0%	100.0%
E-patents	N	17	30	63	3	2	115
	%	14.8%	26.1%	54.8%	2.6%	1.7%	100.0%
Indexing - abstracting databases	N	23	45	40	5	2	115
	%	20.0%	39.1%	34.8%	4.3%	1.7%	100.0%
Full-text databases	N	27	58	25	5	0	115
	%	23.5%	50.4%	21.7%	4.3%	0.0%	100.0%
Digital references sources	N	26	40	44	5	0	115
	%	22.6%	34.8%	38.3%	4.3%	0.0%	100.0%
Institutional repository	N	21	30	55	9	0	115
	%	18.3%	26.1%	47.8%	7.8%	0.0%	100.0%
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	%	20.0%	24.3%	48.7%	5.2%	1.7%	100.0%
digital academic lecture videos	N	18	34	53	10	0	115
	%	15.7%	29.6%	46.1%	8.7%	0.0%	100.0%
CDs/DVDs	N	20	22	64	5	4	115
	%	17.4%	19.1%	55.7%	4.3%	3.5%	100.0%
Digital recreational resources	N	16	31	61	5	2	115

	%	13.9%	27.0%	53.0%	4.3%	1.7%	100.0%
Online job sites	N	24	37	50	3	1	115
	%	20.9%	32.2%	43.5%	2.6%	0.9%	100.0%

While most Users are familiar with common digital technologies, only a small percentage are familiar with more advanced resources like online university courses and electronic patents. Only 45.3% of Users are familiar with lecture videos, while 40.9% are

familiar with e-patents. In sharp contrast, almost three-quarters of respondents are familiar with university websites, and 99.1 per cent with e-journals. The research also shows that users struggle to articulate even the most basic materials, which prevents them from accessing more sophisticated digital resources.

**Table 74:** Barriers Encountered in Accessing Digital Library Resources

		5	4	3	2	1	Total
Poor network/internet connectivity to access electronic databases	N	11	42	52	5	0	110
	%	10.0%	38.2%	47.3%	4.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Most of the digital contents are outdated and not current	N	9	33	56	11	0	109
	%	8.3%	30.3%	51.4%	10.1%	0.0%	100.0%
most of the digital contents are outdated and not current	N	7	48	36	7	2	100
	%	7.0%	48.0%	36.0%	7.0%	2.0%	100.0%
Inadequate technological facilities to use for electronic sources	N	14	35	32	2	0	83
	%	16.9%	42.2%	38.6%	2.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Non-availability of full text access to most of the journals	N	11	27	59	5	0	102
	%	10.8%	26.5%	57.8%	4.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Difficulty in locating materials from the library website	N	13	26	56	5	1	101
	%	12.9%	25.7%	55.4%	5.0%	1.0%	100.0%
Electricity failure	N	7	23	54	9	0	93
	%	7.5%	24.7%	58.1%	9.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Any other	N	5	18	28	3	0	54
	%	9.3%	33.3%	51.9%	5.6%	0.0%	100.0%

**Note:** 5=Strongly agree; 4=Agree; 3 = Uncertain; 2=Disagree; 1= Strongly disagree

Table 7 shows that low internet connection (48.2%), static digital material (51.4%), and information

system issues (55.4%) restrict digital access to the school library. These sociotechnical issues decrease user confidence in library systems and access equality.

**Table 8:** Key areas for improvement and innovation in enhancing information retrieval in digital library environments

		5	4	3	2	1	Total
Training and support of users in information retrieval skills	N	19	65	18	0	0	102
	%	18.6%	63.7%	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Building an index form a document collection to a searchable data structure to enhance electronic information retrieval	N	12	71	18	0	0	101
	%	11.9%	70.3%	17.8%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Developing an improved description metadata to describe information that is in formats other than text	N	12	56	35	1	0	104
	%	11.5%	53.8%	33.7%	1.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Provision of an online abstract that provides comprehensive information on the institutional repository	N	16	57	23	2	1	99
	%	16.2%	57.6%	23.2%	2.0%	1.0%	100.0%

Provision of catalogues that provide comprehensive bibliographic information that cannot be derived directly from the objects	N	16	45	24	1	1	87
	%	18.4%	51.7%	27.6%	1.1%	1.1%	100.0%
Provision of more proficient digital libraries	N	16	59	22	1	0	98
	%	16.3%	60.2%	22.4%	1.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Any other	N	10	21	10	2	0	43
	%	23.3%	48.8%	23.3%	4.7%	0.0%	100.0%

**Note:** 5=Strongly agree; 4=Agree; 3 = Uncertain; 2=Disagree; 1= Strongly disagree

Table 8 shows that respondents strongly support training programs (82.3%), better metadata (65.3%),

and improved cataloging services (70.1%). Users want better discovery tools, thus “user-centered design” and “user training” should be emphasized for digital library services.

**Table 9:** Users’ compliance with ethical codes in university libraries in Karnataka

		Very High	High	Low	Very Low	Total
Failure to return any material in the users’ possession when due attracts a fine	N	22	30	30	2	84
	%	26.2%	35.7%	35.7%	2.4%	100.0%
Show your identity card	N	28	63	13	3	107
	%	26.2%	58.9%	12.1%	2.8%	100.0%
No making of calls in the library	N	19	31	35	5	90
	%	21.1%	34.4%	38.9%	5.6%	100.0%
No fighting in the library	N	18	33	37	8	96
	%	18.8%	34.4%	38.5%	8.3%	100.0%
No stealing of library materials	N	17	40	32	8	97
	%	17.5%	41.2%	33.0%	8.2%	100.0%
Loss of library materials in users position attracts payment of new ones	N	22	36	27	5	90
	%	24.4%	40.0%	30.0%	5.6%	100.0%
No wearing of noisy slippers and shoes	N	20	37	28	7	92
	%	21.7%	40.2%	30.4%	7.6%	100.0%
Taking bags inside the library by users is prohibited	N	18	38	21	10	87
	%	20.7%	43.7%	24.1%	11.5%	100.0%
No tearing or mutilation of any library material	N	18	37	24	9	88
	%	20.5%	42.0%	27.3%	10.2%	100.0%
No eating in the library	N	21	32	26	8	87
	%	24.1%	36.8%	29.9%	9.2%	100.0%

**6. Discussion**

Table 9 measures library user ethics. The most crucial compliance indicators, such as displaying identification cards (85.1%), stealing proprietary materials (58.7%), and paying late or missing items (61.9%), led to a yes vote. Lower compliance with no calls (55.5%) and no loud footwear (61.9%). Users seem more compliant with institutional regulations that bind materials and responsibility. Users seem more compliant with institutional regulations that bind materials and responsibility. The academic user faces a major behavior decorum gap.

In the context of rapidly changing technology and institutions, this study investigates the perspectives and experiences of research researchers and postgraduate students regarding the university library.

Analysis of digital user behavior, staff professionalism, and ethics reveals several intersecting threads.

University websites, electronic journals, and electronic books are only a few examples of the

digital platforms where users' participation and use awareness have changed noticeably, according to the data (Tables 6). users were satisfied with the resources given, which supports the idea that academic work is more accessible and engaging due to the digital transition. However, there is still limited use of university value-added services such as academic films, indexing databases, and institutional repositories, suggesting that these sophisticated services are still in their early stages of development and that not everyone is happy with them.

Users had positive impressions of the professional staff's attitudes regarding responsiveness, approachability, and timeliness of service. Better staff training and a more attentive and compassionate approach to customer service are required, nevertheless, since users complained about a lack of individuality and emotional involvement.

Academic library patrons' involvement has shifted from a passive reliance on physical resources to an active, actively engaged usage of digital technologies. Table 5 shows that e-resources are chosen and appreciated even in learning, research, and revision processes. it also shows that self-motivation and peer teaching are prominent motivators, which may indicate a separate digital literacy culture that challenges the idea of libraries as exclusive educational institutions.

An ethical shift is occurring alongside a behavioural shift, as users push for greater openness, digital platforms, and systemic inclusivity with faster processes—a paradigm shift that is becoming increasingly prevalent in the global supply of academic resources (Lankes, 2011). Table 7 shows that the honesty and reliability of the library's services are severely undermined by obstacles such as lateness of issues, unstable internet connections, and basic full-text access. An additional sign of the numbing down of other essential behavioral norms in the digital age is non-validated behavioral compliance, which includes things like disregard for phones and behavioral etiquette (Table 8).

Unattended principles give rise to the institutions' access to advanced tactics. Academics in particular continue to exhibit a lack of behavioral standards and principles as well as an outright contempt for established norms of professional conduct and email protocol (Hernon & Rossiter, 2007).

## **7. Conclusion**

A case study of how the changing values of graduate students and research researchers have influenced the evolution of university libraries. Tables 6 show that respondents' reliance on digital resources, including e-journals, e-books, and the university web site, increased significantly. A large majority of respondents were pleased with the services provided and among the many factors related to education, research, and scholarship, the use of digital resources ranked highest (Table 5). The need for immediate gratification, portability, and spatial independence has shifted user ethos toward a preference for classic print interactions and main print-based resources.

The control of service delivery and the ethical service atmosphere were largely influenced by institutional leaders. In general, respondents thought the library personnel was helpful and kind (Tables 7). However, when it came to engaging emotionally, there was a major gap. There was a lack of advanced training on how to engage with users, and the user education programs that were available mostly included lectures and demonstrations. Users' overall lack of concern for ethical issues was most noticeable in their disregard for established norms of conduct, which indicated that individuals' values did not line up with those of the organization (Table 8). Table 7 clearly shows the stated constraints. Challenges in the areas of technology and economics include things like slow internet connections, outdated material, and a lack of full-text journals. The significance of enhancing infrastructure and implementing supporting policies is highlighted by these problems.

## **8. Limitations of the study**

Despite the study's significance, several caveats should be noted. First, the results may not be generalizable, as the sample size was small (115 Users) and the participants came from a variety of public and private universities. Also, the study relied mostly on participants' own accounts, which are prone to bias. Lastly, it was clear that the analysis was driven by the users. The study may have been far more in-depth if it had taken into account administrative and professional perspectives obtained via interviews or focus groups.

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