Use and Opinion on Digital Information Sources and Service by the Users of Self Financing Engineering Institutions In Thiruvallur District (India)

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Abstract

In this study has been made to identify the digital information sources and their utility among the engineering institutions in thiruvallur district, Tamil nadu (India). There are 44 engineering institutons in this district of which 24 institutions established before 2005 were taken up for the study. Out of 2400 questionnaire were distributed 2214 were respondended. The response rate is 92.56%. In this study Opinion on digital information sources, Frequeny of use of digital information, Search engine preferences and preferred communication mode on library services were analysed and presented. There exist positive approach on the use of digital information sources and preferred to use the digital services effectively by the users of the engineering institutions of Thiruvallur district

Keywords

Digital Resources, information sources and services, SFEC Libraries.

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INTRODUCTION

The digital world permeates every part of our lives – our homes, our schools, our workplaces, our public spaces (transport, libraries, cafes, cities). It is, in fact, very hard to get away from the digital environment. Even those who continue to resist computers, faxes, e-mail, personal digital assistants, let alone the Internet and the World Wide Web, can hardly avoid taking advantage of the embedded microchips and invisible processors that make phones easier to use, cars safer to drive, appliances more reliable, utilities more predictable, toys and games more enjoyable. Increasingly it surrounds us wherever we go. In future digital media is everywhere and internet advertising is constantly responding to the individual viewing it, interacting with that subject, providing goods and services ideally matched to the user's known profile. The digital environment has become intensively invasive, even implanted into the human brain. The novel explores the effects of these digital implants upon a group of futuristic teenagers, where the inconvenience of accessing the internet through a secondary device is removed by the internet invading the human body, a kind of cyborg reality.

This mixture between definition of the digital environment and analysis of the effects or symptoms of the digital environment are seen on the online digital guide developed by Caslon[1] Analysts in Australia, which lists a number of key aspects which make up the digital environment or issues relating to the digital environment, especially from their own interest in the regulation of this new arena.

DIGITAL COLLECTION

Libraries of all sizes and types are embracing digital collections, although most libraries will continue to offer both print and digital collections for many years to come. New purchases and purchases of journals, magazines, and abstracting and indexing services are heavily weighted toward digital, while digital books (e-books) are only beginning to become a presence in library collections.

Libraries prefer digital collections for many reasons, including, but not limited to, the following: digital journals can be linked from and to indexing and abstracting databases; access can be from the user's home, office, or dormitory whether or not the physical library is open; the library can get usage statistics that are not available for print collections; and digital collections save space and are relatively

easy to maintain. When total processing and space costs are taken into account, electronic collections may also result in some overall reductions in library costs.

RELATED LITERATURE

There exist several reviews and monographs on information seeking and scientific communication study (Bates, 2005; Case, 2002; Dervin & Nilan, 1986; Fisher, Erdelez & McKechnie, 2005; Spink & Cole, 2005). Information seeking and use varies by discipline, profession, task, situation, and context (e.g., Bates, 1994; Bates et al., 1995; Borgman, 2006; Bystrom,1999; Case, 2002; Cool, 2001; Dervin, 1997; Kling & McKim, 2000; Hansen & Järvelin, 2005; Rice & Tarin, 1993; Savolainen, 2006a, 2006b; Solomon, 1997, 2002; Talija & Maula, 2003; Tenopir et al, 2005; Tenopir et al, in press; Vakkari, 2006; Vakkari & Talija, 2005; Zhang, 2001). Using various research methods (Wang, 1999), the majority of the studies have focused on specific user groups or individual IICTs, such as e-journals, digital library, and online library catalogue, etc.

This ongoing study investigates the frequency of use of digital information, opinion on digital information, and expectations on various digital information services by students studying in engineering instituions. A semi-structured questionnaire method and a hybrid quantitative and qualitative approach to observe researchers' uses of digital environment in seeking their required information. The purpose of the study is to understand how digital environment are used to support their academic requirements and what are the similarities and differences across disciplines and cultures.

OBJECTIVES

Some of the objectives are :

- To identify awareness on digital environment among the students of the Engineering Institutions.
- To identify the awareness about the availability of digital services by the users in engineering institutions.
- To identify the awareness among the users about the availability of digital sources in their engineering instituions.
- To identify the awareness on various ICT tools by the users
- To identify the barriers in providing the digital services and acquiring digital sources by the engineering institutions

HYPOTHESES

Based on the stated objectives following hypotheses were framed :

1. Their exist awareness on digital environment among the students of the engineering institutions.
2. The users are well aware about the availability of various digital services in their institutions.
3. Their exist awareness on various digital sources in their institutions among the users
4. The users are familier in the use of ICT tools
5. Their exist certain barriers in providing digital services and in acquiring of digital sources in engineering institutions

METHODOLOGY

There exist 46 Self financing engineering institutions in Thiruvallur district in Tamil Nadu, India. These engineering instituions are established over the years from 1991. Out of 46 Self financing engineering institutions only 24 engineering institutions that are established prior to 2005 were taken up for the study. A well structured questionnair were distributed among 24 Self financing engineering institutions. Each institution was provided with 100 questionnaires. Thus 2400 questionnaires were distributed. Out of 2400 questionnaire distributed only 2214 responses were received. The response rate is 92.25%. The questionnaire thus received were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS).

LIMITATIONS

There exist 46 self financing engineering institutions in Thiruvellur district. Out of which 24 self financing institutions that are established on or before 2005 are taken up for the study. The private universities are not taken up for the study. Each institutions only 100 questionnaire alone distributed.

DATA ANALYSIS

The 2214 responses thus received were analysis using SPSS package. The demographic details of the respondentes were shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Details of the Respondents

S.No	Description	Responses	%
1	Gender		
	Male	1501	67.8
	Female	713	32.2
2	Age		
	18-20	2148	97.0
	21-23	44	2.0
	24-26	17	0.8%
	Above 27	5	0.2%
3	Branch		
	Circuit Branch	1584	71.5%
	Non Circuit Branch	630	28.5%
4	Nature of Management		
	Self financing - Minority	1296	58.54%
	Self financing – Non Minority	918	41.46%

It can be seen from the table-1 that 67.8% were male and 32.2% are female. Similarly 97% of them are of age group between 18 and 20. Only 3% of them are of age group are above 21 years. 71.5% of them belong to circuit branch and 28.5% belong to non circuit branch. 58.54% belongs to Minority Self financing institutions and 41.46 % belongs to Non-Minority institutions.

Frequency of use of digital information

The frequency of use of digital information by the respondents were ascertained and the same is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Frequency of Use of Digital Information

S.No.	Frequency of visit	No. of Responses	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Daily	1323	59.8	59.8
2	Once in a week	201	9.1	68.8
3	Several times a week	585	26.4	95.3
4	Once in a fortnight	58	2.6	97.9
5	Once in month	12	0.5	98.4
6	As & when required	35	1.6	100.0
7	Never	0	0.0	100.0
	Total	2214	100.0	

59.8% of the users are using the digital information daily. 35.5% of users are using eaither once in a week or several times a week. Nearly 95.3% of users are using the digital information exhaustively. Only 1.6% were using the digital information as and when required.

Opinion on digital information sources

The opinion on digital information sources were ascertained based on Thirteen variables on a five point scale such as “Not motivator”, “Weakest Motivator”, “Average Motivator”, “Fairly Motivator”, and “Strongest Motivator”. The mean and standardard deviation were calculated based on opinion. The variables, opinion, mean, standardard deviation and ranks were shown in table 3.

Table 3: Opinion on Digital Information Sources

S.No.	Description	Not Motivator		Weakest Motivator		Average Motivator		Fairly Motivator		Strongest Motivator		Mean	Std	Rank
1	to update subject knowledge	18	.8%	93	4.2%	438	19.8%	949	42.9%	716	32.3%	4.02	0.87	2
2	to prepare for examination	0	.0%	36	1.6%	281	12.7%	1034	46.7%	863	39.0%	4.23	0.73	1
3	genral awareness for new knowledge	49	2.2%	364	16.4%	664	30.0%	819	37.0%	318	14.4%	3.45	1.00	7
4	for participation in seminars/conference etc.	43	1.9%	674	30.4%	706	31.9%	721	32.6%	70	3.2%	3.05	0.91	8

5	management of information	0	.0%	1116	50.4%	904	40.8%	194	8.8%	0	.0%	2.58	0.65	13
6	to write and publish papers in the seminars/journals	54	2.4%	723	32.7%	766	34.6%	660	29.8%	11	.5%	2.93	0.86	9
7	to prepare notes for competitive examination	46	2.1%	225	10.2%	626	28.3%	849	38.3%	468	21.1%	3.66	0.99	5
8	to score more marks in the exam	28	1.3%	218	9.8%	543	24.5%	831	37.5%	594	26.8%	3.79	0.99	3
9	to do higher study	69	3.1%	324	14.6%	639	28.9%	826	37.3%	356	16.1%	3.49	1.03	6
10	to check authenticity of avilable results/ information	19	.9%	1066	48.1%	720	32.5%	364	16.4%	45	2.0%	2.71	0.82	11
11	to evolve information ideas/techniques	5	.2%	800	36.1%	777	35.1%	632	28.5%	0	.0%	2.92	0.81	10
12	to knowthe information about government decisions on science and technology policy of funding	76	3.4%	345	15.6%	743	33.6%	0	.0%	1050	47.4%	3.72	1.29	4
13	for pleasure of doing good work self-fulfillment and self -satisfaction	0	.0%	1116	50.4%	765	34.6%	333	15.0%	0	.0%	2.65	0.73	12

"To prepare for the examination", "To update for subject knowledge" and "To score more marks in the exam" are first three preferences. Least preferences were given for "Management of Information", "for pleasure of doing good work self fulfillment and self satisfaction" and "to check authenticity of avilable reslts/information". The mean ranges from 2.58 to 4.23 which indicate that all variables taken up for the study lies between average motivator and strongest motivatior. Standard deviation ranges from 0.73 to 1.29 indicates that there is not much deviation among the opinion among the users.

Search engine preferred

The order of preference of the search engine that are used for retrieving the digital information has been ascertained on ranking scale and the same is shown in table 4. Google is the prefreered search engine among the users (81.3%). It is followed by Lycos (69.8%), Yahoo (69.2%) and Web Crawler (59.8%). Askjeeves (58.8%) and Altavista (56.1%) are the least preferred search engine. However 31.5% were using other search engines.

Table 4: Preferred Search Engine

S.No	Search engine	preferences	Percentage
1	Google	1799	81.3%
2	Yahoo	1532	69.2%
3	Web Crawler	1324	59.8%
4	Altavista	1243	56.1%
5	Lycos	1545	69.8%
6	Askjeeves	1301	58.8%
7	Others	696	31.5%

Communicating mode on library services

The preferred mode of Communicating the information on library services such as "Remainder service", "Renewal Service", "Request for availability" and "Reservation of books" were ascertained and the same is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Communicating Mode on Library Services

S.No.	Services	SMS		e-mail		by calling		all the three	
1	Remainder service	32	1.4%	533	24.1%	1649	74.5%	0	.0%
2	Renewal service	190	8.6%	379	17.1%	835	37.7%	810	36.6%
3	Request for availability	248	11.2%	664	30.0%	1118	50.5%	184	8.3%
4	Researvation of books	98	4.4%	0	.0%	1210	54.7%	906	40.9%

74.5% of users prefer the remainder services by calling directly. It is followed by e-mail (24.1%) and SMS (1.4%). They prefer any one method and not all the three. Similarly 37.7% of the users prefer renewal services by calling directly. 36.6% prefer all the three methods. 17.1% prefer only e-mail and 8.6% preferring SMS. Request for availability of information are preferred by directly calling (50.5%). It is followed by email (30.0%), SMS (11.2%) and all the three (8.3%). In the case of reservation of books, the responses were 54.7% by calling, 40.9% on all the three methods, and 4.4% by SMS. None of them preferring e-mail alone.

FINDINGS

Some of the findings are

- Out of 2400 questionnaire distributed to 24 institutions, which were established before 2005, only 2214 responses were received. The response rate is 92.25%.
- "To prepare for the examination", "To update for subject knowledge" and "To score more marks in the exam" are first three preferences on the opinion on digital information sources.
- Least preferences were given for "Management of Information", "for pleasure of doing good work self fulfillment and self satisfaction" and "to check authenticity of avilable reslts/information".
- Nearly 95.3% of users are using the digital information exhaustively
- Google is the prefreered search engine among the users (81.3%). It is followed by Lycos (69.8%), Yahoo (69.2%) and Web Crawler (59.8%). Askjeeves (58.8%) and Altavista (56.1%) are the least preferred search engine. However 31.5% were using other search engines.
- Request for availability of information are preferred by directly calling (50.5%). It is followed by email (30.0%), SMS (11.2%) and all the three (8.3%).
- In the case of reservation of books, the responses were 54.7% by calling, 40.9% on all the three methods, and 4.4% by SMS. None of them preferring e-mail alone.

CONCLUSION

Digital resource is a very broad term means any electronic product that delivers collection of data be it in text, numerical, graphical, or time based, as commercially available resource and a kind of documents in digital formats which are made available to library users through a computer based information retrieval system. Few offline databases in CD/DVD formats that can even be accessed without the help of internet are also find place in the libraries. In recent years, academic users have become more dependent to obtain information pertinent to their research needs. Access to e-resources not only influences the way students and scholars conduct research, it also changes the way they use the traditional library. Especially, online e-journals have become widely popular among library users.

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