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## **Utilization of Electronic Information Resources by Library Users at Assam University**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The present study has been undertaken with a view to assess the awareness and usage patterns of electronic information resources by the library users of Assam University, Silchar. The study further aims to investigate the level of satisfaction among the users with the existing ICT infrastructure facilities available in the university library and the various problems encountered by them while accessing internet and electronic information resources. Primarily, questionnaire has been used as a data collection tool along with observations and informal interviews. A total of 110 questionnaires have been distributed randomly among the users who have visited the university library for accessing internet. The data collected through the survey has been analyzed using simple percentage technique and the responses are presented in tables and figures.*

**Keywords:** Use patterns, E-journals, E-books, Onlinedatabases, ETD, Assam University

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's networked environment the emphasis of library collection are gradually shifting towards electronic information resources. It is one of the most important and influential outcome of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) developments. The dawn of e-resources has drastically changed the way of accessing the conserved information in databases, and provided marvelous speeds for retrieving it. During the last few decades growth and demand of information has been multiplied many times. With the revolution of e-resources, the activities, and operation, which were performed manually, are now being automated, thus enhancing the role and responsibility of librarians (Sharma, Singh & Sharma, 2011). The electronic resources (e-resources) available in a library play a prominent role in facilitating access to required information to the users in an easy and expeditious manner. The e-resources, like CD-ROM databases, online journals, online books, OPACs, and the internet, are slowly replacing the importance and usage of print media. It is imperative that one should be familiar with the use and exploitation of e-resources for their quick and effective usage for promotion of academic excellence and research (Bhatia, 2011). Due to the significant advantages offered by the electronic information resources, users are gradually adopting the technology and make use of these information contents in their academic and research work. The users of Assam University Library can access different types of electronic information resources which consist of e-journals, e-books and online databases available through UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium and Department of Biotechnology Electronic Library Consortium (DeLCON). The present study is an attempt to examine the utilization of electronic information resources by the library users at Assam University, Silchar.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A large number of studies have been conducted on utilization of electronic information resources in the last few years. Bhatia (2011) assessed the usage of e-resources by the users of 11 degree college libraries in Chandigarh and suggest few measures to take full advantage of IT to make degree college libraries more digitally resourceful for providing information services to the users. Sinha, Singha and Sinha (2011) evaluate the usage pattern of electronic resources made available in the Assam University Library under the UGC- INFONET Digital Library Consortium and provide few suggestions and recommendations for the improving the access to Internet, e-journals and e-resources. Satpathy and Rout (2010) investigate the use of e-resources by the faculty members of CVRCE and found that the faculty members are aware of various types of e-resources, e-database, and e-journals and suggests the need for the improvement in the access facilities with high Internet speed and subscription to more e-resources by the Central Library. Babu, Sarada and Ramaiah (2009) investigate the use of Internet resources by the academic community of the Sri Venkateswara University (SVU), Tirupati and highlighted various problems and issues involved in handling digital library and give few suggestions for improvement of library services. Gowda and Shivalingaiah (2009)

assessed the attitude of research scholars towards usage of electronic information resources available in university libraries in Karnataka and revealed that the significant differences in preference of print and electronic resources among various disciplines. Koovakkai and Noor KV (2006) revealed the lower rate of satisfaction towards the availability of e-resources among the faculty members and the major barriers in using e-resources are non-availability of full text, lack of time and the lack of system speed.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are:

- To know the preferred media of information among the library users
- To study the usage of different types of electronic information resources by the users
- To determine the frequency of using the electronic information resources by the users
- To study the various purposes of using electronic information resources by the users
- To know the file format of electronic information resources preferred by the users
- To find out the problems encountered by the library users while accessing electronic information resources

### **4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study is limited to the Assam University Library and its users. As the survey has been conducted during February - March 2015, the sample population is restricted to the library users who have visited the university library during the period of two month only.

### **5. METHODOLOGY**

To investigate the utilization of electronic information resources by the library users at Assam University, survey method has been adopted. A structured questionnaire has been designed keeping in view the objectives of the study and used as data collection tool along with observations and informal interviews. The questionnaires are administered to users who have visited the university library for accessing internet during the survey period. Simple random sampling has been followed to select sample from the study population. On the basis of filled up questionnaires the data has been analysed and inferences were made based on standard statistical techniques.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Response Rate

A total of 110 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, out of which 104 questionnaires duly filled by the respondents were received back. The overall response rate is 94.55 percent.

Table 1: Response Rate

No. of Questionnaire Distributed	No. of Questionnaire Received Back	Percentage of Response
110	104	94.55 %

6.2 Characteristics of the Respondents

The sample selected for the study includes students and research scholars who have visited the university library during the survey period. Table 2 shows that 64 (61.54%) of the respondents are students and 40 (38.46%) of the respondents are research scholars. It also shows that 59 (56.73%) of the respondents are male and 45 (43.27%) of the respondents are female.

Table 2: Characteristics of the Respondents

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Category		
Students	64	61.54
Research Scholars	40	38.46
Gender		
Male	59	56.73
Female	45	43.27
Total	104	100

6.3 Preference of Media

One of the utmost outcomes of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) development is the creation of electronic resources. In order to know the impact of electronic resources on usage of printed resources, users were asked to indicate their preference of information resources available in printed and digital media. Figure 1 reveals that majority (81.73%) of the respondents prefer information resources in both printed and digital form.

6.4 Usage of Different Types of ElectronicInformation Resources

It is evident from Figure 2 that e-books (65.38%) are the highly used electronic

information resource among the users followed by online databases (38.46%) and e-journals (28.85%). Electronic Theses & Dissertations (ETDs) are used by only 12.5% of the respondents.

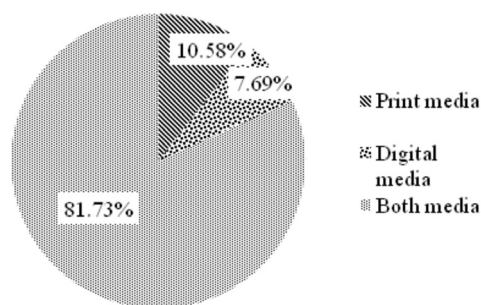


Figure 1: Preference of Media

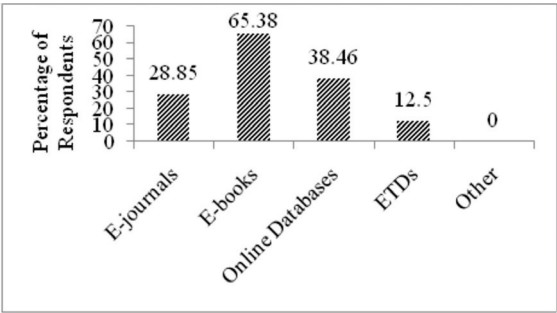


Figure 2: Usage of Different Types of Electronic Information Resources

6.5 Frequency of Using Electronic Information Resources

Electronic information resources have become an important part of academic learning. The users were asked to indicate how frequently they use the electronic information resources. Figure 3 reveals that 40.38% of the respondents use electronic information resources daily and 29.81% respondents use these resources on weekly basis. Around 20% of the respondents use electronic information resources occasionally.

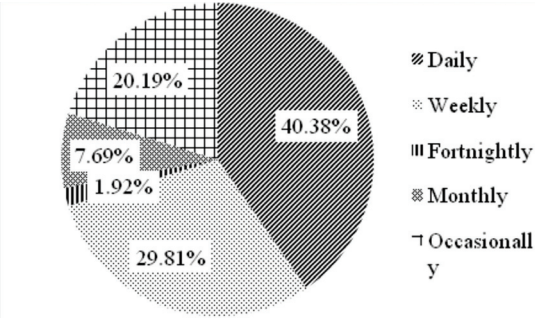


Figure 3: Frequency of Using Electronic Information Resources

6.6 Purpose of Using Electronic Information Resources

Figure 4 reveals that majority (58.65%) of the respondents use electronic information resources for finding course related material followed by 43.27% who use these for updating the subject knowledge. Whereas 20.19% respondents use electronic information resources for research work and project purposes and only few percentages of the respondents (7.69%) use electronic information resources for writing research papers/articles.

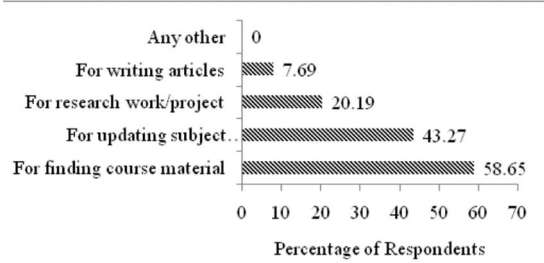


Figure 4: Purpose of Using Electronic Information Resources

6.7 Preferred File Formats of Electronic Information Resources

Electronic information resources are found in variety of file format. The users were asked to indicate their preference of file format of electronic information resources. From the Figure 5, it is clear that PDF is the most popular file format of electronic information resources preferred by 76.92% respondents. The other file formats of electronic resources i.e. MS Word, HTML and PPT are preferred by 36.54%, 32.69% and 30.77% of the respondents respectively.

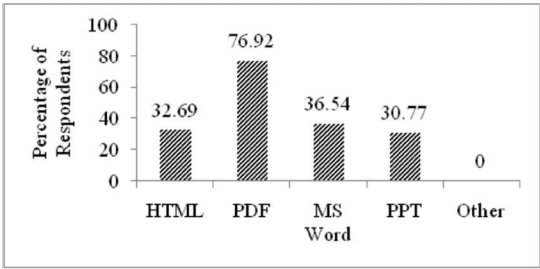


Figure 5: Preferred File Formats of Electronic Information Resources

6.8 Satisfaction with Existing ICT Infrastructure

An attempt has been made to know the satisfaction level among the users towards the existing ICT infrastructure facilities available in the Assam University Library for accessing the electronic information resources. Figure 6 reveals that 51.92% of

the respondents are satisfied with the ICT infrastructure facilities whereas 48.08% of the respondents are not satisfied with the ICT infrastructure facilities available in the university library.

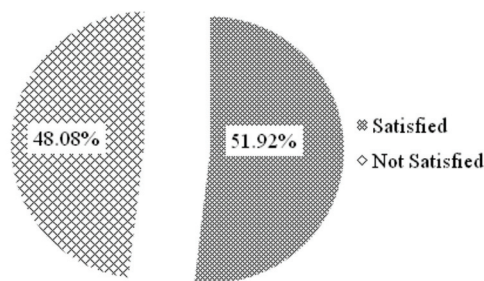


Figure 6: Satisfaction with Existing ICT Infrastructure

6.9 Problems in Accessing Electronic Information Resources

Figure 7 highlights the various problems encountered by the library users while accessing electronic information resources. It reveals that network failure (53.85%) and limited number of internet enabled computer systems (47.12%) are the major problems faced by the respondents in accessing electronic information resources. Slow internet bandwidth (17.31%) and power outage (13.46%) are the other problems indicated by the respondents. And 4.81% respondents indicate that they do not have adequate knowledge of using electronic information resources.

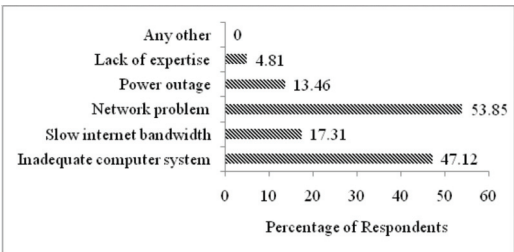


Figure 7: Problems in Accessing Electronic Information Resources

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Electronic information resources have occupied a significant place in university libraries. These resources are becoming popular among the user community due to it's anytime and anywhere access facility. The study revealed that the library users of Assam University prefers electronic resources along with the printed resources but only few users are taking the full advantage of the technology and use these information



resources for academic and research purposes. The main reason behind this is that the users are not fully aware of the various sources of electronic information resources available in their specific field of study. Other important reasons for low usage of these resources are the problems faced by the users in using electronic resources such as frequent power failure, problem in internet connectivity and lack of training. The study reveals that there is a need to develop infrastructure facilities for optimum use of these electronic information resources. Necessary arrangements should be made for uninterrupted power supply and the speed of Internet need to be increased for quick access to the electronic information resources. More number of online journals should be provided and to make use of all these electronic information resources, awareness cum training programmes should be conducted. More number of terminals with internet connection should be provided to all the departments of university and also the internet facility should be extended to the university hostels. User surveys should be conducted from time to time to find out the need of the users and the problems encountered by the users in using the electronic information resources.

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