

Attitude Towards Personal Information Management Practices by Research Scholars of Pondicherry University : A Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study the researchers' practices and use of personal information management in the Pondicherry university Puducherry. A structured questionnaire was designed for the data collection on the basis of objectives of the study and it consists of both optional type questions and statements in five point Lickert scale. Laptop' and 'USB' are the highly used PIM tools by the researchers. The study showed that research scholars use PIM tools for managing their personal information. Among the types of personal information stored, articles ranked first followed by text books. Google is found to be the most used source of information for PIM followed by attachments received through mails. Sending information to self is the most suitable method of storing personal information. The paper highlights the research scholars' attitude towards personal information management.

Keywords: Attitude, Personal information management, PIM tools, Research scholars

INTRODUCTION

Information Management (IM) is the management of the processes and systems that create, acquire, organize, store, distribute, and use information. The goal of information management is to help people and organizations access, process and use information efficiently and effectively (Detlor, 2010). It helps organizations operate more competitively and strategically, and helps people better accomplish their tasks and become better informed. IM in a library perspective recognizes the unique role of information provision organizations, such as libraries, whose central mandate is to provide their clientele with access to information resources and services. This perspective

deals with the management of a subset of information processes involved in the information lifecycle with the goal of helping library patrons access and borrow information items held in the collection.

Researchers deal with large amounts of information in printed and electronic formats. Because of the large amount of information kept at home or workstation, sometimes it is hard to find this information which has been searched and kept before. It is essential to use some techniques and tools to organize and keep this information in the right place to retrieve later. Therefore, they use various methods and tools such as personal information management techniques to access and keep new and up to date information in order to improve their knowledge and research performance.

Objectives

The study proceeds with the following objectives:

- To study the types of personal information stored
- To evaluate the sources of information used for PIM
- To analyse the Personal Information Storing Methods
- To explore the methods of Managing Personal Digital Information
- To study the research scholar's attitude towards PIM
- To identify the difficulties faced by the research scholars in managing their personal information.

Significance of the Study

The literature reveals that there is no similar study being conducted elsewhere, thus it is expected that this study provides the basis for further research in this field. The outcome of the study provides facts and current status of Pondicherry University library. The study also suggests the university library for necessary advancement.

Methodology, Scope and Limitation of the Study

The population of the study includes the 825 full time doctoral researchers of the Pondicherry University Puducherry. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from a population of 825 full time doctoral students from different departments of the university. Out of the 736 questionnaires distributed, 649 questionnaires were returned (response rate 88.1%). The collected data was further transferred to a computerized database for analysis. MS Excel and SPSS version 17.0 are used for specific, descriptive and inferential statistics. Appropriate tests like Mann-Whitney Test (U - Test) and Kruskal- Wallis Test (H-Test) are used to establish statistical significance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

PIM refers to both the practice and study of the activities a person performs in order to acquire or create, store, organize, maintain, retrieve, use and distribute the information needed to complete tasks (work-related or not) and fulfill various roles and responsibilities. PIM places special emphasis on the organization and maintenance of personal information collections (PICs) in which information items, such as paper documents, electronic documents, e-mail messages, web references, and hand written notes, are stored for later use and repeated reuse (Jones, 2008).

Sudhier and Divya (2017) studied the attitude and skills of PIM among research scholars of the Faculty of social sciences in the University of Kerala. The study identified various factors such as age, gender and qualification of the research scholars in University of Kerala. Majority of the respondents agreed that they know more about managing their personal information and apply it to research work and it helps to present papers.

Ameen (2016) reported the PIM behavior of university students under the backdrop of development of information and digital technology infrastructure in Pakistan. They adopted quantitative research design based on a pretested questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 221 students of master programs who were studying in five social sciences disciplines under the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences at the University of the Punjab, Pakistan. The key findings revealed that most frequently used tools for relocating information once found are downloads on personal computers, self-created digital documents, URLs and hyperlinks.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Distribution of Respondents

Table 1 represents the combined data on population size, gender and age groups of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Demographic Information	Responses	Percentage
Age		
< 25	99	15.3
25 - 30	345	53.2
30<	205	31.6
Gender		
Male	225	34.7
Female	424	65.3
Faculty		
Science	170	26.2
Social Science	121	18.6
Arts	228	35.1
Commerce	72	11.1
Others	58	8.9
Educational Qualification		
P G	349	53.8
M.Phil	300	46.2
Research Center		
Departments	363	55.9
University Library	286	44.1

From Table 1, it is evident that majority of the research scholars are in the age group of 25-30 (53.2%) and 31.6% (205) of them are more than 30 years of age. As far as the gender of the research scholars are concerned, the majority of them are females 65.3% and the rest 34.7% are male researchers. Faculty wise distribution of researchers shows that 228 (35.1%) of them are from the faculty of arts and 170 researchers 26.2% are from science. The respondents from other faculties are minimum in numbers 8.9%. It is also evident that most of the research scholars 349(53.8%) possess PG degree as basic qualification and 46.2% possess M.Phil degree as higher qualification. In case of research centers, 55.9% (363) respondents are from various research departments and 44.1% are from the university library.

Types of Personal Information Stored

To elicit the information about the different types of personal information stored through various internet services is shown in the Table 2. 207 (33.9%) research

Table 2: Types of personal information stored

Types of Personal Information	Always	Most of the time	Some times	Seldom	Never	Mean Score	Rank
Photos	196 (32.1%)	154 (25.2%)	183 (30%)	48 (7.9%)	30 (4.9%)	3.7	3
Videos	109 (17.8%)	117 (19.1%)	224 (36.7%)	70 (11.5%)	91 (14.9%)	3.1	7
Audio	111 (18.2%)	134 (21.9%)	192 (31.4%)	82 (13.4%)	92 (15.1%)	3.1	6
Text documents	210 (34.4%)	201 (32.9%)	112 (18.3%)	52 (8.5%)	36 (5.9%)	3.8	2
Presentations	164 (26.8%)	161 (26.4%)	169 (27.7%)	78 (12.8%)	39 (6.4%)	3.5	4
Web links	118 (19.3%)	146 (23.9%)	133 (21.8%)	127 (20.8%)	87 (14.2%)	3.1	8
Web pages	136 (22.3%)	127 (20.8%)	129 (21.1%)	137 (22.4%)	82 (13.4%)	3.2	5
Contact	108 (17.7%)	147 (24.1%)	146 (23.9%)	135 (22.1%)	75 (12.3%)	3.1	9
Appointments	45 (7.4%)	39 (6.4%)	165 (27%)	176 (28.8%)	186 (30.4%)	2.3	12
Tasks	32 (5.2%)	61 (10%)	145 (23.7%)	164 (26.8%)	209 (34.2%)	2.3	13
To do list	39 (6.4%)	39 (6.4%)	126 (20.6%)	178 (29.1%)	229 (37.5%)	2.2	15
Memos	46 (7.5%)	46 (7.5%)	132 (21.6%)	178 (29.1%)	209 (34.2%)	2.3	14
Articles	207 (33.%)	206 (33.7%)	131 (21.4%)	35 (5.7%)	32 (5.2%)	3.9	1
Reminders	48 (7.9%)	84 (13.7%)	112 (18.3%)	192 (31.4%)	175 (28.6%)	2.4	11
Identification information	68 (11.1%)	67 (11%)	130 (21.3%)	141 (23.1%)	205 (33.6%)	2.4	10

scholars use internet services for storing ‘articles’. ‘Text documents’ are stored by 210 (34.4%) scholars. While ranking the types of personal information stored, it is found that ‘article’ is ranked first with mean value=3.9 followed by ‘text documents’ (mean value=3.8) and ‘photos’ (mean value=3.7). The last rank is given to ‘remainders’. The study observed that above two- third of the respondents not interested in using ‘tasks’, ‘to do list’, ‘memos’ through internet services.

Sources of information used for PIM

Information is available in a wide range of formats. Choosing an appropriate source of information is essential to meet the needs and can save time and to get relevant information. The research scholars who are asked to indicate the sources used for accessing information and are presented in Figure 1.

From the Figure 1 it is clear that the ‘accessing of website through Google’ is the prominent sources of information used by the researchers (mean score= 4.2) followed by ‘the attachments with email messages

received from different sources’ (mean score= 4.0).The study found that in the technology growing era websites helps the research scholars for access the information independently, and the study found that libraries and information centers are least ranked information source by research scholars.

Personal Information Storing Methods

Several information storing methods are used by the researchers for keeping the information for the future use.

It is evident from the table that 280 (45.8%) respondents always ‘send email to self’ for managing their personal information and 30% respondents ‘sending emails to others’. Mean score obtained for each storing method is calculated and also given in the Table 3. The ranking shows that ‘sending email to self’ for storing information has ranked first with the (mean value 4.2), followed by ‘saving web page as a file’ with (mean value 3.8). Hence, the study found that most of the respondents always sending email to self for managing their personal information.

Figure 1: Sources of Information used for PIM

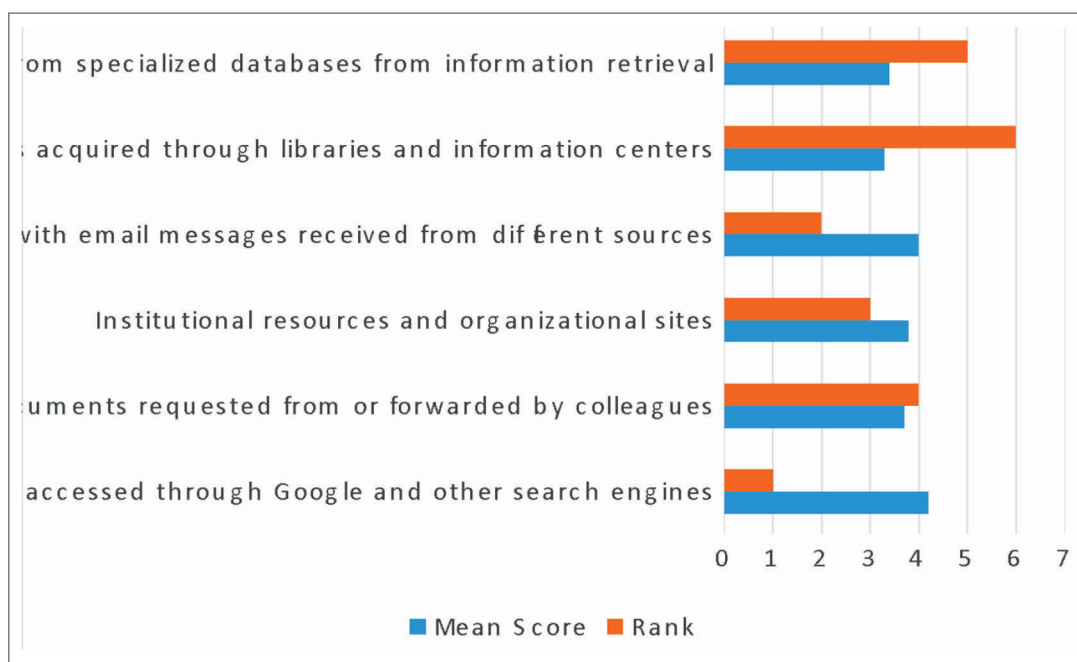
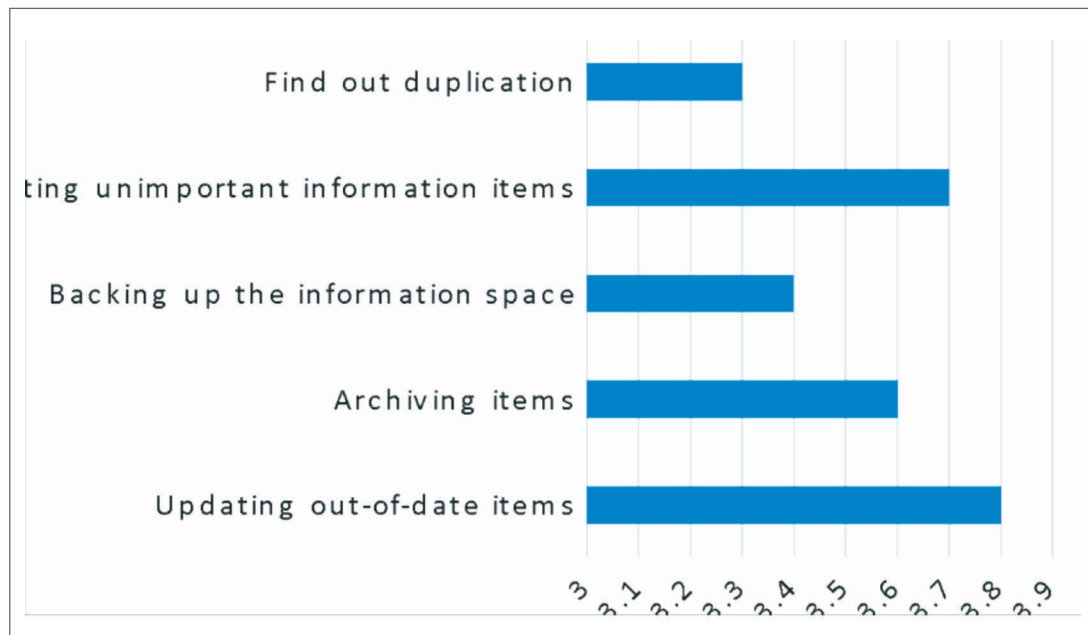


Table 3: Personal Information Storing Methods

Methods	Always	Most of the time	Some times	Seldom	Never	Mean Score	Rank
Send email to self	280 (45.8%)	185 (30.3%)	125 (20.5%)	3 (0.5%)	18 (2.9%)	4.2	1
Send email to others	183 (30%)	176 (28.8%)	175 (28.6%)	42 (6.9%)	35 (5.7%)	3.7	3
Save the web page as a file	176 (28.8%)	219 (35.8%)	154 (25.2%)	46 (7.5%)	16 (2.6%)	3.8	2
Paste the web address (URL) into a document	111 (18.2%)	175 (28.6%)	212 (34.7%)	83 (13.6%)	30 (4.9%)	3.4	4
Add a hyperlink to a personal web page	54 (8.8%)	114 (18.7%)	214 (35%)	148 (24.2%)	81 (13.3%)	2.9	6
Do nothing to save but search again to re-access	27 (4.4%)	59 (9.7%)	213 (34.9%)	158 (25.9%)	154 (25.2%)	2.4	8
Store in outside services eg. Dropbox, GoogleDoc	26 (4.3%)	58 (9.5%)	205 (33.6%)	198 (32.4%)	124 (20.3%)	2.5	7
Do nothing to save but enter the URL directly	97 (15.9%)	131 (21.4%)	176 (28.8%)	129 (21.1%)	78 (12.8%)	3.1	5
Make a Bookmark or Favorite	24 (3.9%)	82 (13.4%)	158 (25.9%)	196 (32.1%)	151 (24.7%)	2.4	9
Do nothing to save but access via another web site	23 (3.8%)	104 (17%)	155 (25.4%)	115 (18.8%)	214 (35%)	2.4	10
Use personal information management software	20 (3.3%)	67 (11%)	146 (23.9%)	126 (20.6%)	252 (41.2%)	2.1	11

Figure 2: Methods of Managing Personal Digital Information



Methods of Managing Personal Digital Information

A group of methods are provided to the respondents to understand their information management methods and the results are shown in the Figure 2.

Regarding the methods of managing personal digital information, the analysis shows that 227 (37.2%) respondents most of the time use to ‘update out dated personal information’. The mean value shows that ‘updating out-of-date items’ is the top most method

Table 4: Research scholars’ attitude on PIM

Research scholars attitude PIM towards	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean score	Rank
Like to know more about managing personal information	228 (37.3%)	296 (48.4%)	71 (11.6%)	16 (2.6%)	0 (0%)	4.2	1
Suffer information overload	44 (7. 2%)	252 (41.2%)	224 (36.7%)	80 (13.1%)	11 (1.8%)	3.4	8
Apply PIM on research work	108 (17.7%)	319 (52.2%)	151 (24.7%)	29 (4.7%)	4 (0.7%)	3.8	2
PIM helps to present papers	102 (16.7%)	315 (51.6%)	162 (26.5%)	23 (3.8%)	9 (1.5%)	3.8	4
Find difficulties in updating my personal information	73 (11.9%)	177 (29%)	217 (35.5%)	123 (20.1%)	21 (3.4%)	3.3	9
PIM motivate research work	100 (16.4%)	290 (47.5%)	175 (28.6%)	42 (6.9%)	4 (0.7%)	3.7	7
Locate and retrieve required information	126 (20.6%)	268 (43.9v)	174 (28.5%)	32 (5.2%)	11 (1.8%)	3.8	6
Effective utilization of time	134 (21.9%)	271 (44.4%)	140 (22.9%)	64 (10.5%)	2 (0.3%)	3.8	5
Makes more efficient	114 (18.7%)	314 (51.4%)	138 (22.6%)	40 (6.5%)	5 (0.8%)	3.8	3

Table 5: Difficulties in Managing Personal Information

Constraints/ Difficulties	Always	Most of the time	Some times	Seldom	Never	Mean score	Rank
Difficulties in keeping information	97 (15.9%)	167 (27.3%)	229 (37.5%)	73 (11.9%)	45 (7.4%)	3.3	1
Inadequate awareness of managing information	22 (3.6%)	164 (26.8%)	310 (50.7%)	95 (15.5%)	20 (3.3%)	3.1	2
Lack of desired information handling competencies	46 (7.5%)	142 (23.2%)	261 (42.7%)	125 (20.5%)	37 (6.1%)	3.1	3
Inappropriate management of information	35 (5.7%)	114 (18.7%)	279 (45.7%)	132 (21.6%)	51 (8.3%)	2.9	6
Fragmentation of personal information	31 (5.1%)	110 (18%)	260 (42.6%)	163 (26.7%)	47 (7.7%)	2.9	8
Mismanagement of information	29 (4.7%)	95 (15.5%)	223 (36.5%)	187 (30.6%)	77 (12.6%)	2.7	12
Duplication of information	28 (4.6%)	115 (18.8%)	273 (44.7%)	127 (20.8%)	68 (11.1%)	2.8	10
Overload of information	42 (6.9%)	140 (22.9%)	230 (37.6%)	149 (24.4%)	50 (8.2%)	3.0	4
Unfamiliarity with PIM techniques	37 (6.1%)	105 (17.2%)	266 (43.5%)	148 (24.2%)	55 (9%)	2.9	7
Lack of PIM skills	29 (4.7%)	106 (17.3%)	283 (46.3%)	123 (20.1%)	70 (11. %)	2.8	11
Lack of time	57 (9.3%)	86 (14.1%)	293 (48%)	116 (19%)	59 (9.7%)	2.9	5
Inability of effective use of different gadgets	29 (4.7%)	106 (17.3%)	279 (45.7%)	145 (23.7%)	52 (8.5%)	2.9	9

(mean value=3.8), followed by the ‘deleting unimportant information items’ (mean value=3.7) and ‘archiving items’ (mean value=3.6). The overall study shows that majority of the respondents manage their personal digital information.

Research scholars’ attitude on PIM

To determine the attitude of the research scholars on PIM, the respondents were asked to identify from the list of statements that reveal their attitude towards the use of PIM. The result is presented in the Table 4

The majority of the respondents (48.4%) agree that they 'like to know more about managing personal information'. 319 (52.2%) agree that they can 'apply PIM on research work' and (51.4%) agree that PIM 'makes them more efficient'. The findings of the analysis revealed that majority of the research scholars have positive attitude towards the use of PIM. The mean score rank revealed that the researchers 'like to know more about managing their personal information' (mean value= 4.2) followed by the 'use it for research work' (mean value= 3.8) and 'makes it for more efficient' (mean value= 3.8).

Difficulties in Managing Personal Information

While managing personal information through internet services users may face many obstacles. The respondents were asked to state whether they faced any problems while managing personal information items in Table 5. The difficulties faced by the researchers while managing personal items are shown in Table 5. It shows that 229 (37.5%) respondents sometimes face 'difficulty in information keeping'. 'Lack of awareness' and 'lack of information handling competency' are the other constraints faced by research scholars. In general, it is clear from the analysis that many research scholars are facing problem in managing their personal information. 'Difficulties in keeping information' is indicated as the most severe barrier faced by the respondents (mean value=3.3) followed by 'inadequate awareness of managing information' (mean value=3.1) and 'lack of desired information handling competencies'.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that, research scholars use PIM tools for managing their personal information. Google is found to be the most used source of information for PIM followed by attachments received through mails. Sending information to self is the most suitable method of storing personal information. PIM gives us the

opportunity to have the information we need in the right place and in the right format. It refers to a set of activities a person performs in order to acquire or create, store, organize, maintain, retrieve, use and distribute personal information for different purposes, including preserving personal and family information assets. Majority of the research scholars agree that they know more about managing their personal information and apply it to research work. Majority of them are facing problems managing their personal information. The paper highlights the research scholars' attitude towards personal information management. Information is the main component of library and information centers activities and services, information management is considered as one of the main elements of service offering to the information community. Libraries can provide information literacy programs for effective use of PIM.

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