

USE OF E-JOURNALS BY STUDENTS OF GURU ANGAD DEV VETERINARY AND ANIMAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY, LUDHIANA

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ABSTRACT

This study is conducted in order to assess the use of e-journals by postgraduate students and researchers of Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Ludhiana. This study explores users' purpose of using e-journals, sources of information about e-journals, frequency of using e-journals and problems faced by them in accessing e-journals.

KEYWORDS

e-journals, Online journals, GADVASU

1. INTRODUCTION

Journals constitute an important information resource of scholarly information for scientific community as they help them to acquaint with recent development in their field of interest. Due to the advancement in IT and the internet, there is a shift from print to electronic format because of the various advantages of the electronic media. These days most of the journals are available in electronic format. Online journals have become an important part of the library collections. E-journal is also called paperless journal, virtual journal and online journal. According to Cambridge Business English Dictionary, 'an e-journal is a journal that is published on the internet'.

Online journals are becoming popular among the research community due to their merits over print journals. The scientific community prefer to use e-journals over print journals because these can be easily accessed anywhere and anytime round the clock using the Internet.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are enlisted below:

- To find out the purpose of using e-journals and sources of information about e-journals.
- To study the frequency of using e-journals.
- To find out the preferred method of reading e-journals.
- To determine the problems encountered by students in accessing e-journals.

2. METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was designed to collect data for this study. Copies of questionnaire were personally distributed among 100 postgraduate students and researchers of Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (GADVASU), Ludhiana. Out of 100 questionnaires

distributed, 94 duly filled questionnaires (i.e. 94%) were received back and found relevant for analysis. The collected data have been interpreted using percentage calculations and presented in graphs.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Holmquist (1997) conducted a campus-wide survey on the use of electronic journals at Princeton in a study titled 'Survey on the Use of Electronic journals'. Majority of the respondents (56%) do not use electronic journals. The main reason given for not using electronic journals was that respondents preferred to read articles printed on paper, not on the computer screen.

The usage and acceptance of electronic journals was evaluated by Rusch-Feji and Siebeky (1999) in an article entitled 'Evaluation of Usage and Acceptance of Electronic Journal'. Authors found that users were motivated to use electronic journals because of ease of access from the desktop around the clock, the ease of downloading and citing elements.

Pazur and Konjevid (2002) conducted a user study titled 'The Use and the Attitude of Scientists from the Rudjer Boskovic Institute About Electronic Journals - A User Study' to find out the extent of acceptance of electronic journals by scientists at the Rudjer Boskovic Institute. The results of this survey showed high acceptance of electronic journals at the Rudjer Boskovic Institute. Most of the respondents preferred to use print version when both the versions were available, but lots of them used both versions equally. Only a few respondents thought that there are no disadvantages of e-journals.

Bonthron et al. (2003) conducted a study titled 'Trends in Use of Electronic Journals in Higher Education in the UK - Views of Academic Staff and Students' to examine disciplinary differences in the use of electronic journals by academic staff and students. The results of the study indicated that academic staff incorporate electronic journal usage into their working patterns in different ways than students and that these differences may affect attitudes towards support services (library Web pages, Virtual Learning Environments) designed to promote electronic journal usage. Similarly, Groote (2003) in a study titled 'Measuring Use Pattern of Online Journals and Databases' found that majority of the users frequently used and preferred online resources to print because of convenience and full-text availability.

Siebenberg et al. (2004) conducted a study titled 'Print versus Electronic Journal Use in Three Sci/Tech Disciplines: What's Going On Here?' Author evaluated journal use statistics at Washington State University to determine if the selection of electronic journals in the Owen Science and Engineering Library was changing student and researchers' choice of journals. Use statistics showed that most print journals were being used more than they were prior to the advent of electronic journals. Results of the study revealed that electronic journals were used heavily and the availability of electronic format greatly enhanced the total use of most titles.

Another study was conducted by Bar-Ilan and Fink (2005) under the title 'Preference for Electronic Format of Scientific Journals-A Case Study of the Science Library Users at the Hebrew University'. Authors reported that majority of the users used and preferred an electronic format irrespective of their rank or age.

Voorbij and Ongering (2006) conducted a survey titled 'The Use of Electronic Journals by Dutch Researchers: A Descriptive and Exploratory Study'. Authors concluded that electronic journals have become indispensable for scientists and social scientists, and have a profound effect on information behavior, varying from methods of becoming aware of relevant articles to benefits on research.

4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Demographic characteristics

Out of the 94 respondents who have responded to the questionnaire, majority 54(57.45%) constitutes male respondents and 40(42.55%) are females. About 84(89.36%) are postgraduate students and remaining 10(10.64%) are research scholars.

4.2. Awareness of e-journals

The responses reveal that all the postgraduate students and research scholars surveyed (i.e. 100%) are aware of e-journals.

4.3. Purpose of using e-journals

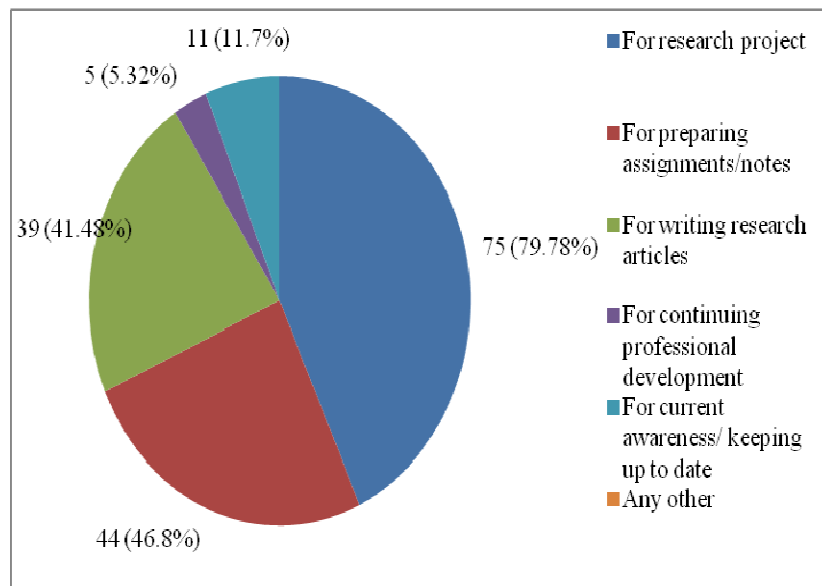


Figure 1: Purpose of using e-journals

It is evident from the figure 1 that 79.78% students and researchers use e-journals for research projects. Around 44 respondents access e-journals for preparing their assignments/notes. About 41.48% use e-journals for writing research papers. Nearly 11.70% respondents use e-journals to keep themselves cognizant of latest developments in their field. Only 5.32% users use e-journals for continuing professional development.

4.4. Sources of information

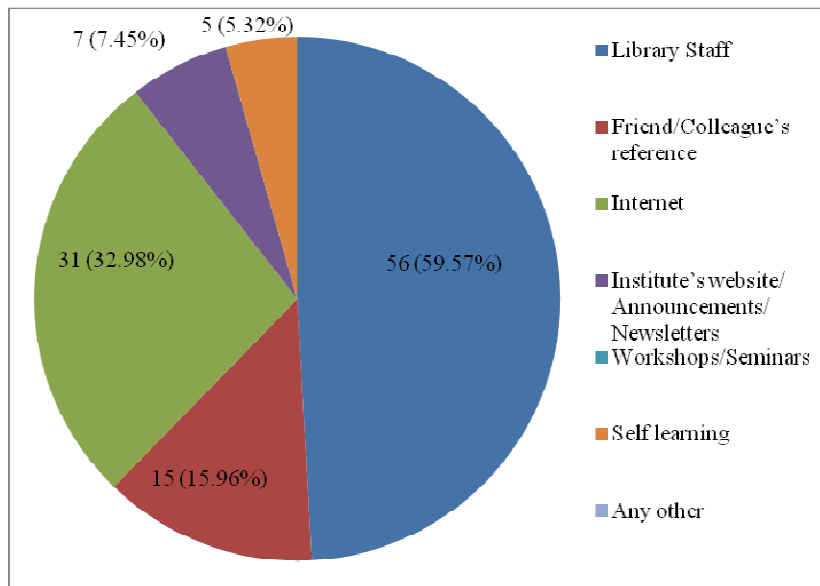


Figure 2: Sources of information

The above figure clearly indicates that more than 50% users came to know about e-journals from the library staff. About 32.98% of respondents got information about e-journals from the Internet.

4.5. Place for accessing e-Journals

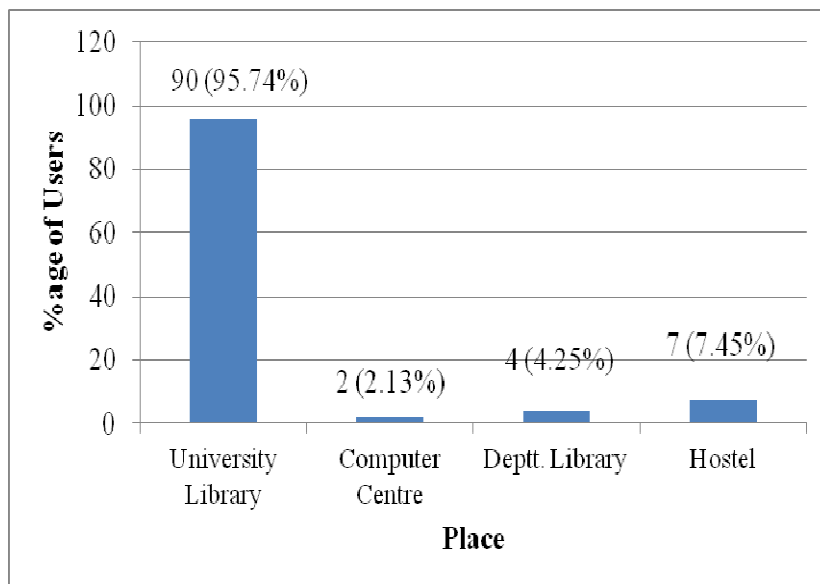


Figure 3: Place for accessing e-Journals

It is clear from the above figure that majority of students (95.74%) prefer to access e-journals from the university library. About 7.45% respondents access e-journals from their hostels.

Around 4.25% users visit their departmental library to access e-journals. Only 2.13% respondents access e-journals from the Computer Centre.

4.6. Frequency of using e-journals

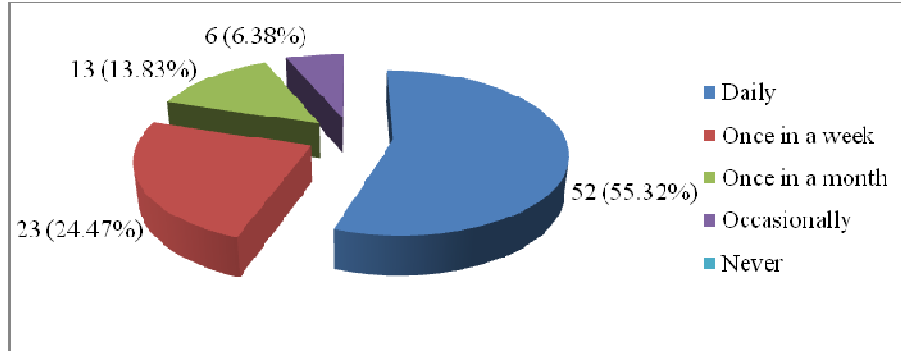


Figure 4: Frequency of using e-journals

It is clear from this figure that nearly 55.32% respondents access e-journals daily, whereas 24.47% use e-journals once in a week. About 13.83% users access e-journals once in a month while 6.38% of them access e-journals occasionally.

4.7. Method of reading full text journals

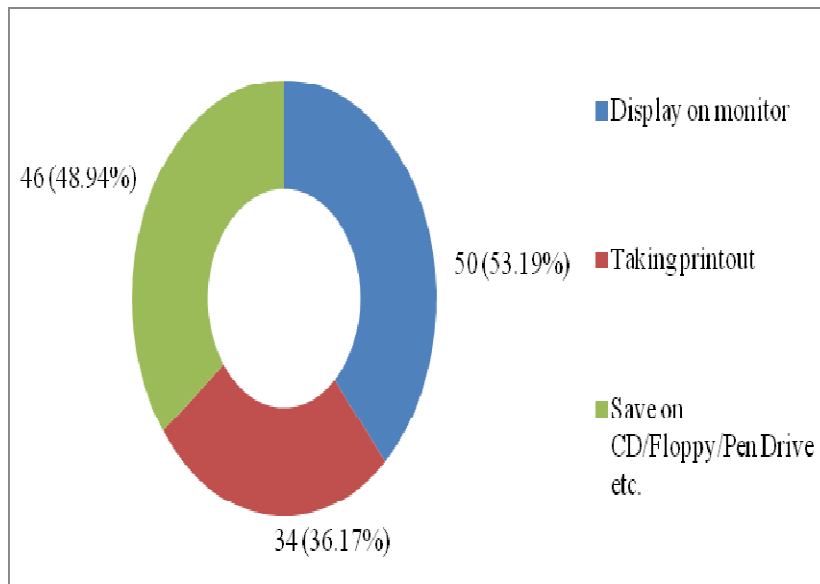


Figure 6: Method of reading full text journals

It is obvious from this figure that majority of the respondents prefer to read e-journals on monitor, while 48.49% of them save the articles on CD/Floppy/Pen Drive etc. About 36.17% users take printout of the journal articles.

4.8. Problems faced in accessing e-journals

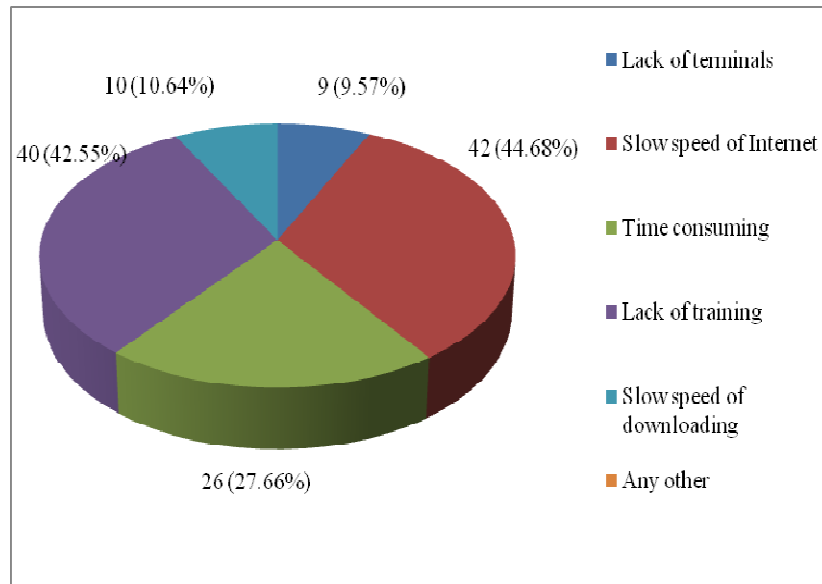


Figure 7: Problems faced in accessing e-journals

Slow speed of the Internet was a major obstacle faced by users in accessing e-journals. Lack of training was also reported as a hindrance in accessing e-journals by 42.55% respondents. Postgraduate students and research scholars remain busy in their research work, therefore, 27.66% of them mentioned that accessing e-journals is a time consuming process. About 10.64% users reported that they encounter problem in using e-journals due to slow speed of downloading.

5. SUGGESTIONS

Training programmes/workshops should be organized by library to train the students in use of e-journals. These types of programmes should be made a regular feature and be made mandatory for the students so that they can effectively use the e-journals.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study brought forward that e-journals are popular source of primary information for students and researchers of GADVASU and all of them are aware of e-journals. The library staff played an important role in making users aware of e-journals. GADVASU library is favourite place of accessing e-journals for users. Most of the users faced problems in accessing e-journals due to lack of training, therefore, training programmes need to be organized at regular intervals to help them to use e-journals effectively and efficiently.

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