Use of e-journals and databases by the academic community of University of Mysore: A survey

Khaiser Nikam\textsuperscript{a} and Pramodini B\textsuperscript{b}

\textsuperscript{a}Reader, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Mysore, Mysore – 570 006
Email: khaism尼克am@yahoo.com

\textsuperscript{b}Student, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Mysore, Mysore – 570 006
Email: pramu31@yahoo.co.in

This paper describes the use of e-journals and databases (subscribed by UGC-InfoNet consortium) by the users of University of Mysore. Nearly 200 responses to a survey based on questionnaire have been analyzed and presented. Besides studying the use of e-journals and databases, the paper also examines the utilization and satisfaction levels of users with respect to the e-resources. The role of Information Communication Division (ICD) of the University of Mysore in informing the users about the availability of these resources is also discussed. Use of internet as an alternative to UGC InfoNet consortium resources is presented.

Introduction

Electronic publishing has been revolutionizing the format of recorded knowledge. Electronic information services are attracting users’ attention in today’s networked environment. Electronic journals and databases have numerous advantages over its print counterparts. Ever-increasing prices of journals accompanied with decreasing, static or marginally increasing budgets are forcing libraries to resort to alternatives like consortia. Over the last few years, a number of e-journals consortia have come up in India. UGC-InfoNet is one such consortium available to the users in Indian universities.

Indian universities constitute one of the largest higher education systems in the world comprising of more than 318 universities and about 16500 affiliated colleges\textsuperscript{1}. These institutions are facing acute shortage of funds to subscribe to required number of journals and databases. This has, for a very long time restrained the users in using e-journal and databases. However, with the formation of the UGC-InfoNet the universities are able to provide access to a number of journals and databases to its users.

Journals from 25 publishers across the globe can now be accessed through the UGC InfoNet. It provides current as well as archival access to journals in different disciplines. So far 100 universities out of 171 Indian universities, which come under the purview of UGC, have been provided access to these journals and it will soon be extended to affiliated colleges of these universities\textsuperscript{2}. It covers almost all areas of learning like arts, humanities, social sciences, physical and chemical sciences, life sciences, computer sciences, mathematics, statistics, etc. The programme is completely supported and funded by the UGC and implemented and monitored by INFLIBNET (Information and Library Network) Centre, Ahmedabad.

With the availability of e-resources under the UGC-InfoNet Consortium, it will be appropriate to study the use of these resources by the intended users i.e., the faculty and students. This study through a survey looks at the usage of the e-resources of UGC-InfoNet Consortium by the users at the University of Mysore.

Scope and coverage

This study is confined to the potential users of UGC-InfoNet consortium resources at the University of
Mysore. Only science and technology faculty members and research scholars are covered in this survey. Users of PG centers of University of Mysore are not included in this study.

**Objectives of the study**
- To identify the extent of awareness of UGC-InfoNet consortium resources among the users;
- To determine the extent of use of e-resources; and
- To identify the alternative sources used to UGC-InfoNet consortium resource.

**Methodology**
The University of Mysore, Manasagangothri Main Campus has 17 science departments with 151 faculty members and 165 research scholars totaling 316 users as the entire population. Structured questionnaire and interview schedule were used for data collection. The questionnaires were distributed to the entire population out of which two hundred filled in questionnaires were received. This amounted to 64% of the total population. Out of the 200 respondents, 66% are faculty members and the remaining 34% are research scholars. The analysis is based on the responses received from the said users.

**Results and discussion**

**Extent of awareness of UGC-InfoNet facility**
Out of the 200 users, it was seen that only 4% of the users were "fully aware" of the UGC-InfoNet facility. The majority of the respondents (61.5%) were 'somewhat aware' of UGC-InfoNet, eighteen percent are 'moderately aware' and 16.5% are not aware of the facility.

**Awareness of UGC-InfoNet**
The survey revealed that the majority of the respondents learnt about UGC-InfoNet 'while browsing the Net' (highest mean value 3.03). This was followed by awareness 'through other library professionals' (mean = 0.58) 'through INFLIBNET professionals' (mean = 0.43), 'through the chief librarian' (mean = 0.35) and 'through the library publicity programme' (mean = 0.05).

**Extent of use of e-resources**
'E-journals' are the most frequently used e-resources by the respondents with a mean value of 2.51. The next most frequently used e-resources are 'e-databases' and 'e-books' with mean value of 1.28 and 1.01 respectively.

**Publisher wise usage of E-databases**
It was seen that most popular resources among the user community are 'Emerald', 'Fly base', 'Science Direct', 'Document Image Database' and the journal 'Nature'.

**Non-use of e-resources**
On the aspect of non-use of e-resources, nearly 60% of the respondents attributed the reason as lack of training/orientation. The other reasons as given in Table 1 included lack of awareness, lack of time and improper Internet connection.

**Help sought from the library staff for accessing resources**
Librarians act as the intermediaries between information resources and the user community. With the emergence of Internet, the users’ dependency on the librarians for seeking information has reduced. In the present study it is found that although the users do not use it to a great extent, they have not approached the librarian for guidance and training. The data indicates that the UGC InfoNet is used only to 'some extent' to access information (60.5 percent). Twenty eight percent of them ‘do not seek their help at all’. Only 11 percent of the respondents opine that they seek help of the library moderately.

**Learning to use UGC-InfoNet resources**
The data presented in Table 2 indicates the methods adopted to learn to use UGC-InfoNet resources effectively by respondents who are using the facility. The data indicates that majority of the respondents have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not aware</td>
<td>28.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aware but no time to access</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aware but internet connection is not proper</td>
<td>10.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Aware but need training/orientation</td>
<td>59.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
learnt to use the resources by ‘Trial and Error’ with a mean value of 1.99. Second method most used by respondents is ‘to learn from friends/colleagues’ with a mean score of 1.87 and this is followed by ‘got guidance from library staff’ and ‘through Mysore University library orientation and training programme’ respectively with the mean score of 0.24 and 0.21 each.

User satisfaction level of use of e-journals/ e-database services

The level of satisfaction among the respondents regarding the use of e-journals and e-database offered at UGC-InfoNet indicates that nearly 50 percent of the respondents are ‘a little satisfied’. About 24 percent of the respondents are ‘not satisfied’. Just about 18 percent are ‘some what satisfied’. Very few respondents are ‘highly satisfied’ (2 percent) and moderately satisfied respondents are only 5 percent.

Training/awareness programme attended

The study revealed that 99 percent users have not had an opportunity to attend training and orientation programme. Only one percent of them seem to have attended the training programme.

Importance of printed journals

Despite the presence of e-journals, the importance of printed journals as perceived by the users is presented in Table 3. It can be seen from the table that printed journals are considered very important by 82 percent of the users. Nearly 17 percent feel that printed journals are ‘moderately important’. None of the users have stated that print journals are not important.

Problems faced in accessing e-resources journals/databases

Problems faced by respondents while accessing e-journal and databases are shown in Table 4. It may be seen from the table that majority of respondents say that they ‘lack guidance and training’ (mean = 2.43). Other problems include ‘poor internet connectivity’ ‘consumes too much time’, ‘frequent power cuts’, with the mean values of 0.93, 0.85, 0.71 and 0.33 respectively.

Awareness about Information Communication Division (ICD), University of Mysore

The University of Mysore has a separate division called Information Communication Division (ICD), which is dedicated for accessing e-resources of UGC-InfoNet. It was found from this study that only 31.5 percent of the respondents are aware of Information Communication Division and the remaining 68.5 percent are not aware of it.

Alternatives for usage

The alternatives to UGC-InfoNet for information access are presented in Table 5. ‘Browsing the internet’ is the first best alternative with a mean score of 3.6. ‘Get a soft copy through e-mail from the authors’ (mean=2.67) is the second most common option. ‘Obtain reprints directly from the authors’ is the third most sought after choice with a mean score of 2.19. Using Bangalore’s Indian Institute of Science (IISc) library is the fourth most opted alternative with a mean score of 1.71. The remaining options like using CFTRI library, DFRL library, and CSRTI library are the fifth option scoring less than 1.00 mean.
Conclusion

Emergence of internet has revolutionised the modes of accessing and dissemination of information. E-resources, particularly e-journals and databases are important sources of information. The UGC-InfoNet is one of the important initiatives that provide access to online journals and databases. The survey indicates that the use is marginal and the scientists in the Mysore University campus need constant guidance and training to maximize the use of the e-resources. The librarians have an important role to play in assisting the library users to make the best use of the electronic journals to a maximum extent.

Table 5 - Alternatives for usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Types of alternatives</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Browse the internet</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Visit IISC library, Bangalore(<a href="http://www.iisc.ernet.in/">http://www.iisc.ernet.in/</a>)</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Visit CFTRI library, Mysore(<a href="http://www.cftri.com/">http://www.cftri.com/</a>)</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Visit DFRL library, Mysore(<a href="http://www.mylibnet.org/dfrl.html">http://www.mylibnet.org/dfrl.html</a>)</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Visit CSRTI library, Mysore(<a href="http://www.csrtimys.res.in">http://www.csrtimys.res.in</a>)</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Obtain reprints directly from the authors</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Get a soft copy through e-mail from the authors</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Northern light(<a href="http://www.northernlight.com">http://www.northernlight.com</a>)</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References
