USE OF INTERNET BY THE FACULTY MEMBERS OF ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGES IN CUDDALORE DISTRICT, TAMILNADU INDIA: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

States that Internet has emerged as the most powerful medium for storage and retrieval of information. Examines the use of Internet by the faculty members of Arts and Science Colleges in Cuddalore district. Deals with frequency of Internet use, purpose of using the Internet, use of different Internet services and impact of Internet on research/ teaching. A questionnaire was prepared for this study and it was sent to 70 faculty members and the response rate was 82.85%. The result indicates that majority 34 (58.62%) of respondents access the Internet from college library. The result shows that majority 53 (91.37%) respondents indicated that research and teaching is the primary purpose of using the Internet.

KEYWORDS: Internet, Websites, File Transfer Protocol (FTP), Bulletin Board Services (BBS), Search Engines, Information Needs

Introduction

The Internet facility in India has grown tremendously over the years. The use of Internet is rapidly increasing owing to its efficiency and capability in providing right information to the right person at the right time. It works around the clock and connects every corner of the world. Internet has become an unavoidable necessity for every institution of higher learning. The Arts and Science education is important for the development of any country. The Science colleges are very much needed for the scientific advancement of the country. For making science faculty more accomplish and innovative in the work force information play vital role, for accessing information and keeping abreast with the new developments, Internet is becoming an essential human needs with all its facets.

The Internet provides access to unlimited sources of information and search engines are continuously being advanced to provide efficient ways to help users to find what they want. The Internet provides access to a large amount of data, saves time and money, and

Provides an opportunity to consult several experts with a single request (via discussion groups), and greater independence from specific times and places for information seeking (Savolainen,1999). Internet has made tremendous impact on the academic activities of the faculty members, researchers and the students. After the advent of Internet, a significant transition is seen in users' approach and the way they seek information and the methods they use in research and learning activities. This has become possible as Internet provides a wealth of new course material and acts as a powerful supplement to the traditional ways of studying and learning. Internet is now facilitating electronic communication, exchange of ideas, and collaboration in research globally. Internet can be accessed for the latest developments in one's area of research at an amazing speed. It also plays a significant role in distance education and conferencing and thus transforming the academicians as facilitators in providing guidance, drawing students, and steering observations. The Internet, therefore, creates an excellent academic environment where the academic community can perform their activities in a rejuvenated manner.

Literature Review

Lazinger et al. (1998) in a study titled "Internet Use by Faculty Members in Various Disciplines: A Comparative Case Study" investigated the use of the Internet among various sectors of faculty members. Questionnaire was distributed to faculty members of all departments and professional schools of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The use of the Internet was found comparatively higher among faculty of science and agriculture than in humanities and social sciences.

Shaw (1998) examined the use of the Internet and the electronic environment by English academics in the study titled "The Use of the Internet by English Academics". Author proposed to know the opinion of users from colleges of University of Wales and also revealed the pattern of using aforesaid sources, purpose of use, problems faced by users in using these sources. In a study named "Internet Access and Usage by Students of the University of Botswana", Ojedokun (2002) investigated the Internet access, usage and problems faced in its use by the students of the university. Findings of the study revealed that though a considerable number of users were aware about the benefit of the Internet, but lacked necessary searching skills for effective use of the Internet. Because of this factor, users accessed the Internet for entertainment, sports and news etc.

A doctoral study by Fortin (2000) explored faculty members' use of and their information seeking behaviors and activities on the Internet at Angelo State University. Using both a quantitative and qualitative methodology, differences were found between tenured and tenure track faculty members on the perceived value of the Internet to meet their research and classroom information needs. Similar differences were also found among faculty members in the broad discipline areas of the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Tenure-free faculty members reported a higher average Internet use per week than tenured faculty members.

Gifty Adika (2003) analysed Internet use among faculty members of universities in Ghana. Research results showed that in spite of the benefits of the Internet, its use among faculty is still very low. The main reasons for this are lack of access to the Internet and the need for

training. It suggested that university authorities must take immediate steps to provide general access points for faculty through computer laboratories. Here librarians, information professionals and computer scientists have vital role to play for organising training and refresher sessions for faculty to get up to date information via Internet for teaching and research.

Another study was conducted by Rajiv Kumar and Amritpal Kaur (2005) under title "Internet and its Use in the Engineering Colleges of Punjab, India: A Case Study". It aimed to examine the pattern of use of the Internet by the teachers and students of engineering colleges of Punjab. Authors examined the users' experience and frequency of the Internet use, time spent, location of use, purpose, resources and services being used, problems faced by users, benefits of the Internet over conventional documents and its impact on the academic efficiency of respondents, etc. Slow access speed of the Internet, difficulty in finding relevant information and privacy were the main problems faced by the users.

Anasi (2006) examined the pattern of the Internet use by undergraduate students of university in study titled, "Internet Use Pattern of Undergraduate Students at the University of Lagos, Nigeria". The level of the Internet use was found low among students under study as they were lacking the search strategies to locate information. Along with the recommendations for provision of adequate computer laboratory and proper power back up system author also recommended the integration of the Internet and computer literacy into compulsory general studies programme of the university. In a research article "Internet Use by Teachers and Students in Engineering Colleges of Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh States of India: An Analysis" Rajeev Kumar and Amritpal Kaur (2006) examined the Internet use by teachers and students and attempted to find whether the Internet can replace libraries? Survey revealed that 77.5% users felt that the Internet can't replace library services, whereas 22.5% responded otherwise, because they find it easy to locate information on the Internet than in library.

In 2006, Al-Ansari conducted a study on Internet use by the faculty members of Kuwait University. This study was designed to investigate the patterns of Internet use by the faculty

including purpose of use, its impact on teaching and research, Internet resources used, and the problems faced while using the Internet. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the faculty coming from four colleges of Kuwait University, i.e. Arts, Social Sciences, Sciences, and Engineering. The study revealed that the Internet is mostly used for communication, research, and publication by saving time, find up to date information and cooperate with their colleagues. Slow speed, lack of time, and lack of access from home are the major problems.

Aldojan (2006) investigated the Internet use among Education faculty members in Jordanian Public Universities. The population of this study included the entire education faculty members (309) in seven Jordanian public universities, ranking instructor/lecturer, assistant, associate, and full professors. The study explored how often, what types of Internet tool is used on a daily basis, and the degree of satisfaction of education faculty members in Jordanian public universities using the Internet in their academic work. The purpose of this study was to collect and to analyze the data to determine the patterns of Internet use and to identify the faculty's concerns and their overall satisfaction degree of its services.

A study in 2008 by Alshankity and Alshawi examined the gender differences in Internet usage among faculty members in Saudi Arabia. The study collected information from 504 faculty members in four Saudi Arabian higher education institutions regarding Internet usage for academic purposes. In the context of the gender-segregated higher education systems and the relatively new advent of Internet in the region, the researchers did not see a significant gender difference in the overall Internet usage.

Bansode and Pujar (2008) conducted a study to ascertain the use of the Internet by research scholars in science, social sciences and humanities under title "Use of Internet by Research Scholars at Shivaji University, Kolhapur." Users were using the Internet mainly for communication purpose that is e-mail as compared to information retrieval. There was need to give training on the use of the Internet so that researchers use appropriate tools and techniques to obtain information. Joteen Singh et al. (2009) executed a study under title "Use of Internet Based E-Resources at Manipur University: A Survey" to examine the use of

electronic information focusing on the Internet services by post graduate students, research scholars, teachers and non-teaching staff members. Users were using the Internet mainly to download the information from web based resources and web sites. Lack of power supply and the low speed Internet access were general problems faced by users in accessing information from web based resources.

Need for the Present Study

Academic libraries have made a significant investment in electronic information resources and in computer-based technologies in general and the Internet in particular as a need on the part of librarians to provide technology mediated information services to the clientele. In a limited span of time, the Internet has become an integral unit for library and Information centres.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To highlight the importance of the Internet and its services over the traditional library services.

- To know the purpose of using the Internet.

- To study the impact of Internet on users' research and teaching.

- To find out the problems faced by the social science faculty while using the Internet.

- To suggest ways and means for the improvement of the Internet facility at the campus.

Methodology of the Study

A survey, using a questionnaire, among the faculty members of the Arts and Science colleges in Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu India was conducted to study the use of the Internet on research and teaching. Of the total 70 faculty surveyed, 58 questionnaire was received back with response rate 82.85 %. The information or data given by the faculty is analysed and presented.
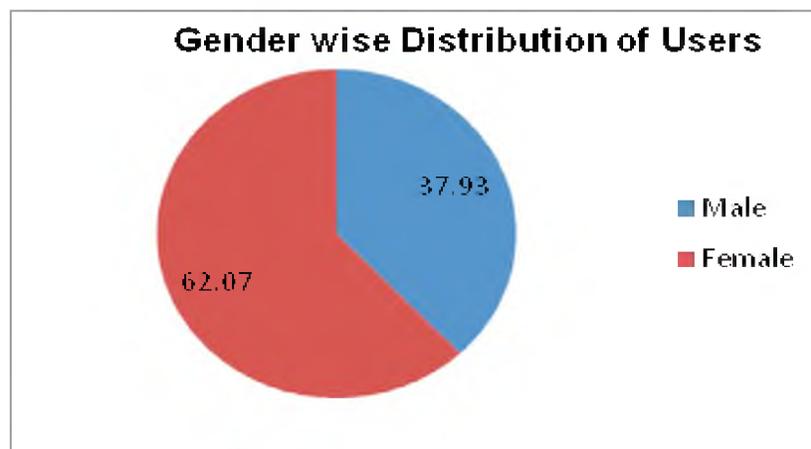
Data Analysis and Discussion

Analysis of data is the ultimate step in research process. It is the link between raw data and significant results leading to conclusions. This process of analysis has to be result oriented.

Gender wise Distribution of Users

Table 1: Gender wise Distribution of Respondents

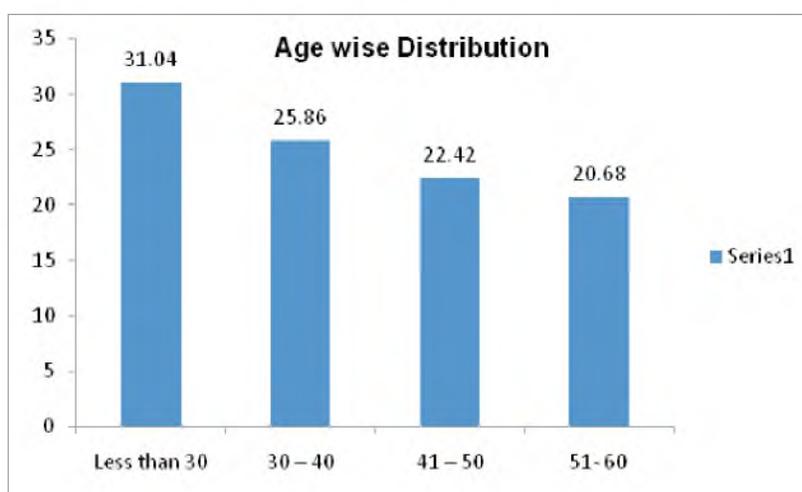| Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	22	37.93
Female	36	62.07
Total	58	100.00

Figure 1 : Gender Wise Distribution of Users

Table 1 shows the sex wise break up of respondents. It is clear from Table-1 that 36 (62.07%) respondents were female where as 22 (37.93%) respondents were male. Table-1 reveals that female respondents are dominating over male respondents in Arts and Science colleges of Cuddalore District (Figure1).

Age Wise Distribution

Table 2 : Age Wise Distribution

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 30	18	31.04
30 – 40	15	25.86
41 – 50	13	22.42
51 - 60	12	20.68
Total	58	100.00

Figure 2 : Age Wise Distribution

Table-2 shows the age wise distribution of respondents. Of the total 58 faculty surveyed, 18 (31.04%) respondents belong to the age group below 30 years followed by 15 (25.86%) respondents belong to the age group between 30 and 40. Whereas 13 (22.42%) respondents belong to the age group between 41 and 50. Only 12 (20.68%) respondents belong to the age group between 51 and 60 (Figure 2).

Use of Internet

Table 3: Usage of Internet

Usage of Internet	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	58	100.00
No	-	-
Total	58	100.00

Respondents were asked about certain questions to ascertain the awareness, usage and purpose of Internet access. Table-3 indicates that all respondents use the Internet regularly.

Frequency of Internet Use

Table 4: Frequency of Internet Use

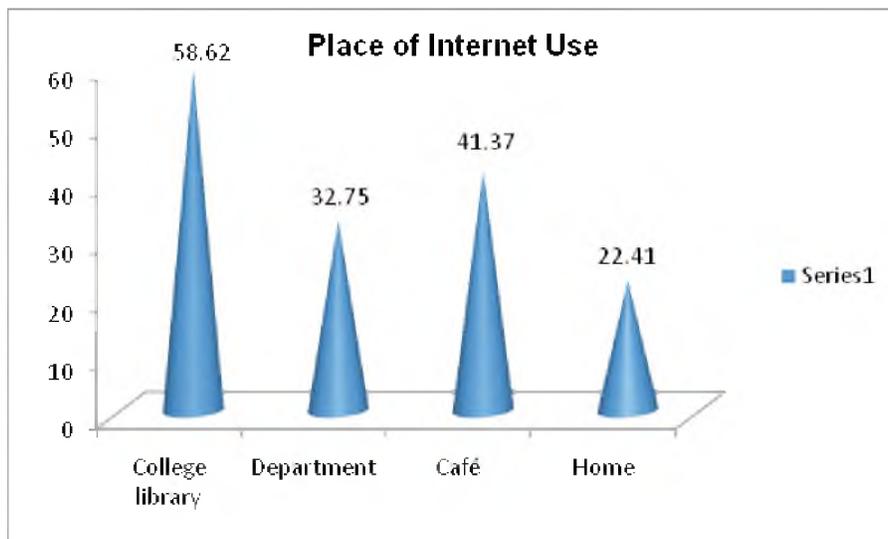| Frequency of Use	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Daily	18	31.03
Once a week	13	22.42
Once a fortnight	15	25.86
Once a month	7	12.06
Occasionally	5	8.63
Total	58	100.00

Frequency of use depends upon the infrastructure facilities of the university and services. Table-4 shows that the majority 18 (31.03%) of respondents use the Internet on daily basis. About 15 (25.86%) respondents use once a fortnight, whereas 13 (22.42%) respondents use once a week, this is followed by 7 (12.06%) respondents using once a month and about 5 (8.63%) respondents using the Internet occasionally.

Place of Internet Use

Table 5: Place of Internet Access

Location	Number of Respondents	Percentage
College library	34	58.62
Department	19	32.75
Café	24	41.37
Home	13	22.41

Note: Total sample exceeds the required size since the questions permitted multiple choices

Figure 3 : Place of Internet Use

Table 5 depicts place from where faculty members access the Internet. The majority 34 (58.62%) of respondents access the Internet from college library, about 24 (41.37%) respondents access from cybercafés, followed by 19 (32.75%) respondents access through the department and 13 (22.41%) respondents access at home (Figure 3).

Purpose of Using Internet

Table 6 : Purpose of Using Internet

Purpose	Number of Respondents	Percentage
E-mail	45	77.58
Online Databases	37	63.79
Home pages	5	8.62
News	25	43.10
Sports	9	15.51
Trade and Commerce	12	20.68
General Information	32	55.17
Mailing List	18	31.03
Research Teaching	53	91.37

Note: Total sample exceeds the required size since the questions are of multiple choices

Table-6 reveals that majority 53 (91.37%) respondents indicated that research and teaching is the primary purpose of using the Internet. Around 45 (77.58%) respondents used the Internet for E-mail purpose. This was followed by 37 (63.79%) respondents who indicated

for online databases and about 32 (55.17%) respondents indicated for general information. Mailing list, news, trade and commerce, sports and visiting home pages recorded relatively lesser preference. Table-6 indicates that majority 91.37 percent use the Internet for their research and training. It clearly reveald that faculty members of Arts and Science colleges in cuddalore district are particular towards their research and teaching activities.

Internet Services

Table 7: Use of Internet Services

Internet Services	Number of Respondents	Percentage
World Wide Web (WWW)	48	82.75
E-Mail	30	51.72
File Transfer Protocol (FTP)	18	31.03
Archive	15	25.86
Discussion Forums	12	20.68
Bulletin Board Services (BBS)	9	15.51
Internet Relay Chat (IRC)	7	12.06

Note: Total sample exceeds the required size since the questions are of multiple choices

Table-7 indicates the use of Internet services. The use of Internet services in order of preference is 82.75% World Wide Web, 51.72% respondents used internet services for E-mail followed by 31.03% who used Internet Services for file transfer protocol, 25.86% use Internet Services for archive, 20.68 % used Internet Services for discussion forums, 15.51% of respondents used Internet Services for bulletin board services and 12.06 % use Internet for Internet relay chat.

Favorite Search Engines

Table 8 : Respondents with Satisfaction with Search Engines

Name of the Search Engines	Views Regard to Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yahoo	38	65.51
Google	52	89.65
Rediff	18	31.03
Alta Vista	7	12.06
Lycos	5	8.62
Bingo	4	6.89
HotBot	2	3.44

Note: Total sample exceeds the required size since the questions are of multiple choices

A study of data in table-8 indicates the respondent satisfaction with search engines. It was assessed with the help of 7 search engines. The respondents' satisfaction towards utilization of 7 search engines can be observed from the following discussion. 89.65% of respondents used Google search engine followed by 65.51% who used Yahoo, 31.03 % used Rediff, 12.06% used Alta Vista, 8.62% used Lycos, 6.89 % use Bingo and 3.44% used HotBot.   It could be seen clearly from the above discussion that respondents make more use of search engines such as Google and Yahoo.

Opinion About Availability of Required Information on Internet

Table 9 : Opinion About Availability of Required Information on Internet

Availability of Required Information on Internet	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	42	72.42
No	10	17.24
Not sure	6	10.34
Total	58	100.00

Table-9 shows that opinion about availability of required information on Internet. Of the total 58 surveyed, majority 42 (72.42%) of respondents indicated that they are getting required information on Internet. About 10 (17.24%) and about 6 (10.34%) respondents indicated that they are unhappy and are not sure about the availability of required information.

Impact of Internet on Research / Teaching

Table 10 : Impact of Internet on Research / Teaching

Impact of Internet on Research / Teaching	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	20.68
Agree	38	65.52
Uncertain	3	5.17
Disagree	5	8.63
To tal	58	100.00

Respondents were asked about the impact of the Internet on their research /teaching Table-10. It is evident that majority 38 (65.62%) respondents agree that the Internet has an important impact on their research / teaching. About 12 (20.68%) respondents indicated that they strongly agree and about 5 (8.63%) respondents indicated that they disagree.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are made to improve the use of the Internet by the faculty members of Arts and Science colleges in Cuddalore:

Orientation programmes for the faculty members should be conducted at regular intervals regarding the effective use of Internet.

Trained staff having Internet knowledge should be appointed to assist the faculty members and an Internet monitoring board should be constituted.

A separate browsing center equipped with advanced facilities should be built up to make better and effective use of Internet services.

To facilitate the Internet use, the directory of websites should be prepared and updated frequently.

Conclusion

The use of information and communication technologies no doubt is gaining momentum in Indian higher education institutions. The Internet is used by faculty and students in searching information. Information and communication technologies assist libraries in providing efficient and current information services. Once the staff and students are able to use these technologies effectively, the teaching, learning and research activities in the college will be made easier for the college community. ICT usage will facilitate development since there will be free flow of information. The present study indicated that the concerned arts and science college authorities should make attempts to provide the necessary infrastructure facilities such as high speed network connections to access the electronic information resources and to conduct training programmes for the library professionals and user orientation programmes for the effective use of Internet facilities.

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