Use and Impact of E-Resources at Some Selected Private Universities in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Today availability of e-resources in a university library is very common. But their proper and maximum use is a matter for discussion. The present paper examines the existence of various e-resources and services are available in some selected Private University Library at Dhaka, in Bangladesh. The study also highlights different types of electronic resources used by students, the purposes and frequency of using electronic resources and the problems faced by the students while accessing and using the electronic resources in the library.

Keywords: e-resources, Private University Library, electronic resource, library

Introduction

Progress in computer applications during the past few decades have brought radical changes in the way information is gathered, store, organized, accessed, retrieved and consumed. The application of computers in information processing has brought several products and services to the scene. The internet and the web are constantly influencing the development of new modes of scholarly communication; their potential for delivering goods is quite vast, as they overcome successfully the geographical limitations associated with the print media. Further, the distribution time between product publication and its delivery has been drastically reduced. The Internet can be used for efficient retrieval and meeting information needs. This is very important for university libraries since most of them call for more and more research work. This important fact is convincing many libraries to move towards digital e-resources, which are found to be less expensive and more useful for easy access. This is especially helpful to distant learners who have limited time to access the libraries from outside by dial-up access to commonly available electronic resources, mainly CD-ROM, OPACs and internet, which are replacing the print media.

Libraries have witnessed a great metamorphosis in recent years both in their collection development and in their service structure. Over the last several years, a noteworthy transformation has been noticed in collection development policies and practices. Print medium is increasingly giving way to the electronic form of materials[1].

Objectives of the study: Some of the major objectives of this study are as follows: i. Know the different types of electronic resources and services are available in the private university library. ii. Study the different types of electronic resources used by students. iii. Study the purpose and frequency of using electronic resources and services available in the library. iv.

Study the impact of electronic resources and services on the academic work of the teachers and research scholars. v. To know the answer regarding electronic materials can replace traditional materials or not. vi. Locate the impediments faced by the students while accessing and using the electronic resources in the library

Literature Review: A number of relevant studies have been carried out on the use of e-resources by teachers, students and research scholars of universities and research organizations. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents feel that the use of the UGC-Info net e-journals has created high dependency value on their research work and they needed current article alert services and electronic document supply services[2].

67.64% of research scholars of faculty of science and 69.23% of research scholars of engineering use e-journals for research work whereas 35.29% of sciences use e-journals to update knowledge and 23.70% of engineering use these for study[3]. Speed of availability and the ease of accessibility of information cause the users to use electronic resources more frequently[4].

49% of respondents are marginally satisfied with online services provided by the library. The survey indicates that the use of e-resources in Jamia Milia Islamia is not satisfactory and needs constant guidance/orientation to enhance their usage[5]. E-journals are becoming a basic need for the academic research scholars every day. Navjyoti finds that speedy publication and availability on the desktop are the key advantages that attract research scholars[6].

Lack of training is a major de-motivating factor in the usage of e-journals, so that needs to be improved. Kennedy proposes the inclusion of Web pages to the library catalogue as a solution to the maintenance of increasing web site links[7]. Kaur reports e-

resources can be good substitutes for conventional resources if the access speed is fast, access to all the important e-journals is provided and more computer terminals are installed to provide access to e-resources[8].

Renwick recommends there be greater promotion of the library's e-resources[9]. Kaur and Verma find that users use all the sources available to them regularly, like CD ROMs, online databases, Web resources and audio/video tapes[10].

Shmara reports that today availability of e-resources in a university library is very common. But their proper and maximum use is a matter for discussion. The present paper examines the existence of various e-resource databases in Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University Library. The study also highlights the preferences and importance of online resources among the teachers and research scholars[11].

Brief history about Asian, Uttara and North South University: Asian University of Bangladesh or AUB is a private, coeducational university of Bangladesh. It was established on 4 January 1996 by the Private University Act 1992. AUB has four campuses in Uttara, Dhanmondi, Khulna and Rajshahi. The university is affiliated by University Grants Commission (Bangladesh) and managed by Asian University Trust. Bangladesh (AUB) received formal approval of the Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh on 4 January 1996 as a degree-awarding university under the Private University Act, 1992. The university is accredited by the University Grants Commission, Bangladesh and the Government of Bangladesh, and alsoalso accredited overseas. Formation of the university was proposed in 1990 by the founder of AUB, Dr. Abul Hasan Muhammad Sadeq[12].

Uttara University is approved by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. UU aims at quality education. The university has been established under the private University Act of 1992 and the amendment to this Act in 1998. UU is also recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC). The university has been successfully in operation since 2003. Uttara University or (UU) is a private university in Uttara, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. UU has three campuses in a one-kilometer radius in Uttara, city campus in Dhanmondi and another campus in Mirpur-1[13].

North South University or NSU is the first government-approved private university of Bangladesh. The university follows the American system with all its distinctive features-semesters, credit hours, letter grades, one examiner system and so on. Its curricula, when first introduced, were reviewed by relevant departments of University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and University of California at Berkeley, USA, and duly approved by University Grants Commission. The academic programs are continually updated and adapted to meet the local needs. NSU now has 234 core (full-time) and 149 part-time faculty members. Core faculty members teach roughly 72% of the courses offered. All faculty members have higher degrees

from reputable foreign universities, with over 90% holding degrees from British, American, Australian and Canadian universities. Visiting faculty members from foreign universities including US, Canadian and Australian universities also teach at NSU. It is very selective in recruiting teachers and admitting students. Its current student enrolment is about 4000[14].

Research Methodology

The study was limited to the students of Asian University, Uttara University, and North South University at Dhaka in Bangladesh. A questionnaire survey was conducted to collect the information regarding the use of e-resources, frequency of use of e-resources, purpose of using e-resources, problems faced by the users while using e-resources. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to collect the primary data out of which 99 questionnaires were found usable for analysis. The questionnaires were completed by personal visits with users by the colleague of the author. Questionnaires were distributed randomly to the users. The collected data was analyzed and presented in the tabular form.

Results and Discussions

Table- 1 shows that the majority of the students 24.24% prefer to use e-thesis. Second highest preference is e-books and use of e-newspapers with more than 15%. Table 1 highlights that only the well-known e-resources are preferably used by the researchers and faculty members, the rest of the e-resources i.e. e-magazines, e-journals are comparatively less used.

Table-1
Use of Various E-Resources

	Frequency	Percentage
E-Journals	6	6.1
E-Books	15	15.2
E-Magazines	12	12.12
E-Thesis	24	24.24
WWW	9	9.9
E-Newspaper	15	15.2
Others	18	18.2

The table highlights that majority of the students, i.e. more than 46%, respond that the interface of the library web site is user-friendly while 29.3% students think that the interface of the library web site is not user-friendly. (Table2)

Table-2
User-Friendly Interface to the Library Website

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	46.5
No	29	29.3
No comments	24	24.24

Table-3 shows that 44.4% respondents have taken the training regarding the access to electronic resources, while more than 55% didn't get any training regarding the access to electronic resources.

Table-3
Training Taken Related to Electronic Resources

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	44	44.44
No	55	55.55

Table-4 reveals that 60(60.6%) respondents use e-resources when necessary. 20.2% respondents use the e-resources very often, whereas 10.10% respondents use e-resources rarely.

Table-4
Frequency of Using E-Resources

	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	20	20.2
Occasionally	10	10.10
When necessary	60	60.6
Never	09	09.09

Table- 5 shows that more than 60% respondents use different databases when necessary, 28.28% occasionally and rest of them i.e. 11(11.11%) very often.

Table-5
Frequency of Use of Different Databases

	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	11	11.11
Occasionally	28	28.28
When necessary	60	60.6

Table -6 elaborates that majority of the students use e-resources in research purpose i.e more than.41%, 37(37.4%) for education purpose and more than 12% for communication purpose and rest of the respondents used e-resources for entertainment purpose.

Table-6
Purpose for Using E-Resources

	Frequency	Percentage
Research	41	41.41
Entertainment	9	09.09
Education	37	37.4
Communication	12	12.12

Table- 7 reveals that a huge amount of respondents, 47 (47.5%), think that e-resources never diminish the light of traditional resources, whereas 28 (28.3%) respondents feel that e-resources may replace traditional sources of information.

Table-7
Do electronic materials can replace traditional materials?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	28.3
No	47	47.5
No comments	24	24.24
Yes	28	28.3

It can be inferred from table 8 that accessing electronic resources is not free from problems. The problems encountered while using the e-resources mainly come from four factors:

break down of the system, high cost of surfing time, Problems of power outage when using computer, slow server. More than 52% of the respondents stated the problem of slow server to access, e-resources, which takes a lot of their slot time to retrieve the relevant information, whereas 21.21% reported that they faced the high cost of surfing time More than 15% of the respondents found Problems of power outage when using computer.

Table- 8
Problems faced by the students in accessing electronic resources

	Frequency	Percentage
Break down of the system	11	11.11
High cost of surfing time	21	21.21
Problems of power outage when using computer	15	15.15
Slow server	52	52.52

Conclusion

Study shows the use of e-resources is very common among the university and majority of the students are dependent on e-resources to get the desired and relevant information. But practical use of e-resources is not up-to the worth in comparison to investments made in acquiring these resources; secondly infrastructure and training programs should also be revised as per requirements. It is observed that the availability of e-resources on the campus is almost sufficient for all the existing disciplines but the infrastructure to use these resources is not adequate and can hinder the ability to meet the requirements of users.

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