

Computer Literacy among the University Students of North India: A Study



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Abstract

Recognizing the importance of computer the higher education bodies introduced the computer in school, college and university level courses. To check the student's computer literacy skills a survey was conducted of 500 university students of North India, the present study reveals that Majority of students have knowledge of computing skills, knowledge of operating systems and ICT skills. All the students are accessing the Internet through computers and mobiles. To get necessary information, search engines, websites, e-resources, subject gateways, portals, blogs, and wikipedia are used in order of preference.

Keywords: University Libraries, Computer Literacy, ICT Skills, Multimedia, North India.

Introduction

The computer is essential part of students and academician life. The major industries are based on computer and its related technologies. Recognizing the importance of computer the higher education bodies introduced the computer in school, college and university level courses. All the competitive, job based exams include computer as a part of syllabus. It made the human jobs very easy and rapid. The storage, processing searching and retrieval are the value added features of it. The internet and other network technologies boom its importance and it becomes a part of common man's life. Computer literacy is as essential as the reading writing literacy.

Computer Literacy, Meaning and Definitions

Dictionary meaning of computer literacy is basic, nontechnical knowledge about computers and how to use them; familiarity and experience with computers, software, and computer systems. (computer literacy, dictionary.com)

Ability to use the computer to solve numerical, logical and informational problems (Anderson)

Computer literacy is defined as the knowledge and ability to utilize computers and related technology efficiently, with a range of skills covering levels from elementary use to programming and advanced problem solving. Computer Literacy includes the use of basic hardware and software and the understanding of key information technology concepts and components.

(Basic Computer Literacy Toolkit:<http://cstproject.ca/sites/default/files/OnLine%20Toolkit%20Basic%20Computer%20Skills.pdf>)

A Person who is computer literate should be able to use computers to perform a few tasks such as writing letters or reports, calculating and comparing numbers or objects, or communicating via connections that support e-mail or (perhaps) a web-page, as personal, business, or educational circumstances require. (Computer Literacy Encyclopedia of Communication and Information).

Review of Literature

Modi (2012) studied investigates the attitudes of primary teachers of Mehsana district of Gujarat state towards computer literacy. Data is collected through structured questionnaire using random stratified sampling. The major findings of the study show that there is no significant difference in the attitude of primary teachers towards computer literacy with reference to their gender, educational qualification. But there is significant difference in attitude of primary teachers towards computer literacy with reference to their experience.

Sampath Kumar, Basavaraja and Gagendra, R. (2014) investigated computer literacy competencies among rural and urban students in India. For the purpose of primary data collection interviews were conducted of rural and urban students. The data is collected of 600

students from rural and urban background. The study reveals that there is difference between the infrastructure facilities among rural and urban schools. The main finding of the study was that majority of urban students (91.33%) use computers regularly compared to very low percentage of rural students (32.33%). All the collected data is analyzed with the help of Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) and graphically presented.

Amandeep, Bhupinder and Brar (2017) have conducted the research on use of Internet for reading by the postgraduate students and researchers of Punjabi university, Patiala (Punjab). The data is collected with the help of structured questionnaire from 50 postgraduate students and 30 researchers of the university. The study reveals that Most of the users frequently uses the Internet and are using their hostels, homes, departments, university library as locations for the Internet usage. The search engines especially the Google is extensively used for accessing information. The HTML format is the most preferred format for online reading. The users are satisfied by the services offered by the Internet but problems like information overload and excess of irrelevant results are posing hindrance to a number of users. It is recommended that the users should be given short term training and lectures to train them in the evaluation of information for relevancy, currency, authenticity, authority and reliability.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the computer literacy skills among the library and information science and other students of north India
2. To explore the Student's knowledge on operating system
3. To identify the use of the Internet and its tools.
4. To identify the different ICT Skills of the students
5. To ascertain the awareness and use of social networking sites.

Research Methodology

Both primary as well as secondary sources of literature related and relevant to study have been taken into consideration. Primary sources include

research papers, reports, white papers and websites while the secondary sources include various indexing and abstracting services and databases. A structured questionnaire is prepared and distributed among the university students. A sample of 500 students was chosen from all the universities under study. Out of the 500 students, 250 were LIS students and 250 were students from other courses. In fact, 40 questionnaires were distributed to LIS students and the other category students in each university under study. On careful scrutiny, it was found that questionnaires of 30 LIS students and 35 other category students were lacking in vital data. Hence these were not included in data analysis and discussion. But in order to maintain uniformity of the sample, 05 questionnaires were got filled again from the other category students.

Scope of the Study

The present study is based on the sample of 500 students from 07 universities (University of Kashmir, Sri Nagar; Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshla; Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; Punjabi University, Patiala; Panjab University, Chandigarh; Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra; and University of Delhi, Delhi) of north India.

Limitations of the Study

Sample for the study has been taken only from 07 universities of northern India. No effort has been made to present the data analysis course wise and subject wise at micro level. Students were divided into two broad categories of library and information science students as one group and other category students as the second group. Faculty and the university library staff has also been excluded to make this study more focused and informative.

Data Analysis

Demographic Profile and Student Participation in Library Promotion Strategies

The gender wise distribution of the students and their participation in library promotion strategies are presented below:

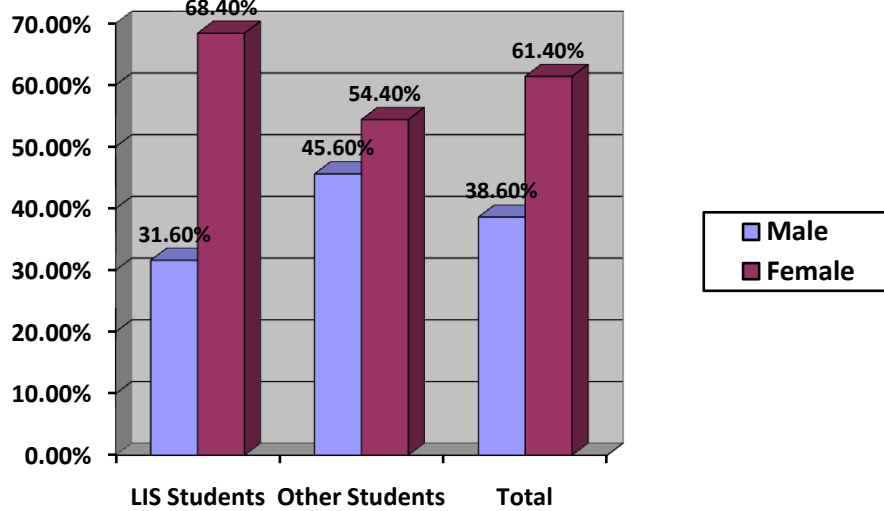
Table 1: Gender Wise Distribution of The Students

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%Age	Number	%Age	Number	%Age
Male	79	31.6	114	45.6	193	38.6
Female	171	68.4	236	54.4	307	61.4
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The above table shows demographic characteristics of the students. It can be seen from the table that 31.6% of LIS students are male and 68.4%

are female. Amongst the students of other courses, 45.6% are male and 54.4% are female. The female population is more in the sample.

Fig. 1: Demographic Profile



Computing and ICT Skills

An attempt was made to ascertain the computing and ICT skills of students under study, the results are tabulated below:

Table 2: Knowledge of Computing Skills

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	203	81.2	191	76.4	394	78.8
No	47	18.8	59	23.6	106	21.2
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The above table shows that majority of students possess computing skills. 81.2% LIS students and 76.4% students of other courses are

computer literate. But 18.8% LIS students and 23.6% students of other courses do not possess computer knowledge.

Table 3: Device Used

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%Age	Number	%Age	Number	%Age
Computer/Laptop	21	8.4	23	9.2	44	8.8
Mobile/ Tablet	26	10.4	36	14.4	62	12.4
Both	203	81.2	191	76.4	394	78.8
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The students were asked about which device they used regularly or most frequently. Majority of the students (78.8%) used the both computer and mobile

regularly followed by the mobile (12.4%). The result percentage in order to ranking of use the device is almost same in both the groups.

Fig 2: Regularly Used Device

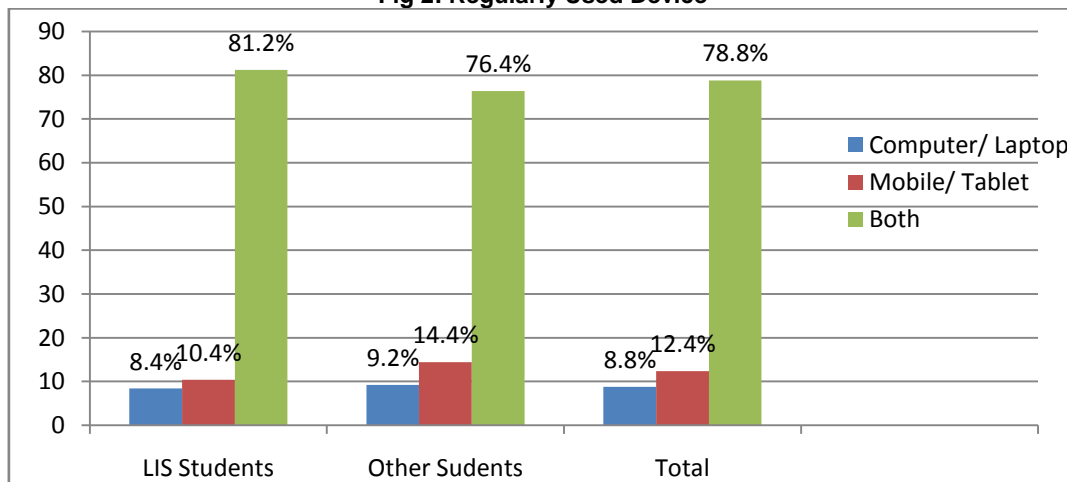


Table 4: Knowledge of Operating System

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%Age	Number	%Age	Number	%Age
Windows	250	100	250	100	500	100
Unix	26	10.4	19	7.6	45	9
Mac	12	4.8	16	6.4	28	5.6
Linux	00	0	00	0	00	0
Android	250	100	248	99.2	498	99.6
iOS	35	14	42	16.8	77	15.4

Operating System is essential for systems it manages the hardware and software of computer/laptop/mobile. All the students have expertise on windows operating system (100%) for computers and android operating system (99.6%) for

mobiles and tablets. Apple's iOS for iPhones is favored by seventy seven (15.4%) students. Few students have proficiency in Unix (9%) and Mac (5.6%) operating systems.

Table 5: ICT Skills

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%Age	Number	%Age	Number	%Age
Microsoft Office	201	80.4	190	76	394	78.8
Multimedia Application	195	78	98	39.2	293	58.6
Email	192	76.8	170	68	362	72.4
Web designing	08	3.2	00	0	08	1.6
CMS	00	0	00	0	00	0
Digital Library Software	00	0	00	0	00	0

When asked about ICT competencies, it was found that 80.4% LIS students have expertise in Microsoft Office, 78% in Multimedia Application, 76.8% in Email and 3.2% in Web designing. Among

students of other courses, 76% possess expertise in Microsoft Office, 68% in Email and 39.2% in Multimedia Application.

Table 6: Use of the Internet

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%Age	Number	%Age	Number	%Age
Yes	250	100	250	100	500	100
No	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The above table shows that all the students (100%) use the Internet for finding needed information.

Table 7: Use of Internet Sources, Services and Tools

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%Age	Number	%Age	Number	%Age
Search engine	201	80.4	232	92.8	433	86.6
Websites	14	5.6	02	0.8	16	03.2
e-resources	08	3.2	04	1.6	12	2.4
Subject Gateways/Portal	04	1.6	0	0	04	0.8
Blogs	06	2.4	0	0	06	1.2
Wikipedia	16	6.8	12	4.8	29	5.8
Total	250	100	250	100	250	100

It is obvious from the table 4 that search engines are the most popular among students. 80.4% of LIS students and 92.8% of students from other courses use search engines to find information. The

websites (3.2%), e-resources (2.4%), subject gateway/portal (0.8%), blogs (1.2%) and Wikipedia (5.8%) are also used by students.

Table 8: Profile on Social Networking Sites

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%Age	Number	%Age	Number	%Age
Yes	250	100	250	100	500	100
No	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

It was also found that all the students (100%) have their profiles on social networking sites.

Findings and Conclusion

Demographically speaking, female population is more in the sample constituting 38.6% male and 61.4 % female. Majority of students have knowledge of computing skills, knowledge of operating systems and ICT skills. All the students are accessing the Internet through computers and mobiles. To get necessary information, search engines, websites, e-resources, subject gateways, portals, blogs, and wikipedia are used in order of preference. Interestingly, it was noticed that all the students have their profiles on social networking sites. They prefer Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and Wikis, respectively. Students also depend heavily on mobile technologies.

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