

Awareness and Use of Internet based Sources: A Case study of North India



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Abstract

Internet is used for various reasons in the field of Information publication, storing, searching, retrieval and access. It has become the global library where all desired information is only a mouse click away. To check the utilization of internet and its services, a survey of 500 students of seven universities of north India was conducted. Data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire. The present study revealed that all students were using internet and its services. The Internet and both the print and the e-resources are used to get the needed information. To get necessary information, search engines, websites, e-resources, subject gateways, portals, blogs, and Wikipedia are used in order of preference. Majority of the students have knowledge and awareness about social networking sites.

Keywords: Internet Based Sources, E-Resources, Websites, Search Strategies, Social Networking Sites,

Introduction

The recent development in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) revolutionized the information publication industry. It has modernized the storage, handling and retrieval of information. The application of ICTs in libraries developed new services and tools for users. The physical form of libraries is also transformed. With this changing scenario, library users as well as their information needs are also changing. The fourth law of library science, save the time of the user indicates the importance of timely delivery of information sources and services. The internet makes it reality to deliver information sources and services at user's electronic gadgets without wasting the time. It also breaks the physical barriers and personal presence in the libraries. It also opens the new ways to searching, retrieving and accessing the information. It also solved the many problems of traditional libraries and introduced the many new services for the users.

Review of Literature

Brar's (2012) study deals with information seeking behavior of Ph.D researchers. The author conducted a survey to reveal the use of library, various techniques of consulting library services and their purpose. E-resources and e-journals acceptance and awareness is also analyzed. The study also exposes the problems faced by researcher and their satisfaction level.

Akpojotor (2016) explored the awareness and usage of electronic information resources among postgraduate students of library and information science in Southern Nigeria. The study was based on a survey of the all the three hundred and seventy-five (375) postgraduate students of library and information science in Southern Nigeria. The study revealed that postgraduate students of library and information science are quite aware and highly use electronic information resources. The study also reported that postgraduate LIS students are skilled in the use of electronic information resources. Based on the findings the study concluded that electronic information resources are essential tools for empowering postgraduate students of library and information science in Southern Nigeria.

Srujan et al (2016) conducted a survey of 142 first year MBBS students at PESIMSR, Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh, India. The study revealed that all students were using internet and felt it to be a useful tool. The study expressed that use of internet was time saving. Majority of the students have knowledge and awareness about the internet usage. The study suggested that attention should be paid to utilize the internet properly.

Sachin (2010) studied the methods of collecting information during their project work by students. The study also discussed the methods of

accessing Internet and other e-resources. The author also discussed the techniques used by students for evaluating the information.

Zhang (2000) discussed the use of Internet for conducting survey. The author presents a detailed literature review on this topic. The comparison of online survey and traditional survey is also made. The problems associated with this new approach are also discussed. By presenting a case study, it seeks possible solutions to some of the problems, and explores the potential the Internet can offer to survey researchers

Nai (2007) compared the differences in use of the Internet and computer by Chinese and British students. The author conducted a detailed survey of 220 Chinese students and 245 British students for this study. Significant differences were found in Internet experience, attitudes, usage, and self-confidence between Chinese and British students.

Objectives of the Study

The present study was carried out with the following objectives:

1. To explore the awareness and use of the Internet by students.
2. To identify the preferred format of information.
3. To reveal the most used information services and tools by students.
4. To explore the search strategies used in information finding.

5. To discover the awareness and use of social networking sites

Scope and Methodology 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. 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. On analysis, it was found, 30 LIS students' and 35 other category students' questionnaires 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. The data were analyzed using appropriate techniques and is presented with the help of tables, bar graphs and a pie chart.

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

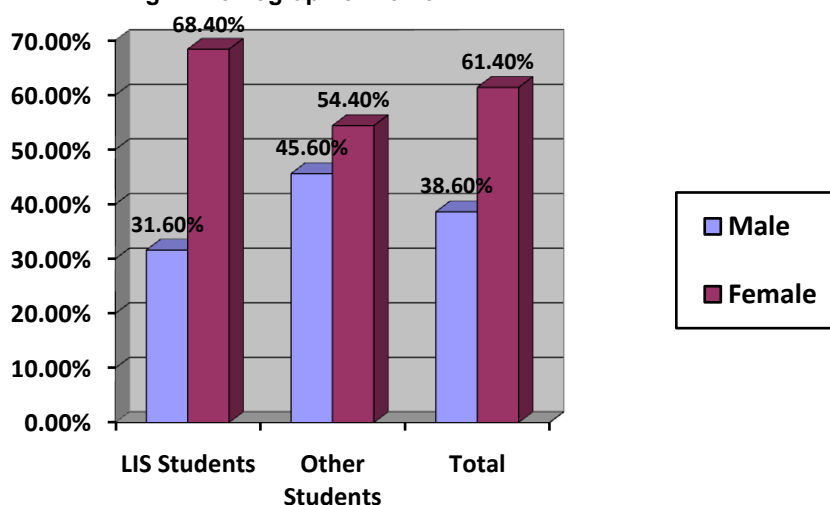


Table 2: Participation in Library Promotion Strategies

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%Age	Number	%Age	Number	%Age
Library Orientation	219	87.6	203	81.2	422	84.4
Reference Work Session	31	12.4	0	0	31	06.2
No Response	0	0	47	18.8	47	09.4
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

When asked about participation in any library initiation activity, it was encouraging to find that majority of LIS students (87.6%) have attended library orientation programme and 12.4% have undergone reference work session. The data of students from other courses reflects that 81.2% have attended orientation but 18.8% provided no response.

Use of the Internet and Document Format Preference

The Internet is quite popular among students and a question was asked about the use of the Internet by students. They were also asked to tell about their format preferences. Table below shows the results:

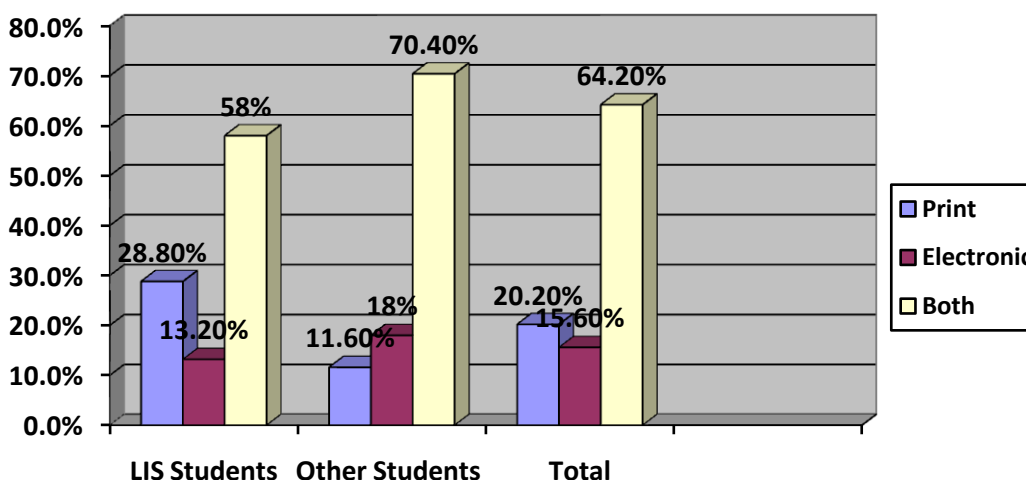
Table 3: Use of the Internet

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.

When asked about the format preference, it was found that majority of students, (58% LIS students and 70.4% students of other courses) rely on both print and electronic formats.

Fig 2: Use of Document Format Preference



Use of Internet Sources, Services and Tools

The students use various sources for accessing the needed information. The sources used,

strategies adopted, and evaluation of retrieved information is presented in the tables.

Table 4: 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 5: Search Strategy in Finding Information in Search Engine

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	% Age	Number	% Age	Number	% Age
Type the Search Statement in searching box	60	24	188	75.2	248	49.6
Type the keywords in searching box	172	68.8	42	16.8	214	42.8
Type the keywords using Boolean operators	18	7.2	20	8	38	7.6
Use Wildcard/ truncations	00	0	00	0	00	0
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The students were asked about the search strategies which they adopt while using a search engine. It was found that majority of them (49.6%) type the search statement in searching box, followed by 42.8% typing the keywords in searching box.

Table 6: Use of Boolean Operators

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	% Age	Number	% Age	Number	% Age
And	78	31.2	79	31.6	157	31.4
Or	130	52	114	45.6	244	48.8
Not	00	0	00	0	00	0
Don't Know	42	16.8	57	22.8	99	19.8
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

In order to find more relevant information, one could include synonymous terms. When asked about the type of Boolean operator used, it was found that majority (48.8%) use OR followed by AND which is used by 31.4%. The 19.8% respondents did not respond to this question which indicates that they are not aware of Boolean operators.

Table 7: Processing, Evaluation and Use of Information

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Use the information as it is	136	54.4	172	68.8	308	61.6
Organize the information in required format	77	30.8	58	23.2	135	27
Evaluate the information and select the most relevant	29	11.6	17	6.8	46	9.2
Repackage the information in desired format	08	3.2	3	1.2	11	2.2
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The information found from the Internet needs to be processed and evaluated before using. A question was asked to students about the same and it was found that majority of students (61.6%) use the information as it is, but 27% organize the information in required format before putting it to use. It was also found that the percentage of LIS students who organize information in required format, evaluate the information and select the most relevant to repackage that information in desired format before using, is more than the students of other courses. This is a positive indication that LIS students evaluate information before using.

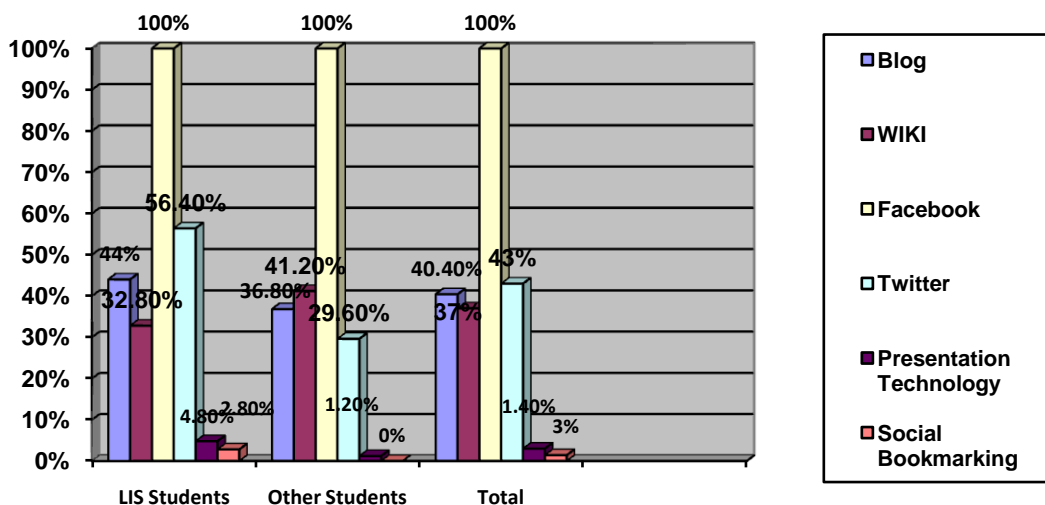
Use of Social Networking Tools**Table 8: Awareness and Use of Social Networking Tools**

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Blog	110	44	92	36.8	202	40.4
WIKI	82	32.8	103	41.2	185	37
Facebook	250	100	250	100	500	100
Twitter	141	56.4	74	29.6	215	43
Presentation Technology	12	4.8	03	1.2	15	3
Social Bookmarking	07	2.8	00	0	07	1.4

The social networking sites are quite popular among the students. An attempt was made to investigate the use of these technologies. The table shows that Facebook is used by all the students

(100%). 56.4% of LIS students use Twitter, 44% use blogs and 32.8% use WIKI. Among students of other courses 41.2% use WIKI, 36.8% use blogs and 29.6% use Twitter.

Fig 3: Use of Social Networking Tools



Findings and Conclusion

Demographically speaking, female population is more in the sample constituting 38.6% male and 61.4 % female. Library orientation and reference service are the main strategies adopted by the students and library staff to promote the use of library resources and services. The Internet and both the print and the e-resources are used to get the needed information. To get necessary information, search engines, websites, e-resources, subject gateways, portals, blogs, and Wikipedia are used in order of preference. Students use keywords to search information from the Internet. Surprisingly, 61.6% students use the retrieved information as such, and only 38.4% recreate that information to suit the purpose of retrieving. Majority of the students use Boolean operators for searching information, but 19.8% are not aware of these operators. The information retrieved from the Internet needs to be evaluated for quality. Legal issues are also involved in the usage of this information.

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