



Growing Use of Electronic Sources of Information - A User Survey of Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah (BGSB) University, Rajouri

Ramesh Pandita*

Abstract

Purpose: *The present study reflects the usage, popularity and effectiveness of electronic sources of information among users at BGSB University, Rajouri.*

Methodology/approach/design: *The study is undertaken by surveying the respondents and the questionnaire as a data gathering tool is employed.*

Findings: *The study reveals that there is a growing trend towards the use of electronic sources of information especially among the younger generation.*

Research limitations/implications: *The geographical area of the study was restricted to research students, research scholars and faculty members of BGSB University.*

Key Words: *Information sources; e-resources; Print resources; Information communication technology (ICT); e-publishing; Consortia; e-resource usage; Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah (BGSB) University*

Paper Type: *Research*

Introduction

As has increased the appetite of man towards electronics and its byproducts, so has he created ways and means of its contention? World has already experienced electronic revolution and is at the threshold of its 2nd electronic revolution but still contention seems nowhere near enough. Despite so much of advancement in the field of electronics, still the exploration & exploitation of electronics to the level of its exhaustion seems the only goal which is at the cards of human mind. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one such area which has created such wonders which humans may not visualize and the fact remains that with the help of ICT tools man has become an unpredictable being as no body knows what is in the offing as the next moment such offing may change the course of whole world. With the fusion of information and technology, whole world has gone IT savvy, and the matter of the fact is, to lesser or greater extent, man has not only become dependent on IT but has also posed a threat to himself, the way he is heading towards getting caged in it. In fact I take the liberty to say that man has started living on the mercy of technological advancement and ICT is one such wonder. The gradual pace with which we are heading with technology

* Assistant Librarian, Central Library, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri, J&K, India. e-mail: rameshpandita90@gmail.com

(our greatest friend) hand in hand, may turn horrible the moment it crashes or if we fail to handle and carry on with it (**Pandita, 2011**).

With the strict instruction by various governing bodies of higher education and the growing trend towards use and publication of electronic sources of information in teaching learning process all across the globe, most of the higher educational institutions have started subscribing to electronic sources of information in India also. Coming up of consortiums like INDEST by AICTE and UGC-Infonet by UGC corroborate the fact that we can very well see the declining expenditures of the academic institutions and a better access to information free from various constraints.

Offerings and availability of e-documents in the form of CDs, DVDs, e-journals, e-magazines, e-books, and other open access documents have revolutionized every sphere of academic activity by conquering both time and space with numerous advantages of electronics over print media. Young generation has grown up with technology and the seasoned ones have shown great keenness in embracing it. The academic set-ups in the present world have embraced various forms of electronic sources of information which have set a successful atmosphere in the institutions making use of them. In all, ICT has reached a stage where mankind may not be able to carry hereon without it.

Literature Review

Madhusudhan (2008) carried a study which clearly highlights that research relies heavily on the use of e-resources. He visualizes that students and scholars from the streams like Engineering and Science make good use of e-resources as compared to other disciplines. A study carried out by **Eqbal and Khan (2007)** also reveals that scholars from Sciences and Engineering use e-journals for updating knowledge. The commonly used e-resources by students, scholars and faculty mostly constituting of CD-ROM's, online databases, web based sources, audio and video tapes etc is also opined by **Kaur and Verma (2006)**.

Schultz and Salomon (1990) carried out a study in Oakland University to assess the growing trend and satisfaction among the students in making use of electronic sources of information in general and CD-ROM documents in particular. They observed that majority of the students found these sources simple to use and they also saved their time and a whopping percentage were of the opinion to prefer this version over print one. One more study by **Goldfinch, Armstrong and Hartley (1990)** regarding the use of CD-ROM documents found that respondents find it very easy to use and time saving also.

Naqvi (2007) observes a marginal satisfaction among the users of online e-resources. **Naidu, Rajput and Motiyani (2007)** clearly stress that

somewhere there is need to upgrade things despite having availability and accessibility of technology which has lead to more frequent use of electronic resources by clientele. Commonly found advantages of e-resources over the print are that publications are made available in time and that too on one's desktop (**Navjyoti, 2007**).

Sharma (2009) observes that teachers and scholars are more dependent on e-resources to seek a particular piece of information. His study clearly depicts that e-resources are much preferred by respondents due to their nature of being more informative, more useful, and less expensive.

Sharma (2009) deciphers that an infrastructure and training program towards the use of e-resources is required as inadequate facilities are one of the major causes to act as hindrance in furthering the best use of e-resources. **Renwick (2005)** also feels a need towards the promotion of e-resources is more required so as to make good use of e-documents. He recommends for putting greater emphasis on the promotion of library's e-resources.

Need and Purpose of Study

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has transformed the information seeking behavior of users especially with the offings like e-books, e-Journals, databases and so many other electronic sources of information. Since majority of the population today being techno-savvy have modern electronic gadgets like, laptops, palmtops, latest mobile phones with advanced features, e-readers etc. it was conceptualized, that despite having so many type of electronic gadgets why not to assess as how far the students, scholars and teachers hold these sources important for study, teaching and research purposes.

Objectives of the Study

Present study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

- To assess the use and preferences of electronic sources of information in study, teaching and research purpose by students, scholars and faculty at BGSB University, Rajouri.

Methodology

Questionnaire (specifically designed for the purpose) was circulated among respondents and stratified random sampling technique was employed to select the sample. To assess the effectiveness of questionnaire, a pretest was carried out among 30 respondents and there after some necessary corrections were carried out. A total of 300 questionnaires were circulated in the heterogeneous group comprising of students, scholars and faculty members. To ensure better response rate and to avoid any misunderstandings especially among B. Tech students'

questionnaires were distributed and collected personally. A good number of faculty members were also interviewed to seek their opinion about the growing trend towards the use of e-resources among students. **Table 1** clearly indicates the questionnaire distribution frequency among various departments at BGSBU.

Table 1: Respondents Distribution

Name of the Department	No. of Questionnaires distributed	No. of responses
College of Engineering & Technology	110	82 (74.54)
School of Management Studies	50	36 (72.00)
Department of Computer Science	50	40 (80.00)
Centre for Biodiversity Studies	40	18 (45.00)
School of Islamic Studies	30	16 (53.33)
Department of Applied Mathematics	20	04 (20.00)
Total	300	196 (65.33)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Data Analysis

Access to Internet

10.71 % respondents are satisfied over the internet facility available to them round the clock; while as a major of respondents (49.48%) are of the view that internet facility is available to them but only for a limited period. 6.63% respondents opine that they are denied access to internet and 33.16% respondents have no internet facility. **Table 2** clearly reveals that there is mixed response over the internet facility provided to users.

Table 2: Access to Internet Facility

Options	Respondents
Yes, for limited period	97 (49.48)
No facility	65 (33.16)
Yes, Round the clock	21 (10.71)
Yes, but access denied	13(6.63)
Total	196

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Places of Preference to Access e-Resources

44.89% respondents access e-resources at home followed by 30.61% respondents in computer labs. 7.65% prefer their use in offices, 8% in class rooms, 5% in library and 3% don't use internet at all. Thus, it is evident that home is the most preferred place to use internet and access e-resources, perhaps for the reason of being the most comfortable place without any hassle (**Table 3**).

Table 3: Places of Preference to Access e-Resources

Options	Respondents
Home	88 (44.89)
Computer lab	60 (30.61)
Class Room	16 (8.16)
Office	15 (7.65)
Library	11 (5.61)
Don't use	06 (3.06)
Total	196

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Better Source of Information

38.77% respondents feel that electronic sources of information are better over print ones and 22.44% respondents still prefer print sources of information over the electronic ones. 11.22 % respondents have replied that they prefer to make use of both electronic and printed sources of information. 27.55% respondents did not respond at all. The reason that could be attributed to the non responsiveness can be non familiarity of electronic sources of information of the non responsive lot. Respondents who did not respond to this question mostly comprise of the people in higher age groups, as such definitely for mostly not being too much techno savvy (**Table 4**).

Table 4: Better source of information

Options	Respondents
Yes	76(38.77)
No	44(22.44)
Both	22(11.22)
No Response	54(27.55)
Total	196

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Commonly Used Electronic Sources

47.95% respondents make use of e-journals and e-books while as 33. 67% respondents use CD-ROMs & databases. 9.69% respondents make use of online catalogues while as 8.67% respondents don't use any electronic source of information. It is evident that users are no more confined to use one particular source of information in electronic format (**Table 5**).

Table 5: Commonly used electronic sources

Options	Respondents
E-Journals & E-Books	94(47.95)
CD-ROM & Databases	66(33.67)
Online Catalogue	19(9.69)
Don't Use	17(8.67)
Total	196

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Drawbacks of Electronic Resources

37.75% respondents sense that lack of proper IT knowledge is one of the key drawbacks in the use of e-resources of information. 35.71% respondents are of the view that use of e-resources distracts a person from the main work and is also being seen as time consuming process. 19% respondents experience that there is too much information available on internet which most of the times is suspected for its reliability (**Table 6**).

Table 6: Drawbacks of e-resources

Options	Respondents
Lack of IT Knowledge	74 (37.75)
Use of e-resources often distracts from work & Time consuming	70 (35.71)
Too much information available & not reliable	38(19.38)
No comments	14 (07.14)
Total	196

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Electronic Resources Usage

23.97% respondents are of the view that following access to electronic sources of information, their academic career has improved for the reason the information they access is current and up to date. Similarly, 20.91% respondents believe that they are able to access wide range of information which enhances their academic excellence. 19.38% of the respondents are of the view that electronic resources are one of the ways to have easier access to information which is again a good indicator of academic excellence. 18.36% respondents use them for accessing the resources at a faster rate while as 17.34% respondents find them a cheaper alternative over the print resources (**Table 7**).

Table 7: Electronic Resources Usage

Options	Respondents
Current & Up-to-date information	47(23.97)
Access to wide range of information	41(20.91)
Easier access to information	38(19.38)
Faster access to information	36(18.36)
Cheaper than print	34(17.34)
Total	196

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Satisfaction Level

56.63% respondents disagree that they have been able to acquire significant information from the electronic sources of information while as only 25% respondents have been able to acquire significant information from electronic sources. 9.69% respondents are not being sure about the satisfaction level with the electronic resources while as 8.67% held no opinion about it. There is no denial in it that internet has gained popularity among people at an alarming pace and people have been able to make good use of internet sources and its applications in day to day life. We can see majority of respondents of this very particular question believe that internet is a good source of information and they have been able to acquire significant information form it (**Table 8**).

Table 8: Satisfaction Level

Options	Respondents
Disagree	111(56.63)
Agree	49(25.00)
Not Sure	19(9.69)
No opinion	17(8.67)
Total	196

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Quality of work following access to e-resources

58.67% respondents feel that their work has improved with the access to electronic resources while as 13.26% maintained that it has adversely affected their work. 8.67% respondents are of the view that they find no change in the quality of their work while as 19.38% respondents have not mobilized any opinion about the subject. Internet and its applications has made its presence felt in the lives of a common man and a day without it will literally cripple and paralyze the life. Dependence on internet for its various services has really helped it to gain popularity among masses which is evident from **Table 9**.

Table 9: Quality of work following access to e-resources

Options	Respondents
Improved	115(58.67)
Can't say	38(19.38)
Suffered	26(13.26)
No Change	17(8.67)
Total	196

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Conclusion

It can be emphatically said that there is a steep increase in the use of electronic sources in the field of teaching and research. Teaching learning community has started relying heavily on electronic sources of information. Poor internet connectivity and limited access to e-resources is definitely going to hamper the academic and research work of teaching learning community to a greater extent and this needs to be given a serious thought. Growing use and popularity towards electronic sources of information has somewhat started weaning interest towards printed sources of information especially among student community. Space and time constraints involved in printed documents are no more in place with e-documents. Popularity of e-documents has grown manifold for many reasons and the prominent being the considerable improvement in making more objective and well defined use of information. The quality of academics is highly reflective of the use of e-resources.

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Corresponding Author

Ramesh Pandita can be contacted at: rameshpandita90@gmail.com