

USAGE OF REFERENCE SOURCES ON THE INTERNET BY STUDENTS IN SRI RAMAKRISHNA COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE, COIMBATORE – A STUDY

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Abstract

The study focuses on the usage of reference sources on the internet by students in Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore. Reference sources are materials in the reference section while reference services are rendered by reference librarian in meeting the information need of users in the library. Out of 80 respondents, 22%,21%,15%,11%,7%,3%,1% are using type of online reference source web OPAC, E-books, encyclopedia ,database, dictionaries, bibliographic, handbooks respectively. Number of reason 55% are using google search engine. Regarding rate of using the internet for the purpose of e-mail. Out of 80% of respondents, 49 (61.3%) respondent knows online reference sources in browsing centers. It could be concluded that students make use of reference materials and have understanding of reference sources. Probably because science students have compulsory courses in the Library Instruction Programme and Introduction to Library Studies respectively. From the findings of the study, it could be recommended that new reference sources should be acquired to cover all courses and reference librarian should organize orientation for the students on the use of reference sources in the library.

Keywords: Reference, Sources, internet, OPAC, Dictionary. Library

INTRODUCTION

There's a lot of information out there, not all of which is trustworthy. We live in an information age. The quantity of information available is so staggering that we cannot know everything about a subject. For example, it's estimated that anyone attempting to research what's known about depression would have to read over 100,000 studies on the subject. And there's the problem of trying to decide which studies have produced reliable results. Similarly, for information on other topics, there's not only a huge quantity out of there but every uneven level of quality. You don't want to rely on the news in the

headlines of sensational tabloids near supermarket checkout counters, and it's just as hard to know how much to accept what's in all the books, magazines, pamphlets, newspaper, journals, brochures, websites, and various media reports that are available.

People want to convince you to buy their products, agree with their opinion, rely on their data, vote for their candidate, consider their perspective, or accept them as experts. In short, we have to sift and make decisions all time and you want to make responsible choices that you won't regret.

Evaluating sources is an important skill we need all the time. It's been called an art as well as work, much of which is detective work. We may be overwhelmed with too much information or too little. The temptation is to accept whatever we find. But don't be tempted. Learning how to evaluate efficiently is a skill you need both for our course papers and our life.

Reference sources

Meaning Reference Sources that

- Provide facts or specific details on a subject
- Provide Background Information
- Provide outlines of a subject
- Point to other sources of information
- Print are located in a separate area of the library
- Can be print or electronic

Reference sources are defined as

“Are used to find information on a topic quickly. May be printed or electronic”

Types of Reference Sources

DICTIONARIES

Dictionaries are defined as “Provide information about words, especially their meanings”. The Dictionary provides information about the meaning, pronunciation, and spelling of words. Unabridged dictionaries attempt to be complete by including all words currently in use in a language. They provide extensive information about the words included. Abridged dictionaries omit words that do not regularly appear in books, magazines, and newspapers. Specialized dictionaries provide detailed information about the words that apply to a particular subject, such as space, maths, biology, psychology, and many more. They include technical words that are rarely used outside of the subject.

THESAURUS

A thesaurus contains synonyms for commonly used words. A synonym is a word that has the same meaning or nearly the same meaning as another word. For example, "simple" is a synonym for "easy." A thesaurus contains many more synonyms for a word than does a dictionary. A thesaurus can help you precisely express your ideas when writing.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA

An encyclopaedia contains articles on a variety of subjects. The articles are written by experts on each of the subjects. In addition to articles, encyclopaedias may include illustrations and diagrams, definitions of some words, and references to additional information. A general encyclopaedia includes overview articles on a wide range of topics. A subject encyclopaedia contains longer and more detailed articles on specific topics, events, or fields of study.

ALMANAC

An almanac is an annual single-volume reference source that contains useful facts about a wide range of topics. You can learn about countries of the world, government, historical events, and many other topics. Because almanacs are revised each year, the information is current.

ATLAS

An atlas is a collection of maps. The most common atlas contains maps that show the political and physical features of countries throughout the world. A political map shows government boundaries. A physical map shows the features of the earth's surface such as mountains, deserts, and bodies of water. You may also use a road map to learn how to get from place to place. There are also specialized atlases for such things as weather across the world, the oceans of the world, and even the anatomy of the human body.

Review of Literature

Ruzgar (2005) studied the purpose of the Internet use and learning via the Internet. It was concluded that the Internet has become an integral part of college life and its usage is approaching 100 % among students. It was found that 36% of the students spent 1-10 hours per week on the Internet. In terms of activities online, sending/receiving e-mail topped the list, followed by reading news and finding sports information, research for school-related work, chat, research for products and services, and downloading images. Because of their online activities, students watched less television.

Ozad (2010) explored the use of the Internet in tertiary media education. It was suggested that in addition to using the Internet as a source of information, students majored in communication and media should also use it as a tool of communication.

Dominika Sokol and Vit Sisler (2010) conducted a study on Internet Use among University Students in the United Arab Emirates. The study aims to analyze socializing on the Internet and attitudes towards the Internet as a medium of social interaction among university students in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The result reveals that the Internet can largely act as a vehicle for resisting social exclusion and gender segregation; it can also simultaneously serve as a mechanism for reinforcing pre-existing norms within newly networked traditional communities.

Sakina Bashir (2011) conducted a study on Internet Use among University Students: A Survey in University of the Punjab, Lahore. The objective of the study was to explore the Internet use behaviour of students. The results show that most of the students use this technology for course related reading and research needs. They are new users of the Internet. They use it at the University Library's Digital Lab Unit as well as their

departments and homes. A large number of them have learnt to use the Internet tools by 187 | Page themselves, or relying on assistance from friends without attending any formal training programs. Ease of work and time saving are the reasons of Internet use among university students.

OBJECTIVES:

- To identify the accessibility of online reference sources
- To analyze the use pattern of online reference sources
- To know the use pattern of newspapers
- To get the opinion of online reference resources
- To know the frequency of the visit to online sources
- To know the purpose of using online reference sources
- To identify the popular online reference sources

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter deals with the methodology in the research that has been adopted for the study. The research methodology includes the significance of the scope of the study, aim and objectives of the study definition of concepts, universes and sampling techniques, tools of the data collection used by the research pre-testing limitation of the study and conclude with the chapterization of the study.

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

Table 1 : Distribution of respondents by Age wise

SL. NO	Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	BELOW 20	3	3.8
2	20-25	77	96.3
	TOTAL	80	100.0

Table 1 shows that distribution of respondents by age group. Out of 80 respondents below 20 years were 3.8% and the 20-25 were 96.3%.

Table 2 : Distribution of Respondents by Gender

SL.No	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	MALE	32	40.0
2	FEMALE	48	60.0
	TOTAL	80	100.0

Table 2 shows that distribution of respondents by gender wise. Out of 80 respondents, 60% are from female and only 40% of the respondents are Male.

Table 3 : Distribution of Respondents by course wise

SL.No	Name of the course	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	UG	17	21.3
2	PG	47	58.8
3	M.PHIL	16	20.0
	TOTAL	80	100.0

Table 3 shows course wise use of online reference sources out of 80 respondents the PG dependence were 58.8% and the M.Phil respondents are 20 % and the UG respondents are 21.3%.

Table 4 :Distribution of Respondents by purpose of using online reference source

SL.No	Using online reference sources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	TO GET SUBJECT RELATED INFORMATIONS	17	21.3
2	TO PREPARE SEMINARS	27	33.8
3	RESEARCH PURPOSE	11	13.8
4	TO GET CURRENT INFORMATION	22	27.5
5	PREPARING JOURNAL ARTICLES	3	3.8
	TOTAL	80	100.0

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents based on the purpose of using online reference sources used the internet for seminars and 27.5% of respondents use internet for current information and 21.32% of respondents use the internet for subject and 13.8% of respondents use the internet for research and 3.8% of respondents used THE internet for preparing journal articles.

Table 5

Type of online reference sources used by the

SL.No	Online reference source	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	E-BOOKS	21	26.3
2	DATA BASES	11	13.8
3	WEB OPAC	22	27.5
4	DICTIONARIES	7	8.8

5	ENCYCLOPEDIAS	15	18.8
6	HAND BOOKS	1	1.3
7	BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES	3	3.8
	TOTAL	80	100.0

Table 5 shows that type of online reference sources used by the respondents. Among the respondents, 27.5% of them use WEB OPAC, 26.3% of them used E-Books, 18.8% of them used encyclopedia, 13.8% of them used databases, 8.8% of them used dictionaries 3.8% of them used bibliographic sources 1.3% of them used hand books.

Table 6 : Distribution of Respondents by specific search engines used

Sl.no	Search engine	No. Of respondents	Percentage
1	YAHOO.COM	17	21.3
2	ALTAVISTA.COM	4	5.0
3	ASK.COM	9	11.3
4	GOOGLE.COM	44	55.0
5	HOT MAIL.COM	4	5.0
6	MSN.COM	1	1.3
7	REDIFF.COM	1	1.3
	TOTAL	80	100.0

The above table shows that the distribution of respondents by specific search engine used for getting the reference sources. The majority (55%) of the respondents is using google.com and 1.3 % are using rediff.com as the smallest percentage out of 100 %.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The age wise 96.3% were belonging from 20-25 years.
- The qualification of students, 58.8% of respondents are postgraduate students.
- 33.8% of respondents are using online reference sources for preparing seminar materials.
- Out of 80 respondents, 61.3% of respondents are using online reference sources at browsing centers.
- Regarding the time spent majority of the respondents spend 30-60 mts per visit 3.8% respondents spent above 90 mts per visit.
- Regarding time preferred for using on the sources 48.8% of respondents are in the afternoon, followed by a noon (16.3%) equal number of respondents (13.8%) are preferred evening and morning.
- Out of 80 respondents the 22%, 21%, 15%, 11%, 7%, 3%, 1% are using type of online reference sources web OPAC, E-books, encyclopedia, database, dictionaries, bibliographies, handbooks respectively.

CONCLUSION

In today's fast paced world, people have grown to significantly depend on their computers and the advancements in technology to have their lives operate smoothly. Whether in the house, or as part of a large business network, computers and the World Wide Web have allowed for incredible developments in the way people communicate and manage their lives. It is hard to believe that nearly fifty years ago the Internet was non-existent, with no one ever expecting the capability of globally communicating with others through a computer.

With the invention of the Internet, people changed the way they view and obtain information. Gradually the Internet has developed into a global network connecting millions of users collectively all over the world. It has become an immense system of networked computers and additional mini-computers; all linked to locate information, meet new people, and buy various products. In addition, the Internet is accessible nearly anywhere, from your home, at a local library, where any computer is connected to a modem.

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