

E-RESOURCES IN ENGINEERING COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN KERALA: AWARENESS AND AVAILABILITY – A STUDY

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Abstract

Today the engineering institutions are investing huge amount for digital resources because the quality of engineering institutions is measured in terms of digital collections, e-resources, networking component, ICT tools etc. This study aimed at finding the awareness of librarians about the various e-resources existing in Engineering Education sector and the availability of these e-resources in engineering college libraries in Kerala. A well-structured questionnaire was distributed among the librarians of engineering colleges in Kerala. The result of this study provided information about the librarians' awareness about library consortia and e-resources, availability of e-resources and membership of engineering college libraries in these consortia, Infrastructural facilities available for utilizing the e-resources, etc. Some suggestions have been set forth to make the service more beneficial for the academic community of the engineering colleges under study.

Keywords: E-Resources, Library consortia, e-journals, Engineering College Libraries

INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are under increasing pressure to demonstrate the value of their collections to their stakeholders and to focus on products and services that support e-learning. If the cost of library services increase and the perception of the importance of the library decrease, a value gap can result. Measures of value, including usage, and return on investment can help to demonstrate the current value of the library and help librarians to set priorities for the future.

More than repositories for materials and knowledge; now libraries are access- point to acquire knowledge and skills at a faster rate. Technology provides better access to information; especially electronic resources play a vital role in supporting academic activities and research. Recent studies demonstrate that academic users have become

more dependent on article databases and electronic journals to obtain information pertinent to their needs.

The printed resources are now being digitalized which has increased the availability of books and journals in the electronic format. Providing access to E-resources is a service to help library users find E-Databases, E-Journals, E-Magazines-Books/ E-Audio/ E-Images, Data/ GIS, Digital Library Projects, Electronic Exhibitions, E-Subject Guide, E-newsletters, E-conferences proceedings and Web search tools on a range of topics. In India, higher education has made tremendous growth in providing quality education for past two decades. Most of the libraries in the universities and colleges are providing specific electronic information facilities to their users.

DEFINITION

There is no standard and accepted precise definition of the electronic resources. According to AACR2, 2005 Update, an electronic resource is: "Material (data and/or program(s)) encoded for manipulation by a computerized device. This material may require the use of a peripheral directly connected to a computerized device (e.g., CD-ROM drive) or a connection to a computer network (e.g., the Internet)." This definition does not include electronic resources that do not require the use of a computer, for example, music compact discs and videodiscs. In broad sense E-resources are those resources in electronic or e-format that can be accessed via Internet in digital library environment. E-resources are that electronic products that deliver collection of data, text, image collection, other multimedia products like numerical, graphical mode, commercially available for library and information centres. These may be delivered on CD-ROM / DVD, over the Internet and so on. It provide users faster, more convenient in 24 hours*7 desktop access from home, college or library, etc. Usually, more than one person can use the same electronic resources simultaneously.

OBJECTIVES

This study is an attempt to evaluate the awareness of librarians about the various e-resources and availability of electronic resources in the Engineering College Libraries in Kerala.

The specific objectives of the present investigations are:

- To examine the awareness of Librarians on E-Resources ;
- To identify availability of different types of electronic resources in the engineering colleges in Kerala;
- To find out the infrastructure available for creating, storing and using of e-resources.
- To suggest some remedies to tackle the deviations and difficulties

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Over the last decade, many researchers have studied and summarized certain conclusions about the availability, awareness and usage pattern of e-resources in academic institutions.

Mulla and Chandrashekara (2006) "E-Resources and Services in Engineering College Libraries – A Case Study". Study was conducted to examine the efforts made by the engineering college libraries in Karnataka to build electronic resources. Results of the study revealed that collection and service infrastructure of the libraries in sampled regions were not up to the mark and libraries were struggling to build digital collection and in disseminating digital information due to lack of ICT infrastructure, IT trained manpower and paucity of finances, etc.

Use of E-resources among P.G. Students of Kerala Agriculture University by Mathew, Sini and Sornam, Ally. S.(2007) was a study highlights the weaknesses of library as limited working hours, less speed of computers, lack of infrastructure facilities including adequate number of computers and internet facilities and suggests subscription to more E books and E journals and creation of awareness among students about the different online resources.

Sujatha and Mudhol (2009) in the paper titled "Evaluation of Electronic Information Services in the Fisheries College Libraries in South India: A Study" described the electronic information services in four fisheries college libraries. Authors also discussed the challenges the libraries and information centers were facing.

Availability of Electronic Resources in Engineering Institutions in Tamil Nadu, by I Sasireka S Gopalakrishnan S Balamurugan (2011), the paper describes about the availability of electronic resources in academic libraries in Tamilnadu. It is based on the case study conducted in the Engineering Institutions of Tamilnadu. The study provides evidence of the current status of e-resources, selection and access to various e- resources.

METHODOLOGY

Survey method is adopted by the investigator, which comprises of a well-structured questionnaire which was administered among librarians to collect the necessary primary data, keeping in view the objectives of the study. Observations of the participants and interview of some of the participants for knowing the opinion of the respondents in respect of availability and awareness of electronic resources is also carried out.

SCOPE AND COVERAGE

There are around one hundred and eighty two Engineering colleges located in Kerala. The present Investigation is limited to an exploratory study pertaining to the awareness of librarians about the various e-resources in engineering education and, availability of e-resources and infrastructure facilities to access on-line/ offline E-Resources by the Engineering College Library users in Kerala. Its aim is to fulfill the academic requirements of library users which include mainly Online Databases, E-Books, E-Journals and Offline Databases available on CD-ROMs/ DVDs, Bibliographic Databases of Books Serials, Theses through in-house OPAC/ Web OPAC

The scope of the study is confined to the libraries of engineering colleges in Kerala started in 2002 and earlier.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis and interpretation of the data collected through questionnaires distributed to engineering college librarians is provided below.

Table 1: Awareness and Membership in Library Consortia

Consortia name	Awareness about consortia	Percentage	Membership in Consortia	Percentage
	Number of Librarians		Number of Libraries	
INDEST - AICTE	60	90.90	28	42.42
UGC-INFONET	64	96.96	4	6.06
INFLIBNET	66	100	6	9.09
DAE	56	84.84	2	3.03
DELNET	60	90.90	22	33.33

The data (table 1) expressed that, all the major consortia are known to librarians. In the First position is INFLIBNET followed by UGC-Infonet, INDEST-AICTE, DELNET, DAE consortia. Considering the membership in these consortia first rank goes to INDEST-AICTE followed by DELNET, INFLIBNET, UGC-INFONET and DAE

Table 2: Awareness and Availability of e-journal packages

e-Resources	Awareness about e-resources	Percentage	Availability in the library	Percentage
	Number of Librarians		Number of Libraries	
IEEE	64	96.96	64	96.96
ASME	64	96.96	58	87.87
ASCE	62	93.93	58	87.87
ASTM	64	96.96	56	84.84
ELSEVIER	64	96.96	62	93.93
EBSCO	66	100	52	78.78
SPRINGER-LINK	64	96.96	60	90.90
J-GATE	64	96.96	58	87.87
WILEY-BLACKWELL	62	93.93	15	22.72
McGraw Hill - AEL	62	93.93	58	87.87

Table 2 depicts that all librarians are well aware about all e-journal packages pertaining to the engineering discipline. It also shows that most of the packages are available in the engineering colleges giving top preference to IEEE, followed by Elsevier, Springer-Link, ASME, ASCE, J-Gate, McGraw Hill, ASTM, EBSCO and Wiley-Blackwell.

Table 3: Electronic resources subscribed by the libraries

e-resources	Number of Libraries	Percentage
e-books	36	54.54
e-journals	66	100
Tech. Reports	4	6.06
Patents & Standards	6	9.09
CD-ROM databases	16	24.24
Multimedia products	6	9.09
Online databases	16	24.24

Table 3 indicates that e-journals are given top priority by all engineering institutions; followed by e-books, CD-ROM databases and Online databases. Technical Reports, Patents and Standards, Multimedia products are given low priority.

Table 4: Equipments available in the Libraries.

<i>Equipment</i>	Number of Libraries	Percentage
Server Class Machine	33	50
Laptop Computers	15	22.72
Access Control System-Biometric	4	6.06
Smart Card Reader	4	6.06
RFID Reader	5	7.57
Barcode Reader	50	75.75
Barcode Printer	34	51.51
Inkjet Printer	9	13.63
Dot-matrix Printer	5	7.57
Laser Printer	44	66.66
Smart Card Printer	4	6.06
Photocopying Machine	41	62.12
CD Server	5	7.57
Desktop Computers	66	100
Theft Control – Gate Antenna	7	10.60
Surveillance Camera	27	40.90
Heavy duty n/w printer	7	10.60
Scanner	38	57.57
LCD Projector	5	7.57
Web Camera	9	13.63
Air Condition (AC) Machine	12	18.18
UPS	38	57.57

From table 4, it is observed that most (50% and above) of the libraries have Servers, Barcode Readers and Printers, Desktop Computers, Scanners, Photocopiers, Laser Printers, UPS. While some of the equipments like Laptop Computers, Inkjet Printers, Theft Control – Gate Antenna, Surveillance Camera, Heavy duty n/w printer, Web Camera, Air Condition (AC) Machine are available only in some (50% to 10%) libraries. With reference to Access Control System-Biometric, Smart Card Reader, RFID Reader, Dot-matrix Printer, Smart Card Printer, CD Server, LCD Projector are available only in very limited (less than 10%) libraries.

FINDINGS

Major findings of the study are:

- Librarians' awareness about various consortia and e-resource packages in engineering discipline are extremely good.
- Availability of e-resources in engineering college libraries is excellent but membership in consortia is not up to the mark.
- Subscription of Technical Reports, Patents and Standards, Multimedia products are very low compared to other e-resources like e-journals, e-books etc
- Infrastructure for creating, storing and using e-resources are not sufficient in many libraries.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the awareness and availability of electronic resources and related issues in Engineering College Libraries in Kerala. This is a matter of concern, as presently, electronic information sources and the Internet are considered extremely important tools for effective teaching and research. Based on the findings of this study, we would like put forward some suggestions. More funds should be allocated for e-resources; Library consortia should have collective bargaining with publishers and make available more e-resources at less cost. That will attract and motivate colleges to take membership and join hands with library consortia. Subscription of patents, standards, technical reports and multimedia products should be amplified. These resources are very informative and needed in the present engineering scenario. For all the above, effective communication is needed in micro level and macro level. Infrastructure is the backbone of all communications, so excellent infrastructure is also needed to make use the available e-resources.

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