

Usage of Electronic Information Sources by the Undergraduates of Allied Health Sciences, University of Jaffna

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Abstract

Purpose

Electronic information sources are currently the backbone of any dynamic collection of information resources. Students are increasingly expected to use electronic information sources while at the University. The libraries should know how well the student community is acquainted with the flood of electronic information sources (EIS). The paper examines the usage of EIS by the students of Allied Health Sciences Unit (AHS), Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna. AHS conducts degree programmes in medical laboratory sciences, nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy, radiography, and occupational therapy. Currently, the library has a subscription only to the *Hinari* electronic database.

Methodology

Total population of the unit; 110 students from all current batches was taken for the study. A survey based on a pretested structured questionnaire was used. Paper based questionnaires were personally distributed among students. The questionnaire comprises of four sections; demographic information of the users, usage of EIS, and students' opinion about EIS and problems they encountered when using the EIS. Response rate was 70%. The data collected were analyzed by simple statistical methods as percentages and summation of weighted values.

Research findings

The main purpose of using EIS by students is supporting coursework. It is followed by updating knowledge. Majority of the students use their personal computers (PCs) at home to access the Internet, because of the inadequacy of number of PCs available in the library for the students' use.

Though all stated that EIS is either very important or moderately important, a majority of the students (69%) preferred print format for in-depth and convenient reading. Majority (89%) of the respondents also believed electronic journals subscriptions were very useful for their studies.

Regarding their opinion about EIS; speedy communication, provision of more comprehensive information, currency were emphasized. Low speed of the Internet connectivity, frequent power failures, lack of computer facilities and not having subscriptions to full text databases were the main problems among the students.

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Conclusion & Recommendations

Electronic information sources are very important for the contemporary student. Even though a majority of the students use EIS for learning purposes, still most of them prefer to use print resources for in depth reading. It is recommended to improve accessibility by increasing the number of PCs, and the speed of the Internet connection.

Key words: electronic information sources; electronic journals; information retrieval; allied health sciences