INTERNET USAGE BY THE POST GRADUATE ARTS STUDENTS OF SOURASHTRA COLLEGE, MADURAI: AN AWARENESS STUDY

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Abstract

Studying the internet usage pattern of the students in an educational institution will help the administrators to take certain strategic decisions on issues like number of computers, availability of internet connection, the speed of the internet connection, bandwidth required, anti-virus and fire-wall softwares to be used, the kind of user orientation or education programmes need to be conducted, the variety of e-resources to be made available etc. The present study aims at finding out the internet usage pattern of Postgraduate students of Sourashtra College, Madurai. The study is restricted to 69 randomly selected PG students of various arts departments of the college. Data was collected through questionnaire. The study reveals that: 32 % (23) of the respondents have been using Internet since 1-2 years. 25 (36%) respondents use internet 2-3 times a week. 'Trial and Error method'' and 'Guidance from Friends' are the two internet learning sources. 65% of the respondents are aware of Airtel and Reliance as the Internet Service Providers (ISPs).'College' and 'Browsing centres' are the most preferred locations for the respondents to access Internet. 'Education' and 'Entertainment' purposes alone constitute 67% of the reasons for internet use. 85% of the respondents use web addresses and search engines to get required information. 'Google' is used by 92% (66) of the respondents. The most referred e-resources are 'E-Books' and 'E-Dictionaries' (57.33%). 'Electricity failure' is the major problem faced by 31 (48%) respondents in accessing Internet. 83% of the respondents opined that internet facilities made available in the library are good.

Keywords*: Internet, e-resources, frequency, location, search engine, search strategy, usage problems, orientation programme, digital literacy*

Introduction

Internet – the network of networks – has become the walk of our life and talk of the town in this digital millennium era. It is a world of virtual library wherein resources of all sorts in all file formats are available at anywhere anytime any machine environment. The way the members of the academic community look at this vast ocean of information current known as 'Internet' has tremendously changed their total outlook and insight.

Internet has become visible God for many of the incumbents working in academic environment. The students, research scholars and the faculty members of different backgrounds of information needs rely upon the ready-made, click-away cluster of electronic digital resources and services available in user friendly interfaces. The quantity and quality of information made available in the vast ocean of world wide web, the easy-to-use navigation tools existing over there along with the speed at which the information is

displayed to the users etc are all the extra bonanza features of this new tool of 22nd century - 'Internet'.

Institutional Profile: Sourashtra College, Madurai

Sourashtra College Council, and through donations from the philanthropists they collected money to form a corpus fund to enable it to start a College. With the approval of the Government of Tamil Nadu and the then Madurai University, now called Madurai Kamaraj University, the Sourashtra College was inaugurated in 1967 with Pre-University Courses in the first instance. it is a recognized Research Centre for Commerce from 2005. The College also offers M.Phil. Programmes in Commerce and English. At present it offers seventeen UG Degree Courses and ten PG Degree Courses along with the Certificate and Diploma courses. The College has been awarded the Linguistic Minority status by the Government of Tamilnadu. The college has got both central library and departmental libraries. The central library has a collection of 42,871 books. The library works for 180 days in the year. The library subscribes to 25 periodicals.

Review of Literature

Mani Kumar & Basavaraja Karapudi (2012) examined the use of internet by the students of IBS-Bangalore, in order to determine the level usage, the major purpose behind accessing the internet and the required search strategy and information literacy skills to use Internet. The study revealed that usage of internet is very high among the students of ICFAI Business School. **Maraddi & Konnur (2012)** conducted a study on Internet use and its impact among the education colleges of Gadag city using structured questionnaire and found that 98.89% of the total respondents use Internet only for e-mail facility and 94.44% respondents are using Google as the favourite search engine for accessing information. .

Christopher & Maria-Gorretti (2012) used questionnaires to study the internet usage among 1000 secondary schools students Benin City, Nigeria and found that students have the capacity to use the internet which they learnt from friends and family members. Students access the internet from their homes and cyber cafes since they are denied access in their respective schools while most of the students use the internet for educational activities. Shambare, Rugimbana and Sithole (2012) examined SNS usage habits of 256 South African students using questionnaire and confirm the popularity of Face book. Faster Internet access and cheaper 3G technology, as well as Smartphone telephony, are enablers that influence adoption of social networking positively.

Ogunjobi & Fagbami (2012) examined the use of the Internet by researchers in Agricultural Research Institutes in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria using questionnaires and found that the researchers used the Internet mostly for research purposes (76.53%), communication (40.82%), knowledge acquisitions (20.41%) and news sourcing (10.20. A slow Internet connection (75.51%) is the major problem in the use of Internet. The researchers are ready to use the Internet for their research work Adekunmisi, Ajala & Iyoro (2013)

performed a study to determine Internet access and usage by the undergraduate students of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria by collecting data from 200 undergraduate students with the use of a questionnaire and found that majority of the respondents were Internet literate with 32.50% of the respondents browsing the Internet daily; 37.50% weekly, 13.00% fortnightly and 17.00% monthly. The most used Internet facilities are the e-mails, WebPages, search engines and chatting facilities for communication, academic activities and for sourcing of information and knowledge.

Thukaram (2013) conducted a study to find out the internet use pattern of Research Scholars of Ramesh Mohan Library, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad using questionnaires and found that large numbers of the scholars are interested to use the internet several times in a day. Most of the respondents are using internet for more than one hour. A large numbers of research scholars are using the Internet for E-Resource (51.84%) and (43.20%) for Research-based Information. The majority of users are satisfied while using the Internet. The Google is the only search engine used by the scholars. Mahipal, & Bairagi (2013) studied the use of internet by Students of Bastar Vishwavidyalaya Jagdalpur . The study proved that 100% Students were aware to use internet services. Majority of the students are satisfied with internet service available to them.

Sekhar & Pulla Reddy (2013) analysed the internet usage pattern of 1,650 users of libraries of Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, and University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad using questionnaire method and found that most of the users (94.36%) have knowledge to use computers and Internet. Most of the users (96.61%) have access to Internet facility in their libraries. More than one-third of the users (34.91%) use Internet facility daily and 29.92 per cent of the users spend on an average 2 hours per week for using Internet. Majority of the users (78.69%) are using Google search engine. 'Insufficient number of computers' and 'lack of awareness on search techniques' are the major problems faced by the users in the use of Internet facilities. Rama Murthy & Raghunatha Reddy (2013) carried out a study to determine Internet searching and usage by the undergraduate students of Dr.NTR University of Health Sciences, Andhra Pradesh by collecting data from 235 undergraduate students with the use of a questionnaire and found that majority of the respondents were Internet literate with 48.50% of the respondents browsing the Internet daily; 25.75% weekly, 11% fortnightly and 14.750% monthly. The most used Internet facilities are the e-mails, WebPages, search engines, and chatting facilities for communication, academic activities and for sourcing of information and knowledge. Sivagamasundari & Sivasami (2014) conducted a survey on the use of internet and e-resources by the faculty members and students of business management institutions of Chennai. The findings reveal that: 42.16% of them are accessing e-resources for 2-4 years; 21.72 % of them are using e- resources for their study purpose; 56.79% of them strongly agree that enough computer literacy should be given; 42.28 % of them are satisfied with internet e-resources.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are, inter alia :

- To find out how long the respondents have been using Internet.
- To find out the frequency of internet usage by the respondents.
- To identify the modes by which the respondents have learnt about internet use skills.
- To trace out the awareness of the users on various Internet Service Providers (ISPs).
- To trace out the preferred location of the respondents to browse internet.
- To list the primary purpose of using the Internet by the respondents.
- To elicit the variety of search strategies being employed by the respondents.
- To catch out the favourite search engines used by the respondents.
- To discover the list of internet services used by the respondents.
- To enumerate the types of e-documents used by the respondents.
- To ascertain the problems faced by the respondents in accessing and using internet and
- To find out the overall satisfaction of the respondents on internet services offered in the college library.

Methodology

a) Research Type: The study is a descriptive research. It has used survey method.

b) Sampling Frame: The Post Graduate students of Arts departments of Sourashtra College, Madurai constitute the sampling frame of the study.

c) Sample Size: 75 post graduate arts students of the college.

d) Selection of samples: The randomly selected sample of 75 students represents different arts departments of the college.

e) Tool for Data Collection: Questionnaire is used as the data collection tool.

f) Data Collection Period: The data was collected in the months of March-April 2014.

g) Method of data collection: The questionnaires were distributed to the library users on the day of visit by the researcher personally. Out of 75 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, only 69 were duly filled-in and thus considered for analysis.

h) Data Analysis and Interpretation: The data collected was simplified by means by tables – single column and double column or triple column tables – prepared with the help of coding with tally marks. The tabulated data was analyzed with simple percentage method in MS Excel to draw necessary inferences. For the purpose of testing a hypothesis framed by the researcher, chi-square test was applied. PSPP – a free statistical software (equivalent to IBM SPSS package) was used to get required output for drawing inferences.

i) Hypothesis

H_0 – There is no association between gender of the respondents and the problems faced by them in using internet in the college.

H_1 – There is an association between gender of the respondents and the problems faced by them in using internet in the college.

Data analysis and Interpretation

Gender-wise distribution of the respondents

Table 1 depicts the gender-wise distribution of the respondents under study. 39 (56%) respondents are male and 30 (44%) respondents are female. Thus, number of male respondents is more than that of female respondents.

Table 1: Gender-wise distribution of the respondents

S.No	Gender	No. of Respondents	%
1	Male	39	56
2	Female	30	44
Total		69	100

Age- wise distribution of respondents

Table 2: Age-wise distribution of respondents

S. No	Age Group	No. of Respondents	%
1	20-22	43	62
2	23-25	25	36
3	26-28	00	00
4	29-30	01	02
Total		69	100

The above table shows the age-wise distribution of the respondents. 62 % (43) of the respondents belong to 20-22 years age group followed by 36 % (25) of the respondents who are in 23-25 years age group. While 02% (1) of the respondents are in 29-30 years age group, none belongs to 26-28 years age group. Thus most of the respondents (98%) under study are in the age group of 20-25 years.

Period of Internet usage

Table 3: Period of Internet usage

S.No.	Period of Usage	No. of Respondents	%
1	< 01 Year	15	22
2	01– 02 Years	23	32
3	02 - 04 Years	15	22
4	> 4 years	16	24
Total		69	100

It can be easily understood from Table 3 that 32 % (23) of the respondents have been using Internet since 1-2 years followed by 24 % (16) of the respondents who are using

internet since more than 4 years. 22 % (15) of the respondents each have been using internet since 1 year and two to four years respectively.

Frequency of Using Internet

Table 4: Frequency of Using Internet

S.No	Frequency of Using Internet	No Respondents	%
1	Daily	16	23
2	2-3 times a week	25	36
3	Once a week	22	32
4	Others	06	09
	Total	69	100

The table 4 indicates that 25 (36%) respondents use internet 2-3 times a week and 22 (32%) respondents use internet once a week. While 16 (23%) respondents use internet daily, 6 (9%) respondents use internet during different time intervals.

Where do they browse at?

Table 5: Place of accessing Internet

S.No	Place of accessing Internet	No. of Respondents	%
1	College	40	58
2	Home	06	09
3	Browsing centre	19	28
4	Other places	04	05
	Total	69	100

Table 5 provides information about places where the respondents access internet. 58 % (40) of the respondents browse internet at the college itself and 28 % (19) of the respondents browse internet at private browsing centres. While 9 % (6) of the respondents access Internet at their homes, 5 % (4) of the respondents access Internet at other places. Thus, college and browsing centres are the most preferred locations for the respondents to access Internet.

Mode of learning internet skills

It is clear from table 6 that respondents have learnt their internet browsing skills through various modes of learning. 45 % (31) of the respondents have learnt about internet skills through trial and error method and 38% (26) of the respondents learnt it with the help of guidance from their friends. While 10 % (7) of the respondents attended some courses run by external firms to learn internet skills, 7 % (5) of the respondents attended the training programme conducted by the college to learn internet skills. Thus trial and error method and guidance from friends are the two chief sources for the respondents to learn about various internet skills.

Table 6: Mode of learning internet skills

S.No	Mode of learning internet skills	No. of Respondents	%
1	Guidance from friends	26	38
2	Training provide by college	05	7
3	Trial and Error Method (Self-Learning)	31	45
4	External courses	07	10
	Total	69	100

Awareness about ISPs (Internet Service Providers)

Table 7: Awareness about ISPs

S. No	Awareness about ISPs	No. of Respondents	%
1	Airtel	30	43
2	BSNL	13	19
3	Vodafone	03	04
4	Reliance	15	22
5	Others	09	13
	Total	70	100

Table 7 makes it clear that 30 (43%) respondents are aware of Airtel as an ISP and 15 (22%) respondents know that Reliance is an ISP. While 13 (19%) respondents are conscious that BSNL offers internet services, 3 (4%) respondents know that Vodafone too offers internet services. Thus 65% of the respondents are aware of Airtel and Reliance as the ISPs.

Purpose of Using Internet

Table 8: Purpose of Using Internet

S.No	Purpose of Using the Internet	No. of Respondents	%
1	Research	06	08
2	Education	30	39
3	Entertainment	21	28
4	Communication	19	25
	Total	76	100

Table 8 furnishes information about the purposes for the fulfillment of which the respondents use Internet. 30 (39%) respondents use internet for educational purposes and 21 (28%) respondents use internet for entertainment causes. While 19 (25%) respondents use internet for their communication purposes, just 06 (8%) respondents use internet for their research work. Thus education and entertainment purposes alone constitute 67% of the reasons for internet use by the respondents.

Search strategies

Table 9: Search strategies

S.No	Search Strategies	No Respondents	%
1	Typing Web address directly	38	55
2	Using Search engines	21	30
3	Using subscription database	03	04
4	Other strategies	08	11
	Total	70	100

Table 9 reports the search strategies employed by the respondents to search for information in the Internet. While 38 (55%) respondents type the web addresses directly to get required information in the web, 21 (30%) respondents use various search engines to get needed web information. While 3 (4%) respondents use subscription databases to get necessary information in the virtual web, the remaining 8 (11%) respondents use other search strategies. Thus, 85% of the respondents use web addresses and search engines to get required information in Internet.

Favourite search engine

Table 10: Favourite search engine

S.No	Favourite search engine	No Respondents	%
1	Google	66	92
2	Yahoo	02	03
3	Rediff	01	01
4	Others	03	04
	Total	72	100

Table 10 elaborates on the search engines used by the respondents. Google is used by 92% (66) of the respondents, being the most preferred search engine among all others. While both Yahoo and Rediff are just used by 04 % (3) of the respondents, another 4 % (3) of the respondents use other search engines.

Reasons for Using Internet

Table 11: Reasons for Using Internet

S.No	Reasons for Using Internet	Respondents	%
1	To gather news	19	17.76
2	To send e-mail	26	24.30
3	To collect educational data	29	27.10
4	To prepare for projects	04	03.73
5	To conduct research	09	08.41
6	To chat	14	13.08
7	Other reasons	06	05.60
	Total	107	100

Table 11 unfolds that 29 (27.1%) respondents use internet to collect educational data followed by 26 (24.3%) respondents who use internet to send mails. While 19 (17.76 %) respondents use internet to gather national/local/sports news, 14 (13.08) respondents use internet to chat with others. Only 9 (8.41%) respondents use internet to collect data for their research work and 4 (3.73%) use internet to get required data to prepare their projects. Thus, mailing and educational needs are the main reasons for the respondents to use Internet.

Internet Services used

Table 12: Internet Services used

S.No	Internet Services	No. of Respondents	%
1	Chat Rooms	11	15.07
2	Blogs	01	01.37
3	Music	12	16.44
4	News	11	15.07
5	Gaming	01	01.37
6	File sharing	05	6.849
7	Browsing	04	05.47
8	Others	28	38.36
	Total	73	100

It is observed from the above table that Music service is used by 12 (16.44) respondents followed by Chat rooms and News service which are the next two most- used internet services by 11 (15.07%) respondents each. While file sharing service is used by 5 (6.849%) respondents, Browsing service is utilized by 04 (5.479) respondents. While gaming and blogging are just used by 1 respondent, there are 28 (38.36%) respondents who did not disclose, in the study, the kind of internet service they use. Thus, chat rooms, music and news are the most used internet services by the respondents.

Problems in using Internet

Table 13: Problems in using Internet

S.No	Problems faced	No. of Respondents	%
1	The allotted time slot is insufficient	12	14
2	Difficulty in finding relevant information	15	21
3	Electricity failure	31	48
4	Important sites in the subject areas are not known	11	17
	Total	69	100

Table 13 discloses that electricity failure is the major problem faced by 31 (48%) respondents in accessing Internet. While 15 (21%) respondents faced the problem of finding relevant information, 12 (14%) respondents had time constraints. 11 (17%) respondents

were not aware of the websites which are prominent in their subject fields. Thus electricity issue has been the topmost problem faced by the respondents in accessing Internet.

Satisfied with Internet Facilities

Table 14: Satisfied with the Internet Facilities

S. No	Level of Satisfaction	Respondents	%
1	Very good	11	16
2	Good	24	35
3	Satisfied	22	32
4	least satisfied	12	17
Total		69	100

Table 14 shows that 35 % (24) of the respondents opined that internet facilities are ''good'' in the library followed by 32 % (22) of the respondents who expressed that they are ''satisfied'' with the internet facilities available in the library. While 16 % (11) of the respondents felt ''very good'' about the internet facilities in the library, 17% (12) of them felt ''least satisfied'' with the internet facilities. Thus, 83% of the respondents shared that the internet facilities made available in the library are good.

Testing of Hypothesis

The chi-square value is 0.67 for 3 df and asymptotic significance is 0.88(i.e.p-value). Since, the p-value 0.88 is greater than 0.05, the difference between observed frequencies and expected frequencies is insignificant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho), i.e. there is no difference between gender of the respondents and the problems faced by them in using Internet is accepted at 5% level of significance. Table value for 3 df at 5 % level of significance is 7.815. Calculated Value is 0.67. Since, calculated value is less than the table value, null hypothesis is accepted.

Suggestions

- Enough exposure on the availability of internet facilities in the college should be given so that more students will start using Internet in the campus frequently. The college library may take up small training programmes to educate the users on internet competencies and information literacy skills.
- Since college is the most preferred place for accessing internet, more computers may be provided in the library with good bandwidth. List of subject-wise useful websites may be displayed in the library.
- Firewall programmes may be installed since 28% of the respondent use internet for entertainment alone. Enough orientation on various search strategies like keyword search, phrase search, truncated queries, Boolean operator queries etc may be arranged to make the users effective in their search formulations.

- Various specialised search engines like picsearch, youtube etc are to be introduced to the readers. Uninterrupted Power Supply provision should be there in the library as electricity failure is the major problem faced by the respondents. UPS with 5 to 10 KV capacity with adequate batteries should be housed in the library for the uninterrupted internet usage by the library users.

Conclusion

The findings make it clear that the Internet is a good source of information and a good channel for accessing online information sources to the PG students of the Arts faculty in Sourashtra College, Madurai. Availability of better computer and internet infrastructure in the library, awareness created among the students on the availability of internet resources, knowledge of internet searching skills and co-operative and skilled library staff are the necessary factors that need to be built in a college library so that right information to the right user in right time in right format through right medium can be delivered in this Google era.

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