

Study on the utilization behaviour of online journals by the students of TNAU

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Abstract : The study was taken up in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore. TNAU offered PG programme in 22 disciplines and among them 10 disciplines were selected. The sample size was 40 students consisting 20 post graduates and 20 doctoral programme students using Simple Random Sampling technique. Four students were selected from each of the 10 selected departments using simple random sampling technique. Percentage analysis was used for data analysis. About two-third of the students referred online journals for their purpose of assignment, seminar and research. Majority of the students faced the problems like getting user name, password, long time to download an article, read only content and limited availability of online journals are the major difficulties faced in access and usage of online journals. These problems could be addressed to enhance the learning of online journals among the students of TNAU.

Keywords : *Online journals, usage, assignments, problems.*

Introduction

Electronic literacy (Online journal) is not isolated from the types of literacy practiced with print but rather involve added layers that account for the new possibilities presented in the electronic medium of computers and the Internet. Electronic literacy is actually an umbrella term that encompasses several other generic literacies of the information era, including computer literacy, information literacy, multimedia literacy, and computer-mediated communication literacy. These new literacies stem in part from the new technological features of the computer but also from the broader social setting in which computers are used (Warschauer, 2003).

Online journal usage is fundamental to the effective use of ICTs. It should also

be supported by the development of relevant online content. Majority of online journals' content currently emanated from the US is text based and written in English.

Computer Mediated Education literacy also plays an important role in the facilitation of online learning and distance education which has the potential to extend learning opportunities to millions who would otherwise be denied a good education (World Bank & AusAID, 2001).

The key element in all of this is not "access" either to infrastructure or end user terminals. Rather what is significant is having access and then with that access having the knowledge, skills, attitude and supportive organizational and social structures to make

Table 1. Personal characteristics of the students (n=40)

Variables	No.	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	23	57.50
Female	17	42.50
<i>Educational Qualification</i>		
M.Sc. (Ag) : I Year	07	17.50
II Year	13	32.50
Ph.D. I Year	09	22.50
II Year	07	17.50
III Year	04	10.00
<i>Computer ownership</i>		
Yes	13	32.50
No	27	67.50
<i>Internet Connection</i>		
Yes	09	22.50
No	31	77.50

Table 2. Awareness, Interest, Access and preferences of using online journals (n=40)

Particulars	No.	%
<i>Awareness about online journals</i>		
Yes	38	95.00
No	02	5.00
<i>Interest in reading online journals</i>		
Yes	33	82.50
No	07	17.50
<i>Access to online journals</i>		
Yes	33	82.50
No	07	17.50

effective use of that access and using on line journals to achieve students community objectives. Keeping this fact in mind a study was conducted with the following objectives.

1. To study the utilization behaviour of online scientific journals by the students of TNAU.
2. To identify the factors influencing their usage of online journals.

Materials and Methods

The study was taken up in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore. TNAU offered PG programme in 22 disciplines and among them 10 disciplines *viz.*, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Entomology, Agricultural Extension, Agronomy, Horticulture, Plant Breeding and Genetics, Plant pathology, Seed science and Technology, Soil science and Agricultural Chemistry and Bio technology were purposively selected for the study. Since some of the online journals of these departments are available online for their research purpose. The sample size was 40 students consisting 20 post graduates and 20 doctoral programme students using Simple Random Sampling technique. Four students were selected from each of the 10 selected departments using simple random sampling technique. The data were collected using well structured questionnaire. Percentage analysis was used for data analysis.

Results and Discussion

The utilization behaviour of online journals by the students community of TNAU was studied and the results are presented in Table 1. It shows that more than half (57.5%) of the students were male. Regarding educational qualification nearly one-third (32.50%) of the students belonged to second year post

graduation and nearly one fourth (22.50%) of the students belonged to first year doctoral programme. Two-thirds (67.5%) of the students did not possess personal computer. Majority of the agricultural students come from middle and poor economic background might be the reason for not possessing personal computer. About three-fourths (77.50%) of the students lack internet connectivity. The internet facilities available in central computer center and department computers might be the reason for not showing interest to get a separate connectivity.

Students awareness, interest, access and preferences of using online journals.

The Table 2 shows that overwhelming majority (95.00 %) of the students was aware about the availability of online journals in their respective subjects and only meager percent (5.00%) of the students were not aware about the online journals. It could be discussed that students' community had the chance of going out seeking the information from the browsing centers.

Majority (82.50%) of the students had shown interest in reading online journals. A variety of impressive information, different sources of search engine, information clarity and illustrations were the reasons perceived by the students' interest for reading the online journals. A less than one-fifth (17.50%) of the students had not shown interest. Size of letter, eye irritation due to waving computer and less time availability might be the reasons the students have not shown interest to read online journals.

Table 3. Preference to the type of online journals and the reasons for preference (n=40)

Particulars	No.	%
<i>Preference to the type of online journals</i>		
Indian Journals	04	12.12
International Journals	06	18.18
Both	23	70.00
<i>Reasons for preferences</i>		
Open access / Free of cost	30	75.00
Regular updating	27	67.50
User friendly	23	57.50
Regular updating	21	52.50
Quality in terms of standard of publication	18	45.00
Attractive Page makeup (Page layout)	14	35.00

Table 4. Purpose of using online journals and membership (n=40)

Particulars	No.	%
Assignments, Research and Seminar	22	67.00
Research	04	12.00
Seminar	03	9.00
Assignments	02	6.00
Others	02	6.00
<i>Membership to online journals</i>		
Yes	14	35.00
No	36	65.00

Students' preference to the type of online journals

The students opinion regarding their preference to the type of online journals and the reasons are presented in the Table 3. It shows that nearly 70 per cent of the students preferred both Indian and International journals followed by the Indian (10.00%) and International (15.00%) journals respectively. Since, adequate

and recent information are available in both the journals.

Regarding reasons for preferences, a majority (75.00%) of the students had preferred online journals due to their access @ free of cost. Half the students expressed regular updating of information (67.50%) and user friendly (57.70%) were the prime reasons

Table 5. User difficulties in access and Usage (n=40)

Particulars	No.	%
Needs user name and password	29	72.50
Not able to download full articles	28	70.00
Majority of the journals are not free of cost	27	67.50
Cannot download full articles	24	60.00
Read only content	24	60.00
Take long time to down load the articles	17	42.50
Limited online journals are available	15	37.50
Internet connection is poor / low	13	32.50
Some articles giving only abstract	12	30.00
Back volumes not available	08	20.00
Difficulties to find out the free and paid online services	05	12.50
Reliability of the content	03	07.50

for preferring online journals. About 45 per cent of the students preferred due to quality of articles in terms of standard of publication followed by attractive page makeup /page layout (35.00%).

Regarding purpose of using online journals it was found that a slightly higher than two-third (67.70 %) of the students utilized online journals for the purpose of assignments, seminars and research .Only a meager percentage (6.00%) of the students utilized online journal for other purposes. It is evident that the students community effectively used online journals for their academic purposes.

Where as 35 per cent of the students only had membership of online journals and more than half (65.00%) of the students were found to have no membership with any online journals. It was observed that the student community lacked financial support to become a member of online journals.

User difficulties in access of online journals

A perusal of Table 6 revealed that nearly a less than three-fourth (72.50%) of the students expressed non availability of user name and password as the prime difficulty in accessing the online journals. About 70 % of the students had faced the problems of downloading full articles, an equal proportion of students faced difficulties like subscription amount (67.50%), read only content (60.00%) in accessing the online journals. One-third of the students opined that time taken for down loading the articles (42.50%), limited online journals (37.50%) and poor connectivity (32.50%) were the major difficulties in the usage of online journals.

In the recent years computer mediated learning / listening is playing a major role in academic and student's research. Now a days students are effectively using computers and internet connection for their academic

purposes. About one-third of the students had owned computer and internet connectivity. Majority of the students had awareness about online journals, shown interest on seeking information from both Indian and International online journals. Free of cost, regular updating and user friendly were the major reasons for the preference of online journals. About two-third of the students referred online journals for their purpose of assignment, seminar and research. Majority of the students faced the problems like getting user name, password, long time to download article, read only content and limited online journals are

the major difficulties faced in access and usage of online journals. These problems could be addressed to enhance online learning journals among the students of TNAU.

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