USER ATTITUDES ON E-BOOKS COLLECTION IN MAHATMA GANDHI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract: This paper attempts to bring out the user attitudes, understanding and user interest of e-book collection in the Mahatma Gandhi University Library and how best these e-resources are helpful for the learning, higher education and research. The user access difficulties and other related problems associated with the e-books are dealt with the survey study conducted. The inference of the study emphasizes the need for orientation and induction, and the other alternative arrangements suitable for e-book access process.

Keyword: E-books, University Libraries, access inconvenience, tools and techniques.

INTRODUCTION

In the digital library environment, the growth of e-journals and its consortia have got achieved its own gain among the university libraries and their user groups. In furtherance, the need for giving attention to have the e-books became more widely accepted due to the reasons that the shrinking budget provisions, limited physical space and the preserving inconveniences etc. along with the publisher's offer for the large collections of content at moderate affordable prices. The universities started to give importance in acquiring the e-books aiming to support the higher education in teaching, learning and research. Hence the concept of growth of the library has also paralleled to the growth of the campus was accepted so as to accelerate the shift from the physical to digital resources (Coyle, 2003). The access to digital content has transformed our approach to collection development and management, and it will continue to do so; more importantly it has transformed our user's approach to information seeking and uses (Kaufman, 2009). The acquisition of e-books needs to be understood in the content of this transformation in user expectations. The academic members of faculty were also willing to participant in this shift to digital resources in the university environment along with the students and scholar's categories as the changing user expectations have influenced library's approach to e-books. Due to the technological developments, various tools and techniques used in access the e-books have been created a situation which is not come to the expected level in the University Libraries (Abram S, 2004). But the situation has changed with the portable reading devices and the increasing number of e-book titles on various subjects aimed to support the user groups for the education and research (Press, L,

1994). But the libraries still procure a high volume of expensive e-books even though the tools and technologies are not user friendly for the best access. This paper attempts to study and examine the user attitude about the collection of e-books in the Mahatma Gandhi University Library among the user groups of students, faculties and the scholars, the user's habits and opinion in using e-Books and access difficulties, and user perception on print counterpart resources.

E-BOOKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI UNIVERSITY

E-books are 'text in digital form, or digital reading material, or a book in a computer file format, or an electronic file of words and images'. E-books are usually read on dedicated hardware devices known as e-Readers or e-book devices (Lam et al., 2009). To realize the above definition, a separate ICT Lab was established to bring out the text in digital form in the University Library in 2011. The Oxford Scholarship Online from OUP consisted of 2234 titles of e-books and subscription to Encyclopedias from Taylor and Francis Group consists of Chemical Processing, Library and Information Science, Nano science and Nanotechnology, and Supra Molecular Chemistry by Perpetual Online Access. The e-books collection from OUP consists of 26 various subject products. The collection of e-Books designed in the university library is based on user-centered approach and satisfies the dimensional factors like content, format, purpose and use to promote the education and research by avoiding the duplication of print materials available in the library. Among three patterns of acquisition of e-books like perpetual access, access fee and purchase of e-book services not for the e-book resources, the university library has foreseen

the future requirements placed the acquisition on perpetual access which can be renewed yearly so that the access to the resources will be lifelong. The addition of e-book resources can be undertaken during the renewal to support the database maintenance. This library proposes to expand the e-book use for online and other mobile learning in the future, to increase the number of e-book collection, to monitor the trends and patterns of use, to support demand driven acquisition based on faculty's recommendations, and to extend the service on interlibrary loan/ access through the campus wide network to ensure immediate access which is user centric. (Wilson R., Landoni M. and Gibb F, 2002).

RELATED RESEARCH

The concept of e-books has been flourished in the college and even libraries in the world wide but the introduction of use of e-books started to introduced in the university levels in India in the higher education sector. The main hurdle of the initiation is the cost of e-books, high cost of reading devices and other related technologies (Ramaiah, Chennupati K, 2012). The development of introducing e-journals in the higher education institutions became common as the result of use of such online e-journal collection gave an amazing result enrooted for the e-books (Luther, 2000). The study of user community of e-books and their opinion of use has been studied by a survey conducted at Palmer School of Library and Information Science (Chu, 2003). From the study it is come to understand that the e-book resources should be made available "round the clock availability", "search ability", and "need for special equipment for read". The absence of these key will hinder the use of e-books. The studies carried out in Indian School of Sciences in 2004 that the students tended to use e-books more often than faculty member and staff. Those who use e-books depended upon the reference and technical materials for the research and higher studies purposes (Anuradha and Usha, 2006). The subject wise access to e-books on science, social science and humanities has been awaked and enhanced, but the greater awareness did not translate to greater use and they used e-books almost in the same frequency as the other respondents (Levine-Clark, 2007).A survey conducted at University College of London (Rowlands and Nicholas, 2008) showed that the print titles are perceived ease and convenience for reading. Also it was observed that the benefits of e-books like up-to-dateness, space-saving and around the clock availability. The general survey about the demand e-books in academic libraries and their insight into evaluating the statistics for a large e-book collection for the academic purpose were proved (Soules, 2009). The role of libraries handling e-books and other resources has been studied and needs to be framed within a strategic plan and the university libraries are to develop strategic e-resources for the quality of education and research enriched (Woods, 2007 & Schmidt, 2007). However the various studies on e-book's use and access have been conducted, the studies on e-books in University Libraries in India are limited as the concept of e-book has recently been given acceleration to support the quality of higher education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the user interest on e-books through the survey respondents
- To evaluate how often do they use the e-books
- To study the and evaluate the purpose of use of e-books enabling to acquire the sound collection in the future
- To evaluate and examine the access velocity in science and social science subjects
- To study the easiness of access or locating available e-books in the library.
- To study and evaluate what type of subject e-books are mostly used for the research purpose
- To study and analyze the mode of reading convenience of e-books in the library environment
- To analyze the problems encountered along with access denied for copy/download the e-book resources
- To study the user awareness and the usage of e-books

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for the study consisted of data collected mainly through the questionnaire. The supporting tools like interview and observation have also adopted to study the use pattern of the user groups. The total questionnaire of 128 was distributed among the faculties and students and scholars who use the e-book collection and 117 were responded. The data so collected has analyzed and presented in the form of table for the inferences and possible suggestions were made accordingly.

DATA ANALYSIS

128 questionnaires were distributed to the user groups like faculties, scholars and students who are e-book users. Table-1 shows the survey response and the user interest of e-book.

Table-1: Response to Questionnaire

User Groups	Questionnaire		%
	Issued	Received	
Faculty	23	20	86.95
Scholars	50	45	90.00
Students	55	52	94.54
Total	128	117	91.40

It is observed that 91.4% of the user to whom the questionnaire were distributed, clearly indicates the user interest over the collection of e-books. The students and teaching faculty are more divergent than the scholars in using the e-books. It is observed that the curiosity and interest of the user groups on e-books are found positive as the collection is user-centered, (Wilson, Landoni and Gibb, 2002).

The frequency of using the e-book collection

It is essential to study and evaluate the frequency or velocity of use of e-books in the university Library as the use of Internet is also explicit. The subscription to e-books has the IP based access facility, so that without signing o Internet, the access to e-books is impossible. The following table clearly gives the statistical data of the velocity of use of the both items.

Table- 2: frequency of using the e-book collection

User Group	Internet Access			E-Book Access			
	Every day	Twice a week	Once a week	Every day	Twice a week	Once a week	
Faculty	10 (50%)	8 (40%)	2 (10%)	8 (40%)	10 (50%)	2 (10%)	
Scholars	41 (91%)	4 (9%)	Nil	34 (76%)	11(24%)	Nil	
Students	50 (96%)	2 (4%)	Nil	38(73%)	11(21%)	3(6%)	
Total	101(86%)	14 (12%)	2(2%)	80 (68%)	32(27%)	5(5%)	

The above table shows that the Internet access and use is more than that of the use of e-books. The faculty members use more time on Internet i.e. 50% everyday, while time spent for e-books is around 40% which less than the use by the scholars (76%). The students use the e-books more than that of the faculty which brings out the need for the purpose of use. The use technique, e-book collection type, awareness etc are the deciding factors of the use of e-book collection.

The purpose of use of E-Books

The use of e-books cover assignment preparation, examination point of view, projects preparation, scholarly writings on journals, relevant content for dissertation and theses, fact finding and extended reading etc. The Table-3 clearly shows that use statistics of the e-books in the library.

The purpose of use of the e-books amount to 80% and 95% positively for the faculties and scholars respectively where as the case of students the use mainly relied upon the course of study and hence the use is found "not good but fair" (Nicholas, Rowlands, and Jamali, 2010). Other than the theses works, the student group use e-books on various purpose than the scholars. The scholarly writings are primarily focused in all user groups in which the faculties use by 60% and followed by the scholars 40% respectively.

Table-3: Purpose of Use of E-book

Purpose of Use of E-books	User Groups		
	Faculty	Scholars	Students
Assignment	Nil	Nil	23 (44%)
Examination	Nil	Nil	15 (29%)
Project Preparation	Nil	22 (49%)	42 (81%)
Scholarly writings	12 (60%)	18 (40%)	3 (8%)
Relevant content for Theses	Nil	41 (91%)	NIL
Relevant content for Dissertation	NIL	NIL	43 (83%)
Fact Findings	14 (70%)	38 (84%)	47 (90%)
Extended Reading	16 (80%)	43 (95%)	12 (23%)

The Subject wise attitude of access to e-books and access difficulties

As the user groups are varied from one another, the different subject discipline user groups are classified to study the more access discipline in the library. The various departments and schools cover science and social science subjects (Abdullah & Gibb, 2008) , the following table gives clear picture of the subject wise access and velocity of e-books which can able to determine why access rate is less.

Table-4: Subject wise access

User Group	Science	Social Science	Access difficult
Faculty	11 (55%)	9 (45%)	14 (70%)
Scholars	28 (62%)	17 (38%)	32 (71%)
Students	31 (60%)	21 (40%)	41 (78%)

From the above table, the users from science subject are found more than social sciences as 55%, 62%, and 60% respectively. It means that the collection of e-books covers more science subjects and the science discipline users depend more on the e-books than the social sciences. The less rate of access felt among students as the access difficulties because best use. The faculty by 70% felt the access difficulties due to many reasons.

Problems with the Use of E-books

The problems and inconveniences have been identified form the inception of the concept of e-books by unified standard, technology and tools are not accepted by the vendors. This situation does not create any positive effect among the different types of users and the library environment (Dillon, A. 1992). The reading inconvenience posed the anti-eye friendly situation for the many cases by using the computers for long hours of time than reading the print materials (Ludwick and Gazer, 2000). On the basis of these studies the following table of data is studied.

Table-5: Problems with use of e-books

Inconvenience and problems	Faculty	Scholar	Students
Easiness to learn to use	11 (55%)	20 (44%)	16 (31%)
Easiness to solve error occurred	6 (30%)	22 (49%)	19 (37%)
Difficulties in login the sites	2 (10%)	5 (11%)	2 (11%)
Easiness of search strategies	10 (50%)	30 (67%)	28 (54%)
Do you have all time full text	18 (90%)	40 (89%)	47 (90%)
Do you have hyperlink discomfort	13 (65%)	32 (71%)	34 (65%)
Any discomfort of display and font	15 (75%)	30 (67%)	22 (42%)
Hazards of print/copy/download	14 (70%)	37 (82%)	42 (81%)
Reading hazard longtime on-screen	16 (64%)	30 (67%)	39 (75%)
Enough Time allotted for use of e-books	14 (70%)	28 (62%)	33 (63%)
Use of external device for download	11 (55%)	18 (40%)	19 (36%)

The learning of e-books to use is not up to the level of expectation as the students have learning efficiency is by 31%, where the scholars responded 44% is lesser than the faculty by 55%. So that the error occurred has been common and the difficulties to login, hypertext link discomfort are the subsequent repercussions. The display and font of the text are not sufficient to the user groups to read and write. The size of display of monitors and the font size of the text should be maximized as the discomfort is recorded as 75%, 67%, and 42% by the faculty, scholars and students respectively. The down load/print and copy facilities are not enough due to the technological protection measures enforcement which may be avoided. The time allotted to user groups are not enough as the search of e-books are meant for the research and education. Due to the fear of other technical problems to be occurred, the use of external devices is restricted by which the students are so suffered by 36% than the scholars of 40%.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The rate of use and access to the Internet is found more than the access to e-books. The use of e-books is mostly subject related and research oriented and hence the number collection development of e-books has to be increased, in accordance with the need for the users. The purchase mode of the e-books on the basis of "pick and select" process would help user groups more effectively. The purpose of use of e-books focuses on the extended reading and research; hence the collection should be based on the area of interests of the scholars. The various publishers and vendors on e-books may be invited for the better collections along with the open source e-book collection may also be made as institutional repositories for the best use. The subject wise access in which the science subjects are accessed more than the social sciences. The need for more e-book collection is to be built on social sciences too. The access difficulties and problems are found more among all user groups. It is important to implement the supporting best practices to overcome these problems by orientation programs, training and workshops on the use of e-books, techniques, tools and search strategies in regular periodical intervals. Maintaining the separate OPAC for the e-books would help to search and locate the needs of users and ensures the best access. The copy/print/ down load facilities would

be extended without any restrictions and the enforcement of TPM may be relaxed for the educational and research purposes. The size computer monitors and font size of the text may enlarged along with the number of computers may increased to provide maximum time to use the e-books. The Operating Systems may be converted to open access OS like Linux so as to avoid the virus problem and in furtherance the use of external devices to store, download and print etc may not create problems. A separate ICT based laboratory facility may be initiated to incorporate the e-book access services. The proper monitoring, maintenance, regular collection up datedness, user orientation and feedback etc should be carried out for the smooth functioning and best access of the e-books for the quality of research and lifelong learning.

CONCLUSION

The choice of the users to use e-books is based on the availability, quality, easiness of access and the sound collection, so that the present situation of the unfair use quality can be overcome. The academic and other user community's needs should be studied in accordance with the area of interest of their study. The implementation of digital library concept has been widely influenced in university libraries and the necessary platforms may also be created to introduce the e-books for the quality education and research.

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