

E-Resource Usage Pattern among Assam University Library Users under Consortia Services: A Case Study

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Abstract: A consortium facilitates the member libraries to get the benefit of wider access to electronic resources at affordable cost and at the best terms of licenses. Further, the approaches to help to get attractive discounted rates and most of publishers responded positively to the call of consortia and are enthusiastic to give the best possible offers. This study aims to examine the e-resource usage pattern among the library users in the Assam University, Silchar. Further, it also examines the preference of e-resources among university library users and awareness of library consortia by them.

Keyword: Models, Information Seeking, Information Seeking Behaviour, Digital Information Seeking Pattern

1. Introduction

Library consortia is a community (a supportive) of two or more libraries which have formally agreed to cooperative, synchronize, organize, collaborate or consolidate certain functions to achieve joint objectives. Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science (ODLIS) defines Library Consortia as "an association of independent Libraries and/or Library systems established by formal agreement, usually for the purpose of sharing". Membership may be restricted to a specific geographical region, type of Library (Public, Academic, and Special) or subject specialization"

2. Need for E-Consortia

Libraries are committing larger portions of their budgetary allocations for either procuring or assessing electronic resources while the allocation keeps on diminishing. The libraries with their diminishing or at best static financial allocations have to consider new ways to consolidate globally accessible electronic resources. Consortia are formed with an objective to enhance the purchasing power of the participating institutes in this critical situation of major financial crunch faced by the libraries and information centres. A consortium facilitates the member libraries to get the benefit of wider access to electronic resources at affordable cost and at the best terms of licenses. Further, the approachesto help to get attractive discounted rates and most of publishers responded positively to the call of consortia and are enthusiastic to give the best possible offers.

3. Objective of the Study

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To examine the e-resource usage pattern among the library users in the Assam University, Silchar;
- To examine the preference of e-resources among university library users;
- To examine awareness of library consortia by them.

4. Scope of the study

The present study has been designed for library users of Assam University, Silchar.

5. Research Method Adopted

For the study "Sample Random Sampling Method" was used. "Survey Method" of research was used to collect data from the library users of Assam University, Silchar. The tools used for collection of data pertaining to the present study are questionnaire; which is followed by Interview-schedule; and observation method.

6. Finding of the Data Analysis

a. Background Information of the Respondents

- Out of 120 numbers of questionnaire distributed, only 85 duly filled in

questionnaires were received during the period March-May, 2015. Thus the response rate is 70.84%.

- Further, the study reveals that Assam University consists of 43 respondents belong to "Faculty Member" category [25.3% within Faculty Member Category, 50.6% within Assam University and 12.2% within "Total"] whereas remaining 42 respondents belong to "Research Scholar" category [23.0% within Research scholar Category, 49.4% within Assam University and 11.9% within Overall/"of Total"].
- Out of 43 faculty members belong to Assam University, majority of the respondents 23 (53.5%) belong to Assistant Professor which is followed by 13 (30.2%) respondents belong to Associate Professor; whereas 7 (16.3%) respondents belong to Professor Category
- It is also observed from the study that most the respondents have their highest qualification or pursuing Ph. D. degree. Further, it is very interesting to know that majority of them are female respondents.

b. Aware of Library Consortia

- STM library users are extremely using the Library Consortia in compare to LH&SS library users, which may be due to less availability of e-resource in their respective fields or may be less awareness among Library Consortia.
- The study further shows that out of all the consortia which is being subscribed by the universities libraries of Assam, majority respondents (66, 77.6%) aware of UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium which is followed by 54 (63.2%) numbers of respondents aware of DeLCON Consortium.

c. E-Resource Usage Pattern

- In this study, all 85 (100%) respondents are aware of Internet/e-resource, which indicates that the all the library users belong to different universities are well aware of Internet/ e-resource and extensively using Internet to access e-resource and others facilities in their day to day activities.
- Further the study highlights that majority of the library users (71; 84.4%) use e-journals to a maximum extent, which are followed by 55 (65.5%) respondents use e-books, whereas 41 (48.5%) respondents use e-dictionary.
- Moreover, majority of the respondents does not use Offline databases, Online database, Blog regularly at their day to day research activities.
- These shows that usage pattern of e-journals/ e-books by Science, Technology and Management (STM) and Linguistics, Humanities and Social Science (LH&SS) respondents are not same. STM respondents are generally using e-resources very effectively

whereas LH&SS are not using it or they may be getting their required documents.

d. Problem Faced by the Respondents

- The study shows that out of total respondents, the most of the respondent (91.9%) are facing problem due to "Less no. of relevant journals".
- Majority of the respondents are facing problems due to the difficulty in judging relevant information (70.7%); which is followed by "problem in accessing relevant information from e-resources/ e-consortium" (55.2%) whereas (59.6%) respondents face "problems on accessing articles of own field".
- Again 48.7% respondents face problems due to some other factors, which are non-availability of full text articles, less numbers of subscribes journals in the consortia especially in SSH&L field, non-availability of linguistic field journals within consortia, etc.

7. Suggestions

From the above discussions, now it is almost clear that the respondents are not getting full satisfaction while accessing e-resources under the consortia services. They are facing lots of problems while accessing information from consortia. The general findings of the study and the problems they encountered, their willingness towards improvement of the existing system leads to provide suggestions. The following suggestions and recommendations, thus, can be made as an outcome of the study.

- It is clear from the study that consortia have a great impact on library users for their information needs, research publications, etc. Therefore, library should continue the consortia services with more valuable e-resources;
- Library should also provide adequate electronic collections as per the needs of the respondents;
- Library electronic collection needs to be enriched. There should be proper guideline how to build library e-collections;
- While developing electronic collection development policy, various other aspects such as perpetual access, orders and payment should be framed to address the need for inclusion of e-resources, making online orders etc.;
- Use of offline e-resource such as CD/ DVD-ROMs for bibliographical searches should be encouraged and improved;
- Proper e-journals subscribed should be made in each relevant field by the library;

8. Conclusion

A consortium is an association of two or more individuals, companies, organizations or governments (or any combination of these entities)

with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources for achieving a common goal. A library consortium is a group of two or more libraries that have agreed to cooperate with each other in order to fulfill certain similar

needs, usually resource sharing. It is clear from the study that consortia have a great impact on library users for fulfillment of their information needs. Therefore, library should continue the consortia services with more valuable e-resources.

9. Reference

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