

# Information Literacy Skills and Use of Electronic Resources by Research Scholars in Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati: A Study

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## Abstract

*In today's world electronic resources (e-resources) have become very popular, and libraries are no exception. Today, the academic libraries are procuring more and more e-resources for their libraries. This paper is a literature review on usage of e-resources in academic libraries. It gives an overview of the relationship of e-resources with information literacy. It also gives a brief overview of the importance of information literacy on e-resources in academic libraries.*

**Keywords:** E-Resources, Usage of E-Resources, Information Literacy.

## 1. Introduction

Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognise when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information (ACRL, 2000). The importance of information literacy is increasing in this electronic environment. With the coming up of e-resources in libraries, users are likely to build up their information literacy skills. It can be said that from the above literature reviewed, information literacy plays a pivotal role in enhancing the usage of electronic resources in academic libraries. However, most of the users do not use their full potential in retrieving information from electronic resources due to lack of information literacy skills. Finding and making use of the required information from the electronic environment needs information literacy. There are certain principles which information literate persons have. Therefore, students especially the beginners should be guided by the librarians, staffs or faculties how to locate the correct information needed and to be able to apply that information to solve their problem. Information literacy skills like technology skills and critical thinking should be taught to the students so that they can locate and use the required information efficiently and easily. Information literacy necessitates the student's skill to know when there is need for information, how and where to get the information and using such information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose. Today's libraries are not just traditional libraries, they have developed into Information Centres which are collecting, organizing electronic learning resources/ digital objects to provide access to the end users. The role of library professionals has also changed in order to provide best services to the end users,

from traditional ways to electronic modes which the younger generation wants and also demands. Students need information for a variety of activities and the e-resources can meet their purposes. There is a daily explosion of information resources and the challenge of using these resources effectively and responsibly. In using the e-resources, students lack skill in locating and evaluating information, which impedes its effective use. Therefore, libraries should organise orientation programmes in the beginning of each session where the users can be taught how better they can access e-resources and be familiarised to the electronic environment. Also the faculty can help the students on how to access e-resources which are available in the library as well as those that are not subscribed by the library.

## **2. Review of Literature**

According to the study done by Sharma (2009), use of e- resources is very common among teachers and research scholars of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University and majority of the teachers and research scholars are dependent on e-resources to get the desired and relevant information. But practical use of e-resources is not up-to the worth in comparison to investments made in acquiring these resources and infrastructure and training programmes should be revised as per requirements.

In the study conducted by Ansari (2010), it was found that majority of the academics have computer skills that facilitate the use of electronic resources, although a majority have little knowledge of electronic resources, which was not a positive aspects of the findings. Mostly users use both electronic and printed resources, or only printed resources. Electronic resources are used for research and for preparation of lectures. Nearly all respondents were satisfied or quite satisfied with the available resources but they regard them as less reliable. Lack of knowledge and lack of facilities are the main reasons for not using electronic resources.

Bhatia (2011) stated that the internet has attracted the attention of the users as an easy source for accessing information and e-resources as is evident from her study. However, she also verified that only a sizeable number of users could frequently seek information from e- resources. Most of the users access e-resources for updating their knowledge on their respective subjects and for academic assignments. Furthermore, the college library should organise awareness and training programmes and seminars to educate the users on seeking information from e-resources and to maximize the use of library resources and services.

Habiba & Chowdhury (2012) confirmed in their study a large number of e-resources are made available in Dhaka University Library (DUL). Their study also revealed that, a majority of the users use e-resources for their learning purpose and that the e- resources materials are available for users to use to their satisfaction. Nevertheless, the authors stated that DUL lack infrastructure facilities. Therefore, DUL should arrange more training programmes for users, appoint trained professionals with ICT skills and accommodated users opinions on subscribing new e- journals.

Adeniran (2013) notified that the use of electronic resources had tremendous impact on the academic performance of the undergraduate students of Redeemer's University. However, there was a need for the users to acquire more skills in the use of electronic resources.

Okite-Amughhoro, Makgahlela & Bopape (2014) in their study substantiated that despite the availability of electronic information resources (EIR), the postgraduate students at Delta State University, Araka, lacked training on how to access EIR to use them efficiently and effectively for academic research. Furthermore, the authors stated that students must acquire the necessary skills to find, select and use the different information resources. Orientation and training on the use of ICT and how to access the various databases should be extended to newly- registered students in every field of study at the institution.

Akussah, Asante & Adu-Sarkodee (2015) brought forward that in their study all the four constructs (satisfaction level, preferred database, time and frequency, and level of awareness) of the electronic resources indicated a significant positive relationship with usage among the users. The authors also recommended among others that the institution in question should adopt more dynamic marketing strategies in order to inform and create awareness of the existence of the electronic resources, which can include fresh student's orientation, faculty seminars, mailing list to users, circulars, memorandums, selective dissemination of information and word of mouth.

According to Adeleke & Emeahara (2016), the low level of usage of e-resources, especially full text databases, among postgraduate students in the University of Ibadan revealed that they need to be more competent in using communication technologies, including computers and associated skills such as desktop publishing, database management, programming, and web page design to navigate in an electronic environment. Significant relationship between information literacy skills and use of electronic information resources was established from result of the findings. It is evident that postgraduate students need to be assisted by stake holders to acquire the needed electronic information literacy skills, provide unmediated access to effectively use and benefit from the myriads of electronic information resources available to them to improve the quality of their academic and research work.

### **3. Statement of the problem**

It has been observed that upcoming scholars, especially university freshmen and postgraduates often experience difficulty searching and using information effectively. Lack of information literacy skills seen to be at the root of scholars' search difficulties and poor performance in universities. Electronic information resources offer the 21st century research scholars new opportunities that were not available to previous generations, yet large number of research scholars leave universities without necessary skills to cope within the information-based society. Despite the success stories by some scholars on the use of electronic resources in tertiary institutions in Andhra Pradesh, it has been revealed by some researchers that constraints in accessing electronic resources include insufficient number of terminals available for use despite high demand, inadequate electricity supply, lack of information retrieval skills for exploiting electronic resources amongst others. Also, other researchers like Oparah and Faloye (2015) further observed that the effective use of electronic resources in academic institutions are marred by a variety of factors such as difficulty in getting information due to poor retrieval skills, unfamiliarity with the library environment and resources as well as poor information literacy and evaluation skills. Arising from the foregoing, the study is therefore set out to

investigate the information literacy skills and use of electronic resources by research scholars in Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati: A Study.

#### 4. Objectives of the study

The following are specific objectives of the study:

1. To know about possess of Information literacy skills by the research scholars;
2. To identify the various electronic resources used by the research scholars;
3. To know the benefits by the research scholars derived from the use of electronic resources; and
4. To know the problems faced by the respondents in using the electronic resources.

#### 5. Methodology

The study has been made by surveying of the Science Research Scholars of the Sri Venkateswara University Library by distributing questionnaires 150 Questionnaires were distributed, out of which 139 users returned the duly filled in questionnaires making 92.7 per cent response. After collecting data required for the study, the data was analysed and interpreted in the form of tables.

#### 6. Analysis of the data

##### 6.1. Information literacy skills

**Table-6.1**  
**Information literacy skills possessed by Research Scholars**

Information literacy skills	Agree	Percentage (%)	Disagree	Percentage (%)	Total (%)
Ability to recognize the information needed	131	94.2	8	5.8	139 (100%)
Skills to search for information online	127	91.4	12	8.6	139 (100%)
Skills to evaluate information appropriately	114	82.0	25	18.0	139 (100%)
Skills to make use of information sources	123	88.5	16	11.5	139 (100%)
Skills to construct a logical search strategy	52	37.4	87	62.6	139 (100%)
Skills to incorporate information into one's knowledge base	125	89.9	14	10.1	139 (100%)
Saving and e-resource editing skills	107	77.0	32	23.0	139 (100%)

In table 6.1, the information literacy skills possessed by research scholars for using electronic resources were discussed. 131 (94.2%) agreed that they have the ability to recognize the information needed, 127 (91.4%) possessed the skills to search for information online, 125 (89.9%) have the skills to incorporate information into their knowledge base, 123 (88.5%) have the skills to make use of information sources, 114 (82.0%) possessed the skills to evaluate information appropriately, 107 (77.0%) possessed saving and e-resource editing skills while. Though, majority of the respondents do not have the skills to construct a logical search strategy as confirmed by 87 (62.6%) of the respondents. This finding corroborates the observation of



Issa, Amusan and Daura (2009) who asserted that students need some level of information literacy skills to make decisions about academic matters and other aspects of their daily lives.

## 6.2. Electronic Resources

**Table-6.2**  
**Electronic Resources used by Research Scholars**

Electronic Resources	Agree	Percentage (%)	Disagree	Percentage (%)	Total (%)
Websites	135	97.1	4	2.9	139 (100%)
Electronic Books (e-Books)	117	84.2	22	15.8	139 (100%)
Electronic Journals (e-journals)	134	96.4	5	3.6	
Compact Disc – Read Only Memory (CD-ROM)	41	29.5	98	70.5	139 (100%)
Online Database	57	41.0	82	59.0	139 (100%)
Internet sources	137	98.6	2	1.4	139 (100%)
e-News	119	85.6	20	14.4	139 (100%)
e-Data Archives	17	12.2	122	87.8	139 (100%)
Online Magazines	128	92.1	11	7.9	139 (100%)

It is evident from Table 6.2 that 137 (98.6%) agreed that they make use the internet. Other electronic resources used by the research scholars include websites 135 (97.1%), e-News 119 (85.6%), Online Magazines 128 (92.1%), e-Journals 134 (96.4%), and e-Books 117 (84.2%). However, online database CD-ROM and e-Data archives recorded low usability by the respondents as affirmed by only 57 (41.0%), 41 (29.5%) and 17 (12.2%) of the respondents respectively. This analysis therefore shows that majority of the research scholars make use of various electronic resources.

## 6.3. Benefits of the Use of Electronic Resources

Table 6.3 shows the benefits derived by research scholars from the use of electronic resources. The benefits include access to a wider range of information 139 (100%), relatively easy to use 138 (99.3%), instructional delivery to support teaching and research activities 137 (98.6) and aids access and retrieval of information as revealed by 129 (92.8%) of the respondents. Other benefits include improvement in general communication as disclosed by 133 (95.7%), improved overall academic performance as declared by 132 (95.0%) and high dependency value on research work as affirmed by 96 (69.1%). Thus, this analysis declares that the research scholars derive a lot of benefits from the use of electronic resources.

**Table-6.3****Benefits of the Use of Electronic Resources by Research Scholars**

<b>Benefits of Electronic Resources</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Improvement in general communication	133	95.7	6	4.3	139 (100%)
Instructional delivery to support teaching and research activities	137	98.6	2	1.4	139 (100%)
Relatively easy to use	138	99.3	1	0.7	139 (100%)
High dependency value on research work	96	69.1	43	30.9	139 (100%)
Access to a wider range of information	139	100	0	0.0	139 (100%)
Improved overall academic performance	132	95.0	7	5.0	139 (100%)
Aids access and retrieval of information	129	92.8	10	7.2	139 (100%)

**6.4. Problem faced in use of e-resources****Table 6.4****Problems faced in the Use of Electronic Resources by Research Scholars**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Lack of awareness to electronic information resources	121	87.1	18	12.9	139 (100%)
Ineffective communication channels	134	96.4	5	3.6	139 (100%)
Inadequate searching skills	78	56.1	61	43.9	139 (100%)
Slow internet access	136	97.8	3	2.2	139 (100%)
Lack of information retrieval skills	49	35.3	90	64.7	139 (100%)
Unavailability of e-resources relevant to my information needs	44	31.7	95	68.3	139 (100%)
Excessive academic workload	118	84.9	21	15.1	139 (100%)
Financial problem	33	23.7	106	76.3	139 (100%)
Inadequate ICT facilities	57	41.0	82	59.0	139 (100%)
Erratic power supply	122	87.8	17	12.2	139 (100%)

Table 6.4 shows the problems faced by research scholars in the use of electronic resources in Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati. It is obvious that slow internet access, ineffective communication channels, erratic power supply, lack of awareness of electronic information resources and excessive academic workload were the biggest problems facing research scholars as revealed by 136 (97.8%), 134 (96.4%), 122 (87.8%), 121 (87.1%), and 118 (84.9%) of the respondents respectively. However, it is evident

that majority of the respondents did not consider inadequate searching skills, inadequate ICT facilities, lack of information retrieval skills, unavailability of e-resources relevant to my information needs and financial problem as problems towards the use of electronic resources as it was only 78 (56.1%), 57 (41.0%), 49 (35.3%), 44 (31.7%) and 33 (23.7%) of the respondents that agreed to these as problems respectively. Although, this implies that some problems are reprising research scholars in the use of electronic information resources in Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati.

## 7. Conclusion

After the forthcoming examination and investigation into the information literacy skills and use of electronic resources by research scholars in Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, it was revealed that the important role played by electronic resources in the lives of research scholars (both academic and general) cannot be underestimated. The researcher therefore concludes that the respondents of the Science departments are well versed with information literacy skills, which they use to exploit the millions of information available in electronic resources via the internet. Also from the findings, it can be concluded that some issues posed as hesitant blocks to the most favorable use of these resources by research scholars in Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati.

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