

Information Literacy Skills on Utilization of the E-Resources and SNS Among the Dentistry Students of Ragas Dental College, Chennai

S. Ganesan*, K. Kaliyaperumal**

Abstract

Information literacy is set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyse for efficient use of information. In the information age, the information literacy skills are essential, since the explosion of information output and information sources. The literature growth in the field of medicine, unassessable and ever growing in exponential ratio and quick obsolence. In this context the medical students are find difficulties in getting awareness and availability of resources in the electronic forms for their day to day activities. As such, the study is carried out among the student users of Ragas Dental college library, which is one of the leading library in the field of dentistry. The results show that students are having ICT skills along with knowledge about Social Networking Sites (SNS). Though, the information literacy programmes run by the library are effective to the students but not bringing out expected results.

Keywords: Information literacy; Use of e-resources; Social networking service; Dentistry students and Ragas Dental College.

Introduction

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) defines as "Information Literacy is the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information" and also ALA's Presidential Committee on Information Literacy states that 'Information Literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They are the prepared for life long learning because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand'.

The beginning of the 21st century has been called Information Age because of the explosion of information output and

information sources. As U.S. Representative Major R. Owens has said "Information literacy is needed to guarantee the survival of democratic institutions. All men are created equal but voters with information resources are in a position to make more intelligent decisions than citizens who are information illiterates. Information literacy is a survival skill in the Information Age. Instead of drowning in the abundance of information that floods their lives, information literate people know how to find, evaluate, and use information effectively to solve a particular problem or make a decision whether the information they select comes from a computer, a book, a government agency, a film, or any number of other possible resources".

Nowadays, the concept of literacy includes both computer literacy and information literacy. Information literate people are effective consumers of information. They are critical thinkers and self-directed learners, and they use and communicate information effectively and responsibly. In order to gain information literacy skills individuals should follow an information literacy programs. Libraries of all types, play a central role in teaching information literacy skills and in

Author's Affiliation: *Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science & Assistant Librarian, Madras University Library, University of Madras, Chennai - 600005, **Librarian, Madras University Library, University of Madras, Chennai - 600005.

Reprint's request: S. Ganesan, Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science & Assistant Librarian, Madras University Library, University of Madras, Chennai - 600005,

Email: ganesans54@gmail.com

(Received on 28.06.2013, accepted on 04.07.2013)

integrating information literacy into the school curricula at all levels. Creating and maintaining information literacy programs that will support lifelong learning should become a mission for every library. Although traditional user education can be counted as a part of information literacy, there is no doubt that information literacy is a wider concept. In this context a testification is made among the dentistry students of Ragas Dental college to find out the information literacy skills and use of e-Resources and Social networking sites (SNS).

Review of the literature

Manhas[1] examined the patterns of use of patient care resources available on the internet and via other electronic resources, the information literacy skills of the dentists. It also focused the problems encountered while using Internet and electronic resources. It assessed usage of internet resources compared to printed reference materials.

Dorrington[2] studied the health professionals, both clinical and non clinical whether practitioners or students require to have library and information services throughout their education, training and continuing all professional development activities. The Health care libraries continuously providing various services to users on demand. So, the librarians as well as users should be trained in computer literacy skills to achieve the tampering of the resources.

Kaur and Sarman[3] explored the information seeking strategies of students of Guru Nank Dev University in acquiring information literacy, information skills, digital literacy. By administering the questionnaire method, the qualitative small sample of data collected pertaining to students of the University. The finding shows that students possess knowledge in computer literacy and further suggested for conduct of information literacy programme to enhance knowledge and it should be made as of part of curriculum.

Kiran Kumar and Kumbar[4] investigated information skills of faculty members NMAM

Institute of Technology, Karnataka to know the use pattern of search of information for electronic sources. A questionnaire has been designed and data obtained from the faculties. The findings and suggestions are mainly for conducting the user orientation programme at regular interval so as to enhance acquaintance of the information literacy skills.

Bala, *et al*[5] studied the impact of Information communication technology and use of e-Resources subscribed to benefit variety of users in Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education & Research (PTIMER) Library at Chandigarh. The study findings are suggested for further to strengthen the Library collections and continuance of the e-resources subscription, since majority of the users like faculty, researchers and students depended on it. Users and staff Information literacy programmes are to be conducted periodically to acquaint with knowledge on desired information search.

Maraddi and Konnur[6] explored the internet use and its impact among the education colleges users of Gadag City. A questionnaire administered to students and faculty of five educational colleges of Gadag city to ascertain the usage of internet, search engines and facilities provided by the respective colleges. Findings suggested that redesigning of IT based services so as to motivate the use of such services in more numbers of user community.

Need for the study

The Indian Libraries are in transition at present but in this context many of the libraries are not coming forward to run in the information literacy programs so as to enable their users to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information very effectively. The Literature growth in the field of medicine is unassessable and ever growing in exponential ratio and quick obsolescence is also a major criteria. In this context, the Medical academics are find difficulties in getting the awareness of the availabilities of the resources in electronic forms as well as method to access pin pointed

information out of the junk. In this context, this study has been carried out among the users of the Ragas Dental College Library is one of the leading library in the context of dentistry. This library often organising information literacy programs which also incorporated with user education program. This programs are often run by the library professionals along with the publishers of the e-resources on the subject. Especially, the library runs the user education programs for the newly admitted students in the beginning of the academic year. Thus, the study has been carried out to find out the information literacy skills and use of e-resources along with SNS among the student users of the library. It is hoped that the findings of the study will be useful for the library to reform their existing information literacy programmes.

Profile of the Ragas dental college library

Ragas Dental College[7] and its Hospital, one of the premier Institution of our Country, which is located in Southern part of Chennai City. The college is affiliated to Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University and has been duly recognised and accredited by the other bodies like Dental Council of India (DCI) and also of both State and Central Governments. This Institution is providing advanced study in Dentistry and its teaching programmes are characterised by academic diversity and an international atmosphere of learning in a tradition setting with all modern facilities. The Ragas Dental College conducts periodical National and International seminars, symposium and conferences to benefit of academic community of the institution. The College provides Undergraduate and Postgraduate studies in Dentistry. There are eight specializations in MDS to benefit of students pursuing area of specialization to get extensive experience in the field settings. The usual BDS course is also offered to students to enter the profession and commence a professional career of dental practice.

The Ragas Dental College is provided with separate Library for the benefit the students pursuing BDS, MDS, Research Scholars and

Faculty members. The library has good collections of more than 8000 subjects books on dentistry and 25000+ back volumes of journals for reference of users. The Library also subscribes more than 87 National and International journals pertaining to dentistry. The Library also provides Database search, CD-search and other services to users. The library activities are computerised and OPAC terminals are provided to users. Internet search facilities are also provided to users of the library to access e-resources. An average 300 users are visiting the library on daily basis to have access on various resources available in the library.

Objectives of the study

The following objectives are framed for this study.

- To identify information literary skills among the students of the study.
- To elicit ICT application skills along with internet search mechanisms of the students.
- To find out the use of Social Network Sites (SNS) and purpose of using them.
- To identify the difficulties in using ICT applications of the library and their method of acquiring knowledge in using the ICT applications of the library.
- To find out the problems of using the e-Resources.

Methodology

A structured questionnaire was designed keeping in view of the objectives to collect the data from the students pursuing BDS and MDS courses in Ragas Dental College & Hospital, who are all regular visitors of the library to find out information literacy skills on the utilization of the e-resources and Social Networking sites. Total 150 questionnaires were distributed to the BDS and MDS students selected out employing judgement sampling of that institution and 126 properly filled in

Table 1: Educational Status of the respondents

Sl. No	Students	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	UG (BDS)	92	73
2	PG (MDS)	34	27
Total		126	100

Table 2: Daily visitors of the Library

Sl. No	Descriptions	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	91	72.2
2	No	35	27.8
Total		126	100

questionnaires were collected back. The rate of response is 84 percent. In addition to the questionnaire method and observation method are also used to collect required information as a supplement to it. It enables to get clarity to the data which are essential and use for analysis and interpretation of data.

Data analysis and interpretations

Back ground information of the respondents

The Table 1 presents the total no of students participated in the study. It is seen from that table that majority of the under graduate students are participated than that of the PG students since the UG students are more in number in the college and as well as in the usage of the library.

The Table 2 shows that among all types of students participated in the study more than 70 percent of the respondents are regular user of their institution library.

Table 4: Frequency of using computer facilities

Sl. No	Descriptions	BDS n=92		MDS n=34	
		No	%	No	%
1	Daily	63	68.4	26	76.4
2	Once or twice a week	12	13.0	3	8.8
3.	Once every two weeks	10	10.8	4	11.7
4.	Once a month	2	2.1	1	2.9
5.	Less than once a month	-	-	-	-

Information literacy skills of the students

ICT skills

The data related to ICT skills of the respondents is presented in the Table 3, it is seen that more than 89.1 percent of the BDS and 64.7 percent MDS students are familiar with word processing skills. Subsequently, 100 percent of MDS students are familiar with World Wide Web and e-mail applications. And almost 80 percent of BDS students are also familiar with these applications. Morethan 75 percent of the students are also familiar with Social Networking Services and Less percent of the both segments are unfamiliar with ICT skills like spread sheets, open learning courses and other internet applications and knowledge in telecommunication networking.

Frequency of using computer facilities

It is seen from the Table 4 that more than 75 percent of MDS students are daily using

Table 3: ICT skills of the respondents

Sl. No	Descriptions	BDS n=92		MDS n=34	
		No	%	No	%
1	Word processing	82	89.1	22	64.7
2	Spreadsheets	11	11.9	23	67.6
3	Open learning courses	36	39.1	18	52.9
4	CD-Roms	22	23.9	19	55.8
5	World Wide Web	72	78.2	34	100
6	e-mail	75	81.5	34	100
7	Other internet applications	19	20.6	19	55.8
8.	Social Networking	72	78.2	27	79.4
9.	Knowledge in computer languages	32	34.7	16	47.0
10.	Knowledge in Telecommunication networking	7	7.6	8	23.5

Table 5: Purpose of using ICT applications and e-resources

Sl. No	Descriptions	BDS n=92		MDS n=34	
		No	%	No	%
1	For the Academic purpose	72	78.2	31	91.1
2	leisure /general enjoyment	33	35.8	11	32.3
3.	independent learning /research	56	60.8	24	70.5
4.	looking for jobs	17	18.4	9	26.4
5.	keeping in touch with family/friends	56	60.8	21	61.7
6.	shopping	12	13.0	4	11.7

Table 6: Information search strategy used in the Internet search engines

Sl. No	Descriptions	BDS n=92		MDS n=34	
		No	%	No	%
1	Type the search statement in searching box	65	70.6	29	85.2
2	Type the keywords in searching box	54	58.6	27	79.4
3.	Type the keywords with Boolean operators	18	19.5	17	50
4	Use wild card	21	22.8	9	26.4
5	Don't know how to search	16	17.3	4	11.7

Table 7: The respondents created SNS account

Sl.No	Descriptions	BDS n=92		MDS n=34	
		No	%	No	%
1.	Created own Blog	12	13.0	9	26.4
2.	Having account in the Face book	53	57.6	22	64.7
3.	YouTube	17	18.4	11	32.3
4	Account in Orkut	21	22.8	8	23.5
5.	Account in Twitter	33	35.8	9	26.4
6.	Other SNS	4	4.3	3	8.8

computer facilities available for them, but this percentage is lesser with BDS students i.e., 68 percent of BDS opined this phenomenon. But irregular use of computer facilities is less among both the segments of students under study. It is observed that moderate use of computer facilities is due to hectic academic schedules of both the students under study.

Purpose of using ICT applications and e-resources

It is seen from the Table 5, that morethan 90 percent of MDS students using ICT applications of the library to access e-Resources for the use of academic purposes. In the segment also 70.5 percent of students opined that independent learning out of ICT applications to access and e- resources. They are also using ICT applications to keep in touch with family and friends via e-mail and SNS.

These three phenomena are also expressed by the BDS students with variation in percentage i.e., for the academic purpose, 78.2 percent, for independent learning purpose 60.8 percent and same i.e., 60.8 percent opined for communicating to their friends and family. Less percent of both segments opined the use of ICT applications and e-Resources for leisure time readings, jobs and shopping extra.

Information search strategy used in the internet search engines

The students of the library are accessing e-Resources through internet publishers search engines/library portal, while using these engines the efficient use of search terms are important to locate pinpointed information that are needed by them. In this context, the study is also made an attempt to identify the search mechanisms used by the respondents

Table 8: The Purpose of using SNS

Sl. No	Descriptions	BDS n=92		MDS n=34	
		No	%	No	%
1.	Using the service for academic purposes	23	25	12	35.2
2.	Using for sharing the information	46	50	18	52.9
3.	For getting general information	41	44.5	16	47
4.	For recreational purposes	31	33.6	14	41.1

Table 9: Difficulties in using the ICT applications of the Library

Sl. No	Descriptions	BDS n=92		MDS n=34	
		No	%	No	%
1	Lack of computer knowledge	5	5.4	3	8.8
2	Limited number of computers	26	28.2	12	35.2
3.	Information are not updated	36	39.1	14	41.1
4.	Do not understand the process	23	25	12	35.2
5.	Not aware of the services available	6	6.5	6	17.6
6.	System is not user friendly	3	3.2	5	14.7
7.	Difficult to access to internet	2	2.1	3	8.8
8	Any other	1	1.0	1	2.9

to search and access the relevant information. The related data is presented in the Table 6. It is seen from the table that 70.6 percent of BDS students prefers in typing the research statements in searching box of the engines along with 85.2 percent of MDS students as search strategy. The MDS students are good enough to use key words as a search strategy i.e, 79.4 percent rather than that of BDS students, it is only 58.6 percent. The other types of search mechanisms are not so familiar except use of Boolean operators by 50 percent of MDS students.

Use of SNS

The respondents created SNS account

It is seen from the Table 7 that 57.6 percent of the BDS students and 64.7 percent MDS students are having account in the Facebook and also 35.8 percent of BDS and 26.4 percent of MDS students are having account with Twitter. It is interesting to note that there are also account holder of You Tube. Among all the SNS, the Facebook is preferable one for both segments of respondents. The reasons for this, they are very familiar with this site and their fellow friends/relatives who already have accounts in Facebook. Further, it is inferred

that traffic in facebook is very smooth and fast and any problem in the search strategy can be solved immediately by the Facebook by way of sending a reply mail to their e-mail address. When compared to other SNS, majority of them are not so familiar. Next to Face Book it is Twitter plays an important role in SNS. However 26 percent of MDS students have created their own blog informing their professional activities and 13 percent of BDS students are also created their own blog. It shows that most of them are not familiar with creation of Blog and posting their activities by way of exchanging their views and opinions to others. Likewise, 18.4 percent of BDS and 32.3 percent of MDS students are having account in You Tube. Orkut and other SNS are unfamiliar to the respondents of the study.

Purpose of using SNS

The results of the Table 8 reveal that 50 percent of BDS and 52.9 percent of MDS students are using SNS for sharing their information. For exchange of general information it is seen from the table, 44.5 percent of BDS and 47 percent of MDS are opined . For academic purpose 25 percent of BDS and 35.2 percent of MDS preferred SNS

Table 10: Way of acquiring knowledge in using ICT applications of the Library

Sl. No	Descriptions	BDS n=92		MDS n=34	
		No	%	No	%
1	By consulting library staff	23	25	21	61.7
2	By taking fellow users assistance	31	33.6	22	64.7
3.	By self approach	26	28.2	11	32.3
4	Through information Literacy programs run by the library	22	23.9	6	17.6
5	Any other	8	8.6	1	2.9

Table 11: Problems encountered while using the e-resources

Sl. No	Descriptions	BDS n=92		MDS n=34	
		No	%	No	%
1	Lack of online resources available in the library	48	52.1	12	35.2
2	Poor internet connectivity	62	67.3	15	44.1
3.	Time consuming	16	17.3	13	38.2
4	No assistance provided by the library staff	21	22.8	12	35.2
5	Lack of training programmes	33	35.8	8	23.5

and recreational purposes 33.6 percent of BDS and 41.1 percent of MDS preferred SNS. So it gives clear picture that sharing information and exchange of general information are prime concern for using Social Network sites by the respondents. It is seen that moderate use of SNS by respondents for academic and recreational purposes.

Difficulties in using the ICT applications of the library

The respondents were asked to state the reasons for difficulties that they are facing in using ICT applications of the library. The results are presented in the Table 9. It shows that the information are not updated as stated by 39.1 percent of BDS and 41.1 percent of MDS students and they do not understand the process of ICT by 25 percent and 35.2 percent of BDS and MDS students. Likewise, 5.4 percent of BDS and 8.8 percent of MDS students lack computer knowledge; 28.2 percent of BDS and 35.2 percent of MDS opined that, due to Limited number of computers in the library, which hinders the usage of ICT applications. The other reasons like unaware of services available (6.5 percent of BDS and 17.6 MDS), system is not user friendly (3.2 percent of BDS and 14.7 percent of MDS), and difficult to access to internet (2.1

percent of BDS and 8.8 percent of MDS).

Way of acquiring knowledge in using ICT applications of the library

It is seen from the Table 10, that acquiring knowledge in ICT applications majority of the MDS students 61.7 percent and less number of BDS. student i.e, 25 percent consult the library staff. For this reason also 64.7 percent and 33.6 percent of BDS students are getting assistance from fellow users. But the information literary programme are ineffective for the segments MDS (17.6 and BDS (23.9) for this purpose.

Problems encountered while using the e-resources

Table 11 exhibits the problems encountered by the respondents while using e-Resources. 52.1 percent of BDS and 35.2 percent of MDS students stated that non availability of many online resources in the library. The poor internet connectivity and band with are also problems as stated by 67.3 percent of BDS and 44.1 percent of MDS students respectively for using the e-resources. Other reasons like time consuming (17.3 percent of BDS and 38.2 percent of MDS; lack of staff assistance in accessing of e-resources by 22.8 percent of BDS and 35.2 percent of MDS; Lack of training

programme by 35.8 percent of BDS and 23.5 percent of MDS Students are also as the reasons for non accessing of e-Resources.

Findings and Suggestions

The findings of the study and the following suggestions are made.

Findings

- Almost all the respondents of the study are familiar with world wide web and e-mail applications along with word processing skills.
- More than 70 percent of respondents of the study are regular visitors to the library and they are acquaintance with daily use of computer facilities available in the library.
- It is also found out that quite number of users are using computers facilities available in the library moderately due to hectic academic schedules.
- Academic use of ICT applications for academic purpose, independent learning and communicating with family members and friends are dominant factors among the both segments of the students. Usage of these things regarding jobs, shopping and general enjoyment are less among both types of students.
- All students under study type search statements and keywords instead of using of Boolean operators, wild card while they use internet search engines and search engines of e-resource publishers.
- Among all SNS, FaceBook is the prominent site for both respondents under study followed by Twitter. The use of these services for communication purpose rather than that of academic reasons.
- It is found out that lack of updated information, limited number of computers are major difficulties experienced by in using the ICT

applications by the library.

- They also expressed that low speed of internet connectivity and band with along inadequate number of e-resources in the relevant subjects are the major difficulties experienced by them.
- Library staff assistance and fellow users are major reasons getting awareness, access of ICT applications and e-Resources of the library but periodical running of Information literacy programme is inadequate to them.

Suggestions

- Almost all the respondents of the study are computer literates but they are not in a position to aware the ICT applications and e-resources of their library. To avoid these the library should intensify the Information Literacy programmes by the way of conducting more number of training programmes especially to the BDS students.
- Internet connectivity along with higher bandwidth are to be enhanced for speedy access and use of e-resources.
- An immediate attention need to be given to increase of number of user terminals and placing of display on access mechanisms of e-resources near each terminals.

Conclusion

The heavy investment of the library towards establishment of ICT infra structure along with subscription of the e-resources is successful only if these facilities and resources are used by readers more effectively and efficiently. But it is not possible without running information literacy and awareness programme among users which will enable them life long learning of the available resources and their access mechanisms. Though, many of the libraries are ready to invest for creating ICT infrastructure

and e-resources subscription but they are not in position to run periodical literacy programmes. But in some cases they information literacy programmes are less attended by the users of the library

References

1. Manhas Rajee. Use of Internet and Electronic Resources for Dental Science Information: A case study. *Library Philosophy & Practice*. 2008; 10(2): 1-8.
2. Dorrington Linda. Health Libraries as Joint Use Libraries: serving medical practitioners and students. *Library Trends*. 2006; 54(4): 596-606.
3. Kaur Amritpal, Sarman, Rani Saritha. Information literacy among the students in the electronic environment: a case study of Guru Nank Dev University, Amritsar. *SRELS Journal of Information Management*. 2012; 49(1): 21-38.
4. KiranKumar G, Kumar Mallinath. Information search pattern in the electronic environment by the faculty of NMAM Institute of Technology, Karnataka: A study. *Information Age*. 2013; 7(1): 9-13.
5. Bala Adarsh, Kiran Dhaliwal, Deepika Tandon. Managing E-Resources in postgraduate institute of medical education & Research (PGIMER) library, Chandigarh: a study. *SRELS Journal of Information Management*. 2012; 49(4): 421-425.
6. Maraddi Krishna S, Konnur PV. Use and awareness of Internet at education colleges of Gadag City, Karnataka: a case study. *SRELS Journal of Information Management*. 2012; 49(3): 325-330.
7. Ragas Dental College & Hospital. Available from <http://www.rdc.ac.in>