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USAGE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES, SERVICES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY THE LIBRARY USERS IN UNIVERSITY OF THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS (UVPA), SRI LANKA

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Abstract

The electronic resources have become one of the major sources of information for teaching, learning and research activities, as present era is mainly depending on internet based online resources. Though the conditions are prevailing as such, majority of the library users do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to use the electronic resources and services. Hence, before commencing awareness programs and orientations it is essential to measure the usage, issues and challenges of using e-resources and services by the library users. This study was designed to speculate the usage and problems of using e-resources and services provided by the UVPA library. Population of this study was UVPA library users and random sampling method was used for selecting the participants. Among the population total number of 450 library users were considered as the sample. Sample has been represented 300 number of students in three faculties and 150 number of academic and nonacademic staff members. Structured online questionnaires were used as main data collection instrument and interviews and observations were used to collect the primary data. The response rate was 100%.

The study revealed that the majority (72.7%) of library users (students and staff members) aware of the e-resources and services provided by the library. But, only 62.2% of the library

users used the e-resources and services. Most of the respondents used library Web-resources (website), OPAC (searching and renewing service) and past exam paper downloading facility, respectively as a percentage of 62.2%, 60.9% and 57.8%. In additionally findings were revealed that 46% of respondents used the e-journal and Digital Repository System. Compare to the other services E-mail service and database usage were fairly low. Study has shown that nearly 37.8% of respondent had never used the e-resources and services. User satisfaction and usefulness of e-resources and services was 62.2% of the participants.

Based on the findings, the reasons for lower usage of e-resources and services were lack of infrastructure facilities, lack of user education and user awareness programs, English language barriers, and lack of IT skills and knowledge. Accordingly, library should play active role by commencing well-planned user awareness programs and more user education programs, developing infrastructure facilities and subscribing more e-resources. Further to this researcher suggest to revise the curriculums by adding more practical sessions and establishing email or mobile alert update service to get maximum benefit of the e-resources and services.

Keywords

Electronic Resources, Electronic Services, E-resources Usage, Library and Information Science, Sri Lanka

1. Introduction

University of the Visual and Performing Arts (UVPA) is a newly established Government University in Sri Lanka. Dance, Music and Visual Arts are the main subject areas of the University. At present, University have nearly 3000 number of undergraduate students and more than 500 number of academic and nonacademic staff. As an information provider to community, library has become a major focal point of the University.

UVPA library system consists of a main library, branch library and a faculty library. Printed Books, Journals, Theses, CD/DVDs, etc. are the main information resources of the library. But, with the advent of the Information Communication Technology (ICT), electronic resources are becoming major information sources rather than printed resources. Therefore, library should facilitate infrastructures to use e-resources for the users to fulfill their information needs.

"An electronic resource consists of materials that are computer - controlled, including materials that required the use of a peripheral (e.g. a CD-ROM player) attached to a computer; the items may or not be used in the interactive mode. There are two types of e-

resources: data (information in the form of numbers, letters, graphics, images, and sound, or a combination thereof) and programs (Instructions or routines for performing certain tasks including the processing of data and programs (e.g. online services, interactive multimedia)" (Parthasarathy, 2018).

According to the description of Parthasarathy, there are so many different type of electronic information resources available in the world such as E-books, E-journals, Databases, Internet gateways and search engines, etc. Many library users have preferred e-resources rather than printed resources due to the various reasons, such as it's easier to access, search, store, retrieve, share and use. Therefore, library should encourage the users to refer the e-resources more and more to get the benefits out of it. But, Majority of the library users do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to use the electronic resources and services effectively. And also, many researchers abroad have attempted to measure the usage of e-resources on research and scholarship through surveys. In Sri Lanka, very few attempts have been made so far to study extensively the use of e-resources by research scholars and the impact of e-services and their functioning. Thus, it is important to find usage of e-resources and issues/challenges facing, when use the e-resources. This study will help to address the main issues of use of e-resources & services to provide recommendations in order to overcome issues and challenges.

2. Literature Review

Literature review is essential tool for identifying studies, already conducted by researchers in the world wide. It has been found that several studies carried out many countries including Sri Lanka on use of e-resources and services by library users. Kwadzo (2015) conducted a study to investigate the awareness and database usage of students in University of Ghana. In light of these findings it is recommended that librarians especially subject librarians should heighten the publicity of the databases and the research guides to both students and faculty (Kwadzo, 2015).

Garg and Tamrakar (2014) evaluate the use of e-resources by the postgraduate students and faculty members of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur, India, with a special reference to e-resources and services offered by the central library. The study focused that all the students and faculty members often used available e-resources and services in central library such as Websites, Database, e-journals, etc. Further central library of IIT was played a unique role for promote, assistance to provide access to the e-resources. Finally, they recommended to conduct special user awareness program to improve users' awareness of e-resources and services in the central library.

Thanuskodi (2012) carried out a research to examine the use of e-resources by the post graduate students and research scholars of Faculty of Arts in Annamalai University, India. In that study they found that the majority of users are aware of the availability of e-resources and most of them search and use e-resources through the library website. Many of the respondents have not used online theses/dissertations, OPAC, databases which are very reliable for their studies. Therefore the study recommended to conduct more user awareness programs on e-resources.

There are few research studies conducted to examine e-resources usage and issues related to the e-resources and services among various user categories. Lavanya and Santharoban (2018) carried out a study for examine the usage of online resources by the under graduates attached to the Faculty of Agriculture, Eastern University of Sri Lanka. The study revealed that most of the students access e-resources through smart phones for different educational purposes and student mostly unaware of both open access and University Subscribed online resources. The study also revealed the barriers to access online resources namely, slow internet connectivity, lack of awareness and various virus attack. It is recommended that well-planned information literacy programs should be introduced for students.

3. Objectives of the Study

This study was intended to identify usage, issues and challenges faced by users in the use of electronic resources in University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka. The specific objectives were as follows;

- To examine the current usage of e-resources and services provided by the library, UVPA.
- To determine the user satisfaction level of e-resources and services.
- To identify issues and challenges in the use of electronic resources.
- Find out preferred solutions for identified issues and challenges.
- Promote and develop user friendly e-resources and service platform among library users.

4. Methodology

As the Survey design, descriptive survey was used and as the sample selection method, random sampling method was applied. Self-designed structured online questionnaires were circulated to gather the information. Questionnaires were designed to

collect the data on awareness and usage of e-resources and services, type of e-resources and services used, issues and challenges in use of e-resources and services and user satisfaction on e-resources and services provided by the library, UVPA.

On the other hand interviews and participant observation methods were used to collect primary data. Data was analyzed using a simple method of calculation and simple percentage technique.

5. Population and Sample

Total population of this study was all the staff members and students attached to the University of the Visual and Performing Arts. Among the population total 450 number of active library users were selected as the sample. 300 number of students and 150 number of academic and nonacademic staff members were represented in the sample. The response rate was 100%. The sample was selected as follows; (Table 1).

Table 1: Sample of the Study

User category	Faculty of Dance and Drama	Faculty of Music	Faculty of Arts	Sample Size	Percentage %
Academic staff	25	25	25	75	16.7 %
Non-Academic staff	25	25	25	75	16.7 %
2 nd year students	34	33	33	100	22.2 %
3 rd year students	33	34	33	100	22.2 %
4 th year students	33	33	34	100	22.2 %
Total	150	150	150	450	100 %

6. Findings

6.1. User Awareness and Usage of E-resources and Services

The table 2 indicated that majority of the library users in the sample (72.7%) had been aware of e-resources and services provided by the library. The participants of the study were asked "do you use e-resources and services in the library?" according to their answers, result has shown that use of e-resources and services rate was 62.2 %. Even though the awareness of users were slightly higher than that. Out Of the 450 respondents, 37.8% responded that they have never used e-resources and services in the library. Following Figure is clearly shown the responded rates of users.

Table 2: Awareness and Usage of E-Resources and Services

User category	Aware	Unaware	Use	Not use
All users (Staff & Student)	72.7 %	27.3 %	62.2 %	37.8 %

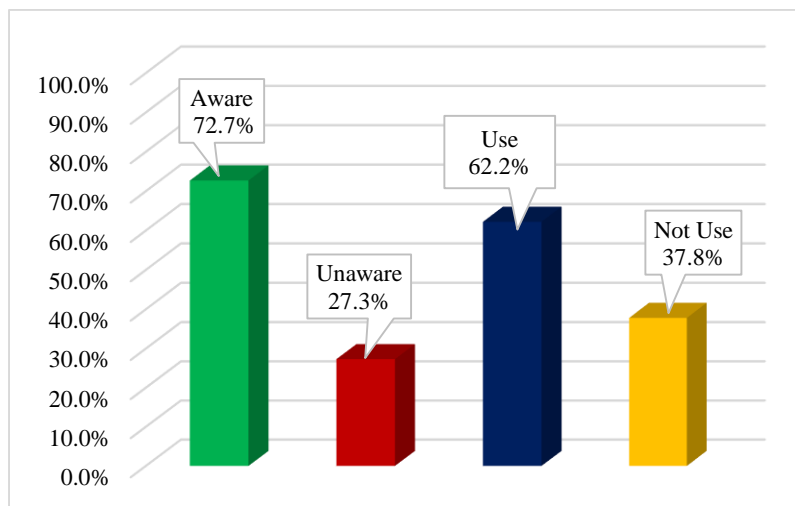


Figure 1: Awareness and Usage of E-Resources & Services

6.2. Individual Usage of E-Resources and Services by the Library Users

This question was set up to find out the use of e-resources and services given by the library. Figure 2 indicated the result of the usage of e-resources and services by the participants. Generally usage of e-resources and services by the library users of UVPA is poor. According to the result of this question the highest used resource was library website which is 62.7 %. Second heights was shown as the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) (60.9 %). Past examination paper downloading is shown as the third highest e-resources used by the library users which is 57.8 %. Repository and e-journal usage was fairly well which is 46 %, but not at a satisfactory level. E-mail services and Database usage were much lower compared to the others which are respectively 39.1 % and 34.9 %. According to the respondents FB chatting is the less willing e-service among the library users which is only 28.4 % out of 450 users.

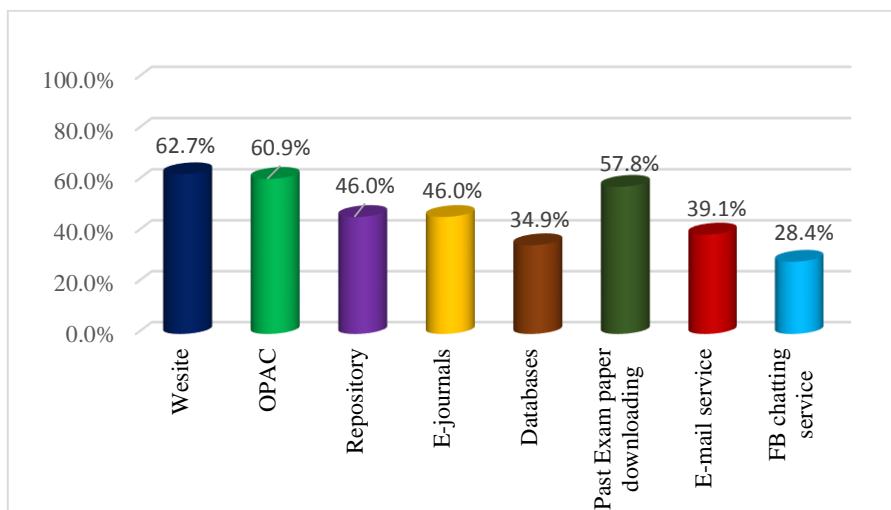


Figure 2: Individual Usage of E-Resources and Services by the Library Users

6.3. User Satisfaction and Usefulness of E-Resources & Services

Finally, the respondents were asked to state their perception towards the use of e-resources & services provided by the library, UVPA. This question was analyzed the user satisfaction and usefulness of the library. As shown in Figure 3, 62 % of users were satisfied the e-resources & services provided by the library. On the other hand usefulness of e-resources & services also shown as the same percentage. 38 % of respondents stated that they have neither satisfied nor useful with the e-resources & service. As user satisfaction which is shown in Figure 4 as 62 %.

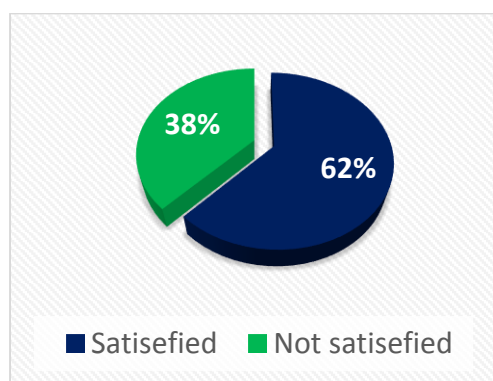


Figure 3: User Satisfaction

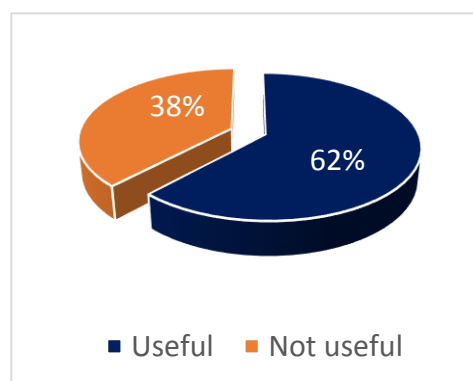


Figure 4: Usefulness

6.4. Purpose of Use of E-Resources and Services

The participants were asked to indicate the purpose of use of e-resources & services. Most of respondents (62.7 %) have been used the e-resources & services to get aware of information. More than half of the participants (56.9 %) were using the e-resources & services to enhance their subject knowledge. 44 % of respondents were used to prepare for the examinations. Although much e-resources usage should be required for the research work

and assignment writings, unfortunately it was indicated that significantly low respectively 34.9 % and 60.7 %. In addition, only 28.7 % of users used e-resources to prepare their lecture notes (Table 3).

Table 3: Purpose of Use of E-Resources and Services

Purpose	Percentage
To get aware of information	62.7 %
Enhance the subject knowledge	56.9 %
Prepare to face the examination	44 %
To do a research	34.9 %
To write an assignment	30.7 %
To improve lecture notes	28.7 %
Other	0 %

6.5. Issues and Challenges to use of E-Resources and Services

Table 4: Issues and Challenges to Use of E-Resources and Services

Barriers	Percentage
Lack of user education and user awareness programs	78 %
English language barriers	63.6 %
Lack of infrastructure facilities (Internet facility, Computers etc.)	48.2 %
Lack of IT skills and knowledge (For Searching, Browsing, Downloading, etc.)	44.7 %
Insufficient related electronic resources	39.1 %
Other	0 %

This question was observed that issues and challenges of using e-resources and services. Analyzing the obstacles that users faced, is very important to make the solutions to overcome those obstacles. This study was identified that the lack of user education and user awareness programs (78 %) were the major issues to use e-resources and services. On the other hand English language barriers (63.6 %), Lack of infrastructure facilities such as Internet facility, Computers etc. (48.2 %), Lack of IT skills and knowledge about Searching, Browsing, Downloading, etc. (44.7 %) and insufficient related electronic resources (39.1 %) were the other barriers to use of e-resources and services (Table 4).

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

No doubt that the perceptions of information resources and services of libraries in the world have been changed nowadays very significantly. One of the reasons for that the development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Library and Information Science. As a result, electronic resources and services have become major asset in the libraries than the printed resources. Further, e-resources and services have emerged as most powerful tool for retrieving information to teaching, learning and for researches, hence we can expect a drastic increase in this area in near future. Therefore, Library professionals should investigate the usage, Issues and challenges faced by the library users when using e-resources and services and remedies available to overcome these issues and challenges. According to the study the results have shown that most of the participants were aware and used e-resources and services. When compare the awareness with usage it has identified that usage of e-resources and services slightly low, even though the users are aware of them. The reasons for lower usage of e-resources and services mainly due to the lack of user education and user awareness programs, English language barriers and lack of infrastructure facilities in the library premises. The existing curricular, teaching and learning methods in UVPA seem to do not fully cater in to emerging e-resources and services under current infrastructure facilities. Therefore, this study is highly recommending that the continuous curriculum revisions are needed with more practical and hands-on sessions. Furthermore, library should play active role by commencing well-planned user awareness and user education programs, developing infrastructure facilities and subscribing more e-resources to the University.

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