

Utilization of Electronic Information Resources by Academic Staff members of University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJP) : with special reference to Faculty of Applied Sciences

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Abstract

Development in information technology paved the way for rapid growth of information directing to information explosion. A vast amount of information is available and increases in all disciplines in different formats especially in electronic format.

Though plenty of electronic information sources are available through Internet, getting relevant information according to the need requires skills on computers and awareness on sources and retrieval techniques. The research study examined the utilization of Electronic Information resources by the academic staff members of University of Sri Jayewardenepura. It also studied the academic staff awareness of the resources available, the use of different types of electronic information resources and the factors affecting resource utilization. The population consisted of permanent academic staff members of Faculty of Applied Sciences. A sample was selected using stratified random sampling technique. The sample size was 100. The study was both qualitative and quantitative making use of a questionnaire and interviews.

Findings reveal that majority of the respondents search for information through electronic resources frequently. Most of them are searching for journal articles through search engines and for freely available electronic books. Eighty five percent have indicated that they are using Internet access through Department computers. The major purposes indicated for searching were for teaching activities and for research purposes. Limited infrastructural facilities were indicated as the main barrier. Inadequate time, unawareness about appropriate sources and information overload difficulties were among the other barriers. Eighty percent of the respondents had not received any proper training on use of electronic resources. Sixty two percent have indicated that their ability in getting electronic information is adequate. But have pointed out that retrieving relevant information is not always successful. Majority of respondents were not aware about the availability of electronic information sources related to their subject discipline. Most of them have got awareness through personal searching and from colleagues.

Conducting workshops by the library on available information sources and retrieval techniques, providing full text documents and purchasing full text or bibliographic databases related to subject disciplines were among the suggestions. The study concludes that majority of academic staff members are using electronic information resources and if there is proper training and guidance from the library, the efficiency and effective use could be accomplished.

Key words : Electronic Information Resources ; Library utilization; Academic staff; Academic Libraries, Information Services

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