Full Length Research Paper

Quality awareness of online information resources: A study

Parashuram S. Kattimani

Central University of Karnataka, Gulbarga-585106 (Karnataka) India. E-mail: parashu.kattimani@gmail.com.

Internet and online resources provide access to a variety of information ranging from primary to tertiary sources. However, the authenticity and value of the online information mainly remains questionable. Therefore, quality awareness among the users is necessary for the value-added information and research. Moreover, accessibility, format, style, and arrangement of the online information resources are different from the conventional sources. Hence, users are expected to adopt different approach to access and use the online sources. This paper aims, is to study the online information seeking and using behaviour of the library users. The study reveals the quality consciousness regarding the online information resources among the library users who use the Internet.

Keywords: Internet, information seeking, online information, quality awareness and users approach.

INTRODUCTION

The advancement in the information and communication technologies (ICTs) introduced new dimensions in the generation, acquisition, organization, processing, and dissemination of the information in the virtual environment. ICTs help users in searching, accessing and using the information by crossing the barriers like time, distance, geography, size, and language. It brings information at the fingertips of information seekers. However, ICTs are not capable to evaluate the quality of the information accessible in the virtual environment.

Whereas, in a traditional environment, the quality of a document or a book can be judged using the standard criteria such as authority, scope, treatment, arrangement and special features (Kattimani and Kamble 2007). The nature of online information is different and varies with the application of ICTs. So, the standard criteria for evaluation of the traditional information sources can not be the only approach to judge the quality of information or a document available in the virtual environment. Hence, in addition to the standard criteria, some other factors are to be considered to evaluate the online information. It implies that users must question the online source of information before using it. In this case, the minimum criteria of evaluation are to verify the credibility, authority, reasonableness, supporting system, cost and copyright of online information (Jyothi and Satyanarayanya, 2001).

The Honeywell library has been established in the year 1992, its industry verticals are Aerospace, Automation,

Control solutions, specially materials and transportation systems. Presently library consists of 1200 users and six library professionals. Library resources like books, journals, back volumes, technical reports, standards, video cassetes, VCD/DVD's learning materials, about 500 online e-books and e-journals are subscribed to the users. Information services rendered to the users using Internet, databases subscribed to the users like J-Desk, Books 24x7IT pro, Ebrary, Harvard manage mentor, Web-OPAC and learning homepage (Honeywell website 2010).

Review of literature

The researcher in an effort to find out the existing literature on the present topic and its related areas has made through literature search published in Indian context pertaining to the study. (Ray and Nalvalkar (2009) discusses the role of the specialized corporate library in the comparative environment in system is market intelligent and needed this information in time in the library and information centre. It also endeavors to demonstrate the best practices followed under each perspective of the balanced scorecard so as to build would class "Knowledge centre" of excellent to achieve higher service levels leading to improved customer satisfaction.

They study Kattimani and Kamble (2008) deals with

Table 1. Purpose of using Internet (N = 80).

Sl. No	Purpose	No. of users	Ratio in Percentage
1	For the project	65	81.2
2	For the presentation	50	62.5
3	For the knowledge	45	56.2
4	For the learning	30	37.5
5	For the leisure	3	3.7

Table 2. Frequency of using Internet (N=80)

Sl. No	Duration per week	No. of users	Ratio in percentage
1	Less than 5 h	60	75
2	5 to 10 h	15	18.8
3	Greater than 10 h	5	6.3

Table 3. Users approach to information (N=80)

Sl. No.	Users approach to information	Order of preference				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Books (OPAC) and e-books	-	5	18	33	65
2	CD-ROMs	3	7	25	35	55
3	Journals and e-journals	5	3	22	41	68
4	Reports	2	4	26	40	70
5	Standards	-	-	31	48	72
6	Video Cassettes	3	5	10	39	25
7	VCDs and DVDs	1	10	30	35	29

1-Below average, 2-Average, 3-Good, 4-Very Good, 5-Excellent.

brief introduction about the software industry libraries in Karnataka. It also discusses the resources used in each IT industry and Gateway to knowledge resources and economically for any library professional and more so, when it comes to the digital resources. It provides data access to e-journal, e-books, CD-Rom database information resources at software industry under Internet and Intranet.

The new emerging technology like e-journals and e-books portal have played a marvelous role in acquisition and dissemination of full text information to ISD (Information Services Division) Wipro Technologies using this at minimal cost and rendering effective services to the its uses. Kattimani (2006) discusses the various facets and issues of e-journals and e-books in details.

Objectives of the study

(i) To understand the purposes of using the Internet by the library users.
(ii) To find out the frequency of using the Internet by the library users.

(iii) To study the library users approach to the Internet and online information resources.
(iv) To identify the preferred database(s) for searching by the users.
(v) To analyze the quality awareness among the users towards information resources and library services.

Assumption of the study

(i) The users of Internet at Information Technology (IT) companies are well aware of the quality of online information.
(ii) The users of libraries at Information Technology (IT) companies depend more on Internet resources than the traditional ones.

Limitation of the study

The present study is confined only in the library of Honeywell, Bangalore, India. The data for this research was collected from the administrative staff and supportive staff. The 80 respondents were among the library users who answered the queries.

METHODOLOGY

Keeping in view the above objectives in mind, a structured questionnaire was prepared to collect data from the users of Honeywell library. The questionnaire contains various questions pertaining to the awareness of online information resources. For this purpose a total of 100 questionnaires were distributed among Honeywell library users. Out of which 80 questionnaires were collected and then data were analyzed, tabulated, interpreted and presented in form of this paper.

Analysis of data

Table 1 shows the purpose of using Internet is for the project results yielded 65(81.2%). Similarly for the presentation purpose is about 50(62.5%) users are using Internet and followed by the knowledge purpose is about 45(56.2%) users are utilizing the Internet facility.

From the Table 2, it is clear that most of respondents that are 60(75%) are using internet for less than 5 h. It is followed by 15(18.8%) are using the Internet for 5 - 10 h and only 5(6.3%) of the library user are making use of Internet for more than 10 h. It implies that, the library users of the last category depends more on the traditional source of information.

Table 3 reveals that users approach to Internet information resources are in the order of good, very good and excellent to motivating factors that has enabled them to extend users approach towards mainly standards (31, 48 and 72%) users approach to information. Further, the users have satisfied by service rendered by the library for reports (26, 40 and 70%), users demand for journals and e-journals (21, 41 and 68%), users demand towards accessing the library OPAC and e-books (18, 33 and 65%).

Table 4 shows that, the majority of library users adopted search strategy for retrieving library resources. Simple search 55(69%) users adopted the search strategy for retrieving information and followed by 32(40%) users who adopted the advance search

Table 4. Search strategy (N = 80).

Sl. No	Search strategy	No. of users	Ratio in percentage
1	Simple search	55	69
	Advanced search	32	40
2	i. More relevant information	20	25
	ii. Advanced search option is given	12	15
	iii. Do not know	2	
3	Both	15	19

Table 5. Use of databases, catalogs, and homepages (N = 80).

Sl. No	Databases	No. of users	Ratio in percentage
1	J-Desk	35	44
2	Books24x7 ITPro	41	51.2
3	Books24x7 BusinessPro	28	35
4	Ebrary	45	56.3
5	Harvard ManageMentor	53	66.2
6	Web-OPAC	62	78
7	Library homepage	70	88
8	Any other	10	12

Table 6. Format for downloading information (N = 80).

Sl. No	Format	No. of users	Ratio in percentage
1	MS Word	15	19
2	PDF	63	79
3	HTML	55	69
4	PDF and HTML	10	12.5

strategy. 20(25%) respondent's users adopted the advanced search strategy for more relevant information.

Table 5 shows that, the library homepage is the most used resource to access the information at the Honeywell. Since, the library's website is a gateway to the information resources, therefore, the library users and the staffs access the online information through the library homepage. The customers use the library homepage 70(88%) followed by Web-OPAC 62(78%,) Harvard manage mentor 53(66.2%,) Ebrary 45(56.3%,) and Books24x7 ITPro 41 (51.2%.).

Table 6 elaborates that, users prefer to download the online information or a document in the Portable document format (PDF) 63(79%). The others choose Hypertext markup language (HTML) 55(69%) and MS Word 15(19%) respectively to download the online information resources.

Table 7 shows that, most of the users (81.2 %) at the Honeywell's library, matter with the quality of the information resources. However, personal websites (43.7%,) currency (50%,) and copyright (56.2%) are the three areas of the quality awareness where the users of the Honeywell's library need to focus.

Findings

Here are the findings of the study about the online information seeking and using behaviour at the Honeywell:

Table 7. Quality awareness parameters (N = 80).

	Nature of awareness	Yes	No
1	Website address	65(81.2)	15(18.7)
2	Author and title	40(50)	20(25)
3	WebOPAC	62(77.5)	18(22.5)
4	Personal websites	35(43.7)	45(56.2)
5	Client sites	50(62.5)	20(25)
6	Currency	40(50)	40(50)
7	Graphics and multimedia	56(70)	24(30)
8	Software	60(75)	20(25)
9	Copyright	45(56.2)	35(43.7)

(1) Majority of library users are using Internet for project work 65(81.2%). Similarly for the presentation purpose is about 50(62.5%) users are using Internet.

(2) 60(75%) are using internet for less than 5 h in a week to use the Internet and to access the online information.

(3) Users approach towards mainly on standards (31%, 48% and 72%).

(4) 55(69%) users are adopted the search strategy for retrieving information.

(5) Majority of library users are satisfied by access library homepage 70(88%) and followed by Web-OPAC 62(78%).

(6) Majority of library users comfortable in downloading the PDF format 63(79%).

(7) 65(81.2%) majority of the library users exposed to the quality awareness of the online information resources.

SUGGESTIONS

The role of the librarians is critical in creating the quality awareness of the online information resources among the staff of the Honeywell. Here are some suggestions based on the findings of this study:

(1) Formal library instruction (or user education) program for the new staff members will be instrumental in teaching the research skills and creating the quality awareness of the online information resources.

(2) Although, the simple search thorough any search engine for online research is a good approach, however, many users at the Honeywell's library are unaware of the potential of the advanced search. The librarian could teach the library users individually about the potential of the advanced searching in a search engines.

(3) There are certain databases, like J-Desk and Books24x7 BusinessPro, which are underused at the Honeywell's library. The on-the-site or online demonstrations by their vendors for the library users will be useful in maximizing the use of such databases.

(4) First, librarians should prove themselves eligible and then they could seek for the company's support.

(5) The awareness about the library services among the staff could be promoted by the e-mail alert system.

Conclusion

One of the major findings of the study revealed that about 65(81.2%) of the library users have quality awareness towards internet information resources. Further, it has been found that knowledge of library users towards various quality parameters such as websites, standards and WebOPAC are excellent. The enhancement in search strategy among the library users is critical to access the quality information resources.

The library is determined in providing the quality information to its community. The librarian is interested in the feedback from the users about the resources and services of the library. The evaluation of the library services helps in the modification of its practices in accordance with the needs of its customers. In future, most of the information resources will be accessible online, therefore, libraries need to adopt with the changes to avoid the isolation (Pangannaya and Kumar, 2000).

REFERENCES

http://www.honeywell.com/sites/htsl/ (Honeywell website) accessed on 2.2.2010

Jyothi M, Satyanarayanya NR (2001). "Uses of Internet in a University Library: a case study." ILA Bull. 37(4): 132-133.

Kattimani PS (2006). E-Journals and E-Books Portals: A Web Retrieval Tool for ISD Wipro Technologies. Conference proceedings 4th International convention CALIBER. Jointly organized Gulbarga University, Gulbarga and INFLIBNET. 2-4th February pp: 716-723.

Kattimani PS, Kamble VT (2007). Bannari Amman Institute of Technology. Tamil Nadu. Indian J. Inf. Sci. Serv. July-December 1(1): 1-2.

Kattimani PS, Kamble VT (2008). Software Industry Libraries in Karnataka: A Gateway to knowledge resources. Indian J. Inf. Lib. Soc. Cuttack, 121(3-4): 192-199.

Pangannaya NB, Kumar SC (2000). "Use of Internet by the Academic Community: a case study." DRTC Annual Seminar on "Electronic Sources of Information." DRTC, Bangalore. March 3 pp: 1-8.

Ray S, Walavalkar P (2009). Re-inventing the corporate library: A success story of best practices in TCS libraries. International conference proceedings "Shaping the future of special libraries: Beyond Boundaries"> Ane Books Pvt, Ltd. News Delhi. pp 517-523.