# A study on the use of e-journals by research scholars at GADVASU library, Ludhiana

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## Abstract

Research has been changed significantly over the past four decades. The changing patterns of the research reflect developments in the intellectual thought that have created new academic disciplines and areas of research. One of the consequences of these changes has been the broadening of the definition of information and sources useful to search. E-publication is the publication of any kind of information on any form of electronic media. E –journals have become major resource in scholarly research. E-journals are the simple electronic representation of journals. The present study is aimed to study the use of e-journals by the research scholars in the Central Library, Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (GADVASU), Ludhiana. It is intended to assess the, purpose for which they are used, amount of time spent in using them, problems in accessing e-journals, search methods used in accessing them, satisfaction with print and e-journals, adequacy of e-journals and training obtained in accessing them.

**Keywords:** E-Journals, Use of E-Journals, Open Access Journals, Web Based Journals, Online Resources, Veterinary University Libraries.

## Introduction

The University library has modern facility to collect, evaluate and organize information resources that adequately support the curricula of the colleges, the research programmes and the general informational needs of the university. The library is computerised and automated of its operations. The library allows open access to its collection and provides services to its users. The Campus Wide Local Area Network has been developed and a lease line of 100 Mbps with 24 hours connectivity provided under NKN Project. The State of art IT services have been used/utilised to provide a single point online access to various digital resources and other library services to its users.

The library provides access to about 3400 journals in the broad spectrum of Agricultural Sciences including Veterinary Sciences, Animal Husbandry, Livestock Management & Poultry Sciences, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Dairy Technology, Biotechnology, Animal Nutrition and allied subjects through the Consortium for electronic Resources in Agriculture (CeRA). Access has been provided to Krishi Prabha, a database of doctoral dissertations and theses submitted to Agricultural Universities in India.

In addition links have been given to various open access electronic information resources. The Library provides the facility of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) not only inside the library but throughout the campus vide intranet. Library has procured more than 20 e-books for the academic community of GADVASU. The university library has also subscribed to foreign journals, Indian journals and two databases (Veterinary Science Database and Indiastat.com).

## E-Journals

The phrase electronic journal or "e-journal" is used to denote a broader category of electronic publications that may or may not have a print counterpart.

## Definition

According to Harold's Librarian's Glossary it is a journal for which the full end product is available on optical disk, over a network or in any other electronic form, strictly a journal in which the entire process is carried out electronically. In other word, an electronic journal is one where writing, editing, refereeing and distribution of item are carried out electronically without paper intermediaries.

According to Lancaster "an e-journals are those journals which are available in electronic medium and is available only in this medium. In general a journal that is available in electronic form through online host is called e-journals."

### Scope of the study

The present study includes research fellows of GADVASU Library, Ludhiana. The main aim of the study was to assess the purpose, knowledge and frequency of using journals and problems faced by users.

## Methodology

A questionnaire was designed to gather primary data which was distributed among 100 research scholars. Out of which only 82 responses were received. The method used for data collection was based on Random Sampling technique. The investigator also had discussions with some users on various issues of journals to make the data and information more convincing and authentic.

## Review of Literature

The following are the major studies conducted on use of e-journals.

Nweke Ken studied the use of publications of zoology by the research scholars at Ibadan University. He found that though the scholars consulted wide range of publications, but mainly that of journals. Ken concluded that periodicals constitute the most important forms of publication than other reading materials.

Shukla and Mishra made a study to highlight the problems faced by the users in accessing e-resources and to examine their views on usefulness of e-resources compared to that of print resources, and the place from where they prefer to access information. Research scholars prefer e-resources against print resources because of their various good features for their research work and are looking in future to have more e-resources access within university campus with better Internet connectivity.

Madhusudhan conducted a study on the use of UGC-Info net e-journals by collecting data from 40 research scholars (Ph. D and M. Phil) and 28 students (M. L. I. Sc.) studying in the Department of Library and Information Science during the academic year 2006-2007 using a questionnaire. The study shows that e-journals perform an increasingly important role in research at Department of Library and Information Science.

Rani and Zainab in their study examine the users of electronic journals published in a hosting system called EJUM (Electronic Journal of the University of Malaya) and their perceived satisfaction with the electronic journals as well as their preferred features in electronic journals and problems they face when using the electronic journals. The Malaysian Journal of Computer Science (MJCS), Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science (MJLIS) and Journal of

Problem Based Learning (JPBL) are being hosted by EJUM. These three electronic journals constitute 3 out of an estimated 17 electronic journals published in Malaysia. Users seem to use the electronic journals to mainly support research and teaching needs.

About 50% of respondents rated the journals as 'good', 20.6% rated 'fair'. Keywords (28.9%) and title (24.3%) searches were chosen by a third of respondents respectively. The majority of respondents (70%) indicated preferring retrieving articles in PDF or HTML. About 41.8% of respondents access the electronic journals while making searches on Google or Yahoo. The next most selected option was 'from specific journal hosting system' (21.8%), followed by 'from my library web portal' and 'from citation links found in another resource'. Most respondents scan the abstracts first to check relevance and then download the articles. Most respondents believed that electronic journals will co-exist with print journals (46.2%). The rest believed that electronic journals will replace the print journals (25.5%)

or will supplement (25.5%). The list of functions and features preferred by electronic journal is provided.

Ali conducted a study to examine the use of electronic information services (EIS) among the users of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Library in Delhi, India. Both questionnaire and observational methods were used for data collection where 300 valid samples were collected. The analysis of data collected covers awareness of EIS services, use of e-journals, advanced search facilities, acquaintance with electronic information sources, the purpose of using e-information, problems faced by the users while using EIS, infrastructure facility available and satisfaction level of users. The study found that Boolean logic and truncation are the most often used search facilities by IIT users. Lack of printing facilities, terminals and trained staff are the major reasons that would discourage users from accessing the EIS. The survey also reveals that some 60 per cent of users face difficulties while browsing e-information.

Khan and Ahmad studied the level of awareness and use of e-journals by the research scholars of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and the Banaras Hindu University (BHU). Their survey reveals that most of the research scholars are aware of the availability of e-journals. The majority of research scholars have access to e-journals from their respective central libraries and computer centers. Most of the research scholar's use of e-journals for their study and research work, to update their knowledge and to write manuscripts and papers. The study reveals that 55.69% of research at AMU and 47.84% at BHU use e-journals daily. They fully agree that the usage of e-journals improves the quality of research work. It is however found that lack of training is the obstacle in proper and full utilization of e-journals.

## Objectives

The following are the specific objectives of the present study:

i) To study about the awareness of e-journals among the research scholars of GADVASU Library, Ludhiana.
ii) To find the purpose of using the e-journals by the research scholars.
iii) To study the users satisfaction pertaining to availability of e-journals.
iv) To study the most preferred form of journals in the library.
v) To study the problems faced by the research scholars in accessing e-journals.

## Analysis

**Age wise distribution of the respondents:**
**Table 1: Shows age wise distribution of the research scholars**

| Age in years | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 21-25 | 18 | 21.95% |
| 26-30 | 48 | 58.54% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 31-35 | 12 | 14.63% |
| More than 35 | 4 | 4.88% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

Table 1 above and pie chart below shows that 58.54% of the respondents belong to the age group of 26-30 years, followed by 21.95% lying in the age group of 21-25 years. 14.63% of the respondents are in the age group of 31-35 years and only 4.88% of the research scholars are in the age group of more than 35 years. It is quite clear that the majority of the respondents are young scholars.

**Frequency of use of E-journals:**
**Table 2: Depicts the frequency of use of e-journals by the research scholars**

| Frequency | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Daily | 12 | 14.63% |
| Twice a week | 14 | 17.07% |
| Weekly | 20 | 24.40% |
| Fortnightly | 11 | 13.41% |
| Once a month | 09 | 10.98% |
| When Needed | 16 | 19.51% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

From the above Table 2 it is clear that 14.63% of the research scholars use e-journals daily. 17.07% of use them twice a week. Majority of them 24.40% use e-journals weekly. 13.41% use the e-journals fornightly and only 10.98% use them onec a month and 19.51% of them use them as and when required by them.

**Form of catalogue used for searching E-journals:**
**Table 3: Shows the form of catalogue used for searching e-journals**

| Form of Catalogue used | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| OPAC | 82 | 100% |
| Card Catalogue | 00 | 0% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

The above table shows that 100% of the research scholars use Online Public Access Catalogue and none of the users consult card catalogue for using journals.

**Awareness about the availability of E-journals:**
**Table 4: Shows the awareness about the e-journals**

| Awareness | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 79 | 96.34% |
| No | 3 | 3.66% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

The above table shows that 96.34% of the research scholars are aware about the availability of the e-journals and only 3.66% of them are not aware about them.

**Sources providing information about E-journals:**
**Table 5: Different sources providing information about e-journals are**

| Sources | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Library Professionals | 20 | 24.40% |
| Teachers | 24 | 29.27% |
| Internet | 16 | 19.51% |
| Colleagues | 14 | 17.07% |
| Any Other | 08 | 9.75% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

It is quite clear from the Table 5 that the information about e-journals is available through many sources. The library professionals were able to provide information to 24.40% of the users. While 29.27% of their respective teachers share the information regarding e-journals. 19.51% of the research scholars are able to get this information from the internet. Only 17.07% of them consult their colleagues regarding the e-journals. A small number i.e. 9.75% of them get information from other sources like department notice boards, social networking sites etc.

**Place of Accessing the E-journals:**
**Table 6: shows the various places of accessing e-journals**

| Places | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Library | 41 | 50.00% |
| Department | 23 | 28.05% |
| At PAU Library | 10 | 12.20% |
| Any Other | 08 | 9.75% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

The above table shows that 50% of the research scholars consult the Library for accessing the e-journals. While 28.05% of them access these journals in their respective departments. Further 12.20% of them use the PAU* Library and only 9.75% of them use other places like veterinary clinics, their respective hostels etc. using their own laptops and other gadgets.
* *PAU and GADVASU share same Campus.*
**Most Preferred format of E-journal:**
**Table 7: Shows the most preferred format of the e-journals**

| Format | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| PDF | 39 | 47.56% |
| HTML | 14 | 17.07% |
| Print Copy | 29 | 35.37% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

It can be understood from eh Table 7 above that 47.56% of the research scholars prefer PDF format of e-journals. Only 17.07% of the users use HTML format

and 35.37% of them prefer them along with their print form.

**Access points for searching the articles:**
**Table 8: Shows the various access points for searching the articles**

| Searched By | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Author | 32 | 39.02% |
| Title | 14 | 17.07% |
| Subject Heading | 20 | 24.40% |
| Keywords | 16 | 19.51% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

It can be seen from the above Table 8 that the users have different approaches for searching the articles in the e-journals. 39.02% of them use author approach for searching, 17.07% use title approach. 24.40% like searching with the help of subject headings and 19.51% search with the help of key words. The author approach is most popular among the research scholars.

**Awareness about E-Journal Consortium:**
**Table 9: Shows the awareness about the e-journal consortium**

| Awareness | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 75 | 91.46% |
| No | 07 | 8.54% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

The Table 9 indicates that 91.46% of the research scholars are aware about the e-journals consortium i.e. CeRA(Consortium for e-resources in agriculture) and only 8.54% are not aware about it.

**Purpose of using e-journals:**
**Table 10: Shows the purpose of using e-journals**

| Purpose | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Writing Papers | 22 | 26.83% |
| Projects | 06 | 7.32% |
| Notes | 12 | 14.63% |
| Research Work | 31 | 37.81% |
| Seminars | 09 | 10.97% |
| Any Other | 02 | 2.44% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

It is quite evident from the Table 10 that 26.83% of the research scholars use e-journals for writing papers. Only 7.32% of them use them for project work. 14.63% use them for preparing their notes. Majority of them 37.815 use them for their research work. 10.975% use them for preparing their seminars and only 2.44% use them for other purposes.

**Satisfaction level regarding Infrastructure facilities for E-journals:**
**Table 11: Shows the satisfaction level regarding infrastructure facilities**

| Frequency | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Fully satisfied | 30 | 36.59% |
| Partially satisfied | 40 | 48.78% |
| Unsatisfied | 12 | 14.63% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

The above tabulated data clearly indicates that 36.59% of research scholars are fully satisfied with infrastructural facilities available to them in the library. However, the majority of them 48.78% are partially satisfied with the infrastructure available to them and only 14.63% are not satisfied with the e-journals facility.

**Problems faced in using E-journals:**
**Table 12: Shows the problems faced in using the e-journals**

| Problems | Research Scholars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of Training | 20 | 24.40% |
| Ease of using | 14 | 17.07% |
| Slow speed | 28 | 34.15% |
| Unorganized | 11 | 13.41% |
| Hardware & Software | 09 | 10.97% |
| Total | 82 | 100% |

The data in above Table 12 reveals that 24.40% research scholars felt the need of proper training for using the e-journals. 17.07% find it difficult to use for their respective purposes. Slow speed of accessing the information is also the concern of 34.15% of the research scholars. 13.41% of them, feel that the e-journals are not organized. The latest hardware and software is also one of the requisites of providing flawless accessibility to e-journals which was led to the conclusion that only 10.97% of the users are satisfied with the present level of set up of the library as far as accessibility of e-journals is concerned.

## Findings of the study
The study arrived on the following findings based on the results from the analysis of the data gathered:
i)   The Research Scholars are fully aware about the availability of the e-journals in the library.
ii)  The Library was found to be the clear choice for the accessibility of the e-journals.
iii) The Library professionals and Internet were revealed as the chief source for information about the e-journals.
iv)  PDF format was found to be the most preferred format for reading the e-journals.

v) Majority of the research scholars are aware about the e-journals consortium for accessing the e-journals.

vi) The study has revealed that majority of the research scholars access the e-journals using author approach. Further most of them are satisfied with the infrastructure available to them. The slow speed of the internet has been the main problematic concern for accessing the e-journals.

vii) The majority of the research scholars use the e-journals for their research work.

## Suggestions

Based on the results and opinions of the respondents, the present study suggests the following:

i) To provide the e-journals service effectively and efficiently, more number of access terminals should be installed in the Library and other departments.

ii) To save the precious time of the users high speed internet connection should be provided.

iii) Need for more trained and skilled staff, having awareness of the functioning of the both software and hardware, who can help the users in areas like accessing, downloading and proper utilization of e-journal resources.

iv) In order to improve the efficiency of the users towards access to electronic journals, the library should provide hand on experience and conduct user orientation programmes for the library users at the start of every academic session.

v) Proper feedback system should be introduced to know about the various problems faced by the research scholars to solve them effectively.

vi) More number of the e-journals should be subscribed by the library in the fields of specialization, where only small number of e-journals are being subscribed.

vii) An adequate number of the research scholars suggested that necessary arrangements should be made to access the full text of more e-journals.

## Conclusion

The present study sought to examine the use of e-journals by the research scholars and the result shows that most of the objectives have been met satisfactorily. The study reveals that majority of research scholars are aware of the e-journals. It has been found that majority of research scholars access the e-journals in the library. Using of the e-journals for research purpose in their area of the study has been one of the most important aspect of the study. Unorganized, lack of training, speed to access have been major problems faced by the research scholars, whereas most of them are satisfied with the facilities available to them. However, majority of them feel that the user training will be of great use for increasing the usage of e-journals among the users in the library.

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