Use of Web Search Tools by Graduate Students & Scholars of Alagappa Institute of Management (AIMs), Alagappa University: A Study

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Abstract

This paper is to know how the graduate students and Scholars of AIMs applied their Information Retrieval (IR) skills in accessing electronic resources.The research method was descriptive survey method was adopted in this study. The data were collected from the 79.35% of entire graduate students and research scholars in Alagappa Institute of Management through a well structured questionnaire. Almost 90% of the students came from the rural areas where the university was established to increasing the literacy level of rural based students.

Keywords

Graduate Students; Rural Areas; Web Tools; Search Engine; Searching Techniques.

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INTRODUCTION

In order to access the available resources the users need the information retrieving skill, it refer to the skills which is needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use the information which are available in the electronic version. An electronic resource is to ensure permanent access to library collections in various formats. Information retrieval skills will facilitate the users to locate, evaluate and use information effectively and ethically. Information retrieval is the activity of obtaining information resources relevant to an information need from a collection of information resources. Searches can be based on metadata or on full-text (or other content-based) indexing. Many universities and public libraries use IR systems to provide access to books, journals and other documents. Web search engines are the most visible IR applications.[1]

Search Engines are very powerful tools to locate and retrieve the information available on the internet. A search engine is a collection of software programs that collect information from the Web, index it, and put it in a database so it can be searched. Search Engine is an automated keyword searching tool, it uses a piece of software, usually known as a 'spider' or 'crawler' to gather the information from web and other servers and generate indexes. Search engine crawl the networks continuously to update their databases.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study mainly focused on information search skills among post graduate students and research scholars in Alagappa Institute of Management. The study aspires to measure the graduate students and research scholars' use and awareness of searching the information on web tools, techniques and resources.

- To know the purpose of searching the information using the web tools.
- To identify the information skills of the respondents in searching and accessing the web.

HYPOTHESIS

- There is no significant difference between age group of respondents and type of web tools
- There is no significant difference between qualification of respondents and type of search engines used.

- There is no significant difference between gender of respondents and type of search engines used.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Thanuskodi (2013) [2] conducted a survey in Tuticorin district which indicated that more than 50% of the students acquired their internet skill through training from the college. The results indicated that majority of students used Internet weekly (56.53%). The study also found that most of the respondents (73.91%) use internet for literature search. Jato and Oresiri (2013) [3] recommended that students should be enlightened on the importance of online resource for their academic success to propel them to use search engines often; and to use a lot of search engines available on the net to retrieve vital information. Shiv Kumar (2012) [4] conducted a study which revealed that most of the postgraduates (95.5 per cent) belonging to rural areas were computer literate. Further, most of them had accessed the web for communication purposes and for locating general and academic information. Users at the postgraduate level does not significantly affect the use of computer and internet, information searching behaviour patterns on the web and library systems, especially OPAC. Tsai et. al., (2012) [5] suggested that educators need to pay more attention in helping students to develop online search strategies for academic activities. In addition, only female students' metacognitive strategies were significantly different from search contexts. There may be an effect of the interaction between search context and gender on students' online searching strategies. Arman and Shariful (2012) [6] concluded that essential training in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be arranged in schools and colleges as well as in public libraries, especially for the women of rural area so that they can get access to quick and accurate information regarding every aspect of their daily lives. Dutta (2009) [7] revealed that weak economy has a profound effect on the availability and accessibility of resources, the information and communication divide is not defined as much by the economic status of a geographic location as it is by an individual user's educational background.

DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questions were prepared in a very simple language so that the respondents could understand easily and could fill up them within 5 minutes. The Alagappa Institute of Management (AIMS), Alagappa University, Karaikudi have been selected for population area. The total population comprises of 165 respondents in Post Graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D has been taken for the study. The AIMS itself include General Management and a newly started Logistics Management. The random sampling method was selected and adopted well for this study. The well structured questionnaire distributed for collecting the data out of which 131 were collected duly filled with the response of 79.35%.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

After data collection and information gained from respondents regarding the topic, the examiner examine the recorded information manually and also on computer and presented it in a systematic manner with the help of tables, charts, etc. to interpret the data.

Table 1: Demographic data about respondents

Sl. No	Particulars	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total No. of questionnaire taken (%)
1	Ph.D	2 (1.5)	8 (6.1)	10 (7.6)
2	M.Phil	3 (2.3)	2 (1.5)	5 (3.8)
3	1 MBA (1st Year)	36 (27.5)	15 (11.5)	51 (38.9)
4	2 MBA (2nd Year)	35 (26.7)	7 (5.3)	42 (32.1)
5	1 MBA Logistic (1st Year)	10 (7.6)	13 (9.9)	23 (17.6)
Total		86 (65.6)	45 (34.4)	131 (100.0)

Source : Primary Data

The total population of the AIMS is 165 as per data. Out of 165, 131 questionnaires were collected for this study. Almost 66% of female and 44% of male have been taken for sampling. The questionnaire are well responded by the respondents and be verified by the researcher.

Table 2: Age wise respondents for the study

Sl. No	Age	Respondents	Percent (%)
1	21-25	116	88.5
2	26-30	12	9.2
3	>30	3	2.3
Total		**131**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data

The above table 2 reveals the age wise respondent has been taken for the sampling. The majority of the respondents were in the age group of 21-25.

Table 3: Respondents' internet browsing

S.No	Browsing starts with	Male	Female	%
1	Websites	11	7	13.7
2	Search engine	34	79	86.3
Total		**45**	**86**	**100.0**

Source : Primary Data

The table 3 implies that 86.3 percent of the respondents are browsing the internet by using web search engine. Web search engines are the essential tools in the mission to locate online information for many people.

Table 4: Hours Spent on Web Search Engine

Sl. No	Daily Hours Spent on Web Search Engines	Age of the respondents			Total (%)
		21-25 (%)	26-30 (%)	>30 (%)	
1	<1 hours	46 (35.1)	6 (4.6)	2 (1.5)	54 (41.2)
2	1-2 hours	59 (45.0)	2 (1.5)	0	61 (46.6)
3	>3 hours	10 (7.6)	1 (0.8)	0	11 (8.4)
4	rarely used	1 (0.8)	3 (2.3)	1 (0.8)	5 (3.8)
Total		**116 (88.5)**	**12 (9.2)**	**3 (2.3)**	**131 (100)**

The table 4 reveals that the most of the respondents' (84.7%) lies in the age group between 21-25 spend more time on web search engines. Out of 111 respondents 56 were spending 1-2hours and 45 were spending less than 1 hour. This indicates that the age group of 21-25 has spending large amount of time on using web search engine.

Table 5: Purpose of using Search Engine

Sl.No.	Purpose of using Web Search Engines	Male (%)	Female (%)	Percent (%)
1	Seeking social information	11 (8.4)	19 (14.5)	30 (22.9)
2	Academic Purpose	13 (9.9)	41 (31.3)	54 (41.2)
3	Know job opportunities	6 (4.6)	3 (2.3)	9 (6.9)
4	For Shopping	7 (5.3)	9 (6.9)	16 (12.2)
5	Find entertainment	8 (6.1)	14 (10.7)	22 (16.8)
	Total	**45 (34.4)**	**86 (65.6)**	**131 (100.0)**

The table 5 indicates the respondent's purpose of using the web search engines. It is found that the most of the respondents are using the search engine for academic purpose followed by seeking social information, entertainment… etc. The reason for choosing academic purpose is to find the academic information. The search engines fulfil all required information need by the respondents.

Table 6: Number of Link Pages opened to get the required information

S. No	Number of Link Pages opened	No. of Respondents	%
1	<2pages	48	36.6
2	<5pages	39	29.8
3	<7pages	32	24.4
4	<10pages	7	5.3
5	>10pages	5	3.8
Total		**131**	**100.0**

Source : Primary Data

The table 6 illustrates to know the number of link pages opened by the respondents to get the right information on the search engines. It is found that most of the respondents (36.6%) get the needed information within two pages followed by 5 pages (29.8) and 7 pages (24.4). Most popular search engine such as Google, Yahoo… etc gives the relevant information at few link pages opened on the internet.

Table 7: Age and Type of Web Tools used

Age	Types of Web Tools				Total	χ^2 = 14.56 df = 6 = 12.59 (at 0.05 level)
	Search Engine	Directories	Websites	Database		
21-25	73(69.07)	8(10.63)	23(21.25)	12(15.05)	**111**	
26-30	4(7.15)	3(1.10)	1(2.20)	4(1.56)	**12**	
>30	1(1.79)	1(0.27)	0	1(0.39)	**3**	
Total	**78**	**12**	**24**	**17**	**131**	

Source: Primary Data

Calculated value χ^2 = $\sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$

The above table 7 shows the chi-square value when calculated is 14.56, degree of freedom = 6 and its table value is 12.59 at 0.05 levels which are less than 14.56. Hence it can be said that there is significant difference between age group of respondents and type of web tools used. The respondents in the age group 21-25 use web tools more than that of others

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Table 8: Types of Search Engine Used

Year	*Types of Search Engine*				*Total*	χ^2 = 28.77 df = 9 = 16.9 (at 0.05 level)
	Google	Yahoo	AltaVista	Others		
MBA I	59(48.58)	10(18.08)	4(6.21)	1(1.13)	**74**	
MBA II	21(27.57)	18(10.26)	3(3.53)	0(0.64)	**42**	
M.Phil	2(3.28)	1(1.22)	2(0.42)	0(0.08)	**5**	
Ph.D	4(6.56)	3(2.44)	2(0.84)	1(0.15)	**10**	
Total	**86**	**32**	**11**	**2**	**131**	

Source: Primary Data

The chi-square value when calculated is 28.77, degree of freedom = 9 and its table value is 16.9 at 0.05 levels which is less than 28.77. Hence it can be said that there is a significant difference between qualification of respondents and type of search engines used.

Google is found to be the most popular search engine for the (65%) respondents. They use the Google search engines for the purpose of searching information. The Table 8 indicates that "Yahoo" is also used by them, its frequency of use being 24.4 percent. Use of other such search engines by the respondents is found to be relatively low and even below the required.

Table 9: Searching Techniques and Strategies

Searching technique and strategies	Gender		Total	χ^2 = 5.96 df = 4 = 9.5 (at 0.05 level)
	Male	Female		
Simple keywords	28(25.06)	39(41.94)	67	
Boolean operators	11(16.08)	32(26.92)	43	
Truncation	4(2.62)	3(4.38)	7	
Field Search	5(4.86)	8(8.14)	13	
Others specify	1(0.37)	0(0.63)	1	
Total	**49**	**82**	**131**	

Source: Primary Data

The study concludes that the value of Chi square 5.96 is less than the table value of 9.5 at 0.05 levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. The chi-square value when calculated is 5.96, degree of freedom = 4 and its table value is 9.5 at 0.05 level which is greater than 28.77. Hence it can be said that there is no significant difference between gender of respondents and type of search engines used. The above table indicates that most of the respondents use simple keywords for searching the relevant information.

Table 10: Satisfaction Level about Web Search Engine

Sl.No.	Satisfaction Level about Web Search Engine	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Total
1	Ph.D	1	3	4	2	**10**
2	M.Phil	0	0	4	1	**5**
3	MBA (1st yr)	3	12	9	28	**52**
4	MBA (2nd yr)	1	2	5	33	**41**
5	MBA Logistic (1st yr)	0	0	3	20	**23**
	Total	**5**	**17**	**25**	**84**	**131**

Source : Primary Data

The table 10 depicts the respondents' satisfaction level about the search engine. None of the respondents was not mentioned dissatisfied about the performance of search engine. Most of the respondents (64.12%) have marked satisfied because the search engine is the favourite tool to find the information on the internet.

CONCLUSION

Search engines are in widely used web tools by the students and scholars in the university to searching the information. Almost 90 percent of the respondents are start browsing with search engines and spent more than one hour in a day on using search engines for the purpose of finding academic information. Most of the search engine users are in lying in the age group of 21-25. The respondents opened at least two link pages on the search engines results to get the needed information. The use of search engines is significantly increased by day to day. There is no major difference between the age and gender of respondents and type of web search engines used.

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