ACCESS AND RETRIEVAL OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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Abstract - The study aimed to evaluate the access and retrieval of electronic resources of Academic Libraries in Cebu City. Specifically, the study sought to identify the available electronic resources, the purpose of the library users in using the electronic resources, and the problems encountered by the users. This study employed the descriptive method of research. This method designed to gather factual and evidence-based information on the utilization of the electronic resources. Furthermore, the researcher used the observation approach to identify the problems encountered by the users. This study revealed that there are two electronic journals subscribed by the university library namely, InfoTrac Custom 100 and Educator's Reference Complete. Furthermore, it was found out that the purpose of the users in using electronic resources was for education, research, and projects. However, the problems encountered by the users were the internet connection is very slow, electricity dependent, it takes time to view or download the information, overload of information on the internet, difficulty in finding relevant information, and lack of knowledge or need assistance. The advancement of the available ICT facilities in the university library, utilization of electronic resources will be improved. The primary contributing factor in the library operation is the provision of fast delivery of library services, quick access and retrieval of electronic resources, and immediate demand from the library users. The university library in the 21st century knowledge management is the ideal learning environment of the modern library users. In the world of technology, library users have sufficient discovery of new knowledge using technological advancement and development of the global perspective.

Keywords: *Access and retrieval, evaluation, electronic resources, academic libraries, information and communication technology, and problems encountered*

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is created by far-reaching transforms in information and communication technologies (ICTs). The surfacing and utilizing of ICT is a good number affecting scholarly information. The purpose of computers to information processing has brought numerous services to the academic libraries (Egberongbe, 2011). Consequently, Sharma (2009) presented that the academe has undergone remarkable changes, presumptuous new scope persuaded by technology-driven applications. Academic Libraries comprised a great transformation of collection development and service structures. Thus academic libraries utilized ICT to develop the quick access and retrieval of scholarly information. Furthermore, the significant transformation has been observed in resources development policies and practices. Print resources are progressively more giving way to the electronic form of resources. Tsakonas and Papatheodorou (2006), emphasized the evolution from print to electronic resources consequential in a growth of electronic information, has provided library users with innovative tools and applications for access and retrieval of information.

Moreover, electronic resources are valuable research tools in the 21st century knowledge management, thus, Academic Library provided electronic resources to their users. The library acquired and subscribed electronic journals for accessibility, easily searchable, interactive, added value, inexpensive, and flexibility for the part of the library users. It can be accessed in the library any time and each journal article can be searched quickly the full text

via online index. Electronic resources can be read, marked by the readers, modified quickly and better response thru the web, advantages on the web, virtual reality and interactive features (Library of Congress, 2008).

The advantages of electronic resources to the library user in the 21st century provides quick access and retrieval of information needed. In the same manner, Dadzie (2007) revealed that access and retrieval to information may controlled to the library user due to economic capacity of the university and access to recent and up-to-date information, and condition of far-reaching links to added resources to associated contents. Academic Libraries are using ICT for providing quality services and fulfilling the needs of a diverse library patron. Libraries will be transformed into paperless libraries where books, journals, and magazines have changed into e-books, e-journals, and e-zines. The global dissemination of information is increased. Electronic resources are easily accessed and retrieved in remote areas. It also saves the space of the library and minimizes the bulk of printed resources.

The advancement of open access systems increases the density and variety of electronic resources because the escalation of resources requires the involvement of ICT. While the important amount of research information is illustrious on commercial electronic resources. The networked environment has enabled the use of libraries that is increasingly free of time and site constraints. The rise of remote access and retrieval to information increases in an academic library's obligation to realign its resources and services to meet the needs of its user wherever they are located. The library and information services environment has witnessed great changes in 1990's as calculating the telecommunications quickly sophisticated and developed. The library card catalogs and information reference tools were the first to shift online, full-text documents and multimedia resources followed them soon on institutional intranet and internet (IFLA, 2012). Moreover, the electronic and virtual revolution has altered the traditional quiet world of libraries. Open to contest is the exact structure and position we can expect for academic libraries in the beginning of the new millennium (Wood and Walter, 2000).

 According to Dhanavandan and Tamizhchelvan (2012) that electronic resource requires computer monitors to access and retrieve any electronic product that delivers information, be it full text, electronic journals, multimedia products, graphical based, commercially available with an aim to being marketed. It creates innovative opportunities for the organizations of services, sustaining to cooperative preparations in developing the library resources. In the same manner, Agaba (2005) dealt that the transformation from printed resources to electronic resources should guide to quality services. Access and retrieval to diversity of electronic resources including indexes, full-text articles and the entire content of the books and journals offer a solution to some problems of academic libraries: to save the space of the library, provide fast access to information needs and provide technological advancement to users.

However, a huge number of research studies have been conducted on the utilization of electronic resources. Shuling (2007) found out that 80% of the library users had a little knowledge about electronic resources and almost 50% of the respondents utilized it. On the other hand, Ali (2005) highlighted that 95% of library users were already aware that the library provided electronic resources. Furthermore, Rehman and Ramzy (2004) showed that libraries are comprehensively used for research needs, preparation of lectures and for attaining recent information and awareness in using of electronic resources.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to evaluate the access and retrieval of electronic resources of the faculty and staff, and students of Academic Libraries in Cebu City. Specifically, the study sought to identify the available electronic resources, the purpose of the library users in using the electronic resources, and the problems encountered by the users.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study employed the descriptive method of research, specifically the documentary analysis type in consulting the available records in the library. These records are the daily statistical records on the access and retrieval of electronic resources, and monthly statistical records generated from the databases. This method designed to gather factual and evidence-based information on the utilization of the electronic resources. Documentary analysis is an investigation of a work in a visual presentation focus in a factual and informative manner.

Furthermore, the researcher used the observation approach to identify the problems encountered by the users. The researcher observed forty (40) students who utilized the electronic resources in the electronic library (e-

lib) of Academic Libraries. Recorded their comments, complaints, problems encountered pertaining to electronic resources access and retrieval. In the same manner, the researcher also observed twenty (20) faculty and staff members who utilized the electronic resources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Academic Libraries subscribes the following electronic resources namely: InfoTrac Custom 100 and Educator's Reference Complete. Results showed the available electronic resources with the corresponding number of titles of periodicals per electronic resource. The Academic Libraries dealt that there were only two electronic resources subscribe as of January 2012. InfoTrac Custom 100 had 100 titles of periodicals and Educator's Reference Complete had more than 1,100 titles of journals. The data revealed that the aforementioned resources were the most suited and needed by the researchers. This was due to the fact that the university offers only Nursing, Education, and Arts and Sciences programs for both undergraduate and graduate studies.

This was confirmed that InfoTrac Custom 100 is a service which offers the Academic Libraries for faculty and staff, students and researchers' access to a suite databases from Thomson Gale. Moreover, InfoTrac Custom databases are collections of informative, up-to-date articles, all on one easy-to-use resources. It gives the freedom to choose only those journals needed and suited as well as customize the resource's search interface and functionality. The Academic Libraries chose InfoTrac Custom 100. Furthermore, InfoTrac is a one-stop source of information on news and journal articles in a wide scope of subject areas. These are Nursing and Arts and Sciences in consortium with two University Libraries.

This was also confirmed that Educator's Reference Complete is a wide-ranging resource for teachers and aspiring educators. Teachers, administrators and undergraduate or graduate students in the field of education, and in-depth information resources are available. In the same manner, this ample resource covers numerous stages of the scope on education and approximately every educational specialty is included. Moreover, this also comprises of information on issues related to administration, funding and policies in education.

The purpose of the library users in using electronic resources classified into three areas namely: education, research, and projects. In the area of education, it also specifies into different purposes as to lectures and teaching, report, and assignments. Research also specifies into different purposes as to study and update knowledge. The data revealed that the purpose of faculty in using electronic resources identified 20 or 100% of the faculty for education, 15 or 75% for research, and 10 or 50% for projects. This was due to the fact that faculty should also update their knowledge with the current trends and issues of education not only in the Philippine settings but also in the global perspective.

The data dealt that the purpose of the student in using electronic resources 100% were education, 75% for research, and 50% of them for projects and others. This was confirmed with the observation of the researcher that students showed their willingness to learn new things and discover new knowledge and ideas with the use of technological advancement.

The problems encountered by the users in using electronic resources for faculty and staff were 100% for the internet connection is very low, 90% electricity dependent, 75% it takes time to view or download the information, 70% overload of information, 60% difficulty in finding relevant information, and 40% lack of knowledge or need assistance. This was due to the fact that during the hands-on training on how to use the electronic resources only 60% of the faculty and staff attended. This was also confirmed by Rehman and Ramzy (2004) that libraries are comprehensively used for research needs, preparation of lectures and for attaining up to date knowledge by the use of electronic resources.

The data revealed that the students were encountered the following difficulty in using the electronic resources. 80% the internet connection is very slow, 75% electricity dependent, 70% it takes time to view or download the information, 55% overload of information on the internet, 50% difficulty in finding relevant information, and 42.5% lack of knowledge or need assistance. This was supported by Shuling (2007) that 80% of the library users had a little knowledge about electronic resources.

CONCLUSION

The advancement of the available ICT facilities in the academic libraries, utilization of electronic resources will be improved. The primary contributing factor in the library operation is the provision of fast delivery of library services, quick access and retrieval of electronic resources, and immediate demand from the library users. The academic libraries in the 21st century knowledge management is the ideal learning environment of the modern library users. In the world of technology, library users have sufficient discovery of new knowledge using technological advancement and development of the global perspective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For providing better and quality services, the following recommendations are deemed necessary: upgrade the internet connections and acquire adequate load of internet server; acquire new computer units with adequate capacity of information; and further studies on impact of electronic resources to library patrons.

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