

BEYOND THE TRADITION: AN OVERVIEW OF E-INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF ACADEMIC STAFF OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA

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The main objective of this study is to examine the E-information seeking behavior of academic staff of Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya. The survey was carried out in year 2011 and the research sample comprised of 144 of permanent academic staff members (Senior Professor to Probationary Lecturer) attached to the seventeen academic departments of the faculty. A self-administered questionnaire comprised with closed and open ended questions was distributed among all respondents while 97 of duly filled questionnaires were received recoding a response rate of 67.36%. The study investigated the extent to which these respondents make use of the electronic information resources provided by the library of University of Peradeniya, and the information they gathered on their own through the Internet. Furthermore, it was attempted to examine the reasons and drawbacks, if these resources are underutilized as well as the problems and issues encountered by the academics in using these resources provided by the library. Results show that, the majority (79%) of the respondents preferred using E-journals whereas the balance (21%) expressed that they have no idea about e-journals. In order to getting awareness of the existing resources, most of the academics (42.3) were made aware of the e-resources through library brochures and leaflets ,another 40.2% of respondents were made aware by the library network webpage while 31% of the respondents were made aware by the library staff and 19.6% of respondents were made aware by their colleagues. About the frequency of using E-journals, 54.6% expressed that they use E-journals 'Sometimes' while 18.6% stated that they use it 'Frequently', and 16 % said that they 'Rarely' use e-journals. Only 10% of respondents expressed that they had 'Never' use E-journals /Online Databases. A significant number of respondents (71%) expressed that they mainly use E-journals and Online Databases for the purpose of 'updating their knowledge' whereas another significant number of respondents (68%) used e-journals as teaching resources and also for the benefit of ongoing research projects (45%).

The Internet is being used by the respondents mainly for two purposes; scholarly communication and recreational activities. Accordingly, majority of respondents (98 %) used Internet for scholarly communication. Under this, they vastly used Internet for sending and receiving emails. With regard to access of E-Information services available at the Library Network webpage, the study revealed that OPAC (62%) and Current Awareness Service (New Arrivals) are commonly used by the respondents (61%). Online reference tools which are available on the web are also widely used by the respondents (85%). The findings proved that the Arts academics underutilize the E-resources and services due to lack of awareness. Therefore it is recommended that the E-information resources and services provided by the library are promoted more effectively among the Arts academics.