Information Needs & Information Seeking Behaviour of Students of Administration Institutions in National Capital Region of Delhi

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ABSTRACT

Information seeking behaviour is an essential component in the designing and developing of need based information centers for meeting the information requirements of users. The study reports the most important aspects of Information seeking behaviour of the students, for whom the library and information centers are being maintained. It deals with the libraries of Administration institutions in National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi.

KEY WORDS: Information seeking behaviour

INTRODUCTION:

The study was undertaken to determine the information seeking behaviour of students of Administration institutions in the NCR of Delhi. Information seeking behavior is one of the important areas in user studies. The motives of users give rise to information needs and requirements. To quench the thirst for information, users adopt numerous ways and means to access various channels of communication of information. Information explosion has paved the way to seek information in increasing variety and diversity at different levels, frequency, volume and use. This situation appears to be ambiguous and heterogeneous in character so that information needs of a particular group of users and information flow from a specific situation / organization are different to determine. The present era is the era of information and knowledge revolution. The increase in information available on the Web has greatly affected information seeking behavior. In Wilson's (1981, 1997) models, information-Seeking behaviour stems from a perceived need for information by the user. In response to this need, the user will place demands on the information system (e.g. library or database) and on other sources of information (e.g. textbook, lecturer, handouts and suchlike). Information needs do not operate in a vacuum but in particular context. The context includes the person (physiological, the effective and cognitive states), the role (the student) and his or her environment. Very few studies draw a distinction between undergraduate users in different years of their studies in a particular discipline. A questionnaire was designed in an effort to understand how students are responding to the changing methods of information dissemination and to enable attention and resources to be directed and targeted where possible to meet those needs.

THEORIES OF INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR:

The concept of information needs has been coined by an American information scientist Robert Taylor in 1962 and is beautifully discussed in his work entitled 'The process of asking questions' published in the Journal of American Society of Information Science (JASIS) now know as Journal of American Society of Information Science and Technology (JASIST). Menzel interprets the results of several recent studies of the total information seeking activity of scientists and technologists in terms of complementary relationship between an extremely flexible and many-sided interpersonal communication system, on the one hand, and a formal communication system, on the other hand. The formal system is able to compete with the informal

system with respect to only a few of the many information needs of the individual. Among the information needs identified are: 'promptness of acquisition of certain information, selective dissemination of communications, screening and evaluation of communications, indication of implications, retention of unscholarly but subtly important details in digest, and rapid feedback'. Newly initiated and proposed activities such as information analysis centers and selective dissemination of information are seen as moves to formalize and improve upon functions long served by information communications.

Using the reasoning from cybernetic theory, Deutsh (2005) explained the historical development of science, and goes to the predict that cultural movement toward symbiosis of the laboratory and computer augmented library becoming increasingly rich in quantitative data commencing on this paper.

Mesarovic (2007) accepts the general desirability of cybernetic models, but asserts that they are not at present sufficiently complex and precise to given great credence as predictive tools. Sutliffe and Ennis (2012) made a study towards a cognitive theory of information retrieval. They have proved that the cognitive model of information seeking illustrates the information seeking activity as beginning when the information seeker encounters an external task information problem.

INFORMATION SEEKING:

Information seeking is a human process that requires adaptive and reflective control over the afferent and efferent actions of the information seeker. Information seeking is a dynamic and changeable process despite its formal problem solving attributes. It depends on the situation, but also large extent on the individual performing it. Information seeking greatly influence of personality (personality is a pattern of characteristics thoughts, feelings, and behaviour that distinguishes one person from other) In the study of information seeking behaviour, the discovery of people's strategies, expectations, attitudes, and anxieties promotes the relationships as they live and work with other information users. Information seekers should begin with finding out what is stopping progress, creating an information gap/vacuum. An important aspect of sense making as a process in the struggle of people to understand a problem that drives them to seek meaning for in many situations and many circumstances they are content to take no such action.

According to Marchionini, Gary (2005) 'information seeking as a process in which humans engage to purposefully change their state of knowledge. The process is inherently interactive as information seekers direct attention on adapt to stimuli, reflect on progress, and evaluate the efficacy of knowledge base of the information seeker. Information seeking is thus a cybernetic process in which knowledge state is changed through inputs, purposive outputs, and feedback.

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR:

Information seeking is a human process that requires adaptive and reflective control over the afferent and efferent actions of the information seeker. Information seeking behaviour (ISB) resulted from the recognition of some needs, perceived by the user, who as a consequence makes demand upon on formal system such as libraries and information centers, or some other person in order to satisfied the perceived information need. The information seeking behaviour essentially refers to locate discrete knowledge elements. It is concerned with the interactive utilization of the three basic resources namely, people, information and system. Further in order, to satisfy the information needs, the user actively undergoes the information seeking process. The attempt of the user in obtaining the needed information results from the recognition of some needs, perceived by the user. The most significant studies on the information seeking behaviour of the scientists have been undertaken by Columbia University, Bureau of Applied Social Research (2010) on scientists Bowden and Wood on Physician, and Chen on engineers.

Robert & Dennis (2009) conducted a study on 'information seeking behaviour of the informal sector entrepreneurs working in Uganda' The demographic and business characteristics of these entrepreneurs are highlighted and empirically tested with regard to their information needs. This study has largely employed qualitative research methodologies, such as the critical incidence technique for interviews with 602 informal

sector entrepreneurs from a variety of trades. Observations of the entrepreneurs work environments and historical methods were also employed. The results suggest that modern/ exotic models of information transfer based on textual media and ICT exhibit less impact on the entrepreneurs information needs and use at macro levels because of poverty, illiteracy and poor information infrastructure. It is however noted that most 'elite' models share a platform with information behaviour of entrepreneurs at the micro levels. The study concludes that an appropriate model for information behaviour for the information poor community must be grounded on oral traditions and indigenous knowledge and be sensitive to poverty, infrastructure and illiteracy. Recognition is also made of the need for information repackaging and the use of appropriate media for information provision.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Kumar (2009) explored in the study, the information needs and use patterns of faculty members and research of Chaudhary Charan Singh University. To identified the constrains faced in using and searching information in libraries. the 200 data collected through the questionnaire was analyzed using FoxPro database Administration system software. the data analyzed by simple percentage and chi square test. the result of study show that 96% of respondents visited library to borrow books, 80% for study / research / training purpose and 81.50% visited library to locate information books and journals.

Patel (2005) investigated to explore information needs and seeking behavior of the teacher of the teachers training colleges of University of Gujarat State. The objectives of this study were to identify need and purpose of information seeking of teachers in teachers training colleges. The result of the study shows that 96.47% of respondents read regularly for satisfied their information needs.64.42% respondents reading newspaper, 99.36% reading magazines,72.44% used library for study purpose only and 36.54% used library for entertainment. The study also show that major respondents needs current information in their fields. 88.46% of respondents used library for reading magazines.

Information seeking is a highly subjective process influenced by many factors and interactions between them (Weiler, 2005). Karlsson et al (2012) studied the information seeking competencies, practices and knowledge of university actors. It was done through the interview and observation study for the Finnish students, researchers and information specialists. Al-Muomen, Morris and Maynard (2012) employed a number of different approaches like questionnaire, face-to-face and online interviews for finding out the information seeking behaviour of graduate students at Kuwait University and revealed various significant factors like library awareness, information literacy, organizational and environmental issues, source characteristics and demographics. Khosrowjerdi and Iranshahi (2011) analyzed the information seeking of graduate students at Tehran University and its dimensions in different disciplines, contexts and the relationships to other variables such as gender, task, knowledge, personality, experience and expertise. The relationships between information seeking behaviour and prior knowledge were tested and found positive. The study by Malliari, Korobili and Zapounidou (2011) on information seeking behaviour of graduate students at the University of Macedonia revealed that their behaviour seems to be influenced by search experiences, computer and web experiences, perceived ability and frequency of use of e-resources and not by specific personal characteristics. Vezzosi (2009) while analyzing information seeking behaviour of doctoral students in the field of biological sciences explored the use of various types of information sources and revealed that Doctoral students heavily rely on internet for their research work.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PURPOSE OF INFORMATION SEEKING:

Table-1 gives a detailed picture of the distribution of the purpose of information seeking. The data were analyzed based on the responses which indicates that out of 10 listed items, 92.3 % respondents seek information to keep abreast with current developments, followed by 91.3% to develop competence, 81.2% to Improve General knowledge, 77.1% for Workshop and seminar presentations, 74.6% Support research and so on.

TABLE 1 : PURPOSE OF INFORMATION SEEKING:

Purpose of Information seeking	No. of responses
Keep up with current Developments	182 (92.3%)
Develop Competence	180 (91.3%)
Improve General Knowledge	160 (81.2%)
Workshop and Seminar Presentations	152 (77.1%)
Support Research	147 (74.6%)
Service or job Requirement	134 (68%)
Preparation for Lecturing	110 (55.8%)
Reading Purposes Only	102 (51.7%)
Writing a book or article	90 (45.6%)
Preparation for audio-video Programmes	40 (20.3%)

The respondents were asked to mention the problems faced while seeking information. Table 2 shows that majority of students 98 (49.7%) are not aware of the existing resources in the library, followed by 80 (40.6%) not of using the information retrieval tools, 71 (36%) informed that the documents are old, 67 (34%) said that the materials are not available as per their requirements, 60 (30.4%) informed that sources are scattered and so on.

TABLE -2 : PROBLEMS TO SEEKING INFORMATION:

Problems	No. of Respondents
Materials are not available	67 (34%)
Library Staff are unwilling for service	30 (15.2%)
Information sources are so far located	41 (20.8%)
Lack of time	53 (26.9%)
Do not know how to use the information retrieval tools	80 (40.6%)
Information scattered in too many sources	60 (30.4%)
Information materials are old	71 (36%)
Don't know the sources available in the library	98 (49.7%)

The students were also asked whether they use libraries of their own institutions or libraries of other Administration institutions as well. 35% of the students informed that they also use library resources from other Administration institutions. This quantitative part of the research helped to find out, how students view information seeking behaviour in terms that make sense to them for learning more about resources available and their use.

CONCLUSION:

The success of any library depends to a large extent on the selection of library resources. The selected resources should meet the needs and requirements of the end users. Libraries and information centers should take utmost care while selecting and acquiring resources, keeping in view the demands of their clientele. The availability of useful resources within the library will be beneficial to greater number of user to cater their information needs which in turn will increase the frequency of visits by users. This scenario will be beneficial for the libraries and will convince the parent organizations that their fund is utilized effectively. The study reveals that Internet is the major source of information, as it is online and available anytime from anywhere. Libraries should enable high level internet connectivity for providing access to quality e-resources within and outside the libraries. Reprographic services must be provided for users in order to photocopy necessary materials not allowed outside libraries. The other most used services include Online Public Access

Catalogue (OPAC), book borrowing and Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) service and most of students are very much satisfied with the facilities and the services. Majority of the students are interested in keeping up with current developments in their concerned fields of study. Libraries as such must employ latest techniques for dissemination of Current Awareness Services (CAS) and Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) such as Short Message Services (SMS), Instant Messaging, Bulletin Board Services and e-mails etc. The study also discovered that most of the students aren't aware of the available resources and the means of using information retrieval tools. Resources should be properly organised and guided by way of establishing latest arrival racks at different places in the library, proper advertisement of resources etc .It is also suggested that library professionals ought to train the students within the e-environment as per the changing needs and should guide them in using varied information retrieval tools with efficiency.

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