

Evaluation of E-Journals in Library and Information Science based on Three Websites: A Case Study

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Abstract

This article to explain the growth of e-journals in Library and Information Science along with the methodology employed in the study analyzed and interprets data, pertaining to a total sample of 136 e-journals available in three websites using only three popular search engines (Google, Altavista, Yahoo) in regard to their subject coverage, country of publication, year of publication, frequency and cost during the period 1995 to 2010. It reveals that 38.97% of the total e-journals in Library and Information Science cover IT (Information Technology) as their thrust area; 56.15% of them are published from USA; 96.18% of e-journals are published in English; 41.22% are published quarterly; and 61.02% of them are fee based journals.

Keywords: E-Journals, LIS Journals, Online Search, Web Periodicals

1. INTRODUCTION

Information is the most important tool now days for the socio-economic as well as scientific development of an individual and for the society. The emergence of World Wide Web (WWW) has given an excellent opportunity to find information from all over the world. The internet is regarded as a rich, multilayered and ever changing textual environment. Text created in the Internet range from a simple e-mail message to a sophisticated document. It is a live, constantly moving, theoretically borderless for the production and circulation of information. It has a great impact on the publishing world. E-publishing is important way top made information available to a wide spectrum of public irrespective of their geographical presence.

2. GROWTH OF E-JOURNALS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

The 1990 is probably the real period of development of e-journals in the field of Library and Information Science. In January 1995, the "Oliver Tree" was available exclusively on the web, which was regarded as the first electronic journal in Library and Information Science has now ceased publication. This was followed

by "LIBRES" (Library and Information Science Research Electronic Journals) which was published in July 1995 from Australia. This electronic journal primarily focuses on the research process in the field of Library and Information Science [1]. In the same year (1995), another e-journals "Library Quarterly" was published from the university of Chicago press (USA). It is a quarterly publication which depicts different exploration of current, past and emerging theories of Librarianship.

In 1996, a Spanish language electronic journal named as "EL Profesional de la Information" was published by Swet and Zeit publishers from Spain. In the same year, another e-journal namely "Libraries and Culture" was published from America by the University of Texas press.

In 2001, "Journal of American Society for Information Science and Technology" published from USA focuses the development made in the field of Information Science and Technology in USA. Another Journal "Portal" also published in the same year by John Hopkins University press. In 2003, "Journal of Informology" was published from Iran by Cultural Research Bureau both in English and Persian languages.

Now, there are a number of electronic journals available in the field of Library and Information Science and some of them do not have their respective print versions [2], such as growth in e-journals no longer makes the e-journals platform as monopoly of a few advantages disciplines.

3. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The present study setforths the following limitations:

1. The study covers the e-journals available only in the following three websites, namely
 - (a) www.bubl.ac.uk.;
 - (b) www.dmoz.org/references/libraries/library and information-science/and
 - (c) www.dir.yahoo.com / references / libraries / libraries-and -information science/ journals (i.e., limitations by websites).
2. It covers those e-journals which are available only through three major search entries, namely, Google, Alta vista, and Yahoo (i.e., limitation by search engines).
3. It includes those e-journals which are available in the above websites and search engines exclusively in the field of LIS, hence do not cover any other subject (i.e limitations by subject coverage), and
4. It includes in its scope only 136 e-journals in LIS available through the above three websites and search engines (i.e., limitation by number of e-journals)

4. SIZE OF THE SAMPLE

For the purpose of the present study, only 136 numbers of e-journals available in three major websites through three popular search engines have been covered.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The basic objectives of the present study are to uncover the following:

1. The core subject(s) reflected in the title of the e-journals exclusively in the field of LIS.
2. The countries and languages in which majority of e-journals in LIS are being published.

3. The year and frequency that predominant in the publication of e-journals the LIS; and
4. The cost of publications of such e-journals and their affordability.

6. METHODOLOGY

The present study e-journals available on internet at three vital websites (namely, www.bubl.ac.uk; www.dmoz.org/reference/libraries/library and -information -science/and www.dir.yahoo.com /reference / libraries /libraries-and-inforamtion science/ journals/ and through three popular search engines, like Google, Alta vista and yahoo have been identified. The available output has been retrieved and a database is created as per the concerned topic using CDS/ISIS software package (version 3.08). The steps involved in the process include.

1. E-journals in LIS were first identified and relevant data were collected.
2. The down loaded data from the text were then tabulated, analyzed and statistically interpreted to draw necessary inference, and
3. Lastly, data were organized in a specially designed format by using CDS/ISIS package version 3.08.

7. DATA ANALYSIS

Data pertaining to 136 e-journals collected from three websites constitute the major database for the present study. Data collected were then grouped under various parameters and then tabulated for necessary statistical interpretation. The resultant data are analyzed according to their year of publication, subject reflected in title, country of publication, language, frequency and subscription cost, etc. However some of the fields pertaining to these e-journals could not be available in same of the specific sites, thereby making the analysis in conclusive.

Table 1 Distribution of Data by Year of Publications

Year of Creation	No. of Respondents	%
1995	13	10.74
1996	10	8.26
1997	9	7.44
1998	9	7.44
1999	9	7.44
2000	4	3.31
2001	8	6.61
2002	4	3.31
2003	2	1.65
2004	4	3.31
2005	5	4.13
2006	5	4.13
2007	6	4.97
2008	14	11.57
2009	11	9.09
2010	8	6.61
Information not Fund in Websites	15	-
Total	136	100

Table 2 Distribution of Data by Subject Reflected in Title

Subject Reflected in Title	No. of Respondents	%
Acquisition	3	2.21
Cataloguing & Indexing	3	2.21
Libraries in Schools and Colleges	7	5.15
Library and Information Services	7	5.15
Information Science and Research	10	7.35
Societies and Association	8	5.88
Management	7	5.15
Librarianship	26	19.12
IT (Information Technology)	53	38.97
Knowledge Management	7	5.15
Digital Libraries	5	3.68
Total	136	100

The above Table 1 clearly demonstrate that majority of e-journals were published in the year 2008, followed by 13(10.74%) e-journals published in 1995, and 9(7.44%) each were published in the year 1997, 1998 and 1999 respectively. Similarly, 9.09% of the total e-journals retrieved was published in the year 2009. Surprisingly, the lowest number of only 2(1.65%) e-journals were published in the year 2003, so far the websites included in the study are concerned the publication of such e-journals in the field of LIS in declining right from the year 1995.

Table 2 shows clearly demonstrated that 53 (38.97%) out of 136 electronic journals are devoted to information technology (IT) as their core subject interestingly, subjects like. (i) Acquisition (ii) cataloguing and indexing carry the lowest number of electronic journals with 3 (2.21%) each. Thus, the influence of IT as the principal title in e-journals can hardly be ignored. The study has therefore, made clear that, IT dominates among the other subject covered in such electronic journals published in the field of LIS.

The Table 3 shows that 73(56.15%) out of 130 electronic journals are published from USA; followed by 35(26.92%) are published from UK interestingly, the lowest number of e-journals are from the countries like 1(0.77%) from Iran; 4 each (3.08%) from Spain and Russia; and 5 each (3.85%) are published from Australia and Spain respectively. Information pertaining to the country of publication of the remaining of e-journals however could not be ascertained in the concerned websites since, the number of e-journals by country remains at 130.

The prices aim of this table was to discover the language that monopolized the publication of e-journals in LIS and to ascertain the share of each language in such publications. The resultant data are depicted in Table 4 for necessary statistical interpretations.

The above table clearly reveals that a trial of 96.18% of e-journals are published in English language alone, followed by 1.53% of e-journals are published each in Spanish and Russian languages respectively. Since, information pertaining to the language of publication of the remaining 5 e-journals could not be found in the concerned websites, the number of e-journals by language remains at 131.

Table 3 Distribution of Data by Country of Publication

Country of Publication	No. of Respondents	%
USA	73	56.15
UK	35	26.92
Australia	5	3.85
Germany	5	3.85
Spain	4	3.08
India	3	2.30
Iran	1	0.77
Russia	4	3.08
Information not Found in Website	6	-
Total	136	100

Table 4 Distribution of Data by Language

Language	No. of Respondents	%
English	126	96.18
Spanish	2	1.53
Persian	1	0.76
Russian	2	1.53
Information not Found in the Website	5	-
Total	136	100

This is a clear indicator that English as a language in predominant in publication of e-journals and found to be the most popularly accepted language among the users of e-journals.

The shorter the frequency, the nascent would be thought content of these e-journals, hence would be more popular among the researchers. The aim of this table is, therefore, to find out how frequently such e-journals in Library and Information Science or published. The resultant data are depicted in Table 5 under 11 broad groups of frequencies.

The above table clearly shows that 54(41.22%) out of 131 e-journals are published quarterly; followed by 30(22.90%) monthly publications and 14(10.69%) Bi-monthly publications. Interestingly, only 2(1.53%) e-journals are being published bi-weekly, followed by 3 each (2.29%) are published weekly, 3 issues per year and

10 issues per year respectively. Thus, the above study clearly indicates that a large chunk of e-journals in LIS have preferred “Quarterly” as most convenient frequency for their respective publications. Information pertaining to the frequency of publication of the remaining 5 e-journals, however, could not be in the concerned website, hence the number of e-journals by frequency remain at 131.

Table 5 Distribution of Data by Frequency

Frequency of Publications	No. of E-journals	%
Quarterly	54	41.22
Annually	7	5.34
Bi- Annually	10	7.63
Monthly	30	22.90
Bi-Monthly	14	10.69
Weekly	3	2.29
Bi-Weekly	2	1.53
3 issues per Year	3	2.29
8 Issues per year	2	1.53
10 issues per year	3	2.29
Irregularity	3	2.29
Information not Found in the Websites	5	-
Total	136	100

In order to determine the subscriptions cost of e-journals, two things have been taken into consideration, whether the e-journals are fee-based or available free of lost. If cost of e-journals is not affordable by a larger avoidance, it loses its importance. The resultant data are reflected in Table 6.

The Table 6 clearly shows that 72(61.02%) out of 118 e-journals in LIS are available fee-based, while 35(29.66%) of e-journals are available free of cost only 11(9.32%) out of 118 e-journals in LIS are opened to bonafide members only. The above study has shows that, a larger chunk of the e-journals in LIS are free based, and only the contents and abstracts of these journals are available in the concerned websites. The user however has to pay for the full text of e-journals. Information pertaining to the subscription cost of the remaining 18 e-journals, however, could not be a sustained from the concerned websites; hence, the number of e-journals by subscriptions remains 118.

Table 6 Distribution of Data by Subscription cost

Subscription Cost	No. of E-journals	%
Fee-based	72	61.02
Free of cost	35	29.66
Membership	11	9.32
Information not Found in the Websites	18	-
Total	136	100

8. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The major findings of the study include:

1. Most of the e-journals in LIS depicts that 38.97% have IT as their thrust area of coverage which is no doubt a good sign as LIS is gradually getting slanted towards information technology as its major domain in research.
2. In comparison to other countries like Australia, Germany, Spain, India, and Russia, majority of (56.15%) e-journals in LIS are now being published from USA; followed by 26.92% from UK.
3. Interestingly, 96.18% of the total 131 of e-journals in LIS available in three websites are published in English language.
4. The publication of e-journals in LIS (as available in three websites included in the study) witnessed a secular decline as 13 (10.74%) of e-journals published in 1995 has been reduced to only 2 (1.65%) in 2003 causing setback for e-journals lowers.
5. Majority of e-journals in LIS (41.22%) are found to be quarterly publications as against 2.29% which are irregular publications, having no specified frequency; and
6. A major chunk of 61.02% e-journals in LIS are fee based, where as only 29.66% of e-journals in LIS are available free of cost on Internet.

9. CONCLUSION

The contemporary society is on the threshold of dramatic changes in terms of publications. Current e-

journals are the refined products of long evaluations. However, the environment they operate is changing slowly, and they need to change as well. The future is uncertain, but reorganization towards it has been, whether, the printed journals will be disappeared or will adapt to the new era is yet to be seen. However, the future is changing more slowly but much more dramatically than one usually expects. Lastly e-journals and the way they evolve into will be at the heart of LIS researchers in the near future, if they are available at as affordable cost with ease in access and simple in search.

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