UTILIZATION OF DATABASES AT GENERAL SIR JOHN KOTELAWALA DEFENCE UNIVERSITY: A STUDY

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Abstract

Electronic databases become a major element of a library collection that increases user demand, especially in a pandemic situation. Academic librarians should be updated on the utilization of databases subscribed by the particular university as they are spending a substantial amount from the annual budget. This study identified usage states of the databases subscribed by the Kotelawala Defence University Library and issues faced by the users when access. The study has been conducted based on the usage statistics generated through each database during the subscription period (September 2020 to April 2021) of three databases; IEEE, Emerald insight and HeinOnline. As there are no limitations to access databases by subject, the entire user community, including both staff and students considered for the study. Issues were identified from user queries received through different media such as email, verbal communications, etc. The outcome of the study was presented by descriptive analysis. The study reveals that the usage of three databases is increasing just after the subscription; this might be due to introductory programs and awareness sessions. Further, it was observed that there was a declination by month that emphasizes the requirement of conducting user awareness at regular intervals. It also found that the lowest usage of all three databases in December 2020 as it was a vacation period. As per the average of the usage statistics, the HeinOnline database shows the highest demand (number of downloads 866) during the respective period. Since the library does not have sufficient printed materials on law users might be shown high usage of HeinOnline. Barriers to network connection, insufficient knowledge in search strategies, and remote access issues are the issues faced by users. Users showed actual enthusiasm for accessing databases during a pandemic situation as they do not have access library physically.

Keywords: Databases, electronic resources, academic libraries, user demand, user awareness