

## Use of Internet among the LIS Students at IGNOU Study Centre, Pantnagar

\*Dr Pankaj Kumar Singh<sup>#</sup> and \*\*Dr K. P. Saxena

\*Assistant Librarian, University Library, G.B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar (Uttarakhand) India; Email: pankajlis12@gmail.com

\*\* Deputy Librarian, University Library, G.B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar (Uttarakhand) India; E-mail: saxena.kp@gmail.com

<sup>#</sup> Corresponding author.

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### Abstract

*The use of Internet is increasing rapidly due to availability of affordable bandwidth from various Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in both rural and urban areas. The Internet has emerged as a means of communication, e-trading and e-learning. IGNOU the National Open University has embraced ICT to facilitate students in pursuing various courses in distance mode of education. The digital repository of IGNOU eGyanKosh has proved to be a great open educational resource offering its entire course material in open access mode. The present study aims to study how the BLIS and MLIS students of IGNOU Study Centre at Pantnagar are using Internet for educational and other purposes. This is a questionnaire based study involving IGNOU students of Pantnagar Study Centre. The 84 questionnaires were administered to BLIS and MLIS students and 70 valid questionnaires collected were analysed in this study. The study shows high interest of students in using Internet and eGyanKosh repository.*

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**Keywords:** Internet, e-learning, web services, eGyanKosh, IGNOU, Pantnagar.

### 1. Introduction

Internet has grown tremendously over the years and it is being used as a platform for communication, trade, education and entertainment. In the field of education Internet has led to the development of online e-books and e-journals and other online e-resources. The availability of open source software like E-prints and D-Space enabled the institution all over the world for creating digital contents and disseminating their intellectual output through Digital Repositories. The repositories hold various types of contents like research papers, theses, reports and course material. The growth of repositories has led to the development of repositories of specific types of contents like ETD Repositories holding only Theses and Dissertations. The MIT, USA provided public access to its course material for students. This development stimulated the institutions worldwide for the development of course material and their accessibility to the students. This way the Open Educational Resources (OERs) came into existence. Besides the development of OERs the enabling technology has led to the era of online education and e-learning. The education came out from the boundaries of concrete to the Internet platform reaching to the remotest places of the country. The Internet has been great platform for distance learners, busy working people and those who cannot pursue education through traditional mode due to any other reason. The distance education has got democratized with the use of Internet.

Internet as a platform is being used for sharing knowledge, collaborative research, content creation, web publishing, knowledge dissemination, group discussion, online trading, social networking and many more purposes. The ever increasing digital contents on the web require effective search engine for relevant search on the web have made inevitable for searching digital contents on the web. The study of awareness and attitude of BLIS and MLIS students of IGNOU Study Centre about Internet will be useful in understanding how far they are prepared to the distance education mode of IGNOU using Internet for various activities and learning resources.

## **About IGNOU**

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) provides education through open and distance learning (ODL) mode. The university was established in the year 1985 by an act of Parliament of India. Today it is largest Open University of the country providing distance education through its 21 Schools of Studies and a network of 67 Regional Centers for monitoring more than 2700 Study Centers. The university offers more than 225 Diploma, Degree and Doctoral level programmes to make higher education accessible to all segments of the society. The university has made available the course material of various courses through its Institutional repository eGyanKosh – a National Digital Repository. The contents of this repository are rich Open Educational Resources (OERs) publicly accessible in various formats viz PDF, Audio and Video.

## **2. Review of Literature**

There have been several studies conducted on the various aspects of Internet and its use in various sections of the society. The area of interest in the current study is teaching learning community. Eynon (2005) found that the use of ICTs in all subjects was to provide students with access to a range of online resources. The paper discusses the growing interest of the use of Internet and electronic resources. Many respondents used Internet for personal interest and enjoyment. During the downloading of electronic resources many difficulties encountered like – time, speed, software, licensing, copyright issues, etc. Another study of teaching learning community conducted at academic institution Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi by Nazim and Saraf (2006) regarding the use of Internet. They found that majority of the respondents used Internet for their research work because the university library was providing a large number of subscribed electronic resources. Google search engine was considered as the most preferred search engine for searching documents.

The Internet is used for various purposes but in academic area Dougruer and Ipek (2011) found that 80% students used search engines to locate their desired information and considerable amount of the participants (65%) confirmed that they used the Internet to talk about school subjects and home work. Research work was considered as a main purpose for using Internet in this study. Thanuskodi (2011) examined the use of Internet by the faculty members and students of the professional colleges located at Tirunelveli region of Tamilnadu, India. He found that majority 48.89% respondents were using Internet from last 1-3 years. The study reveals that 37.23% respondents acquired their Internet skills through training from the college and skill of presenting research papers was considered by the majority of 50.83% respondents as the main purpose of using Internet. Kumar and Manjunath (2013) found that there is high use of Internet sources and services by teachers and research students in university setup to fulfill their information needs. Study results also indicated that

Internet has made a significant impact on their academic performance. The study suggested that there is a need for providing training on use of Internet search skills.

The current trend regarding use of Internet through mobile/ smart phones is gradually increasing. A study on use of Internet through the mobile devices by the students of selected Nigerian private universities conducted by Fasae & Adegbilero-Iwari (2015). They found that mostly students (83.7%) were using smart phones for using Internet and the out of which 77.5% students accepted that the internet was used for educational applications. The Internet facility was used by the students for mainly e-mail (71.25%), social media (68.75%) and search engines (60.5%). Ifeanyi & Chukwuere (2018) investigated the impact of using smart phones on the academic performance of undergraduate students at the North-West University, South Africa. The study revealed that 71.7% respondents sometimes find it difficult to access academic materials on their smart phones. It also found that 72% students accepted that smart phone uses does not decrease their academic performance. This study adds another dimension to the increasing trend of use of Internet through smart phones, especially in the context of academics. Apuke and Lyendo (2018) conducted a study on 250 undergraduate students of three North-East Nigerian universities. They observed that about 86.8% of students reported that they do not have adequate Internet access facilities on their university campus. Most of them accepted that they are dependent upon their smart phone/handsets to access the Internet through the Internet subscribed by them. They were very much reliant upon Google, Yahoo, and Open Access e-Journals.

### **3. Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study was to find out the use of Internet by the Library Science students at IGNOU Study Centre, Pantnagar. Study explored various aspects of use of Internet like what they are searching most and how they are searching using various the search tools. It is further investigated to know that how long they are using Internet and how frequently they use Internet. What were the main objectives for using Internet. What problems they encountered in using Internet. The overall objective was to know how the Internet is being used by the distance learners of a prestigious open university. The Internet skills will enable them to use Internet for effectively exploiting Open Learning Resource of IGNOU the e-GyanKosh.

### **4. Research Methodology**

A survey based study was conducted in order to fulfill the requirement of desired data from the BLIS and MLIS students enrolled at the IGNOU Study Centre, Pantnagar (Uttarakhand). The questionnaire was constructed around the following elements: user profile, use of Internet, frequency of use, purpose for use and other issues faced during the use of Internet. The questionnaire was administrated during October-November 2018 to the all 84 students enrolled for BLIS and MLIS courses at the IGNOU Study Centre, Pantnagar. Out of 84 questionnaires distributed, 70 (83.33%) filled responses were received till November 2018.

### **5. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

#### **5.1 Demographic Study**

The present study is limited to the students enrolled in 2017 and 2018 for the courses BLIS and MLIS at the IGNOU Study Centre Pantnagar. The questionnaire was distributed to all the

students of BLIS and MLIS courses. 70 (83.33%) filled questionnaires were received. The demographic characteristics of the population are shown in table - 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demography of respondents		Number of students enrolled (Total=84)	Questionnaire received (Total=70)	Percentage (N=70)
Courses	BLIS	64	55	78.57
	MLIS	20	15	21.43
Gender	Male	30	26	37.14
	Female	54	44	62.86
Academic Qualification	UG	52	46	65.71
	PG	32	24	34.29

It is clear from the above table - 1 that 78.57% respondents were of BLIS course and 21.43% of MLIS course. Table also shows that 37.14% were male respondents and 62.86% were female respondents. Considering the level of academic qualifications, it was found that 65.71% respondents have UG degree and 34.29% have Post Graduate degree.

## 5.2 Frequency of using Internet

The respondents were asked to indicate that how many times they are using Internet. Their responses are tabulated below.

Table 2: Frequency of using Internet

Frequency	Number (N = 70)	Percentage
Daily	48	68.57
2-4 days in a week	11	15.71
Once a week	04	5.71
2-3 days in a month	04	5.71
Seldom	03	4.29

It is revealed from the above table - 2 that the majority 68.57% respondents are using Internet daily followed by 15.71% 2-4 days in a week, 5.71% both once a week and 2-3 days in a month, where as only 4.29% respondents seldom used Internet.

## 5.3 Time spent in using Internet

When the respondents were asked about the time spent in the use of Internet. Their responses are given below in table - 3.

Table 3: Time spent in the use of Internet

Frequency	Number (N= 70)	Percentage
Up-to 1 hour per day	29	41.43
1-2 hours per day	15	21.43
2-4 hours per day	13	18.57
More than 4 hours per day	02	2.86
Not sure	11	15.71

Table - 3 shows the time spent by the respondents to use Internet. It is clear that 41.43% respondents were using Internet up-to 1 hour per day followed by 21.43% respondents 1-2 hours per day, 18.57% respondents 2-4 hours per day, 15.71% respondents were not sure

about the time spent in using Internet and only 2.86% respondents were using Internet more than 4 hour per day.

#### 5.4 Length of using Internet

Respondents were asked how long they are using Internet for various purposes. The following table contains the related data.

Table 4: Length of using Internet

Length of using Internet	Number (N = 70)	Percentage
Last on year	5	7.14
2-3 years	23	32.86
4-5 years	34	48.57
More than 5 years	8	11.43

It is noted from the above table - 4 that highest 48.57% respondents were using Internet for last 4-5 years followed by 32.86% 2-3 years, 11.43% more than 5 years and only 7.14% from the last one year.

#### 5.5 Purpose of using Internet

The Internet provides a lot of academic resources to the students in order to fulfill their academic requirements. Table - 5 shows the use of Internet for the various purposes as indicated by the respondents.

Table 5: Purpose of using Internet

Purpose	Number (N = 70)	Percentage
Search for information	66	94.29
Update subject knowledge	50	71.43
Checking e-mails	68	97.14
Writing papers	20	28.57
Preparing assignments	56	80.0
Filling forms, see results etc.	65	92.86
Read e-newspapers	55	78.57
Use Social Media	51	72.86
Internet banking	07	10.0
Online bill and fee payments	47	67.14
Online shopping	59	84.29
Recreational use	42	60.0

It is clear from the above table - 5 that majority of respondents 97.14% have used Internet for checking emails followed by 94.29% for searching information, 92.86% for filling forms & see results, 84.29% for online shopping, 80% for preparing their assignments papers, 78.57% for reading e-news paper, 72.86% for accessing social media websites, 71.43% for update their subject knowledge, 67.14 for online bill and fee payments, 60% for recreational use, 28.57% for writing papers whereas only 10 % used for Internet banking.

The easy accessibility of Internet has enabled the Internet users to easily locate and retrieve web based information and online services. Therefore, it can be said that Internet is being preferred by IGNOU students for obtaining the required information.

## 5.6 Most visited websites

There are many categories of websites available for the academic community. When the respondents were asked for most visited websites, their opinions are given in below table - 6.

Table 6: Most visited websites

Categories	Number (N = 70)	Percentage
Academic Websites	57	81.43
Mail Services	70	100.0
Software Websites	06	8.57
News Websites	31	44.28
Film and Entertainment	38	54.29
Sports Websites	25	35.71

It is revealed from the table - 6 that 100% students visited Mail service provider websites followed by 84.43% academic websites, 54.29% film and entertainment websites, 44.28% news websites, 35.71% sports websites and only 8.57% visited software websites. It can be concluded that majority of students used mail services and academic websites.

## 5.7 Use of various e-Resources

There are varieties of electronic resources available on the Internet in both open and paid access mode. Below given table contains the data related to the use of various kind of electronic resources as indicated by the respondents.

Table 7: Use of various e-Resources

Various e-Resources	Number (N = 70)	Percentage
e- Journals & Databases	07	10.0
e- Reference Sources	33	47.14
e-Theses & Dissertations	09	12.86
e-Books	17	18.89
e-Newspapers	46	65.71
e-Patents	00	0.0
e-GyanKosh and other IRs	38	54.29

It is clear from the analysis of table - 7 that 65.71% respondents have read e-newspaper on Internet followed by 54.29% respondents used eGyanKosh and other IRs (Institutional repositories), 47.14% respondents used electronic reference sources, 18.89% respondents read e-books, 12.86% used e-thesis and dissertations, 10% respondents used electronic journals and databases. The analysis shows the growing interest of reading e-newspapers.

## 5.8 Preference of using search engines

The respondents were expected to indicate the preference of using search engines, below given table - 8 contain the related data:

Table 8: Preference of using search engines

Search Engine	Number (N = 70)	Percentage
Google	49	70.0
Yahoo	15	21.43
MSN	2	2.86
AltaVista	3	4.28
Others	1	1.43

It is clear from the table - 8 that majority of respondents are using Google search engine followed by 21.43% Yahoo, 4.28% Alta Vista, 2.86% MSN and only 1.43% other search engines.

### 5.9 Preferred mode for using Internet

There are many modes/places available for the use of Internet. Except the various places/locations smart phone may also be considered as a mode for using Internet. The responses of the respondents are given in table - 9.

Table 9: Preferred place for using Internet

Preferred Modes	Number (N = 70)	Percentage
Home Broadband	04	5.71
Office Internet	14	20.0
Cyber cafe	20	28.57
Smart Phone	29	41.43
Other Modes	03	4.29

It is evident from the above table - 9 that majority 41.43% students are using Internet at their Smart phone followed by 28.57% at cyber cafe, 20% at office, 5.71% at home and 4.29% at other places like library, study centre, etc.

### 5.10 Problems faced in the use of Internet

Respondents were asked about the problems faced during the use of Internet and web resources. Their responses are given below in table - 10.

Table 10: Problems faced on the use of Internet

Problems	Number (N = 70)	Percentage
Irrelevant information	06	8.57
Unorganized information	14	20.0
Slow speed of Internet	22	31.43
Error Messages	10	14.29
Lack of ICT competencies	14	20.0
High cost of paid information	04	5.71

Analysis of the above table - 10 shows that majority 31.43% respondents are facing the problem of slow Internet speed followed by 20% both unorganized information and lack of ICT competencies, 14.29% Error Messages and only 8.57% irrelevant information.

### 5.11 User's satisfaction in using web resources as compared to print format

Below given table - 11 contains the data related to the user's satisfaction with resources available on the web comparison to print format.

Table 11: Levels of satisfaction

Level of Satisfaction	Number (N = 70)	Percentage
Fully Satisfied	13	18.57
Highly Satisfied	34	48.57
Average / Not Sure	21	30.0
Low Satisfaction	02	2.86
No Satisfaction	00	0.0

It is evident from the table - 11 that 48.57% students are highly satisfied with the resources available on the web in comparison to the print resources followed by 30% average, 18.57% very high and 2.86% low level of satisfaction. It shows the popularity of web resources among the IGNOU students.

## **6. Findings**

On the basis of analysis followings major findings were made for the present study:

- The 68.7% respondents were using Internet every day.
- The majority of 41.43% respondents were using Internet approximately 1 hour daily.
- The majority of 48.57% respondents were using Internet from last 4-5 years.
- The main purpose of using Internet was seeing emails indicated by majority 97.14% of the respondents.
- The majority 97.14% respondents used Internet for checking e-mails followed by 94.29% and 92.86% respondents used Internet for searching information and filling forms & see exam results respectively.
- The 65.71% respondents were using Internet for read e-Newspaper and 54.29% respondents were used eGyanKosh repository for download course materials.
- The Google search engine was used by majority 70% respondents.
- The low speed of Internet was the major problem faced by 31.43% respondents.
- The 41.43% of respondents preferred to use Internet through their own smart phones.
- The majority of 48.57% students were highly satisfied with the resources available on the web in comparison to the print resources.

## **7. Conclusion**

It is evident from this study that Internet has become part & parcel of the life of individual's specially teaching learning community. Majority of students covered under study were using Internet every day. The students basically use Internet for fulfilling their academic objectives including searching information for updating knowledge and the preparation of assignments, for browsing all kind of student information disseminated by the IGNOU through its website and other activities. Besides academics the students are using Internet for social networking and online shopping and these findings are in accordance with Indian and global trend. The study also shows that recent trend is the use of Internet through mobile phones supersedes any other mode of Internet use. The IGNOU has also created IGNOU e-Content App to facilitate their students for accessing the course material using latest ICT tools. There has been a significant increase in the use of Internet through mobile phones as well as the use of various Apps.

The Google is unbeatable best search engine for finding relevant information for all purposes and all sections of the society including students. The major problem in India for using Internet is the low bandwidth. The major initiatives of the government and private sector has made low cost Internet available to a large section of society but the bandwidth related issues like speed and connectivity are yet to be resolved. The study truly depicts the current trends in the use of Internet especially in the context of students of IGNOU. The findings of this study will be fruitful for further more detailed studies on Internet.



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