

Use of Library Portal by Research Scholars of Indian Institute of Technology (IITs): A Comparative Study of Patna and Guwahati

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Abstract

The paper presents result of a questionnaire based survey of use of library portal by research scholars of IITs Patna and Guwahati. The findings revealed that majority of research scholars used library portal in IIT Patna and IIT Guwahati. The study identifies some problems faced by Guwahati research scholars. A few suggestions are made for further improvement and enrichment of the library portals to cater to the needs of the researchers.

Keywords: E-Resources, Indian Institute of Technology, Library, Library Portal, Research Scholars

1. Introduction

In recent years many libraries of higher learning institutions have developed digital library portals as a gateway to scientific information resources and services of the library. In the present milieu, the e-resources are the strength of any research institution and these are accessed via the library portal. It is therefore important for libraries to assess the usage of library portals.

The purpose of the present research is to investigate the availability and utilization of library portal at IIT Patna and IIT Guwahati. In IITs, these portals serve as gateways to institutional repositories; digital libraries; consortia-based e-resources such as bibliographic databases; full text journals; web OPAC; virtual library; email service, DDS, FAQs etc. The Central Library of IIT Patna and Bezbaroa Central Library of IIT Guwahati came into existence in 2008 and 1994 respectively. This study examines the use of library portal by research scholars of various departments and the problems, if any, encountered while accessing and browsing the e-resources.

2. Literature Review

Many research studies have been carried out on the use of electronic resources / library portals in India and abroad.

Breckbill and Baldwin (2002) found that some academic libraries displayed a main library webpage as the default home page of their websites. Booth and Napier (2003) in a study examined the practical issues involved in providing a website that meets the needs of diverse users. Jange *et al.* (2006) analyzed library web portals of academic institutions in Karnataka in order to identify measures to enhance the use of library websites and make them more user friendly. Bajpai (2014) studied the use of e-resources by faculty members and research scholars in IIT Kanpur. The study found that majority of the respondent's access e-resources from the hostel; they were satisfied with the use of e-journals. The study suggested some measures that the library should take to increase the use of e-resources in the library.

In another study, Fatima *et al.* (2011) found that majority of the respondents gave average value to their library portals with regard to provision of course material and useful links, and a majority of the respondents expressed that they needed instructions and help for the effective utilization of resources on the library portal. Das and Jeevan (2006) in their study evaluated e-portal providing access to e-books such as Elsevier, Science Direct, Project Gutenberg, Digital library of India, University of Virginia Library (E-Text century), and Batlleby.com, using twenty selected parameters.

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Geetha *et al.* (2013) discussed the use of library portal by research scholars and faculty members of Kuvempu University. Samyuktha (2006) illustrated the features and proactive role of the campus portal of the University of Madras in enhancing quality of research.

Chaurasia (2012) studied the PG students and Research Scholars of IIT Delhi who were not using the library portal due to lack of awareness and lack of contents on the portal. Mane and Panage (2015) examined the use of library portal by the Master’s Degree students, M. Phil and PhD scholars. The study found that majority of the students use library portals; but not on a regular basis. The investigators found that the reason for not using the library portal was lack of awareness and lack of training and guidance. Majority of the students demand educational resources based on curricula along with video lectures on the portal. The study concluded that the library needs to upload relevant e-resources and the portal should be user-friendly.

3. Objectives

The main objective of this study is to investigate dependence of research scholars on e-resources, the impact of the e-resources and problems encountered in using the e-resources through portal. This survey was particularly conducted to evaluate the advantages of e-resources over conventional sources of information.

The major objectives are to:

1. Know the level of awareness and use of library portal by the research scholars.
2. Find out the types of information available on the portal.
3. Know the frequency of use of library portal.
4. Know the purpose of use of library portal.
5. Assess level of satisfaction of users in using library portal.
6. Identify the problems faced by the users in using library portal.

4. Research Methodology

The study used two structured questionnaires for data collection, one for librarian and another for users. 150

questionnaires were distributed among 75 research scholars (various departments) in each of the two IITs. 120 questionnaires (60 from each of the two IITs) were returned duly filled in.

5. Analysis, Interpretation and Findings

Table 1. Distribution of research scholars discipline-wise

Disciplines	IIT Patna		IIT Guwahati	
	No.		No.	
Biosciences and Bioengineering	0		9	
Chemical and Biochemical Engineering	3		0	
Chemical Engineering	0		6	
Chemistry	7		3	
Civil Engineering	0		3	
Civil and Environmental Engineering	5		0	
Computer Science and Engineering	3		5	
Design	0		3	
Electrical Engineering	7		0	
Electronics and Electrical Engineering	0		4	
Energy	0		4	
Environment	0		4	
Human and Social Science	14		3	
Materials Science and Engineering	1		0	
Mathematics	2		4	
Mechanical Engineering	16		5	
Nanotechnology	0		3	
Physics	2		4	

Most respondents were from the Mechanical Engineering and Human and Social Sciences areas. Over 95% of the respondents were aware of the existence of library portal and over 90% of them did make use of the portal regularly.

Nearly half of them used the library portal at least once a week. The portal can be accessed from within the library as also from individual departments, hostels, etc. The details are as in Table 2.

Table 2. Access points of library portal

Access Points	IIT Patna		IIT Guwahati	
	No.	%	No.	%
Library Building	28	46.67	34	56.67
Department	45	75.0	42	70.0
Hostel	28	46.67	32	53.33
Other	4	6.67	3	5.0

Note: Multiple responses

Table 3. Purpose of using library portal

Purpose	IIT Patna		IIT Guwahati	
	No.	%	No.	%
Research	50	83.33	44	73.33
Reference	16	26.67	29	48.33
Database Access	13	21.67	15	25.0
E-journal Access	45	75.0	36	60.0
Full-text download	28	46.67	32	53.33
Others	6	10.0	2	3.33

Note: Multiple responses

Clearly the library portals are being used primarily in support of research, to access e-resources and for downloading full-texts. This is further confirmed by the data in Table 4. However, nearly two-thirds of the respondents from IIT Guwahati also indicated that they use the library portal to access OPAC.

Table 6. Research scholar's perception towards library portal

Benefits	IIT Patna				IIT Guwahati			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
One point access to all library services and resources	53	83.33	7	11.67	56	93.33	4	6.67
Teaching staff to direct students to useful resources	52	86.67	8	13.33	52	86.67	8	13.37
It improves access to scholarly and educational web based resources	54	90.0	6	10.0	53	83.33	7	11.67
It provides more efficient access to e-resources	55	91.67	5	8.33	50	83.33	10	16.67
It improves services	55	91.67	5	8.33	53	88.33	7	11.67
It keeps the information service central to users	56	93.33	4	6.67	54	90.0	6	10.0

Table 4. Information sources

Information Sources	IIT Patna		IIT Guwahati	
	No.	%	No.	%
Web OPAC	19	31.67	39	65.0
Institutional Repositories	17	28.33	20	33.33
E-journals Archive	47	78.33	32	53.33
E-books	41	68.33	37	61.67
E-journal Back volumes	24	40.0	11	18.33
Bibliographic E-resources	12	20.0	9	15.0
Virtual Library	8	13.33	5	8.33
Consortium	3	5.0	8	13.33
Other	0	0.0	1	1.67

Note: Multiple responses

Table 5. Relevancy of information resources available on library portal

Mode of Access	IIT Patna		IIT Guwahati	
	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly Agree	26	43.33	25	41.67
Agree	29	48.34	30	50.0
Neutral	5	8.33	5	8.33
Disagree	0	0.0	0	0.0
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0	0.0

It was generally agreed that the resources and links available / accessible on the library portal are relevant (Table 5). Over 80% of the respondents were satisfied with the layout of the library portal. However, nearly a quarter of the respondents from IIT Guwahati were not satisfied the image quality.

Generally, research scholars in both the institutions had a positive opinion about the benefits offered by library portals (Table 6).

Table 7. Problems in navigation library portal

Problems	IIT Patna				IIT Guwahati			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Organization of web page	13	21.67	47	78.33	16	26.67	44	73.33
Terminology on site is not clear	10	16.67	50	83.33	7	11.67	53	88.33
Time taking	17	28.33	43	71.67	17	28.33	43	71.67
Lack of information sources	26	43.33	34	56.67	15	25.0	45	75.0
Lack of information services	17	28.33	43	71.67	14	23.33	46	76.67
Locating desired information	18	30.0	42	70.0	22	36.33	38	63.33
Downloading problem	13	21.67	47	78.33	21	35.0	39	65.0
Connectivity	15	25.0	45	75.0	10	16.67	50	83.33

The present study also identified the problems faced by the research scholars in using library portal. While a majority of the respondents did not find any major problems in effectively using the library portal a small number of users (43.33% of research scholars in IIT Patna) felt that the portal lacked provision of access to needed information resources; similarly, 36.33% of research scholars in IIT Guwahati expressed difficulty in locating desired information (Table 7). Also, more one third of all respondents in IIT Guwahati felt the need for training and guidance in the use of library portal.

6. Conclusion

With the advent of information technology, libraries have identified opportunities and challenges in acquisition, organization, and dissemination of information. This in turn has led to new communication paradigms and a shift from face to face human contact to human machine interaction, from paper to electronic delivery, and from physical presence to virtual presence. Through library portal, libraries have extended the reach of their services and resources.

The present study found that some research scholars are facing problems of lack of access to needed information sources and in locating desired information. It is suggested that libraries should periodically assess the requirements of end users and enhance the quality of resources and services accessible via their portals.

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