

INCLINATION TOWARDS ELECTRONIC RESOURCES BY ACADEMIC COMMUNITY IN HISTORY: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT -

This paper highlights the usage pattern of e-resources among faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate students only. The geographical area of the present study was restricted to the discipline of history with faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate students of Kurukshetra University and Maharshi Dayanand University only. The study has been conducted at the Kurukshetra University and Maharshi Dayanand University with the help of structured questionnaires offline and online.

The results of this study show that subscribed e-resources are sufficiently used by the top three categories of users but a significant difference was found in the usage pattern of e-resources among the status of the academic community. The usage rate of e-resources for faculty members was higher in comparison to research scholars.

This study is unique in that very few studies have been conducted in the discipline of history regarding the usage pattern of different categories of e-resources by the academic community. This study deals as a separate and important unit to find out the different dimensions of the usage pattern and ranking of e-resources among the academic community in the field of history.

Keywords - e-books, e-journals, Electronic resources, History, online databases

INTRODUCTION

“History is the study of the past, past happenings and, past development of human societies, especially during the period for which written records have been available. History is the account of past happenings, memories, events and incidents. It plays a great role in developing our knowledge towards the past and gave a broader shape to our thoughts and area of knowledge” (Hoselitz, 1959, p.15). The study of “History compels the students to realize that events, ideas, the actions of individuals and shows the relationship between past, current and future issues” (Hunt, 1967, p, 15). Ancient, medieval and modern are the basic specializations in History.

The main motive of the academic community studying and doing research in History is to examine and "analyze, and interpret the past," or collecting, collating, piercing data to extract meaning from it to establish pattern out of thousands of little scraps of information" (Barlow,1998,p.82). In the process of their research faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate students use information sources that include government and institutional records, books, journals, newspapers, newsletters, periodicals, photographs, interviews, films, archives and unpublished manuscripts such as personal diaries and letters". "Evidence plus interpretation are the substance of historical study" (Margaret,1981, p.556). The present study, is a continuation of the studies on the information needs of the academic community and it addresses the information sources consider important by faculty members, researchers and postgraduate students in the field of History, how they locate them, and what their preferences and priorities are and particular attention is paid to the use of e-resource (Stieg,1981).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

With the emergence of information communication and technology, the academic community in the discipline of history are increasingly using electronic information resources. Evidence shows that faculty members, research scholars and students in history are altering their information-seeking behaviour to take advantage of the opportunities offered by digitization, and the literature. The literature supported the notion that faculty members and students are presently combining traditional means printed and e-resources for the academic activities. "The academic community in history are

responding to the new tools and resources produced by digitization. The recent increase in archival data in digital form is great (Duff, Craig, & Cherry, 2004, p.22). It is found that "bibliographies, book reviews, library catalogues, references in journals, specialized bibliographies and abstracts, or indexes are most important for the academic community in history tool" (Tibbo, 2003, p.13). Archives, web OPACS, and the availability of keyword searching are greatly appreciated by them. Dalton and Charnigo (2004) examined that advent of e-resources has increased the use use of catalogues and indexes by the academic community in their efforts to identify appropriate primary and secondary sources of information.

Studies by Kesner (1982) and Dalton and Charnigo (2004) reported that despite all the advances in digitization, the academic community in history are comfortable using print resources and highly value them as a resource. "Academic community in history will always want and need to have access to original documents" and will prefer a paper because its "utility is well understood, its stability has been experienced and it can be used and read without the help of a machine" (Duff, Craig & Cherry, 2004, p.72).

"Academic community in history feel secure and at ease using print resources as the possible complications of electronic resources are not present in printed sources and this will ensure their continued use by the academic community in history " (Duff, Craig, & Cherry, 2004, p.73). Informative websites of archives and museums, and digital databases have increased the use of e-resources among users in studying history but the ease and simplicity of print resources and their

significance in tracing history make these sources an essential component for research purposes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is designed to seek the opinion of the faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate students of the Department of History at Kurukshetra University and Maharshi Dayanand University regarding the availability and use of different categories of e-resources in universities and their libraries with the following objectives:

- i. To identify the usage pattern of e-resources by different categories of users in the field of History.
- ii. To identify the core e-databases in the field of History widely used by faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate students.
- iii. To find out the core e-journals in the field of History.
- iv. To find out the core e-magazines in the field of History based on their usage by the academic community.
- v. To find out the core online repositories in the field of History.

- vi. To find out the prominent websites in the field of History frequently used by the respondents.

METHODOLOGY

A structured questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 76 users including faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate students chosen from the Departments of history of two prominent state universities in Haryana. Responses were also collected online by Google questionnaire.

Availability of subscribed e-resources in university libraries

The use of e-resources is based on the availability and proper awareness of authentic and reliable sources of information. The main aim of the present study is to find out the core e-resources like e-journals, e-databases and e-magazines. In this connection, it is required to know the status of the availability of e-resources. Data was collected directly from both the libraries and verified the records and websites of the universities. The collected data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Availability of E-resources at Kurukshetra University and Maharshi Dayanand University

E-Databases	Library	
	JLN	Vivekananda
ABI/Inform	√	√
Academic Search Complete	√	√
Academic Search Elite	√	√
EBSCO	√	√
International Bibliography of Social Sciences	×	√
J-Gate	×	×
Lexis Nexis Academic	√	√

Oxford University Press	√	√
Scopus	√	√
Social Science Citation Index	√	√
Social Science Full Text	√	√
Total	9	10

Both university libraries provide 16,000+ Social Science Research Networks (SSRN) and subscribe to more than 5000 e-journals. Online databases, for example, EBSCO, JSTOR, Oxford University Press, and Social Sciences Full Text serve the majority of subject-specific e-databases and journals such as American History and Life, Historical Abstracts with Full Text, History Reference Centre, American Historical Review, Past and Present, Indian Historical Review, The Historian and so on.

Use of Various Types of E-resources in the Discipline of History

Use of Online Databases in History

In the present study, users were asked about how often they used the following online databases which they were aware of and the data was tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2: Use of E-databases in History by Various Categories of Users

Use of Subscribed E-databases		FM (n=3)			RS (n=24)			Students (n=49)			Total (n=76)		
		f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM
America Periodicals Series	AL	0	0.0	2.6	13	54.2	3.66	28	57.1	4.14	41	53.9	4.03
	OF	0	0.0		0	0.0		3	57.1		41	53.9	
	ST	2	66.7		9	37.5		15	6.1		3	3.9	
	RR	1	33.3		2	8.3		3	30.6		26	34.2	
	NV	0	0.0		11	45.8		20	6.1		6	7.9	
America: History and Life	AL	0	0.0	4	11	45.8	2.91	20	40.8	3.22	31	40.8	3.15
	OF	0	0.0		1	4.2		5	10.2		6	7.9	
	ST	3	100.0		9	37.5		21	42.9		33	43.4	
	RR	0	0.0		3	12.5		3	6.1		6	7.9	
	NV	0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		24	31.6	
Daily Life Through History	AL	1	33.3	1.66	7	29.2	2.08	13	26.5	2	21	27.6	2.01
	OF	0	0.0		0	0.0		1	2.0		1	1.3	
	ST	0	0.0		5	20.8		9	18.4		14	18.4	
	RR	0	0.0		0	0.0		1	2.0		1	1.3	
	NV	2	66.7		7	29.2		23	46.9		32	42.1	
History Reference Center	AL	2	66.7	1.66	9	37.5	2.08	7	14.2 8	2	18	23.68	2.07
	OF	0	0.0		3	12.5		6	12.24		9	11.84	
	ST	0	0.00		10	41.66		28	57.14		38	50	

Use of Subscribed E-databases	FM (n=3)			RS (n=24)			Students (n=49)			Total (n=76)			
	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	
	RR	1	33.3		2	8.33		8	16.32		11	14.47	
Historical Abstracts	AL	1	33.3	3	6	25.0	2.33	14	28.6	2.89	34	44.7	4.15
	OF	1	33.3		0	0.0		1	2.0		21	27.6	
	ST	0	0.0		8	33.3		20	40.8		2	2.6	
	RR	0	0.0		1	4.2		4	8.2		28	36.8	
	NV	1	33.3		9	37.5		10	20.4		5	6.6	
International Medieval Bibliography	AL	2	66.7	4.33	2	0.0	3.33	3	4.1	3.38	7	25.0	3.40
	OF	0	0.0		13	54.2		28	57.1		45	5.3	
	ST	1	0.0		0	0.0		3	6.1		4	53.9	
	RR	0	66.7		9	37.5		15	30.6		24	3.9	
	NV	0	0.0		0	0.0		0.0	0		0	0	

(* AL - Always, OF - Often, ST - Sometimes, RR - Rarely and NV – Never)

It can be seen that in Table 2, the weighted mean of Historical Abstracts (4.15) followed by America Periodical Series (4.03), and International Mediaeval Bibliography (3.40) was high than any other subscribed e-databases of History which reflects that most of the respondents of both universities preferred to use these two databases more than any other e-

database. The Historical Abstracts is found on the higher side in both awareness and usage terms.

Use of subscribed e-journals in history

For depicting the use of e-journals, a users' category-wise table was formulated, in Table 3, the results of usage of e-journals were tabulated for analysis.

Table 3: Use of Subscribed E-journals of History by Various Categories of Users

Use of Subscribed E-journals	FM (n=3)			RS (n=24)			Students (n=49)			Total (n=76)			
	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	
American Historical Review	AL	0	0.0	3.5	1	4.2	2.3	17	34.7	1.6	18	23.7	2.3
	OF	0	0.0		4	16.7		8	16.3		12	15.8	
	ST	1	33.3		12	50.0		18	36.7		31	40.8	
	RR	1	33.3		7	29.2		6	12.2		14	18.4	
	NV	1	33.3		0	0.0		0	0.0		1	1.3	
Essays in History	AL	0	0.0	2.5	5	20.8	2.83	14	28.6	3.40	19	25.0	3.19
	OF	0	0.0		0	0.0		3	6.1		3	3.9	
	ST	2	66.7		7	29.2		21	42.9		30	39.5	
	RR	1	33.3		11	45.8		11	22.4		23	30.3	
	NV	0	0.0		1	4.2		0	0.0		1	1.3	
History Compass	AL	0	0.0	2.66	2	8.3	3.75	6	12.2	3.61	8	10.5	3.61
	OF	1	33.3		14	58.3		23	46.9		38	50.0	

Use of Subscribed E-journals	FM (n=3)			RS (n=24)			Students (n=49)			Total (n=76)			
	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	
	ST	0	0.0		8	33.3		17	34.7		25	32.9	
	RR	2	66.7		0	0.0		2	4.1		4	5.3	
	NV	0	0.0		6	25.0		13	26.5		19	25.0	
Indian Historical Review	AL	1	33.3	4.33	12	50.0	4.25	22	44.9	4.26	35	46.1	4.26
	OF	2	66.7		5	20.8		15	30.6		22	28.9	
	ST	0	0.0		0	0.0		1	2.0		1	1.3	
	RR	0	0.0		11	45.8		18	36.7		29	38.15	
	NV	0	0.0		13	54.2		28	57.1		41	53.94	
Journal of American History	AL	1	66.7	3.66	3	12.5	2.51	5	10.20	2.51	9	11.4	2.82
	OF	0	0.0		8	33.3		11	22.44		19	25	
	ST	2	66.7		10	41.64		4	4.08		16	21.05	
	RR	0	0.0		2	8.3		21	42.85		23	30.26	
	NV	0	0.0		1	4.16		08	16.32		9	11.84	
Journal of Interdisciplinary History	AL	2	0.0	4.66	1	4.2	3	2	4.1	2.91	5	6.57	3.01
	OF	1	66.7		7	29.2		19	38.8		7	35.52	
	ST	0	33.3		9	37.5		15	30.6		24	31.57	
	RR	0	0.0		6	25		6	12.24		12	15.78	
	NV	0	00		1	4.16		7	14.8		8	10.52	
Journal of Contemporary History	AL	1	33.3	4	2	8.3	3.41	3	6.12	3.77	6	7.89	3.46
	OF	1	33.3		8	33.3		19	38.77		28	36.84	
	ST	1	33.3		12	50.0		7	14.28		20	26.31	
	RR	0	00		2	8.3		6	12.24		8	10.52	
	NV	0	0.0		0	0.0		14	28.57		14	18.42	
Journal of Modern History	AL	1	33.3	4.33	6	25	2.625	22	44.89	3.69	29	38.15	3.1
	OF	2	66.7		3	12.5		8	16.3		13	21.1	
	ST	0	0.0		5	20.		11	22.4		9	21.1	
	RR	0	0.0		3	12.5		3	6.1		9	3.9	
	NV	0	0.0		7	29.2		18	36.7		16	34.2	
Journal of Social History	AL	1	33.3	4.33	5	20.8	3.3	13	34.7	2.36	19	25	2.7
	OF	1	33.3		7	29.2		4	8.16		12	15.7	
	ST	0	0.0		3	12.5		9	18.36		12	15.7	
	RR	2	66.7		5	20.8		4	8.16		10	1.31	
	NV	1	33.3		4	16.7		19	38.7		23	30.26	
Journal of Multimedia History	AL	1	33.3	3.33	5	20.8	2.79	13	26.5	3.02	19	25.0	2.96
	OF	0	0.0		1	4.2		0	0.0		1	1.3	
	ST	1	33.3		8	33.3		17	34.7		26	34.2	
	RR	1	33.3		7	29.2		16	32.7		24	31.6	
	NV	0	0.0		3	12.5		3	6.1		6	7.9	
Literature and History	AL	0	0.0	2.4	1	4.2	3.16	0	0.0	3.24	1	1.3	3.18
	OF	1	33.3		9	37.5		16	32.7		26	34.2	

Use of Subscribed E-journals	FM (n=3)			RS (n=24)			Students (n=49)			Total (n=76)			
	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	
	ST	1	33.3		9	37.5		29	59.2		39	51.3	
	RR	0	0.0		4	16.7		4	8.2		8	10.5	
	NV	1	33.3		1	4.2		0	0.0		2	2.6	
Past and Present	AL	0	0.0	1	2	8.3	2.87	14	28.6	3.34	16	21.1	3.10
	OF	0	0.0		1	4.2		4	8.2		5	6.6	
	ST	1	33.3		13	54.2		16	32.7		30	39.5	
	RR	0	0.0		8	33.3		15	30.6		23	30.3	
	NV	2	66.7		0	0.0		0	0.0		2	2.6	
Radical History Review	AL	0	0.0	1.66	1	4.2	2.95	17	34.7	3.73	18	23.7	3.40
	OF	0	0.0		4	16.7		8	16.3		12	15.8	
	ST	1	33.3		12	50.0		18	36.7		31	40.8	
	RR	1	33.3		7	29.2		6	12.2		14	18.4	
	NV	1	33.3		0	0.0		0	0.0		1	1.3	
The Historian	AL	0	0.0	2.66	5	20.8	2.83	14	28.6	3.40	19	25.0	3.19
	OF	0	0.0		0	0.0		3	6.1		3	3.9	
	ST	2	66.7		7	29.2		21	42.9		30	39.5	
	RR	1	33.3		11	45.8		11	22.4		23	30.3	
	NV	0	0.0		1	4.2		0	0.0		1	1.3	
The Economic History Review	AL	1	33.3	3.33	5	20.8	3.5	20	40.8	3.87	26	34.2	3.76
	OF	0	0.0		6	25.0		12	24.5		18	23.7	
	ST	1	33.3		11	45.8		8	16.3		20	26.3	
	RR	1	33.3		2	8.3		9	18.4		12	15.8	
	NV	0	0.0		4	16.7		10	20.4		14	18.4	
The English Historical Review	AL	0	0.0	2.66	2	8.3	3.75	6	12.2	3.61	8	10.5	3.61
	OF	1	33.3		14	58.3		23	46.9		38	50.0	
	ST	0	0.0		8	33.3		17	34.7		25	32.9	
	RR	2	66.7		0	0.0		2	4.1		4	5.3	
	NV	0	0.0		6	25.0		13	26.5		19	25.0	
The Indian Economic and Social History Review	AL	0	0.0	1	2	8.3	2.87	14	28.6	3.34	16	21.1	3.10
	OF	0	0.0		1	4.2		4	8.2		5	6.6	
	ST	1	33.3		13	54.2		16	32.7		30	39.5	
	RR	0	0.0		8	33.3		15	30.6		23	30.3	
	NV	2	66.7		0	0.0		0	0.0		2	2.6	
Western Historical Review	AL	1	33.3	3.33	5	20.8	3.5	20	40.8	3.87	26	34.2	3.76
	OF	0	0.0		6	25.0		12	24.5		18	23.7	
	ST	1	33.3		11	45.8		8	16.3		20	26.3	
	RR	1	33.3		2	8.3		9	18.4		12	15.8	
	NV	0	0.0		4	16.7		10	20.4		14	18.4	

(* AL - Always, OF - Often, ST - Sometimes, RR - Rarely and NV – Never)

Table 3 shows that the cumulated weighted mean of Indian Historical Review (4.26), The Economic History Review and Western Historical Review (3.76), History Compass and The English Historical Review (3.61), Journal of Contemporary History (3.46), Radical History Review (3.40), Essays in History and The Historian (3.19), Literature and History (3.18), Past and Present

(3.10), Journal of Interdisciplinary History and Journal of Modern History (3.01), Journal of Multimedia History (2.96), Journal of American History (2.82), Journal of Social History (2.7) and American Historical Review (2.3) was high than other e-journals in the field of history. Indian Historical Review attained the first rank among other e-journals based on usage.

Table 4: Use of E-magazines of History by different Categories of Users

Use of E-magazines		FM (n=3)			RS (n=24)			Students (n=49)			Total (n=76)		
		f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM	f	%	WM
American Heritage	AL	0	0.0	1.66	1	4.2	2.95	17	34.7	3.73	18	23.7	3.40
	OF	0	0.0		4	16.7		8	16.3		12	15.8	
	ST	1	33.3		12	50.0		18	36.7		31	40.8	
	RR	1	33.3		7	29.2		6	12.2		14	18.4	
	NV	1	33.3		0	0.0		0	0.0		1	1.3	
Current World Archaeology	AL	0	0.0	1.66	5	20.8	2.83	14	28.6	3.40	19	25.0	3.9
	OF	0	0.0		0	0.0		3	6.1		3	3.9	
	ST	2	66.7		7	29.2		21	42.9		30	39.5	
	RR	1	33.3		11	45.8		11	22.4		23	30.3	
	NV	0	0.0		1	4.2		0	0.0		1	1.3	
Entrepreneur	AL	1	33.3	3.33	5	20.8	3.58	5	27.8	1.08	26	34.2	3.76
	OF	0	0.0		6	25.0		4	22.2		18	23.7	
	ST	1	33.3		11	45.8		4	22.2		20	26.3	
	RR	1	33.3		2	8.3		0	0.0		12	15.8	
	NV	0	0.0		6	25.0		5	27.8		20	26.3	
History Today	AL	1	33.3	3.66	9	37.5	3.95	0	0.0	1.06	26	34.2	4.13
	OF	1	33.3		9	37.5		3	16.7		39	51.3	
	ST	0	0.0		4	16.7		10	55.6		8	10.5	
	RR	1	33.3		1	4.2		5	27.8		2	2.6	
	NV	0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		1	1.3	
Military History	AL	0	0.0	3.66	0	0.0	2.62	1	5.6	0.89	1	1.3	2.60
	OF	2	66.7		9	37.5		4	22.2		29	38.2	
	ST	1	33.3		9	37.5		7	38.9		25	32.9	
	RR	0	0.0		0	0.0		1	5.6		1	1.3	
	NV	0	0.0		1	4.2		5	27.8		1	1.3	

(* AL - Always, OF - Often, ST - Sometimes, RR - Rarely and NV – Never)

Table 4 shows that the weighted mean of Entrepreneur (2.3) and Military History (2.2) was high than any other e-magazine, which shows that most of the respondents preferred to use these two magazines more than any other e-magazine.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The most important findings regarding the core e-resources used by an academic community in the field of history are as follows:

Table 5: Ranking of Top Subscription-based E-databases of History

E-database	Rank
Historical Abstracts	I st
America Periodicals Series	II nd
International Medieval Bibliography	III rd
History Reference Centre	IV th
Daily Life Through History	V th
America History and Life	VI th

The above table highlights, that Historical Abstracts attained the first rank in terms of use among all categories of users. America Periodical Series is in the second rank followed by International Medieval Bibliography (IIIrd), History Reference Centre (IVth), Daily Life through History attained the fifth rank (Vth) and

America History and Life attained the VIth rank. Overall, in terms of use, the top e-databases in the field of History found were Historical Abstracts, America Periodical Series America Periodicals Series, International Medieval Bibliography, History Reference Centre and Daily Life Through History.

Table 6: Ranking of Top E-journals in the field of History

E-journal	Rank
Indian Historical Review	I st
The Economic History Review	II nd
Western Historical review	II nd
English Historical Review	III rd
History Compass	III rd
Journal of Contemporary History	IV th
Radical History Review	V th
Essays in History	VI th
The Historian	VI th
Literature and History	VII th
Past and Present	VIII th
Journal of Interdisciplinary History	IX th
Journal of Multimedia History	X th
Journal of American History	XI ^h
Journal of Social History	XII th
American Historical Review	XIII th

Table 6 above shows the ranking of e-journals based on usage by the three categories of academic users. Indian Historical Review attained the first rank followed by The Economic History Review (IInd), History Compass (IIIrd), Journal of Contemporary History (IVth), Essays in History and The Historian (Vth), Literature and History (VIIth),

Past and Present (VIIIth), Journal of Interdisciplinary History and Journal of Modern History (IXth), Journal of Multimedia History (Xth), Journal of American History (XIth), Journal of Social History (XIIth) and American Historical Review (XIIIth).

Table 7: Top Five E-magazines of History Frequently Used by Users

E-magazines	Rank
History Today	I st
Current World Archaeology	II nd
Entrepreneur	III rd
American Heritage	IV th
Military History	V th

The top high-ranked e-magazines found were History Today (Ist), Current World Archaeology

(IInd), Entrepreneur (IIIrd), American Heritage (IVth) and Military Heritage (Vth).

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of the present study it is suggested that the reading list should be revised at the university level and the electronic format of the information sources should include in the further readings list of history. University libraries can expand their e-library project by procuring all necessary facilities to access the e-library and make effective use of its resources. The library of selected state universities should subscribe to more subject-specific e-journals and e-databases. Hence, the present study strongly suggests that university librarians must keep social sciences' especially history faculty members, research scholars and students up to date about the various categories of e-resources available in their respective libraries. The librarians and library staff should focus on information literacy programmes / workshops / seminars to increase the awareness of users of resources in the field of history. Libraries should

provide single sign-on and off-campus access to e-resources to all users instead of only faculty members.

CONCLUSION

The academic community in history information patterns involves the use of print and electronic resources. The ease and simplicity of print resources and the general failure of electronic tools to meet the information needs of an academic community in history account for their determination to continue their use of traditional resources. There are many opportunities for an academic community in history to make use of electronic resources, for example, informative websites, the web pages of archives, museums and online databases. Continuing improvements in finding aids, virtual reference, and other digital tools will ensure that digital reference continues to enhance the research of the academic community in history. An academic community in history

suggested that print and traditional resources remain essential for their academic and research

purposes

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