Internet and its Impact on University Libraries:
A Case Study at University of Moratuwa

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Abstract

The Internet, networks of networks, has revolutionized the way one can access the information and provide numerous opportunities to the field of library and information science in providing information services easily, timely and appropriately to the users. Therefore the Internet has an impact on library and information services.

This case study was carried out at University of Moratuwa to find out the impact of Internet on university libraries. The study aimed to analyze trends in Internet usage in terms of major user categories, Internet usage patterns, Internet information resources, services, Internet tools and technologies and their impact on university library. The focus of this study was based on three hypotheses;

1) Since Internet is regarded as an information resource and academic staff   and students of the university can freely access it, Internet has significantly reduced the university library usage.

2) As an information resource; Internet users had more favourable attitude towards the characteristics and features of the Internet than the university library.

3) Majority of the Internet users, irrespective of the user category view, University of Moratuwa, Library web site in fulfilling their information needs.

The research sample of the study consisted of 50% of the population of academic staff members, 25% of the postgraduate students, 10% of the undergraduate students and 10% of National Diploma in Technology students and amounted to 518. The study received 83.4% response rate.

According to the results, two hypotheses found to be true. And it was revealed that the Internet has been recognized as source of information by all the user categories of University of Moratuwa, Library and some or other way Internet has reduced the university library usage. To add up, all user categories had favourable attitudes towards the Internet as a resource of information than the university library. But Internet tools, technologies and services are not optimally used by all the user

categories. Even the facilities and features of University of Moratuwa, Library web site has not been utilized as expected.

Therefore, university libraries have to taken an advantage of Internet as a source of information and must play a pro-active role in utilizing its tools, technologies and services to enhance access to the information with respect teaching, learning and research activities of the university without diminishing its status in the academic environment.