

**An Assessment**  
**of**  
**Electronic Information Resources Usage and Management:**  
**A Case study at University of Peradeniya**

**By**

**K.P.N. DAMAYANTHI**

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## **Abstract**

The University libraries have positioned themselves as the main vehicles for the organization, access, distribution and use of stored knowledge of quality. The role of these institutions and associated information services is to contribute to the education, leisure and thus to the socialization process of our society.

The proliferation of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) has number of significant impacts on the use of print resources by the users of the libraries. Thus, electronic environment has created significant role changes for librarians and they become managers of the EIRs.

This study attempts to investigate the availability, services and extent of usage of EIRs, and to explore the difficulties prevailing in the libraries regarding the use of available EIRs in the University of Peradeniya.

The user categories, which were academic staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students in the University of Peradeniya were selected as the user population for this study. Professional library staff was included as user category to compare the EIRs usage with other user categories. The research sample which was selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling method consisted 25% from the total population from academic staff, 5% of the undergraduate students, 10% of the postgraduate students and all professional library staff. Individuals were selected randomly from each stratum. Questionnaires were used as the main research tool for the survey research and were interviewed when required.

The study revealed that majority of respondents had used EIRs, which were provided by the libraries of the University of Peradeniya. The accessibility of resources, frequency of use, and the purposes of use of such EIRs were analyzed. It was highlighted that other than the E-mail and Internet, the use of databases, electronic journals and other electronic resources was surprisingly low. The frequencies of access to the libraries of University of Peradeniya by the respondents to EIRs use were also explored in this study. Other than from the libraries of University of Peradeniya, results speculated that users had used external libraries to access EIRs. The results demonstrated that majority of users learned to use EIR by 'self learning by reading manuals' and by trial-and-error.

It was found that reading preferences and use of print and electronic resources vary among user categories. Majority preferred print resources and secondly they desired to meet their information needs through a mix of print and electronic resources. Analysis was extended to user categories separately and highest frequencies for preferences vary among user categories.

The results speculated that users were not satisfied with the electronic information services offered by the libraries of University of Peradeniya and they strongly believed that EIRs, which were currently available at the libraries were not properly utilized due to the difficulties / problems prevailing. The users suggested various ways and means to improve the services at the libraries.

Emerging of information age has dramatically affected the management of information resources and the role of information professionals as managers. Therefore this study is extended to examine the issues of the management of EIRs and services, within the library system. All in-charges of libraries of University of Peradeniya were included in the sample. It also identified the challenges and opportunities faced by users, and particular by librarians, who support information access and information system use in the University. Finally suggestions and strategies were made and it paves the way to enhance and develop of the usage, services and management of EIRs.