Use of web-based library services in Universities in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Web based library services have become more prevalent and modern as the web became a common and important resource in many aspects of human life throughout the world. Since it became successful players in the e-world, the traditional methods of offering library and information services have changed significantly in recent years. In parallel, the expectations and demands of users also have changed considerably. In this changing scenario, most of the libraries in the world are exploring and offering new web based library services. However, this changing scenario has not been fully exploited by the university libraries in Sri Lanka due to various difficulties. Nevertheless, users of the university environment have expected more and more services via internet at their convenience. Therefore, this study examines the web based library services in university libraries in Sri Lanka and focuses on the use of web based library services by undergraduates. The study was conducted in two main phases. In the first phase, to select the study libraries direct observation was done by using checklist which included eight service categories (reference, acquisition, circulation, cataloguing, periodical, inter library loan and document delivery, instruction and help services, and miscellaneous). In the second phase of the study survey method was used by means of structured questionnaire personally circulated among undergraduate students and librarians in Colombo, Sri Jayewardenepura and Kelaniya universities. A questionnaire was distributed among 291 undergraduates from second, third and fourth year attached to faculty of Social science and Humanities in study universities. Findings indicate that all the study libraries are yet to exploit the full potential of the web based library services and lagging behind in effective use of library website. Therefore, the study highlights the current state of web based library services in comparison with which university librarians in Sri Lanka can benchmark their own web based library services. In addition, they learn how the unique web based library services enhance the quality of web based library services and the study further suggests the new approaches for effective use of web based library services.

Keywords: Library services, University libraries, Information and Communication Technology, Social Media, Internet services