PERPUSTAKAAN UNIVERSITI MALAYA

A CM-215
INVC..nms..24/12/0

INFORMATION NEEDS OF ACADEMIC STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA IN A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

HARVINDER KAUR D/O BAKHTAWAR SINGH

Perpustakaan Universiti Malaya
A510475426

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Masters in Library and Information Science
Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology
University of Malaya
Kuala Lumpur
2000

PERPUSTAKAAN UNIVERSITI MALAYA

ACM-2151
INVC..nms..24/12/0

INFORMATION NEEDS OF ACADEMIC STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA IN A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

HARVINDER KAUR D/O BAKHTAWAR SINGH

Perpustakaan Universiti Malaya
A510475426

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Masters in Library and Information Science
Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology
University of Malaya
Kuala Lumpur
2000

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the information needs, use and expectations of academic staff at the University of Malaya in a digital environment. A survey research methodology was used, and 328 academic staff members were sent a questionnaire asking for information on their current information seeking patterns, perceptions on role, resources and services provided by the university library, information availability and usage, and their information needs. A total of 113 responses were received, representing a 34.45% rate of return.

The findings showed that a majority of the academic staff seeks information for research purposes. 87.6% of the respondents perceived the library as the most important source of information, and followed by Internet resources (84.1%). 47.2% of the respondents considered journals and periodicals as the most important published sources in meeting their information needs. The survey found that 90.7% of the academic staff had visited or used UM Library or any of its branch libraries during the 1998/99 academic year. The library services and collections were rated between poor to fair. Overall the respondents were fairly satisfied with the library in meeting their information needs.

A majority (92.9%) of the respondent had Internet facilities either at their office or other convenient place. Over 80% of the respondents used the computer for word-processing and information search through the Internet. Over 60% of the respondents had used reference and secondary electronic resources for their work.

90.2% of the respondents were aware of the digital resources in their area of specialization and 82.1% of the respondents had accessed the digital information resources. A major deterrent for the use of computers and Internet as well as creating digital resources was a lack of knowledge, skills and time. 86% of the respondents felt that digital resources, which they produced, were an asset to their teaching, research or other professional work-related activities. Training was one of the main improvements the academic staff hoped to see in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would like to express my gratitude to God for giving me the strength to complete this research.

This dissertation is the culmination of the efforts of a number of individuals whom I would like to acknowledge and offer my sincere thanks. I thank beyond measure my supervisor Associate Professor Dr. Diljit Singh for his support, encouragement and thoughtful guidance during the writing of this dissertation.

A special thanks to Mr. Liew Peng Kwai, Principle of SMK La Salle Brickfields for his encouragement during the writing of this dissertation.

I am also indebted to my parents, sister Satveer and brother in-law Rajinder for their understanding and support.

I am grateful to my housemates, friends and colleagues for their warmth and friendship.

Harvinder Kaur

May 2000

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS vii

LIST OF TABLES viii

CHAPTER

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

Changing Role of the Academic Libraries 2

Increasing Digital Environment - Malaysian Scenario 5

University of Malaya 7

University of Malaya Library 8

Statement of Problem 9

Aims of Study 11

Research Questions 12

Importance of Study 12

Assumptions 14

Limitations 15

Definition 16

Summary 19

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction 20

Importance of Information Need Studies 22

Information Needs Among Different Disciplines 25

Relationship between Work Role and Information Needs 29

Information Needs, Expectations and Obstacles in a Network Environment 32

Summary 42

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY 44

Research Design 45

Instrument 46

Population and Sample 48

Data Collection 50

Procedure for Data Analysis 50

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction 51

Current Information Seeking Methods 53

Perceptions on Role, Resources and Services Provided by UM Library 64

Information Technology Availability and Usage 76

Information Needs in a Digital Environment 82

Demographic Information 99

Summary 101

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Study 103

Discussion of Findings 104

Recommendation for Further Study 114

Suggestions for Improvement 115

Summary 117

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Cover letter 118

Appendix B – Copy of Questionnaire 120

REFERENCES 130

ABBREVIATIONS

DAO	Dissertation Abstracts Ondisc/Online
ERIC	Educational Resources Information Centre
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IT	Information Technology
JARING	Joint Advanced Research Integrated Networking
KLCC	Kuala Lumpur City Centre
KLIA	Kuala Lumpur International Airport
LISA	Library Information Science Abstracts
MIMOS	Malaysian Institute of Microelectronics System
MSC	Multimedia Super Corridor
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalogue
R&D	Research and Development
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UM	University of Malaya
UML	University of Malaya Library

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Title	Page
Table 1	Proportion of Respondents by Academy/Center/ Faculty/Institute	49
Table 2	Distribution and Rate of Return of Questionnaires by Academy/Center/Faculty/Institute	52
Table 3	Activity which Requires Most Information Seeking	54
Table 4	Cross Tabulation of Academic Rank against Most Information Seeking Activity	55
Table 5	Use of Information Resources for Work-related Activity	56
Table 6	Most Important Source Used for Work-related Activity	57
Table 7	Cross Tabulation of Academic Rank against Most Important Source	59
Table 8	Use of Published Information Resources for Work-related Activity	60
Table 9	Most Important Published Information Resources	62
Table 10	Cross Tabulation of Academic Rank against Most Important Published Information Resources	63
Table 11	Use of University of Malaya Library by Respondents	65
Table 12	Cross Tabulation of Academic Rank against the use of UM Library during 1998/1999	66
Table 13	Frequency of Use of the University of Malaya Library or its Branch Libraries	67
Table 14	Purpose of Use of the University of Malaya Library	68
Table 15	Rating of the University of Malaya Library Collection	69
Table 16	Rating of Services Provided by University of Malaya Library	70
Table 17	Rating of University of Malaya Library	72

Table	Title	Page
Table 18	Mean Score of the Overall Rating of University of Malaya Library	73
Table 19	Users' Accessibility to Computer with Internet Facilities	76
Table 20	Cross Tabulation of Academic Rank against the Access to Computer with Internet Facilities	77
Table 21	Use of Computer for Stand-alone Activities	78
Table 22	Use of Computer for Networked Activities	79
Table 23	Use of Electronic Resources for Work-related Purpose	80
Table 24	Barriers in Finding Information through Computer	81
Table 25	Awareness of Digital Information Resources in Area of Specialization	82
Table 26	Cross Tabulation of Academic Rank against the Awareness of Digital Information Resources in Area of Specialization	83
Table 27	Have Access Digital Information Resources in the Last 12-Months	84
Table 28	Cross Tabulation of Academic Rank against Access to Digital Information Resources in the last 12-Months	85
Table 29	Use of Digital Information Resources via Internet through UM Library	87
Table 30	Cross Tabulation of Academic Rank against Used of Digital Information Resources on the Internet through UM Library	88
Table 31	Use Digital Information Resources via Internet if made Available in Future by UM Library	89
Table 32	Cross Tabulation of Academic Rank against Used of Digital Information Resources if made Available in Future by UM Library	90
Table 33	Create Digital Resources on the Internet	91