

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.