

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to investigate end-user searching behavior when using CD-ROM. The study identifies users of CD-ROM databases to investigate search techniques used, to identify types of training received and to determine effectiveness of CD-ROM usage.

This study attempts to examine several questions, for example, why do the end-users use CD-ROM databases? What are the common types of searches conducted by the end-users? From who do the end-user learn how to use the CD-ROM? What is the librarian role in transferring CD-ROM use skills to end –users?

In order to get convincing answers to the research questions, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to respondents to determine their perceptions and behaviour. Three hundred and sixty seven questionnaires were distributed, and 153 filled-in questionnaires were received back. However, 3 questionnaires were unusable. Therefore the final number of questionnaires used in this study was 150 responses.

This study has presented the findings of the data from a survey on the CD-ROM searching behavior of Sultan Qaboos University users. The study has explored the distribution of demographic information among the participants and then reported the findings of the variables connected to the library use among the participants. It is clear that most of students at Sultan Qaboos University do not frequently use computers in library. However, majority of these students use CD-ROM Database searching methods but they have not taken the full advantage of the CD-ROM system since they are unfamiliar with its various methods of advance search. This is due to the lack of computer using skills and other training programs. Computer literacy is very important for successful searches. The study found also that the most popular search type used by most of the respondents is the search by author followed by title keyword search. The participants reported usefulness of CD-ROM database search to their studies. In

addition, most of the participants found it easy to use CD-ROM database search. Although the majority of participants learn to use CD-ROM by themselves, again most of them prefer to conduct CD-ROM searching without consultation with librarians.

Several recommendations are made based on the findings of the study. Amongst them are the library should offer training programmes in searching skills and the students should be more aware of other searching options other than the use of author and title.