



# Changing Needs of Library Users: in Reference to College Library

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## Abstract:

*When users especially college students approach a reference "desk" either in person or remotely, they come with a set of expectations and assumptions about the service. The ultimate goal of libraries is to successfully meet the information needs of users while managing and meeting, perhaps even exceeding, their expectations of the service. In India use of Internet and other IT media is increasing rapidly in youngsters. With this information let we have some information on use of internet users in India which ultimately affects on the changing needs of library users (college library).*

**Keywords:** *Changing needs, Internet, IT, Library users*

## 1. Introduction

With the advent of the digital library and a shifting information landscape, traditional library activities are undergoing challenge and change and none more so than the management and delivery of reference services. In the past a library's collection was what it physically owned and housed and resources would be listed in the Library's catalogue. Today libraries provide access to a vast array of information resources some of which it owns, its physical collection, but much of it licensed access to remote electronic collections - databases, electronic journals or e-books, digital images and a wide variety of links to free web sites. In many libraries not all resources are accessible through the catalogue and users must often navigate various parts of a library's web site in a quest for resources to effectively meet their information needs. Many users may never fully explore the vast range of resources available to them due to the challenges posed by resource discovery.

Library web sites are a major and significant communication medium for users, providing information on services, facilities and collections in addition to opening hours, public events and the operations of the agency. Further, most libraries now offer email reference services or telephone centres to cater for the growing number of users who are either remote because of their geographical location or who choose to be remote accessing library and information services from home or work place.

## 2. Growth in Internet usage in India

In India users of internet are increasing rapidly. The major users of internet are mostly youngsters and the college students. As earlier mentioned the need of library users is now totally changed. The users of college library are now asking for e-books, e-journals and so on. The main changes in internet access have happened in the last five years and the internet has become an essential part of office life, and plays a key role in many homes.

The massive Indian market is changing fast. Internet access is mainstreaming among professionals and the use of mobile is intensifying. The pace of change continues to be rapid with digital channels constantly growing in volume and strength. More people spend more time online in India every year,

and the digital tools and sites they use play an ever-growing role in their lives. Smart marketers keep on top of the scale of change and ensure their marketing strategies and touch point's mirror where the consumer is spending their time. These notes give a sense of the scale of change we've seen so far and imply the scale of what is coming.

As India becomes more digitally connected, this special edition of Digital Intelligence shows the way Indian consumers are going online, and on mobile. It covers the key trends you need to know to health check your digital strategy and question whether digital has the right weight in your marketing mix.

India is the third biggest country in terms of internet users in the world, with a highly social and mobile audience. This snapshot takes a closer look at India's digital consumer, and the key trends driving the country towards a digital future. It's estimated as many as 121 million Indians are logged onto the internet. It is a sizeable number, but still a relatively small proportion of the country's 1.2 billion population.

### 2.1 India's Internet Growth

- 2% - Number of rural Indians using the internet
- 25% - Growth in Indian internet users in India over the past 12 months.
- 59% - Number of Indians who only access the internet via mobile devices.

### 2.2 What Indians do online?

- 3 hours - Average time an Indian net user spends on social media.
- 13m - Number of Indians registered on matrimonial or dating sites.
- 70% of Indian internet users who watch online videos.

### 2.3 Internet usage in India

#### 2.4 Growth of Internet use in India 1998 – 2007

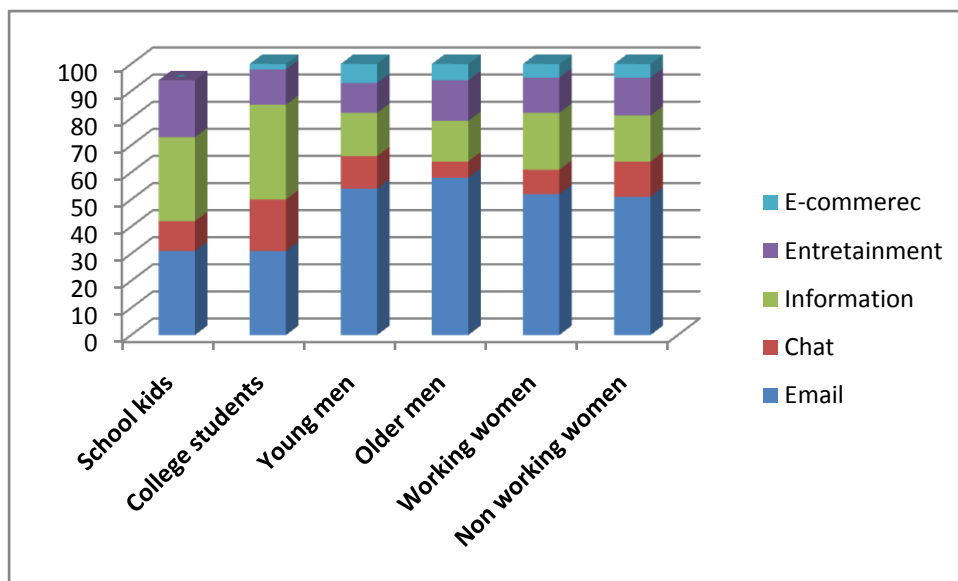
Year	Internet users(m)	Total population(m)	Penetration (%)	Data source
1998	1.4	1095	0.10	ITU
1999	2.8	1095	0.30	ITU
2000	5.5	1095	0.50	ITU
2001	7.0	1095	0.70	ITU
2002	16.5	1095	1.60	ITU
2003	22.5	1095	2.10	ITU
2004	39.2	1095	3.60	C.I. Almanac
2005	50.6	1112	4.50	C.I. Almanac
2006	40.2	1112	3.60	IAMAI
2007	42.0	1130	3.70	IWS

www.Digital Strategy Consulting.com

Source: Internet World Status, Data sets include ITU (International Telecommunication Union), Computer Industry Almanac, IAMAI (Internet and Mobile Association of India), IWS (Internet World Status).

### 3. Online activities in India

#### 3.1 Main reasons for using the internet



Source: IMRB International/IAMAI Internet in India 2007

### 4. Comparison of needs of users during 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century

#### 20<sup>th</sup> Century

- Books
- Periodicals
- Reference Books
- Text Books
- Reports
- Proceedings
- Grey literature
- Index ,Abstracts
- Films, Micrographics
- CD-ROM

#### 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- Non print materials
- CD, DVD
- Electronic Journals
- Floppies
- Multi media AV cassettes
- FMD
- Computer Database
- Printed Books
- Printed Journals
- Other non printed materials
- Non-book materials

#### 4.1 Changing profile and Expectations of users

In academic libraries, users, especially students are becoming more and more techno savvy. Users are also experienced with innovative and convenient technology based services elsewhere, may create an expectation in them for similar or comparable services. For instance, a user who prefers to conduct their banking transactions remotely via the web, may also prefer to conduct library research remotely. Similarly, a student taking distance education courses remotely via the web would need remote access to library resources and services of the institution

offering the course especially if he/she is taking the course from a geographically distant location. Some observations which reflects the changing needs of users are as under

- Demand for print materials from the stacks is decreasing.
- Usage of electronic resources is increasing.
- Traditional face to face reference is declining - more people appear to be finding what they need through e-resources available on the PCs in the Reading Rooms or through search engines on the web. When users do approach the desk for information a reference interaction has the potential to be

quite lengthy due to the complexity and range of resources now available and with diverse search interfaces further perplexing the user.

- Usage of the telephone service is changing and demand is dropping.
- Demand for electronic reference services is increasing with the numbers of faxes and letters declining.

To fulfil the new demands of users following services can be provided to the users:

(i) **Internet Access**

Internet is a medium for digital communication as well as largest repository of information. Internet may fulfil the demand of users as they may access the information from internet. The library provide free access to internet facility

(ii) **Electronic mail**

E-mail is a fast, easy and inexpensive way to communicate with other internet users around the world. It is the most popular and widely used services of the internet. The users (College students) may use the E-mail from library and get the information which he required.

(iii) **Chat or Instant Messengers**

Chat refers to any live discussions conducted communications. Chat programmes allow users on the internet to communicate with each other by typing in real time. It is a feature offered by many online services or web sites that allows users to chat by typing messages which are displayed almost instantly on the screens of other users who are using chat room at a given time.

(iv) **Conferencing**

It is one of the most exciting features of internet to communicate, talk and see groups of people in different locations around the world, without the expense of travel. Conferencing can take many forms such as web chat, audio conferencing, video conferencing, multimedia conferencing, screen sharing etc.

(v) **Net meeting**

Microsoft net meeting facilitate a new way of talking, meeting, working and sharing over the internet. Two or more users can work together and collaborate in reach time using application sharing, white board and chat functionality. Net meeting supports text chat, video shared whiteboard, transferring of files, and directory of connected users. Files such as documents or pictures can be exchanged.

(vi) **Access to web based resources**

**E-journals**

Electronic journals or e-journals are used for those journals and newsletters that are prepared and distributed electronically. E-journals can be accessed via internet from any web enabled PC. Depending on the type of subscription, one or more users can access the service simultaneously either directly from an independent web enabled PC or in a local area network through a proxy server. College library may pay subscription of e-journals which may be useful for students using library.

**E-books**

E-book has been described as a text analogous to a book that is in digital form to be displayed on a computer screen. E-books can be read just like a paper book, using dedicated E-book reader such Gemstar eBook or on a computer screen after downloading it. If college library is full of e-books it may be benefited to college students with no price or cost free.

**Electronic Thesis and Dissertations**

A thesis contains records of an original contribution to knowledge. Dissertation and thesis produced at universities are important sources of information and knowledge for further research.

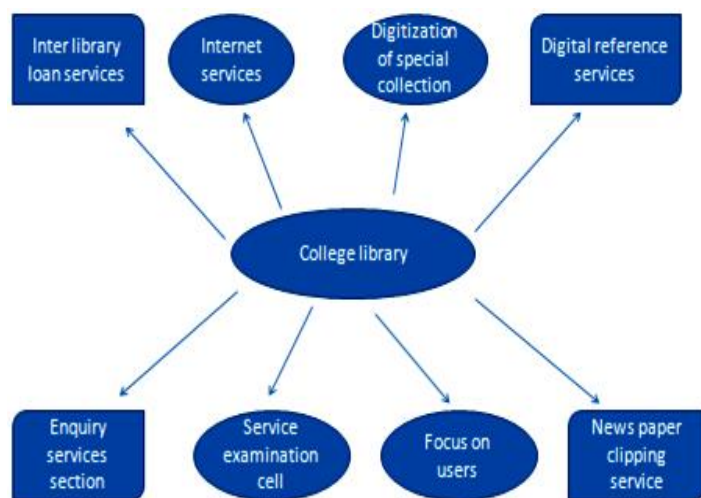
**Course materials**

A large number of web based courseware and teaching aids are being developed to facilitate flexible open learning by many universities and commercial organizations. Many universities have

adopted such course material for their curricula. Libraries can provide access to course material to the learners and teachers and thus contribute to open learning.

## 5. Ways to provide better library services to the users

Besides these the library can help their user's changing needs by following ways.



### 5.1 User education

User education is useful to orient the newly enrolled library user to the facilities and services provide by the library. To raise awareness about the services to optimize usage of the library and provide guidance on accessing electronic data bases.

### 5.2 Initiation to fresher's (Information literacy programme)

SPTMC library is conducting orientation programme to the new students admitted every academic year. Students attend the programme according to the time table drawn by the

library. Students are explained about the resources, facilities services the library provides them. They are taken round the library apart from training the in searching the library data base, e journals e mail internet browsing etc. Students find it useful to know about the resources available in their discipline. They know specific locations of different types of materials and the privileges the library provides them.

### 5.3 Staff Training

Staff training on various IT services may help to fulfil the needs of users.

### 5.4 Collaboration

Collaboration with nearby institute libraries or public libraries which have latest facilities of IT services with fully trained staff will be useful for the satisfaction of changing needs of your library users and be benefited with the latest information which they want to access.

### 5.5 Future directions

- Development of an online research tutorial providing guided and unmediated access to the library's collections and research services
- Restructure of the web site to exploit new underlying technologies and services enabling to move towards integrated access to print, electronic and digitised resources"

## 6. Summary

Today the needs of users are changing rapidly as they wants the information urgently without wastage of time and money and because of that libraries face huge challenges in the marrying of the traditional service delivery modes with the new mode of online service delivery - meeting the delivery expectations of remote library users as well as those who present at the reference desk and providing an equitable and quality service to all. For any reference and information service to remain viable and worthwhile, it must be continually developed and modified to meet the dynamic needs and expectations of clients in an increasingly sophisticated information world "People want what they want when they want it. They don't want something else, they don't want less than they want, and they certainly don't want it at some other time."

(Harry I. Forsha, The Pursuit of quality through personal change Milwaukee, ASQC Quality Press, 1992, p3)