WEB BASED LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN THE EMIRATES

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WEB BASED LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES: A CASE STUDY OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN THE EMIRATES (AUE), DUBAI

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Abstract

The objective of present study is to examine the web based resources and services offered at American University in the Emirates, Dubai. 120 questionnaires were distributed among the students and faculty members. The study shows AUE library use information and communication technology in most of the library functions i.e. Collection Management (RFID Technology enabled), online-based library orientations, electronic resources, cloud computing, etc. This study found that the Source of Information and Online services are most important dimensions, and few respondents are not much comfortable with electronic format. All the respondents are highly satisfied with library performance. But, the library fails to get feedback from the user community. The study suggested that the feedback always helps to improve their services to the user community.

Keyword: *Information services, RFID, remote access, web-based library, case study, AUE, Dubai*

1. Introduction

In recent days, libraries have faced many challenges in providing information to the users due to lack of human resources and financial support (Liang & Chen, 2017). In United Arab Emirates, educational institutes give most importance to library resources and facilities, the library is an integral part of the overall university evaluation for th e purpose of accreditation. At the same time, availability of information does not imply access and use. Educational libraries must address the primary need for their products and services (Popoola, 2001).

2. Background

American University in the Emirates was founded in the year 2006 at the Dubai International Academic City, United Arab Emirates (AUE @ UAE). The University currently offers Business Administration, Computer Information Technology, Design, Education, Law, Media & Mass Communication and Security & Global Studies at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. University Library is known as Library and Information resource center. Library commits to provide access t o a wide range of information resources to support learning, teaching, and research. AUE library adopts some best practices in web-based library services and innovative services through web-based technology.

I. *RFID Technology*: AUE Library is fully automated (Institutional ERP) and using RFID technology. The library physical resources are enabled by RFID tags. This technology helps the librarians' to fulfills the Ranganathan's 4th law of library science "Save the Time of the User," i.e., self-check-in, self-check-out, overdue reminders, online fine payment, misplaced books on shelves, and the like.

II. *Library Orientation*: AUE Library effectively provides the users with the information literacy program through online and offline methods. The main objective of IL program is to promote about the library and services through video display, library website/webpage, social media, video conferencing, etc. with help of web-based technology.

III. *Electronic Resources:* The university library provides up-to-date resources for university faculties and related areas through its hybrid collections i.e. books, print periodicals, CD/DVD's and e-resources (databases). The library subscribes to 10 major electronic resources in various forms i.e., e-books, e-journals, e-databases, and dissertations & thesis. The subscribed electronic resources are based on core areas and the latest scholarly information for users' academic and research development.

IV. *Cloud Computing:* Library provides the remote/cloud-based access the resources through library website, LMS (learning management system) and mobile app. In terms of cloud computing, the library subscribes to the product called Deep Knowledge portal and Vital Source. Deep knowledge portal is a proxy server and it supports to web-based access and remote accessing of online resources as well as mobile application. This facility majorly helps the users to access the electronic resources on, and off-campus. Electronic textbooks procured from Vital Sources and it can be accessed through 'Bookshelf' mobile app and Learning Management Systems (LMS).

V. *Online Renewal & Reservation:* Users can renew the borrowed resources online if there is no reservation against that particular Item. The library will do the renewal once received a mail from the user and will revert the next due date. User can reserve the checked-out resources through the Web OPAC, and the same will be intimated in-person through online once the resources are checked-in. The reserved source should be collected from the circulation counter within one working day. Otherwise, the reservation stands cancelled and will move to next person or circulation.

VI. *Current Awareness Service:* CAS is effectively done for the AUE community. The library professionals observe as like birds view the latest developments in all fields on a daily basis. The identified information is shared through web-based technology (i.e. e-mail, noticeboard, website, blogs etc.). As like, other library related information such as the library newsletter, new arrivals, sectional activities, library announcements are also circulated through web-based.

VII. *Query Based Services:* Whenever users required the library assistance for academic and research purpose, AUE library effectively extends support on-demand basis.

3. Review Literature

Chandrasekhar & Murugathas (2012) suggested that for improvement of library usage, selective dissemination of information service should be concentrated. Library plays an important role to enable the institute to achieve its objectives (Larson & Owusu-Acheaw, 2012). According to Vijeyaluxmy (2015), the Library services should be provided on electronic platforms to keep users comfortable. Potential services should be expanded for the betterment of users. The library should organize the orientation program regular intervals. (Veena & Kotari, 2016).

4. Objectives

This study systematically examines the electronic-based resources and services offered by American University in the Emirates, Dubai. The researcher would like to know how effectively the electronic resources and services support by the respondents academic and research purposes.

5. Methodology

Structured questionnaire was designed to collect data from students and faculty members of the American University in the Emirates, Dubai. A survey was conducted with a sample of 120 questionnaires through simple random sampling method and the results were analyzed to fulfill the stated objectives.

6. Analysis and results

6.1 Reliability analysis

The collected data was verified by Cronbach's Alpha. Based on the formula $\alpha = rk/[1 + (k - 1)r]$, where k is the number of variable considered (9 in this case), and is the mean of the inter-item correlations. George, D., & Mallery, P. (2016) suggested that 0.7 an acceptable alpha value. As shown in the table below, all of Cronbach's alpha was greater than 0.7. Therefore, it is assumed to have sufficient reliability.

Reliability

Variables	α
Source of Information	0.758
IT Infrastructure	0.702
Trained Professionals	0.747
Online Services	0.888
User Satisfaction	0.769

6.2 Descriptive Statistics

The library services are measured with following dimensions: Source of Information, IT Infrastructure, Trained Professionals and Online Services.

Descriptive

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.
Source of Information	3.0611	0.744
IT Infrastructure	2.8672	0.886
Trained Professionals	2.92	0.722
Online Services	3.1608	0.769

The above table exhibits the users' satisfaction level of library services. Overall, the highest mean score with (3.1608) library online services and the second-highest with source of information (3.0611). Based on the mean score, the available trained library professionals and IT infrastructure meets the users' satisfaction level. This study found that the two most influential dimensions of AUE Library Source of Information and Online services.

6.3 Usage of Online resources

The AUE library enables the online-based resource access to the user community. The resources are IP based and integrated with library webpage, learning management system. However, the library offers the cloud-based through Deep knowledge, Vital Source platform and mobile app. The survey evaluated the usage of online resources. The study reveals that the users are much familiar and comfortable with online as well as in offline access to the resources. The respondents have strongly agreed (46.08%) that online resources enhance their academic performance and the second-highest response is that the resources are easy to locate (39.13%) inappropriate time. At the same time, the respondents have agreed that the online resources help recent developments in the core field and are more helpful for professional and career growth.

6.4 Evaluation of e-Textbook usage

AUE library proposed to procure the e-textbook in the year 2017, based on the print and electronic material cost. It was compared to print and the e-textbook cost is very minimum. Based on the librarian's recommendations, the library committee has approved the procurement

of electronic textbooks based on the faculty interest. From 2019 onwards maximum faculty members are more inclined to procure the e-textbooks instead of print copy. The study reveals that maximum number of respondents (88.56%) are comfortable with using e-textbooks, because it is easy to handle and save the time and space. Few respondents have pointed out that they are not much comfortable with electronic format. The study further reveals that they may not be familiar in recent trends or more comfortable in print materials.

Satisfaction Vs Library Team

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
User Individual Attention	2.75	1.002	1.144	.222	.099	.440
Respond to Users Questions	2.83	1.019	.931	.222	-.386	.440
Technically Sound	2.76	.833	.844	.222	-.071	.440
Decision Making	3.12	1.144	.457	.222	-1.276	.440
Group Attention	2.87	.979	.698	.222	-.763	.440

Library professionals play an important role in academic libraries. Institutes spend or invest ore for the knowledge. Library professionals need to be active in their workplace.
 This study examined the AUE library professionals are satisfying the library users on the basis of their need and approach i.e. Individual attention, respond to user's questions, technically whether they sound or not, decision making, and attracting the user community. According to the mean score, the respondents felt that AUE library professionals are very strong in decision making (M=3.12) whenever required and the second-highest score was M=2.87. The study inferred that among the parameters, AUE library professionals are able to answer the users question (M=2.83). There was slightly lacking in users' individual attention and should improve their technical skills according to the latest developments.

Library Performance

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Adequate Resources	3.63	1.134	-.329	.222	-1.293	.440
User Guide	3.68	.956	-.264	.222	-.831	.440
Training	3.66	1.123	-.306	.222	-1.274	.440
Usage	3.52	1.149	-.138	.222	-1.418	.440
Feedback	3.30	1.021	.186	.222	-1.099	.440

The library performance was measured through five parameters
1. Does library procure adequate resources based on the core subject and user recommendations?
2. Whether library have user guides for effective use of resources?
3. Does the library properly train users to use resources effectively?
4. Does library properly monitor the use of resource?
5. Does the library receive feedback regularly from the user?

The library performance is measured through these parameters. Respondents have strongly agreed that the library user guides for effective use of resources with the mean value of 3.68 and the second-highest response is that the library trains the users to use resources effectively with mean value of 3.66. This study found that AUE library should concentrate more on the selection of resources and monitoring the usage of library resources. According to least mean score 3.30 IS indicate that the library should get regular feedback from users.

   7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has investigated the AUE library usage level of electronic-based resources and services. The study found that users are happy to access the e-content and library also perform very well to adopt the recent technology. Based on the analysis report, study found two most influential dimensions of AUE library's source of information and online services. In terms of online resources, respondents have accepted that the online resources help professional and career growth. While using the electronic textbooks, some respondents are not comfortable with electronic e-textbooks. The study pointed that they are more comfortable with print materials compared with electronic format. This study recommended that library professionals have individual attention with library user community. Students should be motivated to use the library in frequent manner and they should get regular training. All the respondents are highly satisfied with library performances which reveals the commitment of services. It means library performing well in available resources and services. But, the library fails to get feedback from the user community. The study suggested that the feedback always helps to improve better services to the user community.

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