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Understanding on Internet and its Usages amongst students of International Schools in Chennai, India

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ABSTRACT

Traditional modes of learning such as classroom teaching and performing routine activities such as homework, and assignments are replaced by interactive methods of teaching such as multimedia presentations and the like. This paper tries to investigate the awareness on Internet and its resources by the members of the students of international school in Chennai. The study covers the students of class VIII, IX and X and was limited to Chennai city only. The analysis of the data was carried out with SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) package and the results were obtained using Simple Percentile analysis and Chi-square tests and to arrive at meaningful conclusions.

Introduction

Gone are the days, when people have to go for libraries in search of information. Internet has claimed its stake in our day-to-day activities inevitably. Nowadays school children are introduced with application packages such as MS-OFFICE, and at higher secondary level they are taught with programming languages such C, C++, and Java as part of their syllabus. So a study on the use and level of awareness on Internet and its resources has been taken up with.

Research Objectives

The present study was designed and carried out to achieve the following objectives.

- To find out the level of awareness on the usage pattern of Internet by the students community
- To study the opinion of the students about library services and frequency and duration of library visit.
- To identify the preferences on electronic resources by the students and
- To suggest improvement measures based on the inferences drawn from the study.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study are:

- Usage pattern of Internet differs with the age of the students.
- Awareness on Internet grows with the level of education of the students.
- Use of library resources is enhanced by the use of Internet.

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- Educational background of the parents influences the usage of Internet resources among the students.

Methodology

In order to accomplish the above set of research objectives, descriptive type of research was carried out. This method enabled the researcher to identify and describe the variability in different aspects. The study was conducted in Chennai city during the year 2008. 150 Students were selected from three International schools in Chennai city for the purpose of this study and they were requested to fill up the questionnaire. 200 questionnaires were distributed but 150 questionnaires were returned duly filled in. A structured questionnaire was designed, mostly using both open ended and close-ended questions. The questionnaire consisted of 25 questions and covered areas such as the type of information sources used by the respondents for their academic purposes and their preference for browsing the Internet for entertainment needs.

Findings

Profile of the Respondents

Of the 150 respondents who participated in the research study, 54 (36.0 per cent) were male and 96 (64.0 per cent) female (Table.1). 27.3 per cent of the respondents were from 8th standard, 40.7 per cent from 9th standard and 32.0 per cent from 10th standard. 45.3 per cent of the respondents are having computers at home and 54.7 per cent are not having such a facility. 44 per cent of the respondents are having Internet facility at their residence itself, while 56 per cent does not have the same.

Table-1: Distribution of respondents by their gender and academic stream

	Gender		Academic stream		
	Male	Female	8th Std	9th Std	10th Std
No. of respondents	54	96	41	61	48
Percentage	36.0	64.0	27.3	40.7	32.0

Educational Profile of Parents

The respondents were asked to indicate that their parents' qualifications both father and mother. It is clearly shown from the table-2 that 42 per cent of the parents are graduates and 30 per cent are holders of professional qualifications.

The table-3 indicates that 34.4 per cent of mothers are educated upto graduation and 22.7 per cent are professionally qualified. It is interesting to note that 21.3 per cent of the mothers are educated upto school level only.

Table-2: Distribution Pattern of the Qualification of parents

Qualifications	Father		Mother	
	No. of respondents	Percentage	No. of respondents	Percentage
Educated Upto School Level	--	0.0	32	21.3
Graduation	63	42.0	52	34.4
Post graduation	42	28.0	32	21.3
Engineering and other Professional qualifications	45	30.0	34	22.7
Total	150	100.0	150	100

Use Frequency of Sufing Internet at Home

The table-3 shows that 28 per cent of the respondents are in the habit of surfing Internet for an hour in a day and 45.3 per cent do surf for three hours in a day.

Table-3: Hours spent on surfing Internet at home

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
One Hour/day	42	28.0
Two Hours/day	40	26.7
Three Hours/day	68	45.3
Total	150	100.0

Opinion about computer terminal at Schools

Respondents were asked to indicate that how many computer terminals are provided for their use in schools. From the table-4, it can be observed that 40 per cent of the respondents are provided with more number of computer terminals (81-100) at their schools.

Table-4: Opinion about number of Computer Terminals provided at Schools

Number of Terminals	No .of respondents	Percentage
1-20	16	10.7
21-40	7	4.7
41-60	25	16.6
61-80	42	28.0
81-100	60	40.0
Total	150	100.0

Reasons for Serching Internet

Respondents were asked to answer, for what purposes they were exploring Internet. Their answers indicated that school students were using Internet for their Entertainment, Educational Needs and for checking their emails. As shown in Table -5, it could be observed that 72.7 per cent of respondents are browsing the Internet for entertainment and educational needs, while 14 per cent browse for their entertainment needs only.

Table-5: Purpose of Searching Internet

Frequency	No. of respondents	Percentage
Entertainment only	21	14.0
Entertainment & Educational Needs	109	72.7
Entertainment & Educational Needs and For looking into e-mails	20	13.3
Total	150	100.0

Preference towards Search Engines

The respondents were also asked to indicate the most sought after search engines; it can be observed that 80 per cent (Table-6) of the respondents having voiced their interests in 'Google & Yahoo' as the most sought after search engines they use. However, it was surprising to note that a very small number of children made use of 'Rediff' for their academic purposes.

Table-6: Frequently/mostly used Search Engines

Name of the Search Engine	No .of respondents	Percentage
Google & Yahoo	120	80.0
Google, Yahoo & AltaVista	21	14.0
Google	6	4.0
Rediff	3	2.0
Total	150	100.0

Use of Websites for Educational Needs

The table-7 shows that 23.3 per cent of the respondents seek the assistance of the website 'www.cbsc.ac.in' for accessing information about their educational needs and 7.3 per cents of them seek 'www.schoollibrary.com'. However, it was really surprising to note that only a few (1.3 per cent) number of children made use of 'www.yahoo.com' for their academic purposes.

Table-7: Preference of Websites for educational needs

Name of the Search Engine	No .of respondents	Percentage
No Opinion	11	7.3
www.wikipedia.com	19	12.7
www.google.com	18	12.0
www.encyclopedia.com	14	9.3
www.cbsc.ac.in	35	23.3
www.dictionary.com	11	7.3
www.atlas.com	14	9.3
www.schoollibrary.com	11	7.3
www.yahoo.com	2	1.3
www.ncert.ac.in	13	8.7
www.123greetings.com	2	1.3
Total	150	100.0

Various Purposes of Computer Usages

Table-8 indicates that 8.7 per cent of the respondents use computers for clearing their doubts on lessons and 7.3 per cent of them use computers for spell checking activities. It is interesting to note that majority (66%) of the respondents are using Internet for clearing their

doubts on textbooks and lessons and also it was note worthy to mention that 62.7 per cent of the respondents were having no opinion on the same. It is quite interesting to observe that none of the respondents have opined about indulging in gaming activities on computers at school.

Table –8: Usage of Computers for various purposes

Purpose of use	No .of respondents	Percentage
No opinion	94	62.7
Doing Homeworks	11	7.3
For making charts and diagrams	12	8.0
For clearing doubts	13	8.7
Spell checking activities	11	7.3
For practicing Mathematics	9	6.0
Gaming Activities	–	--
Total	150	100.0

Awareness on Firewall Protections

It can be observed from the table-9 that 44.7 per cent of the respondents are aware of what a 'firewall protection' means, while 55.3 per cent do not feel so.

Table-9: Awareness on Firewall protections

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	67	44.7
No	83	55.3
Total	150	100.0

Relationship between Age and Hours of Surfing Internet

Since the calculated value is higher than table value, it leads to acceptance of null hypothesis, which means there exists relationship between chosen variables. It is found out from the results that the demographic variable age has an influence over awareness on differentiating between dial-up and broadband connections, the hours of surfing Internet and using Internet for clearing doubts on lessons and text materials.

Table -10: Relationship between Age and Hours of Surfing Internet

Sl. No.	Age Group	Hours Spent on Surfing			Total
		1 Hour	2 Hours	3 Hours	
1.	12-13	41	0	0	41
2.	13-14	1	40	20	61
3.	14-15	0	0	48	48
	Total	42	40	68	150

Pearson Chi-square Value	Table Value	DF	Significance
215.195	9.488	4	0.000

The table value for degrees of freedom 4 at 5% significance is found to be 9.488
So, Table value < Chi-Square value

$T < \xi^2$

$9.488 < 215.195$

Relationship between level of Students and Opinion on having an E-mail ID

Since the calculated value is higher than table value, it leads to acceptance of null hypothesis, which means there exists relationship between chosen variables. It can be observed from the results that the level of students has an influence over their opinion on possessing an email-ID.

Table-11: Relationship between Level of Students and Opinion on Having an E-Mail ID

Sl. No.	Level of Students	Opinion		Total
		Yes	No	
1.	8th Standard	0	41	41
2.	9th Standard	60	1	61
3.	10th Standard	48	0	48
	Total	108	42	150

Pearson Chi-square Value	Table Value	DF	Significance
124.856	5.991	2	0.000

The table value for degrees of freedom 2 at 5% significance is found to be 5.991
So, Table value < Chi-Square value

$T < \xi^2$

$5.991 < 124.856$

Conclusion

In this era of information technology, even school students are not left with the inventions of the modern day technology and inventions like computers and networks like Internet. It can be inferred that the coming day generations are eager

to learn anything and everything, provided they are given an opportunity to do so.

Suggesstions

1. It is suggested to the authorities of the schools to permit students of all ages for accessing computers and the gadgets available in their libraries under proper supervision.
2. It is inferred from the study that multimedia educational tools be developed on the basis of syllabus of the students, so that they can have an interactive learning experience with the help of modern day inventions.
3. It is recommended to the authorities concerned that competitions be held on the level effective usage of networks by the students of schools concerned.

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