Open Access Journals Resources in Social Science – A Pramatic Study

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ABSTRACT: *The speed of putting the literature related to social science online is very slow. Advance countries put their literature on internet. Developing countries are not in position to follow the same pace because of various reason. Economic constraint is one of their slow connectivity speed, failure of electricity, space, charges on etc, hinder the free flow of information. Though slow yet journey to fully automated libraries, information services related to social science has started internet user can have access to number of search engines through which a bulk of information can be collected. This paper seeks to address this issue.*

1. Introduction

Internet information resources can be defined as resources in digital format that provide information or indicator to the information and are accessible over the Internet.

Online availability of information enables the user to get relevant information and acquaint with latest development taking place in their respected field.

Recent past has witnessed a considerable growth in digital information resources like e- journal, e- books, e-databases. The traditional library system is transforming itself into hybrid information system having a mix of digital and traditional paper resources. The hi-tech development in science and technology coupled with information technology has led to the drastic change in the library and information product and services. The user community is becoming more familiar with the new medium over time and has started to actively bid for alternative forms of access. Technology improvement in the communication

network paired with the decreasing cost of hardware, create greater incentives for innovation. Indian university libraries, information centers are also creating databases of books, journals, and establishing archives of theses and research papers etc. Online subscription to journals is becoming very popular now- a-days especially due to consortia based cheaper subscription. In online subscription access to the current issues of journals are made available along with some back volumes.

Internet users can have access to number of search engines through which a bulk of information can be collected.

2. Objectives

The Objective of the present study is to provide a list of Open access journals of social sciences, which meets the pre, conceived criteria of selection. The list may be useful to the users to access the latest researches in their respective field, and enables them to know latest developments and get relevant information. The free on-line journal list will also help in updating individual knowledge of the users so that they can fulfill the demand of their profession.

3. Methodology

Various search engines have been used for searching the open access journals in the field of social sciences. There are various types of search engines such as (1) General search engines like; Google, Excite, NothernLight, Altavista, Lycos, ask, times, deja, Egroups etc. (2) Meta search engineslike; Altaseek, C4, Metracrawler, Genieknows etc. (3) Subject specific search engines like; SOSIG, vlib etc. After finding out the titles of Journals these were verified from the actual sites and their details like publishers, editors, periodicity, coverage and medium of availability (print/online/CD-ROM) have been ascertained.

4. Limitation

The uses of various indexing techniques by the different search engines were one of the biggest bottleneck and a comprehensive list could not be prepared. The comprehensive list of all open access journals meeting the criteria could also not be prepared because of limitation of time and the scope of present work.

About Social Science Open Access E-jounrals?

• Assessment and Accountability Forum (Phoenix Institute, USA) http://www.intered.com/public/aaf_main.htm [A journal of educational and professional assessment, and of testing instruments design and implementation.]

• **British Archaeology** (UK) http://www.britarch.ac.uk/ba/ba.html

• **Canadian Journal of Sociology** (U. Alberta, Canada) http://www.ualberta.ca/~cjscopy/cjs.html

• **De Proverbio:** An Electronic Journal of International Proverb Studies (U. Tasmania, Australia)

E-law: Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law (Murdoch U., Australia) http://www.murdoch.edu.au/elaw/ [A general journal of law and legal issues published by the Murdoch University School of Law. It contains articles in four categories: NetWatch, Current Developments, Materials for Comment / Works in Progress, and Refereed Articles.]

• **FineArt Forum** (Missisippi State U., USA) http://www.msstate.edu/Fineart_Online/home.html

• **Gestalt!** (St. John's U., USA) http://rdz.stjohns.edu/gestalt!/masthead/ [Refereed Gestalt Therapy e-journal. "We're not a copy of anything else. We're not a part of any official organization. We are interested in the people of Gestalt psychology and psychotherapy - those making things happen, talking about Gestalt theory, and practicing Gestalt principles everywhere in the world."]

• **HASN** - History of Australian Science Newsletter (ASAP, Australia) http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/hasn/hasn_inf.htm

ii: The Journal of the International Institute (U. Michigan, USA) http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/journal/ [A forum for specialists in international area studies to present their ideas and their work to a diverse non-specialist readership.]

• **JCMC:** Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication (Hebrew U., Israel) http://jcmc.huji.ac.il/

• **Latitudes, The McGill Journal of Developing Areas Studies** (McGill U, Canada) http://vub.mcgill.ca/journals/latitudes/ [The journal increases awareness and stimulates more informed opinions regarding the interdependency of developing and developed worlds by opening discourse on issues related to developing areas.]

• **MERGER Newsletter** (Utrecht U., Netherlands) http://www.ercomer.org/merger/index.html [The newsletter of the Migration and Ethnic Relations Group for European Research. It is published three times a year by the European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations (ERCOMER) in the Netherlands.]

• **Native Title Newsletter** (Native Title Research Unit, AIATSIS, Australia) http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/ntru_abt.htm [Contents: Current news, Native Title in the News, Reports about Native Title Issues in Australian media, Recent publications, New NTRU publication, Have your say! - Reader Survey.]

• **Online Archaeology** (U. Southampton, UK) http://avebury.arch.soton.ac.uk/Journal/journal.html

• **Policy and Research Report** (www.urban.org, USA) http://www.urban.org/periodcl/prr.htm http://condor.depaul.edu/ethics/ethg1.html

• **Qualitative Report (Nova Southeastern U., USA)** http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/index.html [On-line journal devoted to writing and discussion of and about qualitative research and critical inquiry.]

• **Research and Analysis** (Australia) http://www.defence.gov.au/lwsc/pubs.htm [A newsletter of the Australian Land Warfare Studies Centre, previously known as the Directorate of Army Research and Analysis - DARA.]

• **SAAB** - Society for American Archaeology Bulletin (U. California at Santa Barbara, USA) http://www.sscf.ucsb.edu/SAABulletin/

• **TNO:** The Network Observer (U.California at San Diego, USA) http://communication.ucsd.edu/pagre/tno.html

• **Union Seminary Quarterly Review** (Columbia U., USA) http://www.uts.columbia.edu/~usqr/

[Edited and produced by graduate students at Union Theological Seminary/Columbia University in the city of New York.]

• **World Archaeological Bulletin** (U. Southampton, UK) http://avebury.arch.soton.ac.uk:80/wac/bulletin/bulletin.html

Criteria to Evaluate the Open Access Journals

The Internet hosts a lot of information resources but all sources available on the Internet are not equally valuable or reliable. A search executed on a search engine such as Goggle or Alta vista on any topic brings out thousands of links to information resources, most of which are often found irrelevant or found to have ceased to exist.

So it is highly recommended that sites must be evaluated. Some of the criteria employed for evaluating printed information resources are also used for evaluating the internet resources.

1. Authority: First of all the author and publisher of the web documents should be identified. It s very difficult to find the author and publisher of a website on Internet but we can easily find out the organization, which has hosted the site and is responsible for content creation.

2. Scope: After identification of the authority, the subject coverage of the website must be checked. Who are the contributing authors to the website. In case there are many contributors their details? What is the recent level of the website? Whether site provides links to other sites also; if so whether links are working or not.

3. Treatment: Here, we have to check whether subject is covered accurately or not the information given is recent or out dated.

4. Arrangement: What is the system of information rendering on the website besides arrangement the most common feature is

the style of rendering information the style must be easily comprehensible.

5. Format: We have to check that in which format the document is available. Here format means basically audio, video, text and image format.

6. Special Feature: After checking the above points finally we have to see whether there is any specific feature associated with the document. Indexing has been done, download given etc.

Out of the above criteria of evaluation there are several alternatives also available to evaluate the online resources. These can broadly be divided in to the following four categories:

1. Initial appraisal

2. Suitability of resources

3. Content analysis

4. Structure and presentation

1. Initial appraisal

Initial appraisal of an Internet resource may be made based on the following criteria: -

Author: Author's credentials, i.e. institutional affiliation, educational background, other scholarly works, experience, etc.

Date of publication: Date of publication or date of last revision is an indication of currency.

Edition or Revision: revision or updation reflects changes in the subject contents.

Publisher: Publication from a university press or scholarly society are likely to be treatises of high scholarly value.

Title of journal: Is the journal popular or scholarly.

2. Suitability of Resource

Scanning the contents and indices to determine the resource on the following criteria:-

Scope and Coverage: Since most of the internet resources do not have a formal introduction or preface, determining the scope and intended audience can be a daunting task. The time period covered in an information resource is also an indication of coverage.

Factual Vs Opinion: The information contents should be factual it should not be propaganda, advertisement or opinion.

Primary Vs Secondary: Access whether the information is primary or secondary in nature. Books, articles in encyclopedia, etc. are secondary sources while research articles in journals and conference proceedings are primary sources of information.

Audience: An information resource on Internet should clearly define its potential audience

3. Content Analysis

Accuracy: The contents of a resource should be reliable and error – free.

Authority: The reputation of an author as an accomplished authority in his field of study is an important criterion of evaluation. An author's affiliation to an organization of repute is also an indication to his/her authority.

Objective: Information contents of a resource should be factual, unbiased and written most objectively.

Currency: The date of last update given on the site indicates currency of a resource.

Completeness: The information contents of a website should be complete and comprehensive.

4. Structure and Presentation: It covers the following aspects

Writing Style: In general, the text should be easy to read and should follow the basic rules of grammar, spelling and literacy compositions. Structure: The information resource should be organized logically with major points or headings clearly presented. The resource should follow the basic principles of graphic design, wherever applicable. Design and Layout: Layout and design of a website should communicate a sense of location to the user, based on apparent patterns and consistent use of visual element such as headings. Easy to Use: The information source should be easy-to-use even for a novice user.

Accessibility and Reliability: The information should be easily accessible and quick to load. The aim of the work on Open Access Journals is to increase the visibility and ease of use of open access and scholarly journals on Social science thereby promoting their increased usage and impact.

The aim is to be comprehensive and cover all open access and scholarly journals on social science that use a quality control system to guarantee the content.

Open Access Journal: For the purpose of present study open access journals are defined as journals that use a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access.

Research Journal: Journals that report primary results of research or overviews of research results to a scholarly community. Periodical: A serial appearing or intended to appear indefinitely at regular intervals, generally more frequently than annually, each issue of which is numbered or dated consecutively and normally contains separate articles, stories, or other writings.

5. Selection Criteria

Coverage:
• **Subject:** All scholarly subjects covered under Social Science

• View papers in full text.

• **Acceptable sources:** Academic, government, commercial, non-profit private sources are all acceptable.

• **Level:** The target group for included journals should be primarily researchers.

• **Content:** A substantive part of the journal should consist of research papers. All content should be available in full text.

• English languages

Access:
• All content freely available.

• **Registration:** Free user registration online is acceptable.

• Open Access without delay (e.g. no embargo period).

Quality:
Quality control: for a journal to be included it should exercise quality control on submitted papers through an editor, editorial

board and/or a peer-review system.

Process Logic: The different search engines produced different results. The use of logic and actual verification of the sites and their contents

was required in every case. The process of evaluation of Internet resources consisted of the following steps.

1. Identification of Links to Resources
Identification of information resources was done using mailing lists, distribution lists, other Meta resources, Internet resources newsletter, Internet search engines, specialty search engines, directories of Internet resources, etc.

2. Follow a link to Find out More about the Resources
Following a link to the document where the link was originally referred could provide details about the intended scope and audience and whether the information was likely to be updated and how often.

3. Analysis of the URL
The URL (Uniform Resource Locator) provides useful information for evaluation of an internet resource.

5. Suggestions and Conclusion

Out of several searched e-journals it is found that many journals available in full text form, free of cost does not meet the criteria decided for selection. The facility has been provided by the publishers to subscribe these journals through e-mail and can be received regularly without missing een a single issue.

The subject and titles are found scattered on the Internet. No standard for presenting the bibliographical details of the journals on the Internet were followed. In some journals editors, sub-editors, frequency, place etc. are not found. Many e- journals were detected available full text in first round of search, but a few journals found missing in the second round of search, so it was very difficult to rely on the sites.

It has been observed that information could have been organized on the Internet in a better way to enable to find the relevant information timely. The search engines should eliminate the bulk list of search by using the latest IT search techniques.

The listed journals are regular in their periodicity and their articles are properly edited and published by the concerned authority with regular editors and publishers. While going through the text of these journals articles, it is noticed that highly useful information is available in these journal articles which is very useful to the social science professional in providing/delivering the latest researches and developments taking place in the field of social science. This highly useful information can be utilized by the students, teachers, researchers, scholars, philosophers and all other users to fulfill their information needs.

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