

## Internet Usage among University Students: An Exploratory Study

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### Abstract

Internet is a multipurpose tool with numerous potentials. It enables students to communicate with other students abroad and thus share each other's ideas, knowledge, experiences, and cultures. It enhances skills and capabilities of students, which assist them in studies and in professional life. So the present study is an attempt to study the Internet use among students of Central University of Jammu. The main aims of this study was to find out the frequency of internet user, time spent on internet, factors affecting in the effective use of internet, to examine the use of different internet applications, kind of information student receive from the internet and to study the perception of university students towards the quality of learning through internet usage. The descriptive exploratory survey method was used. The sample of present study was 50 university students including PG students and Research scholars. The data was collected with the help of self prepared Questionnaire and group discussion with students and scholars. About 30% of the students perceive themselves to have a high or very high level of Internet usage skill. The findings for academic purposes is somewhat mixed. They also subscribe to various Internet services and have access to WIFI services either in the university or outside. On the method of information search, especially in relation to academic materials, there is a tendency for students to search from search engines such as Yahoo and Google. Students mostly have positive perception about the quality of learning through the Internet. The findings of the study listed above have important implications for the university, policy makers and teachers also.

**KEYWORDS:** Internet, University Students, Time Spent, Quality Education

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### INTRODUCTION

The internet is a worldwide system of the interconnected computer work. Today, the internet serves as a global data communication system that links the millions of private, public academic, business networks via an international telecommunications backbone that consists of the various electronic and optical networking technologies. Internet is a multipurpose tool with numerous potentials. It enables students to communicate with other students abroad and thus share each other's ideas, knowledge, experiences, and cultures. It enhances skills and capabilities of students, which assist them in studies and in professional life. The academic landscape in education sector has been comprehensively transformed by the recent advancement in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Consequently, the teaching and learning processes along with educational programmes and pedagogy of instruction are being restructured, reformed to meet the expectations of a whole new breed of students entering the Universities. ICT applications in education sector can greatly enhance the quality of education. It is also one of the greatest recent advancement in the world of information

technology and has become a useful instrument that has fostered the process of making the world a global village.

**Internet Penetration and Usage:** It took the country ten years to go from 10 million internet users to 100 million internet users. Now the nation is adding five million internet users every month. India had reached over 375 million internet users in June 2016. According to Internet World Statistics, by the end of June 2016, 3.6 billion people out of 7 billion were connected through the internet. India is the world's third largest user of internet after USA and China. Seventy five percent of India's online population is under the age of 35 years i.e. between 15-35 years. This data of I Cube Survey 2015 indicates that the highest percentage of PC-Internet is in India is in the age between 15-35 years. These are largely the college students or higher education aspirants in our country. The event of low cost smart phones and cut throat price competition in internet tariffs might change this trend and more users in the country may become tech and net-savvy (Molosi, 2001).

**Internet and Learning:** The internet has emerged as a powerful tool for dissemination of education through its worldwide access, transparency and seamless flow of information. It has revolutionized the life of an ordinary man to the extent that words like Suffering, Chatting Browsing, Downloading, have become the part of the parcel of the daily verbatim. Suffering, chatting and entertainment to pass time have become a child's play today. Social messaging sites have made the world to small. The webs are emerged as the GURU, and its wings are continuously expanding to reach the unreached. As we see that 70% of our youth between 15-30 is addicted towards internet. They misuse the internet to pass time, to chat with their friends and to download songs and movies etc. They do not use the internet for their educational purpose. Nowadays internet is very effective and popular tool used by the students for education as well as variety of other purposes including entertainment. Internet provides an interactive environment for sharing as well as seeing of information on a wide, diverge and variety of subjects. **Ozad (2010)** also explored the use of the Internet in tertiary media education. It was suggested that in addition to using the Internet as a source of information, students majored in communication and media should also use it as a tool of communication. **Dominika and Vit (2010)** conducted a Study on Internet Use among University Students in the United Arab Emirates the result reveals that the Internet can largely act as a vehicle for resisting social exclusion and gender segregation; it can also simultaneously serve as a mechanism for reinforcing pre-existing norms within newly networked traditional communities. **Sakina (2011)** conducted a study on Internet Use among University Students: A Survey in University of the Punjab, Lahore. The results show that most of the students use this technology for course related reading and research needs. They use it at the University Library's Digital Lab Unit as well as their departments and homes. Ease of work and time saving are the reasons of Internet use among university students. **Ayoub, M., Fauzi, A., Hamid, W., Hamzari, W. and Nawawi, M. H. (2014)**. On average, the participants accessed the Internet 4.48 hours per day. There were also significant differences in the time spent using the Internet among students in different fields of study, with computer science students spending more time online (5.61 hours per day) than the others. In terms of Internet use for academic purposes, students in social sciences, agriculture and computer sciences scored the highest. In an analysis involving all the students in this study, the total time on the Internet was found to be weakly correlated with the time spent

online specifically for academic purposes. Thus from the findings of the above studies it was clear that the student spent different amount of time for internet usage and internet was used for different purpose. The research and teaching are the core functions and responsibilities of universities. Students at all levels are expected to spend most of their time learning and conducting research. They should be engaged in knowledge generation and transmission as full- time activities.

### **JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

The internet has very long reaching effects into the life of individuals. We all are required to be aware of the internet viewing of our children and needs to guide them. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of students at the Central University of Jammu towards the Internet, specifically how they access the Internet, for what purpose they use the internet, how frequently they use the Internet, what Internet services they use most, how satisfied they are with the Internet services provided by the university, and what problems they face during an Internet search and to find out the significant difference between male and female and scholars and students. Previous studies have also shown that students (especially those in institutions of higher learning) used the Internet for different purposes, *viz.* academic research, online socializing and entertainment. The time spent using the Internet also differed in each study. In this connection, studies on the time spent by students browsing the Internet should be conducted frequently since the technology is continually changing. More and more applications via the Internet have been developed. The latest trend shows social and entertainment websites to be gaining popularity, with the number of users subscribing to such websites increasing every day. Now a day as we see that in the field of higher education the internet becomes the source of many problems. The students and scholars only try to cut and paste the material of another people. So keeping in mind all the above facts the investigators select this problem for investigation. Different websites and platforms could influence how students use the Internet in future, and how learning styles change time to time. So the present study is an attempt to study the Internet use among students of Central University of Jammu.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The purposes of this study were to identify:

1. To examine the time spent on the Internet among university students.
2. To examine the use of different types of internet applications (for example e-mail, social networking tools, the www and search engines).
3. To study the kind of information students look for on the internet.
4. To determine the factors affecting students effective use of the internet services.
5. To study the perception of students toward the quality of learning who use the Internet for academic purposes.
6. To find out the difference in the attitude of M.Phil/Ph.D. Scholar and UG/PG students towards internet usage.
7. To find out the difference in the attitude of male and female university students towards internet usage.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How much time is spent by the university students on internet?
2. How is the Internet used for academic purposes by university students?
3. What are the factors that effect the internet usage among university students?

4. What pathways and search engines are used to find information?
5. What is the perception of students toward the quality of learning of those who use the Internet for academic purposes?

#### **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

1. There will be no significant difference in the attitude M.Phil/Ph.D. Scholar and UG/PG students towards internet usage.
2. There will be no significant difference in the attitude of male and female university students towards internet usage.

#### **DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

1. The study was delimited to students and scholars of Central University of Jammu.
2. The study was delimited to the sample of 50 University students (20 scholars and 30 students)
3. The study was delimited 24 boys and 26 girls from various Departments of the University

#### **METHOD**

There are many methods of collecting, analyzing and reporting research data. Strictly speaking the decisions about the methods depends upon the nature of the problem and objective to be achieved. Mixed method approach was used for the present study. For the present study the investigator has used mainly the exploratory survey method which is the type of descriptive research. The study was qualitative and quantitative in nature.

#### **POPULATION**

All the university students and scholars studying in various departments of the central university of Jammu constitutes the population

#### **SAMPLE**

The sample of the present study is drawn randomly from PG students, M. Phil and Ph.D. scholars. The sample consisted of 50 students from various department of central university of Jammu.

#### **PROCEDURES OF DATA COLLECTION**

To collect the requisite data related to various aspects of assessing internet self designed questionnaire (both open ended and close questions) has used. The researcher established a rapport with them. Initially the researcher was distributed the questionnaire and requisite directions and instructions were given. On the other hand the group discussion with students was also encouraged among scholars and students.

#### **STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED**

In order to find out the significant difference in the attitude of male and female and scholars and students towards internet addiction among university students the investigator was used t-test as a statistical technique.

#### **DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **MAIN FINDINGS**

1. After the collection of data it was found that the average time spent on internet per day by undergraduate and post graduate student was 4-5 hours (1-2 hour to pass time to chat with friends, followed by 40-50 minutes for shopping, 40- 50 minutes downloading songs, 30- 40 minutes for news and only 20-30 minutes for educational purpose). On the other hand it was found that the research scholars (M.Phil/Ph.D.) spend 7-8 hour on internet (180-200 minutes for research purpose

(review of related literature and other related information) followed by 30-40 minutes for e-mail, 40-50 minutes for news update, they use 10-20 minutes for downloading music followed by 20-30 minutes for online shopping and spent 20-30 minutes to chat with friends.

2. UG/PG students used Search engines (Google and Yahoo), educational sites and online shopping sites for searching information where as the research scholars used web pages, search engines, Educational sites, magazines cites and other related sites, the use of academic databases such as Proquest, university E-learning resources, university web resources (Library), and university library publications.
3. Students maximum use internet to pass time, to keep in touch with friends, to download music and movies and less use for educational purpose where as research scholars used internet for research purpose and other research related information followed by e-mail, jobs, news and spend less time on social networking sites.
4. Students and scholars from central university of Jammu faced almost similar problems in the usage of internet. Problems like slow internet connections, insufficient awareness, inaccessibility of the internet laboratory, inadequate points of use and temptation of addiction are the common problems.
5. A majority of them feel that the quality of their work improves when using the Internet and that their reading is up to date through the use of Internet.

**Table: 1 shows the Attitude of M.Phil/Ph.D. Scholar and UG/PG students and male and female students towards internet usage**

Hypotheses	Groups	Numbers	Means	SE <sub>DM</sub>	t-value	Results
<b>I</b>	Scholars	20	53.00	1.43	4.10**	Hypothesis I is rejected
	Students	30	47.13			
<b>II</b>	Male	24	49.93	1.63	0.72	Hypothesis II is accepted
	Female	26	51.11			

**\*\* Significant at 0.01 level**

6. Table 1 revealed that the t-value between scholars and students came to be 4.10 which was significant at 0.01 level. There was significant difference in the attitude of scholars and students of central university of Jammu towards internet usage. Therefore hypothesis I There will be no significance difference in the attitude of male and female university students towards internet usage was rejected.
7. Table 1 also indicated that there was no difference in the attitude of male and female university students towards internet addiction, as male and female university students used internet comparably. So the hypothesis II stated that “there will be no significant difference in the attitude of male and female university students towards internet usage was retained

### **DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

After the collection of data it was found that the average time spent on internet per day by undergraduate and post graduate student was 4-5 hours (1-2 hour to pass time to chat with friends, followed by 40-50 minutes for shopping, 40- 50 minutes downloading songs, 30- 40 minutes for news and only 20-30 minutes for educational purpose). On the

other hand it was found that the research scholars (M.Phil/Ph.D.) spend 7-8 hour on internet (180-200 minutes for research purpose (review of related literature and other related information) followed by 30-40 minutes for e-mail, 40-50 minutes for news update, they use 10-20 minutes for downloading music followed by 20-30 minutes for online shopping and spent 20-30 minutes to chat with friends. The result was similar to the previous investigation by Odell et al. (2000) and Anderson (2001) showed that Internet access time by students also differed according to the field of study. This finding indicated that students in computer science seemed to browse the Internet longer as compared with other students possibly because of the nature of their course which required frequent use of the computer. Meanwhile, engineering students spent more time on the Internet compared with science and agriculture students.

UG/PG students used Search engines (Google and Yahoo), educational sites and online shopping sites for searching information. But on the other hand the research scholars used web pages, search engines, Educational sites, magazines cites and other related sites, the use of academic databases such as Proquest, university E-learning resources, university web resources (Library), and university library publications. There is a greater tendency for scholars and the students to use the popular search engines such as Yahoo and Google. The use of information services such as ERIC and other search engines such as Dogpile, Altavista, Alltheweb, Ask.com and Infomine were low. The findings were supported by Ciglaric et al. (1998) believes that the popularity of the Internet as a teaching-learning tool increased with the introduction of the web browser, which uses a hypertext concept.

The Internet provides plenty of information across various disciplines, including education. It is important for students to search, identify, evaluate, and use these information sources for their educational purposes. It is recommended here that students maximum use internet to pass time, to keep in touch with friends, to download music and movies and less use for educational purpose similar results were obtained by Luambano and Nawe (2004) found that students who used the Internet did not use it for academic purposes. But on the other hand research scholars used internet for research purpose and other research related information followed by e-mail, jobs, news and spend less time on social networking sites. The results were similar to the results drawn by Chan and Fang (2007) on young people in Hong Kong found that the Internet was used for different purposes such as for making friends, shopping, listening to music, having fun, completing homework, and searching for information on further education. Aslanidou and Menexes (2008) who collected samples from 418 high school students in four Greek cities found that Internet access remained at a very low level and was insufficiently used for academic purposes.

Students and scholars from central university of Jammu faced almost similar problems in the usage of internet. Problems like slow internet connections, insufficient awareness, inaccessibility of the internet laboratory, inadequate points of use and temptation of addiction are the common problems. Similar results were found by Luambano and Nawe (2004) investigated the Internet use by students of the University of Dares Salaam. Their findings revealed that the majority of the students were not using the Internet due to the inadequacy of computers with Internet access, lack of skills in Internet use and slow speed of computers.

Students mostly have positive perception about the quality of learning through the Internet. All (100%) students feel that they can use the Internet to learn at anytime. A majority of them also feel that the quality of their work improves when using the Internet and that their reading is up to date through the use of Internet. Most of the sample is able to find information from around the world, and that they are at par with students around the world. But on the other hand it was observed by the investigators during the study that the internet usage on social networking sites will degrade the quality of education. Usage of Internet has degraded writing skills, problem solving skills of the students and leads to duplicity of the work. When they chat with friends they do not bother about the language and spelling. E.g. they use gd---for---good, congtrtz---for---congratulation etc. Internet usage has the potential to improve the quality of education. This is supported by Laurillard (1992) who postulated that computer-based learning can increase understanding of theoretical and critical concepts.

Table 1 revealed that the t-value between scholars and students came to be 4.10 which was significant at 0.01 level. There was significant difference in the attitude of scholars and students of central university of Jammu towards internet usage. Therefore hypothesis I There will be no significance difference in the attitude of male and female university students towards internet usage was rejected. It indicates that scholars and students differ significantly in their attitudes towards the internet usage. The mean score of the scholar found to be 53 which is greater from the mean score of students i.e. 47.13.

Table 1 also indicated that there was no difference in the attitude of male and female university students towards internet addiction, as male and female university students used internet comparably. So the hypothesis II stated that “there will be no significant difference in the attitude of male and female university students towards internet usage was retained. It means that male and female students did not differ in internet usage. The results were similar to the study of Amandeep (2005) found that there was no significant difference between the internet addiction of male and female university students.

### **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION**

The findings of the study listed above have important implications in our university in particular and for the higher education institutions in general. Some implications are mentioned below:

1. In order to make more beneficial and effective, awareness programme for maximum use of Internet should be undertaken by the Information Technology Institutions, Libraries and Information Centers of Universities.
2. In the present study most of the respondents are getting knowledge of accessing internet from their institutions. Proper vigilance in the computer laboratory should be ensured and also provide on-line facilities for students, their departments take some steps to increase the number of systems with higher configuration and speed of access internet.
3. To prevent misuse of Internet facilities, proper monitoring of services should be ensured as restricted sites should be blocked.
4. The users are facing lots of problem in accessing internet for academic purpose or collecting other information. To maintain their interest towards the internet the University must ensure adequate and continuous uninterrupted power supply and appropriate internet connections and usage in the laboratory.

5. Higher education institutions provide ICT supported learning environment, various platform and equipment which are essential to enhance the teaching-learning, communication skill and interaction with different people from different cultural backgrounds.
6. Students should be encouraged by the college/university professors to develop e-content and must contribute to the community/nation through government sponsored schemes like SWAYAM, e-ACHARYA, e-PATHSHALA etc. And teacher should train the students how to develop online contents and how it can be uploaded.
7. UGC/AICTE should setup guidelines for starting online courses/programmes like MOOC for UG/PG students at the college or university level.
8. At college level there should be the provision of separate ICT classes for students. At college level there should be the provision of online courses, teleconferencing, video conferencing and virtual classes.
9. The students faced problems related to internet usage so they advised that there should be internet speed with high bandwidth, More computers should be provided in computer labs, Internet service should be provided 24 hours a day, Internet and computer training should be provided to general public, Internet should be used positively and Useless websites should be blocked by the University.

## CONCLUSION

The study showed that the use of the Internet has created a great impact upon the scholars of Central University of Jammu in their research and academic works. It is clear from the study that the younger generation has used the internet for entertainment and to pass time with friends and make less use for accessing to the relevant information regarding academic and research work. So these students should be encouraged to make adequate use of internet for their educational purpose. The internet in higher education should be used to enhance the quality of academics and research work. The present study also found that internet plays a key role in day today life.

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