



# **Information-Seeking Behavior in Generation Y: A Comparative Analysis of Scholars and Students in University of Kashmir**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*In the present society information acts as the key component, where almost each and everything is dependent on it (information). Therefore, the need arises to get acquainted of one's own requirement (what kind information we need), identify the sources (i.e, from where obtaining required information) and utilize it in proper means are must. With the aim of collective well being. Thus, Information seeking behavior (ISB) is the natural and necessary mechanism of human existence. It can be considered as the pattern of various research scholars (R.S), students (Sts.) etc in collecting information according to their need(s). Although access to information is one of the important factor in obtaining progress. The present study is an attempt to investigate the information seeking patterns and the approach of Generation Y (Research scholars, Students) present in University of Kashmir. In order to elicit response questionnaire was used as data collection tool. To find out the importance of various information sources which cater their needs and information gathering activities and analyze the impact of information technology on their ISB.*

**Keywords :** *Information, Information seeking behavior (ISB), Scholars, Students, Sources, Technology.*

## **I INTRODUCTION**

The term information and communication are very close to each other that they are consider to be of the same meaning .The verb “Inform” normally is used in the sense to communicate (i.e, to report, relate or tell) and comes from Latin verb informare, which meant to shape (form) an idea (**Hobart and schiffman,1998**). Although **Debons (1988)** defined information as the cognitive state of awareness (as being informed) of given representation and physical form. This physical representation facilitates the process of knowing. Thus information is all knowledge, ideas, facts, data and imaginative works of mind which are communicated formally or informally in any format



(**Chen and Heron, 1982**). In addition to this, it (Information) can be considered as the data which is processed or in other words we can say that data is the raw material of information and after processing it becomes information. Everybody needs information in everyday life. Information seeking differs from person to person depends upon their information needs. It plays an important role in how we cope with problems in our everyday life. Thus, ISB refers to the way people search for and utilize information (**case, 2002**). It is the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking, and information use (**Wilson,2000**). The present study focuses on the information seeking behavior in Generation Y (These are technologically advanced and labeled as visual learners, exploring innovations and demanding immediate satisfaction). They behave differently, they exhibit different social characteristics and have different learning styles. Generation Y is more individualistic than earlier Generations and lacks reading habits. They may be computer literate but not necessarily information literate (**Weiler, 2004**).

## **II LITERATURE REVIEW**

During past 30 years a considerable amount of literature has been produced dealing with information needs and information seeking behavior of an individual or a group of individuals. Information seeking behavior is a broad term, which involves a set of actions that an individual takes to express information needs, seek information, evaluate and select information, to satisfy information needs. **Wilson (1981)** was possibly the first researcher to present the concept of ISB. It can be taken as the product of certain elements (assumptions, the kinds and structure of problems etc) of information use environment within which people operates and work. Although **Combes (2007)** focused on the usage of technology among the students to fulfill their information needs and also noticed that they show ease with multi tasking while using a range of technologies. Furthermore, It has been noticed that Generation Y students view the virtual space of the world wide web as the part of their information universe. As they mostly prefer to do their tasks/ research outside what the library has to offer on their website mainly because on library websites, the different resources are categorized into different areas. The students prefer to search on Google and bypass the more sophisticated and time consuming searching on library website (**Lippincott, 2005**). Besides this, Generation Y prefer working in teams and they can combine team work with technological skills with the results. They see the internet as an important part of their lives which indicates that their use of technology plays a major role in education as well as their personal life (**Holiday and Qin, 2004**). Meanwhile, the term “Infobesity” used by (**Bell, 2004**) suggests that student’s searching habits are similar to those of consuming fast food. In this case author claims that Google is supplying users with a junk of information. He further points out that students want quick access to information, regardless of the quality or the type of information they seek. Infact the pew internet study (**Jones and Fox, 2009**) reveals that teenagers and Generation Y would mostly like to use the internet for entertainment and for communicating with friends and family. This study draws its results from telephone. Interviews were also conducted to collect data. This study further reveals that over half of the internet users are



between 18 and 44 years old. On the other hand ETS (**Educational Testing Service, 2006**) tested 6,300 students on their information and communication abilities . Results revealed that when students search large databases only 50% of the participants used a search strategy that eliminates irrelevant results. In the same year (**Keller, 2006**) conducted a study on an examination of user's behavior during web information task in order to understand the characteristics of information seeking tasks on the web and how the tools of current web browsers, are being used within information seeking tasks. On other hand an investigation by **Fidzani (1998)** conducted in university of Botswana, Gaborone to determine the information needs and information seeking behavior of graduate students. Findings revealed there was a heavy reliance on library books, text books and journals as sources of information .While as a web based survey was conducted to determine whether newly enrolled students studying economic and management sciences at Stellenbosch University are exposed to technology. A total of 1370 students participate in the survey. The complete response rate of the survey was 23.3%.The findings revealed that 88% of the students frequently use a wide range of information technologies. Approximately 78% of the students grew up with computers at home (**Wessels and steenkamp, 2009**).

### **III PROBLEM**

The problem taken up for the study was to investigate the information seeking patterns and the approach of Generation Y (Research scholars and Students) of Kashmir University towards the information, and specifically focus on the impact of technology on their ISB.

### **IV OBJECTIVES**

- To find out the importance of various information sources which cater their needs.
- To study their information gathering activities.
- To analyze the impact of information technology on their ISB.

### **Methodology**

In order to obtain set objectives a questionnaire was drafted after a comprehensive literature search. The questionnaire contained all the relevant queries, that provided required information . 40 questionnaires were distributed in an equal ratio among scholars and students of both the departments (Earth science and Environmental science (Env. Sc.). 33 (15 Research scholars and 18 Students) respondents provided their input for the present study. Which included 7 Research scholars, 9 students from Earth science department and 8 Research scholars, 9 students from Environmental science department. Thus an overall response rate is 82.50% . The collected data was be tabulated and analyzed to draw useful inferences.



### **Scope**

The scope of this study is limited to the Research scholars and students of two departments (Earth science and Environmental science) of University of Kashmir.

### **Data Analysis & Interpretation**

**Table 1: use of information sources**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>Opts</b>	<b>Scholars</b>	<b>Students</b>
Which of the following Information sources you mostly prefer to use.	A1	15%	20%
	A2	35%	40%
	A3	30%	25%

**Opts:** Options      **A1:**Library      **A2:** world wide web      **A3:** Both

As indicated in the table 1 highest 40% of students followed by 35% of research scholars make use of the www as the main source of information. While as 30% of scholars and 25% of students prefer both (library and www). On the other hand it can be seen only 20% of students and 15% of research scholars are making use of library as the main source of information.

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>Opts.</b>	<b>Research Scholars</b>	<b>Students</b>
Do you prefer to use social websites as the major source of information.	B1	55%	70%
	B2	25%	15%
	B3	25%	15%
	B4	30%	25%
	B5	10%	45%
	B6	15%	5%

**B1:** Yes      **B2:** No      **B3:** Research Gate

**B4:** Google Scholar Citations

**B5:** Face book

**B6:** others

**Table 2: Use of social website**

As evident from Table 2 highest 70% of students followed by 55% of research scholars are making use of social websites as primary source of information which includes highest 45% of students making use of face book followed by 30% of research scholars making use of Google scholar citations. While as 25% of scholars are making use of research gate and 15% of students are making use of the same . Table 2 also clearly depicts that 15% of scholars and only 5% of students are making use of other websites.

QUESTIONS	Opts.	Research Scholars	Students
Are you aware about citation Databases.	C1	45%	25%
	C2	35%	60%
	C3	25%	15%
	C4	10%	10%
	C5	10%	0%

**C1:** Yes    **C2:** No    **C3 :** Google Scholar    **C4 :** Web of Science    **C5 :** Scopus

Table 3 shows 45% of scholars and 35 % of students are aware about citation databases. Further table 3 depicts 25% followed by 10% are making use of Google scholar, web of science, Scopus respectively .

**Table 3: Use of Citation Database**

QUESTIONS	opt	Research Scholars	Students
Do you use any alerting Service.	D1	30%	20%
	D2	40%	65%
	D3	20%	10%
	D4	5%	10%
	D5	5%	0%

**D1:**Yes    **D2:**No    **D3 :**Email alerts    **D4 :**Table of Content alerts    **D5:** Saved search alerts



**Table 4: Use of Alerting Services**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>opt</b>	<b>Research Scholars</b>	<b>Students</b>
Which of the following full text Databases is most relevant to your work	E1	35%	40%
	E2	20%	30%
	E3	10%	10%
	E4	15%	5%

**E1:** Emerald    **E2:** Science direct    **E3:** Pubmed

**E4:** All

Table 4 results indicates 30% of scholars and 20% of students are making use of alerting services which includes highest 20% of email alerts followed by 5% of table of content alerts and saved search alerts. On the other hand 20% of students use alerting (10% email, 10% table of content) alert.

**Table 5: Use of Full Text Database**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>opt</b>	<b>Research Scholars</b>	<b>Students</b>
Which among the following you prefer to enrich your knowledge	F1	45%	30%
	F2	25%	50%
	F3	10%	5%

**F1:**Conference

**F2:**websites

**F3:**Academic forums and discussions

Table 5 shows that highest 40% of students, 35% of scholars are making use of emerald as the most relevant full text database. Where as 30% of students, 20% of scholars prefer to use science direct. 10% of scholars and students consider pubmed as the most relevant one. On the other hand 15% of scholars, 5% of students find all of the above mentioned databases as the relevant to their work.

**Table 6: Preference to information sources**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>Opt</b>	<b>Research Scholars</b>	<b>Students</b>
I prefer following formats for obtaining journal articles	G1	5%	20%
	G2	20%	25%
	G3	55%	40%

**G1:** Electronic

**G2:** Print

**G3:** both



Table 6 indicates that for enriching knowledge highest 45% of scholars followed by 25% lowest 10% prefer conferences, websites and Academic forums and discussions while as highest 50% of students followed by 30%, 5% use websites, conferences and Academic forums and discussions respectively for the same purpose.

**Table 7: Preference to Formats**

Table 7 shows that 5 of scholars, 20 of students prefer electronic format. On the other hand 20% , 25% of scholars students prefer print format meanwhile highest 55% of scholars followed by 40% of students prefer to make use of both (electronic, print) formats

QUESTIONS	Opt	Research Scholars	Students
I prefer following formats for obtaining journal articles	G1	5%	20%
	G2	20%	25%
	G3	55%	40%

**V FINDINGS**

The results of the study revealed that highest 40% of students prefer to make use of www mostly as the source of Information but still 20% consider library. Despite of this, 30% of research scholars prefer to make use of both (www as well as library). Further the study revealed that 70% of students consider social websites as the major source of information. Facebook is highest rated by the students as compared to this only 55% of research scholars consider it as the major source of information and give more preference to Google scholar citation among the listed social websites. The study also provides insights regarding respondents awareness level about citation databases and shown that scholars are more aware than students. But both (scholars and students) are making use of Google scholar at highest level. Similarly both are making use of email alerting services at a great level. Although the full text database they found most relevant is Emerald followed by science direct. Besides this, 50% of students, 45% of scholars are making use of websites, conferences respectively to enrich their knowledge and also they (scholars, students) prefer both (electronic, print) formats to acquire article

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