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**ONLINE DATABASES: A STATE-OF-THE-ART LITERATURE REVIEW**

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**Abstract:**

*With the introduction of ICT the libraries are shifting their role from the custodian of traditional information resources to the provider of service-oriented digital information resources. All the library activities have changed the way from traditional to digital. In these context e-resources plays important role for the academicians especially after the pandemic. A new way of searching information became also exposure with the introduction of online databases. Online database is a product of information retrieval services provided by producers of online databases in which searches are carried out by means of a local computer that interacts with far-off systems containing information contents. A large number of publications by various authors at national and international level reflect the interest in online databases. Reviews of literature on Online Databases have been done in the past by a few authors. In the present investigation the researcher has made an attempt to highlight these selected review of literature published on online databases and authored by Indian and foreign authors. Various views have been given by authors regarding online database through different studies. However, considering the contributions in the recent times, a more comprehensive review is attempted here. The study would help researchers, academicians and practitioners to take a closer look at the awareness, use and applicability of the online databases in academic activity.*

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**Keywords:** *Online Database, Review of Literature, E-Resources, Literature Review, Use of Online Databases*

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**Introduction:**

Reviewing literature is a unique, significant and crucial step of the research which includes systematic writings and covering all relevant aspects of the research on the given topic. It requires knowledge of the use of the indexes, abstracts, ability to organize the collected data meaningfully describe, relate each source to the subject of the enquiry, present the organized review logically and last, but by no means least to correctly cite

of all sources mentioned. (Afolabi, 1992) There are variety of purposes behind the reviewing of related literature in research are to identify gaps in the literature, to identify the similarity between the area, to increase the breadth of knowledge of the subject area, to avoid reinventing the wheel, to identify the people those are working in same fields, to identify where research reached, to identify opposing views, to put the work into perspective, to identify information and ideas that may be

relevant to the project etc. With the current development of computer technology have drastically changed the way in which information is collect, retrieve and disseminate. As an impact of these technologies, manual information retrieval systems have been transformed into automated retrieval systems and have emerged as an excellent tool for information retrieval. This transition expanded the scope of information retrieval systems from automated retrieval systems to online retrieval systems and considered as a significant source of information in academics. A new way of searching information became exposure with the introduction of online databases. The present study attempts to explore the literature reviews regarding the Online Databases published at Indian and also with International level to clarify its various dimensions like its awareness, use, perceptions, factors those are affected on its usage etc. Reviews have been organized into different facets to present an insight into various issues and aspects pertaining to the current research investigation. Present study is carried out as a part of on-going PhD research work of the researcher.

### **Literature Review Theoretical Framework:**

Considering the topical scope of the present study various indexing, abstracting, full text, open access and citation databases were browsed to find out different literature on the given topic. The following overview of the literature is pertaining to the issue of various subscribed and open access online databases and its usage and organized into following different frameworks in chronological order. The collection of literature has been reviewed till 2022.

- a. **Awareness and Use of Online Databases**
- b. **Perception and access Management Online Databases**
- c. **Comparison and Analysis of Online Databases.**
- d. **Impact of Online Databases use on academic and extension activities**
- e. **Problems faced by users while using Online Databases/ Barriers to Online Database use**

### **a) Awareness and Use of Online Databases:**

Several user studies have been carried out by the students, research scholars and teachers of the different institutes, colleges and universities all around the world focusing on the awareness and use of online databases.

**Hase, V. L. et al. (2021)** during the COVID pandemic to investigate the availability, awareness, and use of online databases subscribed by the RIT Institute of Technology, Islampur, Maharashtra. A mixed research approach used for the study and data collected through online questionnaire from the 128 faculty members of the selected engineering college. Study found that more than 90 percent of the respondents were aware of the Online Databases subscribed by the institutional library and ASME database, Science Direct, IEEE, Springer link are highly used databases. Majority i. e. 75% of the respondents was using E-books as a source of information from an online database. The study also found that insufficient internet bandwidth, lack of technical skills and guidance etc. are the major hardens faced by the users while accessing online databases. Finally, the study made it very clear that most of the users are satisfied with the Online Databases provided by the institutional library.

**Wong, L, Mohamad Shakire, et. al. (2018)** in the cross-sectional survey study among university medical students show

that the students are aware about the availability of online academic databases and medical journals as sources of scholarly information, but they have low perceived usefulness and low usage practice of these databases and journals. Availability of full text subscriptions was found to be an important factor in using online databases. Study suggest for increasing training of medical students, especially creating awareness of available academic databases and on ways to perform searches in online academic databases and medical journals so that they can obtain the highest quality information.

**Upadhyay, Ashok Kumar and Deepmala (2018)** explore the usage of online databases in University of Delhi as well as purpose on satisfaction level. It shows that majority of the library users from Delhi University are using various online databases and out of that Taylor & Francis and Science Direct are the most accessible databases. Study suggested that information literacy programs and user education are very much needed for proper utilization of online databases.

**Larson, Agatha Gifty (2017)** explained that electronic databases worked as backbone for any library and libraries spent a large amount to purchase electronic databases. The result shows that the majority of the respondents were aware of the databases to access their information needs at university of Ghana, number of faculty members were utilize the online databases and has knowledge about it and they have utilize it for the research and other educational activities. Even though there were few obstacles faced by them which effects on the use of databases. Few recommendations were suggested effective and efficient use of the databases.

**Verama, Sapna (2016)** also attempted a study to explore the awareness level and usage of online databases by postgraduate students of University of Delhi. Most of the respondents are using online databases provided by the Central Science Library and having awareness. Respondents basically use online databases to update their knowledge. It revealed from the study

that Science Direct, Web of Science and Springer Link are most preferable databases. It is suggested that libraries should provide training sessions for proper utilization of the subscribed databases.

**Khan, Saima and Sudharma Haridasan (2015)** revealed use of online databases by the users of faculty of Arts in Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and University of Delhi. Finding shows that users of University of Delhi are more aware and much use of online databases compared to users of AMU. The main purpose is teaching and research behind the use and access of online databases. It revealed from the study that the users are more reliable and dependents on print resources. Some databases are used widely such as JSTOR and Annual Review, Training of users and staff is much needed.

Another study of **Deepmala and Khan, M.T.M. (2014)** elaborated the use of online journals and purpose of accessing online journals by the M.Phil and PhD students of Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh (India). A survey method is selected to complete the study in which a well-structured questionnaire is circulated to collect the necessary data. It revealed that Emerald, J-STORE, were highly preferable databases to access the e-journals. Majority of the students are aware about the UGC - INFONET journals consortium but they have face lack of training and down loading problems.

Study in IRAN done by **Anaraki and Babalhavaeji (2013)** found that the utilization level of students in three universities, that is Tehran University of Medical Science (TUMS), Iran University of Medical Science (IUMS) and Shahid Beheshti Medical University (SBMU) were lower than the average and those who are not aware of the existence of the Integrated Digital Library (IDL) portal used general search engines to meet their information needs. According's to the findings, students of Tehran University of Medical Science (TUMS) used EndNote, Elsevier, Thomson, Scopus and ProQuest databases mostly. The respondents admitted that their lack of awareness about

the IDL was their most significant problem. Most of the students expressed the effect of the IDL on the academic activities.

**Dukic, Darko (2013)** has described that the main purpose of the study was to determine the use of online databases by Croatian University teachers to what extent. We know that online databases work as research tools and how librarians are playing their important role for the promotion of online databases. It revealed from the study that online databases are considered as important documents, but they are unable to be used frequently in comparison to other Countries. They faced various problems while using the databases. On the other hand some solutions were also provided to fulfill the needs of users efficiently.

**Singh, Krishna kumar (2012)** aims to find out the level of utilization of electronic information resources and services by the library users of the Management Colleges in NCR, India'. It revealed that the majority of academic community use Bibliographic databases and web based resources Emerald Management Xtra, EBSCO Business Source Complete, Science Direct are mostly preferred resources. It also resulted that users are satisfied with the use of electronic information resources.

Further **John and Gandhi (2012)** discussed the use of online medical databases by medical professional in Bugbane City. Survey also describe the awareness of end users about the kind of databases available, difficulty faced in accessing those databases, relevancy of search results. It is also found that database for the requirement of information is the best strategy, which depends on awareness of the users about the databases. Lastly is it suggested that need of training to get the relevant information from the subscribed as well as open access databases.

**Omotayo, B. O. (2010).** Investigate the level of awareness and use of online database by academics of Kaduna State University (KASU), Nigeria. Study find

outs the purposes of using online databases and discovering factors which are discourage academics from using online databases. Survey method used with guided questionnaire along with field note for both interview and observation for data collection. Findings of the study showed that the most of the academics are aware about the online databases by the university library. It is also discovers that; information literacy, internet and ICT skills formed the major discouraging factors which hinders the usage of online databases. The study recommended that; University library should conduct regular information literacy & ICT training for the academics, provide strong and uninterrupted internet access to academics in the Campuses. Users should develop their search skills, knowledge of subject coverage area of the databases and ICT skills.

**K Novak, et. al (2010)** attempted an online survey to explore the awareness and use of evidence-based medicine (EBM) databases in Croatia and found that respondents known about the EBM databases, but they used mostly non-EBM databases. Study concludes that there is a low awareness about the EBM which need educational interventions about EBM for the benefit of health care in Croatia.

#### **b) Perception and Access Management of Online Databases**

**S. B., S., & Devi, B. M. (2019)** analyzed the use of online databases as a tool for research among the Science research scholars at the University of Kerala. The result of the study shows that the majority of the research scholars (45.16%) were moderately aware of online databases and more than 50% of the scholars used online databases daily to up-to-date information. The majority of the researchers (57.42%) used advanced search methods and a fewer respondents (4.52%) used expert search method. A greater part of the respondents (64.52%) opined that online databases are very influential for research and no one stated that it is not at all influential. The study concludes with recommendations to

ensure the effective and efficient use of the databases.

**Tyagi (2011)** surveyed to examine the scientists' perception of information resource usage patterns, access to types of sources and to scientific libraries, and use of particular information technologies by the scientists of Pharmacopoeial Laboratory for Indian Medicine (PLIM). It is noted that there is significant use of electronic information sources mainly for research purposes, and also respondents have given top priority for this purpose. Study revealed that effective use of these electronic information sources for retrieving needed information will have a profound impact on the quality of research output of the scientists. The result of the study finds out that the majority of the scientists have average skill in the use of e-databases.

**Tanya Cothran (2011)** study examined that the graduate students of Twin Cities campus of the University of Minnesota perceived Google Scholar to be a resource that is useful and easy to use. A survey explores the perceptions of Google Scholar as part of three research process. Majority of the participants had used Google Scholar at least once before, and it is found that usefulness, loyalty, and to a lesser extent, perceived ease of use, were positively and significantly related to the graduate students. This research showed that technology acceptance model is an applicable model for predicting graduate student use of Google Scholar, which can help academic librarians seeking to understand graduate student acceptance of new information sources.

**Upadhyay, Navin and Chakraborti, Hirak Kanti (2008)** described library statistics reveals that the majority of the patrons of the library use remote access to search online journals and databases as more. Resources are available online. Over the past decade use patterns have totally changed. The respondents use UGC Infonet, INDEST and University Library for their databases.

**c. Evaluation, Comparison and Analysis of Online Databases.**

**Chattopadhyay, P. and Halder, B. K. (2022)** are described UGC established a dedicated Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE) to promote high-quality publications in reputed journals that would develop an approach and methodology for identification of good quality journals to prevent publication in sub-standard journals. The aim of the UGC CARE is to create and maintain a Reference List of Quality Journals for all academic purposes. This study measures the UGC CARE listed LIS journals statistically and mathematically. Current list of the UGC CARE journals in the field of Library and Information Science are found and according to that list the whereabouts of each and every journal is being consulted from different perspectives like descriptive analysis of listed LIS journals, and frequency of publications, by giving various tables highlighting different aspects of Informetrics measurement study.

**Singh A K, & Mukherjee B (2018)** attempts tried to understand how the licenses of commercial publishers support resource optimization. Five international publishers namely Elsevier, EBSCO, Sage, Springer, and Taylor & Francis were identified and analyzed their agreements. Study indicates that core part of the negotiations still remain price, IP access, display, ILL/document supply, etc. while important issues like perpetual access, archiving, self-archiving, copy of individual articles and share the same for non-commercial use by authorized users. A greater awareness of this to library managers is essential. It was suggested that librarians must be acquainted with the clause of the license agreement of commercial publishers and must negotiate to that extend so that the access should be uninterrupted.

**Upadhyay, Ashok Kumar and Deepmala (2016)** attempted the general idea about the Online Databases, its types, characteristics and searching techniques to enhance the utilization of online databases. Through the internet it can be searched

beyond the geographical boundary. Online databases are an important element for the academic and research community.

**Vishwakarma, P., & Mukherjee, B. (2014)** intended that to identify the strengths and weaknesses of LIS journals of SAARC countries. Selected journals have been evaluated by applying 30 various criteria's based on the current measures used by Thompson Reuter, SCOPUS, SciELO, LISA, LISTA, etc. The result indicates that there are a considerable number of journals being published in India since long time, but only a few journals are qualitatively strong. The review policy as mentioned in documentation, subject coverage can be considered as their strength, the geographic non-diversity of members in Editorial Board, contributors are their weakness. Most of journals are indexed in LISA and LISTA, however no journals are yet to include in JCR. Overall, to cope-up with international standard journals need to consider their publication policy thoroughly. The findings of the study seems to be useful for academics to know the list of journals which adhere to the quality requirements of LIS discipline; librarians to know the core LIS journals of SAARC countries in LIS discipline; policy makers to measure the quality of publications. LISA and LISTA are two major databases where journals are indexed. No journals of these regions are yet to index in WOS and SCOPUS (except *ALIS* & *DJLIT*). It is suggested that to include journals in the international databases like SCOPUS, WOS, journal should adopt online submission system.

**Way D (2010)** examined the open access availability of Library and Information Science (LIS) research journals. Study reported that the Google scholar is very good source of availability of online information resources particular open access journals and magazines in the field of LIS. Google scholars provide bibliographic information for thousands of research articles and mostly available full text for users. Research scholars not submit their articles in any repository nor

archive them in proper form. Consequently, the Google scholars could not found full text articles those are not submitted, so, they not consulted by other researchers. Study recommended that the research articles should be indexed with any good indexing database or with the Google scholars for maximum readership. Apart from this the author declared the Google scholar a very good tool to find the open access literature.

**Walters, W. H. (2009)** did comparative evaluation of Google Scholar and 11 other bibliographic databases (Academic Search Elite, AgeLine, ArticleFirst, EconLit, GEOBASE, MEDLINE, PAIS International, POPLINE, Social Sciences Abstracts, Social Sciences Citation Index, and SocINDEX). Study evaluates the search performance of the selected databases by using multidisciplinary fields. The results of simple keyword searches are evaluated with reference to a set of 155 relevant articles identified in advance. Study found that Google Scholar performs better than most of the subscription databases in terms of both recall and precision. The study concludes with a discussion of a new approach to document relevance in educational settings—an approach that accounts for the instructors' goals as well as the students' assessments of relevance.

**Hannah M. Noll 2008.** In his study evaluated content coverage of three commercial databases (Arts & Humanities Citation Index, Bibliography of the History of Art and Art Full Text/Art Index Retrospective) and Google Scholar on the subject of art history. Databases are tested by using a bibliography method and evaluated based on Péter Jacsó's scope criteria for online databases. Of the 472 articles tested, Google Scholar indexed the smallest number of citations (35%), outshone by the Arts & Humanities Citation Index which covered 73% of the test set. This content evaluation also examines specific aspects of coverage to find that in comparison to the other databases, Google Scholar provides consistent coverage over the time range

tested (1975-2008) and considerable access to article abstracts (56%). Google Scholar failed, however, to fully index the most frequently cited art periodical in the test set. Finally, Google Scholar's total citation count is inflated by a significant percentage (23%) of articles which include duplicate, triplicate or multiple versions of the same record.

**Ekman, Richard, and Richard E. Quandt (1999)** the study reports on the experience of social scientists using JSTOR, a prototype World Wide Web application for viewing and printing the back archives of ten core journals in history and economics. The core economics journals in JSTOR at the time of this study included American Economic Review, Econometrica, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Journal of Political Economy, and Review of Economics and Statistics. The core history journals included American Historical Review, Journal of American History, Journal of Modern History, William and Mary Quarterly, and Speculum. In the future, JSTOR will expand to include more than 150 journal titles covering dozens of disciplines.

#### **d. Impact of Online Databases use on academic and extension activities:**

**Ansari, N. A., & Raza, M. M. (2018)** in their study examines the researcher's perception towards the usage of JSTOR database. The findings revealed that users of Library are obtaining a significant benefit from this database for their research works and other academic tasks. Article title was the most common searching techniques under simple search strategy used by the researchers. Study revealed that the 78% of the respondents do not use JSTOR, because they don't know JSTOR database and 10% prefer other database. It is also found that all the respondents satisfied

with the service of JSTOR. It was recommended that library should organizing literacy programs and orientation programs for new researchers so that they can be maximized the use of JSTOR database.

**Iroaganchi, Mercy A. and Izuagbe, Roland (2018)** in their study examined the role of online databases in faculty research output of six universities. Study revealed that JSTOR ProQuest, EBSCO host are frequently used databases. Various hindrances faced by Faculty members such as study power supply, information literacy skills. The study recommended that adequate funding for university libraries, provision of supportive means of power generation and increased user education will maximize the exploitation of subscribed databases.

**Musa, Hamza Ukastu and Others (2015)** opined that electronic resources are in trend than authentic print resources. It also revealed from the study that the most of the respondents use electronic databases for research activity and teaching various obstacles encountered while accessing electronic resources such as slow internet connectivity and lack of skill.

**Dahibhate, N. B., Khandare, Dhanishtha and Ajgond, Mahantesh (2013)** stated that researchers are depend on primary information sources and for that they are using online databases for proper information, they also mentioned that the online databases are more dynamic than offline databases which saves time, money, space and effort. Various online databases are available in the market for different subjects. They only need is that selection of online databases according to users and organization demand.

**e. Problems/ Barriers faced by users while using Online Databases:**

Common Problems/ Barriers of the different reviews are shown in Table I.

Further, a comparison among the earlier attempts to review literature on benchmarking is made using certain attributes.

Sr. No.	Author	Title of paper	Problems/Barriers
1	Iroaganchi, Mercy A. and Izuagbe, Roland (2018)	Access to Online Databases: Predicate for Faculty Research Output	Discussed the barriers to e-resources use:
2	Ray and Day (1998)	Student attitudes towards electronic information resources. Information Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of skills in how to use information sources</li> <li>• A lack of appropriate reward for electronic scholarly communication</li> </ul>
3	Tompsett and Alsop (1997)	A study of human communication issues Interactive scholarly, electronic journals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of consistent technical support and provision and a lack of time to be spent on searching for information</li> </ul>
4	Macias-Chapula (1995),	Development of a soft systems model to identify information values: Impact and barriers in a health care information system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study power supply</li> <li>• Information literacy skills</li> <li>• Lack of training</li> </ul>

Table I. Problems/barriers mentioned in earlier literature reviews

**Emmasiegbu, M. and Anaehobi, S. E. (2021)** identified the challenges to the use of electronic databases by Lecturers in Government-owned University libraries in Anambra State Nigeria. A descriptive survey design, with 749 sample respondents from two government-owned universities in Anambra State was selected through proportionate sampling technique. The findings of the study indicated that above 50% lecturers accepted these items as the electronic databases including; EBSCO Host, AJOL, JSTOR, HINARI, AGORA, OARE, DOAJ, DATAD, EBRARY and Web of Science. Lack of user education and guidance on use of databases and slow internet connectivity are the challenges encountered by the faculty members. Study recommended that greater publicity of the subscribed databases should be necessary and that improvement in the internet connectivity is required.

**Ugwu, Cyprian I. and Orsu, Emila Nkam (2017)** discussed about challenges faced by the students while they used

online information resources. The data were collected from 203 students through a questionnaire reveals that cyber cafes were preferred by the students to access online resources. They faced various problems such as lack of browsing skills, low internet bandwidth and lack of motivation.

**Nazir Tawfeeq, Wani Zahid Ashraf. 2015** carried out the literature review based study is to find out the constraints and hindrances faced by the users while accessing and using e-resources by the users of Indian institutes. The study reveals that the major problems faced by users particularly users of Indian institutes are more or less same, that is, Lack of Internet terminals, frequent power cuts, lack of orientation and short of professionals.

**Aina, Rachael Folashade (2014)** described that academic staff had inadequate awareness about electronic resources which directly affects the accessibility of electronic resources. There is a need to create awareness to the staff



towards the available electronic resources. To perform this work proper learning is required of academic staff. The management should be involve making the internet facilities available to the staff so that they can work properly and make the maximum utilization of the resources.

**Stewart and others (2005)** in their investigation on, "Accessibility and usability of online library databases" had indicated that most of the indexes and databases are largely compliant with common accessibility standards and permit the performance of common search tasks and to the accessibility of document content.

### Conclusion:

The literature survey of previous research and studies provides understandable information on online databases. Sufficient literature exists on various aspects and facets of online databases. This paper provides an overview of research on this topic. The use of electronic resources is increasing in information science field. In the literature review, several national and international studies on the awareness and use of online databases have been examined from different perspectives. There has been a proliferation of literature on the topic of online databases in the last 15 years, with some occasional exceptions as revealed in this literature review. The study covered different topics of online databases and their use, awareness, searching, problems and other relevant aspects. The usage data gathering for online library resources has increased its importance, as libraries and their users rely heavily on such resources. It helps to justify and plan expenditures and gauge the need for information literacy initiatives. The current work helped the researcher to draw findings or ideas that will create new perspectives for further study. It facilitates readers to know what has been done and what still needs to

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be accomplished on the topic. Thus, a literature review creates a more remarkable literary base to produce better and more in-depth research on the usability of online databases and add knowledge to the field of inquiry.

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