INTERNET FOR ALL: A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

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Admittedly, the internet's use has its marks in almost all walks of life, transforming and evolving various domains. Scholarly research is not an exception. Extensive use of internet across disciplinary boundaries has transformed the research domain in terms of its reach and volume. From information collection to disseminating the outcomes of their research, researchers rely greatly on the use of internet. Presently, internet seems an arena with a plethora of overwhelming information on almost all subjects to meet the information needs of the masses. This accelerates the reliance of researchers on internet to explore research sites like Science.gov, Google Books, BASE (Bielefeld Academic Search Engine), Google scholars, Research gate, Infotopia, Ebsco, Lycos, Altavista, Web Crawler, Infoseek etc. Institutional e-libraries are also serving the purpose of gateway to virtual knowledge banks. Information gathered online from research sites can serve multiple purposes. For example, for researchers, the information obtained from published research manuscripts can provide a theoretical base in the form of literature review to provide a crux of the extant research and facilitates in identifying the research gaps to open research avenues for future researchers.

Internet is not only an information giant but also provides efficient quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, software and mobile applications. For instance, *Instant Data Entry Application (IDEA)* for documents and records, *Google Forms and Zoho Survey* for questionnaire data collection, *Learning Space Tool Kit for focus groups, Sony ICD ux560* for interviews, *Quetext* for case studies, *Checkli* and *Forgett* for checklists etc. Similarly, Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk)—a crowdsourcing marketplace—also offers paid data collection services to researchers to collect survey data across global. In the same vein, it is interesting to mention the availability of various invaluable data analysis tools on internet for descriptive, inferential, diagnostic, predictive and statistical analyses, and data visualization. Like, *SAS*, *Teradata*, *E-Programming*, *Python*, *SQL*, *Matlab*, *RapidMiner*, *Qlik*, *Intesoft*, *Oracle Business Intelligence*, *Sisense* to name a few. While, plenty of software like *AMOS*, *SPSS*, *JMP*, *STATA*, *R*, *E-Views*, *NVivo*, *ATLAS.ti*, *XLSTAT*, *Graphpad*, *CAT*, *MAXQDA* and many more have facilitated qualitative and quantitative data analyses. Once published, research findings can easily get diffused online, assuring more virtual visibility. Internet has, thus, ensured the massive dissemination of knowledge with an ease for audience in bulk. Institutional or open access to the recorded information in electronic form has resulted in *Information Revolution*, giving an edge to researchers to quench their scholarly curiosity. Now, scholars around the world can search most of the information about the subject matters of their interest online. The reliance on internet for knowledge sharing has expanded massively during COVID-19. Webinars and virtual conferences using software like *Zoom*, *Teams*, *Bb Collaborate*, *Webex Meetings*, *Panopto* etc. have been proving the efficient and effective means to disseminate knowledge among researchers, which would otherwise have been not plausible. The attributes of internet use like the ease of use, efficiency, cost-effectiveness and quick dispersion of information have allured more and more researchers to adopt this mode. Their reliance on internet-mediated research has to get momentum. On realizing a dire need to deal with the methodological issues like the nature, confidentiality and consent of the participants, modes of virtual communication, scholars have set some guidelines for internet mediated research. Notably, the authorized bodies like the *Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR)* and *Institutional Review Boards (IRB's)* have complemented their extant guidelines realizing the increasing use of internet during COVID-19 for research purposes.

Recommendations

In the era of this unprecedented pandemic, the internet use has increased manifolds in many domains in general, and particularly in research. The constraints of in-person research activities have accelerated the reliance on the internet use. In the era of this new normal, the research community at the national level should be well abreast of the use of the available online research resources. This calls for the need to increase awareness among researchers. Institutions should offer training on the use of software and applications used for research purposes. The issues related to the internet use should be identified and solved to maximize the efficiency of the researchers.