



# Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of the Academics of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna

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## Abstract

As the usage of the library has been decreased due to incompatibility of the resource collection and user needs, a survey was carried out to identify the information needs and the information seeking behaviour of the academics of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna. Out of total 67 academics 45 were surveyed in the study. Data has been gathered using a structured questionnaire with both open and close ended questions. Data were analysed using quantitative methods. It was found that the main purposes for seeking information by the academics are to carry out their research work (100%) followed by to perform educational activities (96.4%), for general awareness (57%) and to carry out administrative tasks (14.5%). While journals/periodicals and the Internet considered as the most preferred sources of information to keep up to date in their research interests, attending conferences obtained the next highest rank. Scientific journals/periodicals are considered as the most preferred formal source, while meeting/seminar/conference is considered as the most important informal source. 57.6% of academics preferred journal articles either in printed or electronic form while 35.7% preferred digital form. Even though the introduction of IT to libraries affects the frequency of visits, majority (82.1%) indicated that still they use the library as a source of information. The findings revealed that majority (96.4 %) visit the library when a need arise. 50% of academics have not used the Inter Library Loan service of the library due to the unawareness. The highest percentage of respondents (35.7%) spent more than 10 hours per week to read e-mails for gathering information, while 32.1% spent more than 10 hours to scan journal articles.. Majority of the respondents suggested that the library should initiate necessary awareness programs for the users on important library resources and services and conduct training on how to use electronic resources effectively. As the respondents are much more rely on digital sources, library should take necessary steps to acquire more low cost, quality electronic sources of information, specially designed to developing countries in the world.

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