



Improving of Information Literacy level of Fresh Students (with reference to 2014 Intake of Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna)

K.T.S. Pushpakumara^a and S.L. Gammanpila^b

^a*Library, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna*

^b*Library, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna*

^a*sanathka@lib.ruh.ac.lk*

Abstract

The field of Agriculture is often interrelated with novel technologies. To keep them and to tackle with the challenges in higher education, agriculture students need to develop Information Literacy (IL) skills. As the majority of school libraries and public libraries of Sri Lanka are not well equipped with technologies and the qualified staff, school children face difficulties in developing their information literacy skills. This paper investigates the IL level of new students of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna. Employing a survey, 230 students from the new intake - 2014 were selected as the sample. Structured questionnaires were distributed among the 230 students at the library orientation. This study used the sample survey method. The overall response rate was 66.5%. The survey revealed that 90.2% of fresh students have accessed to internet before entering to the university. The majority of them (52.3%) had sometimes accessed to Internet. 66% of students had their own computers with Internet facility. 50.4% students used the internet for their academic work and entertainment. Findings reveal that Google Chrome (56.9%) and Mozilla Firefox (36%) are the most popular and widely used Web browsers. Google (88.8%) and Yahoo (24.2%) are most popular and widely used search engines among students in the intake 2014. The survey also found that they were not aware with the Web searching techniques. Majority of students (34%) used keywords to retrieve information while 23.4% of students have no idea regarding the web searching techniques such as Boolean search, phrase search and truncation search. 98.1% of students have used the school library while 62.1% of students have used the public Library for seeking information before entering the university. Majority of students (60.8%) used public library to read novels. Although they have used libraries, 81.6% of them had no experience of using the library catalogue. The study shows that fresh students are seriously lack of necessary IL skills. Majority of respondents (97.4%) have mentioned that they need to develop their IL skills. The study recommends that a carefully designed IL course to be introduced for all agriculture students at University of Ruhuna. In addition, importance of including "Information Literacy" as a subject module in the curriculum of undergraduate and postgraduate courses of agriculture in Sri Lanka are highlighted.

Keywords: *Information Literacy; Agriculture students; New intake*