

Usage evaluation of electronic resources in academic and research libraries in Ghana

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to investigate the usage of electronic resources within the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana (CARLIGH) in order to support subscription and budget decisions. This has become necessary because of the difficulty faced by institutions in paying subscription fee as a result of the continuous increase in subscription fee, financial constraints and high exchange rates.

Design/methodology/approach – The study is a quantitative research of electronic resource use covering six years. Full-text download statistics of ten most used electronic resources accessed by an average of 33 institutions were sampled from 27 databases and analysed to investigate level of usage. Six out of the ten electronic resources were analysed to evaluate cost per use over four years. Sampling was purposive. Data analysis and presentation were conducted using a descriptive method of analysis of simple frequency count, mean and percentages, while Microsoft Excel was used to organise data into tables and graphs.

Findings – Findings revealed an improved usage of CARLIGH-facilitated electronic resources. However, the rate of improvement declined by the year. Also, October and November recorded high usage, while January and May-August recorded low patronage. Finally, using a mean as a benchmark, it was ascertained that costs per use/article was less than \$0.98.

Research limitations/implications – Because of limited data evaluated, the research results may lack generalisation; hence, there is a need for further research.

Originality/value – This study will be useful in supporting librarians' decisions on continuous subscription, budget justification and promotion.

Keywords – Databases, Electronic journals, Usage statistics, Cost per use, Electronic resource management, Full-text downloads.

Paper type – Research paper