Use of databases and eBooks in international secondary schools in Hong Kong: a small scale survey

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This usage of online databases and eBooks in three international secondary schools in Hong Kong is investigated from the student perspective. Major issues relating to e-Resources surfaced include: student preferences for e-Resources, WWW or print materials; volume of use, and reasons for use; students' perceived retrieval ability; and ease of use of e-Resources. The implications of library policies and information literacy training are explored. The results raise issues that can assist school librarians to make informed decisions about e-Resource acquisitions and related library activities, such as the need for user education and promotion of e-Resources.

Databases; eBooks; secondary schools

Introduction

Online databases, eBooks and other web based developments have the potential to contribute to improved educational outcomes. Many school libraries in developed countries have significantly increased their access to online databases, eBooks and other digital resources in recent years. For example, the 2003 *School Libraries Journal Spending Survey* reported that most students in the United States had access to databases (e.g. Miller & Shontz, 2003)**.** 77% of librarians who responded to the 2006 *Survey* subscribed to online databases (Brewer & Milam, 2006). Accessing online databases can be an effective way to retrieve current and reliable information. Additionally, students using online databases can develop portable information-seeking skills that can be transferred to tertiary studies and the workplace. This paper focuses on use of online databases and e-Books in international secondary schools in Hong Kong. Anecdotal evidence indicates that while e-Resource use in these schools is increasing, there are concerns about their effectiveness.

Literature Review

This brief review of the literature was originally undertaken during November 2008 and subsequently updated. The literature was retrieved from a range of sources including the following: *ProQuest*, *LISA*, *ERIC*, *Library Literature Emerald*, and *Google Scholar*. It is not an exhaustive review, but provides an indication of trends in the use of databases and eBooks While the focus is on eResource use in secondary schools, where useful, sources have been drawn from other areas, e.g. academic library studies. For clarity, this review is divided into two parts: databases and eBooks.

Databases

There is a dearth of research addressing the use of electronic resources in secondary international schools in Hong Kong. In a small scale study in 2007 of a single international secondary school (Sinclair, Warning, Wong, & Chu, 2007; Warning, Chu, Wong, & Sinclair, 2008), usage statistics indicated that online databases were increasing in popularity. Feedback from teaching staff, especially from those who embedded the use of online resources into their assessment tasks was positive.

There are a numerous surveys on the use of eResources in academic libraries. A qualitative interview-based study (McDowell, 2002) identified outcomes based on use of eResources, including: expanded opportunities for students to access materials/information and changers in teaching approaches. He also noted that the growth of unregulated eResources created uncertainty concerning information quality and increase possibilities for plagiarism. Dounce (2008) suggests that online databases benefit both teachers and students. Apart from access to resources, learning to use and search a database helps students organize research and decide what data is relevant.

There are some other well-known advantages to eResources. Tenopir's survey of studies of online resources noted that "faculty and students use and like electronic resources and most readily adopt them if the sources are perceived as convenient, relevant, and time saving to their natural workflow" (Tenopir, 2003, p. iv). These include reduction of the time and location constraints imposed by library opening hours and physical materials. Materials contained in online databases are likely to be more reliable than information from

unregulated webpages (Brisco, 2006; Cooke, 2001). Digital collections save space and are relatively easy to maintain. When total processing and space costs are considered, electronic collections may also result in some overall reductions in library costs (Montgomery & King, 2002) although this may not apply to school libraries due to their smaller scale. Online databases offer enhanced search capabilities allowing users to searching in more sophisticated ways (Media and Methods, 2004).

eResources also pose challenges. Databases have their own interfaces so users need to learn different commands for different systems, which is time consuming (Pennsylvania State University, 2005). Remote access requires login and password, although an increasing number of database vendors that allow users access using IP addresses (Clumpner, 2004).

eBooks

There are some obvious advantages that eBooks have compared to traditional books, such as remote access, resistance to damage or loss (Coleman, 2004), and the ability to incorporate multimedia (Clyde, 2005). A range of studies have explored the use of eBooks and comparisons with traditional printed books. Most of these studies relate to tertiary education, looking at a single institution or a range of institutions.

The awareness of eBooks is increasing, but there is unwillingness by readers to embrace them completely. A survey conducted by the Rosemary Murray Library at Cambridge University showed that students broadly accepted eBooks, as long as they still had access to print copies (Makin, 2008). Only 28% of surveyed respondents at the University of Hong Kong preferred to use eBooks (Woo, 2005). At the College of Mount St. Joseph's Archbishop Alter Library, 39 percent of the respondents had used an eBook (Gregory, 2008). "The top five categories explaining why students had not used an e-book were awareness, preference for print, eyestrain, lack of need, and ease of use" (p. 269). A survey conducted by Abdullah and Gibb (2008) in a Scottish higher education institute showed that although most respondents were aware of eBooks, "a majority of students had not used an e-book before the survey" (p. 598). Similarly, in an online British survey of 3,916 readers, 85 percent of respondents were aware of eBooks, but only half of them had used them, 38 percent had bought at least one eBook, and 13 percent had borrowed an e-Book from a library (Gunter, 2005). The UK National E-Books Observatory study, a benchmarking survey of e-book usage and perceptions in more than 120 participating universities, noted that:

> Overall it has been demonstrated that e-book penetration is very strong (62 per cent of
> all students are already using them in connection with their scholarly work, as teachers
> or students), so the e-book revolution has already happened but clearly it has some way
> to go." (Nicholas, et al., 2008, p. 333)

Impediments to eBook adoption. A major problem with eBooks is that they may require special software or hardware (Clyde, 2005). Apart from inconvenience, users may require assistance. Other problems include: problems with browsing, and poor resolution, colour, brightness and contrast (Rao, 2004). Another issue is the "look and feel" of eBooks compared to the familiar print item (Wilson, 2002). Additionally, current eBook business models are complex and vary considerably. Publishers and aggregators offer libraries numerous pricing options for their titles, including purchase, subscription and book rental (Vasileiou, Hartley, & Rowley, 2009).

Research Design and Methodology

The study addressed the following research questions:
- How does online database and eBook use compare with use of other resources, eg books, the internet etc?
- What are the target group's perceptions towards online databases and eBooks in terms of ease of use, searching ability etc?
- Do databases assist students in their studies and assignments?
- Do teachers require students to use online databases to complete assignments?

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied. A 20-question online survey was administered to students in three international secondary schools (see Appendix). Most questions required multiple choice or Likert scale responses. There was also an open-ended question for students to add any other comments they wished to make. The survey instrument was pretested on volunteer students to ensure its validity. The survey was completed by 222 respondents, 219 of whom were from three schools. The three additional responses are not included in the results. Additionally, ongoing interviews were undertaken with the librarians at the target schools. These interviews included telephone interviews and email correspondence. In accordance with University of Hong Kong research ethics protocol, informed consent was obtained from the principals of the participating schools. The authors express their gratitude to the school librarians who provided valuable comments in interviews and also organised completion of the survey within their schools.

Limitations

This is a small scale study: the sample size is small and it involves only three international secondary schools in Hong Kong. The findings may not be generalizable to all international schools in Hong Kong. Additionally, as different international school libraries may subscribe to different online databases, students' views and perceptions towards the databases may vary among different schools. Similarly for eBooks, none of the target schools have eBook collections. Surveying schools that have eBook collections would provide different data and enable more complete comparisons to be drawn. The respondents were from all grades within secondary schools. Their responses have been aggregated.

Findings and Discussion

Databases

The following data was extracted from questions 4-12 of the online survey and supplemented the interviews with school librarians.

Table 1
Frequency of weekly database use n=219

Frequency	Percentage
1-3 times	38%
4-6 times	18%
7-9 times	8%
10 or more times	8%
Haven't used	28%

The majority of respondents (72%) use databases, but more than half of the user group use them 1-3 times per week. 28% of respondents make no use of databases.

Table 2
Database use by school n=219

School	Use	Non-use
	Percentage	
School A	67%	33%
School B	72%	28%
School C	80%	20%

While there are differences in the rates of use and non-use of databases among the three schools, the differences are not dramatic.

Table 3
Reasons for not using databases n=62

Reason	Percentage
Databases are not useful	35%
I don't know what databases are	19%
Others	46%

The lack of awareness of databases by almost one-fifth of database non-users indicates that they are not being promoted sufficiently. Of perhaps greater concern is the perception by more than a third of non-users that databases are not useful. This may also represent insufficient promotion, in terms of demonstration of the advantages of databases compared to other sources of information. Reasons listened under "others" include:
- "I do not need them"
- "There are better alternatives"
- "Internet is more convenient and useful"
- "Too complicated and too annoying to use…too many steps"
- "Inconvenient to access database"

Respondents' preference for the internet is not surprising, especially among "Generation Ys". Librarians face a constant challenge educating users about the advantages and disadvantages of the internet as an educational source. Many respondents voiced the complaint that databases are inconvenient to access: they need to identify suitable databases for their needs, are required to log in to their library accounts, remember passwords etc. Additionally, the databases may be difficult to use.

The search features are complicated and there may be many steps required to use the databases effectively. This problem was surfaced in the Pennsylvania State University study (2005) referred to earlier, where it was noted that the same search principles *cannot* be applied to different types of databases and that users needed to spend additional time to understand the structural design and search features of the information retrieval system before they search.

Moreover, some respondents stated that the teachers may not require them to use databases, and they would only use them when an assignment specifically required them to search particular databases.

Table 4
Subjects most commonly requiring database use

Subject	Respondents using Percentage
English	49%
Geography	41%
Biology	31%
History	29%

The range of subjects requiring use of databases was surprising. Matching the results from the previous table, one-third of respondents reported that none of their subjects requires them to use online databases.

Table 5
Most commonly used databases

Databaset	Respondents using Percentage
Global NewsBank	44%
Encyclopedia Britannica	37%
Gale (Infotrac)	25%
WorldBook	25%
WiseLearning	10%
Proquest	8%
EBSCOhost	6%

The most commonly used databases are: *Global NewsBank*, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Gale (Infotrac)* and *WorldBook*. *Global NewsBank* is a tailor-made database particularly designed for school libraries. Its collection covers all subject areas and supports a variety of curriculum topics. *Britannica* and *WorldBook* are longstanding general resources for school libraries, in both their previous print and contemporary digital incarnations. *WiseLearning* is a popular database in Hong Kong. Other databases, not included in the most popular list, such as *Grove Music Online* (3%) support niche areas of study.

Table 6
Attendance at database training n=219

Action	Percentage
Have attended	47%
Haven't attended	53%

Stated reasons for respondents not attending the training lessons include:
- eBook users want access to more eBooks
- "I don't know there was training lesson"
- "Never heard of database training from school"
- "Not necessary, database can be self-learnt"
- "Database is easy to use"
- "I don't know what databases are, so I don't attend any lesson"
- "I am not interested in databases"

Almost one third of respondents who have not attended database training claimed that their school does not provide training or they received no information about it. On the other hand, 10% of respondents regard databases as easy to use, so they do not need to attend training. They also stated that they will explore the online user guide if they have problems. 5% of respondents stated that as database training is not mandatory they do not attend. One school librarian explained that currently no training is provided to students as there is insufficient time for the library to prepare it. However the library provides guidance to students who express difficulties in using the databases. The librarian also reflected that the library is planning to hold training sessions, but the plan is in the negotiation stage with teachers since extra time is difficult to extract from students' rigid timetables.

At another of the surveyed schools, there are formal database training sessions for the teachers at the beginning of the year. The library only provides training for students if teachers request it. According to the librarian, not all the teachers take advantage of these demonstrations, so students have little chance to learn more about databases.

Structured database training is provided in the third surveyed school, but according to the librarian they are introductory lessons. To provide additional assistance to the students, the library organizes an annual visit to The University of Hong Libraries (HKUL). During this visit, HKUL provides database training. In addition, the library is now planning to organize an eResources workshop offered by the Hong Kong Public Library (HKPL), which provides access to a large suite of databases.

Ideally all the libraries would offer database training, but various resource and structural impediments restrict their ability to provide it.

Table 7
Access of databases from Home n=219

Action	Percentage
Use from home	49%
Do not use from home	22%
Didn't know remote access was available	29%

A major advantage of online databases is remote access that transcends time and place. Apart from reasons similar to those for non-use in general (preference for search engines, login complications etc.), the major reason for not using databases remotely was ignorance of its availability. This replicates results from the previous database study in Hong Kong (Sinclair, et al., 2007; Warning, et al., 2008) and highlights the importance of promotion.

Table 8
Preferences for information seeking n=219

	Most used	Frequently used	Sometimes used	Less used	Least used
Internet	71%	8%	4%	3%	14%
		79%			17%
Print materials	4%	45%	32%	16%	3%
		49%			19%
Online databases	12%	24%	34%	17%	13%
		36%			30%

CD-Rom	9%	10%	9%	28%	44%
		19%			72%
Others	4%	13%	21%	36%	26%
		17%			62%

The internet is clearly the most used information resource chosen by the respondents. Print materials still play an important role in obtaining information, which is natural as school libraries are primarily print based. Most of the respondents believe that it is sufficient to use web-based search engines to locate information. Accessing online databases is inconvenient and complicated, and searching skills required by online databases are more demanding than those required by search engines. Search engines usually retrieve larger numbers of documents than databases.

Table 9
Views on databases n=219

Statement	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally Agree
I think online databases are useful for learning	5%	4%	34%	37%	20%
		9%		57%	
I am confident in my own searching skills	4%	3%	29%	40%	25%
		7%		65%	
I think the use of online databases is relevant for my study	5%	3%	37%	36%	19%
	8%			55%	

These results are consistent with the results of earlier questions. A key issue is the ability of students to interrogate databases. Non-users had voiced concerns about the complexity of databases while the majority of respondents had *not* attended database training. Interviews with the librarians had surfaced their concerns about the ability of the students to retrieve and evaluate information effectively. These factors would suggest that there may be a misconception gap between respondents' perception of their searching abilities and their actual searching abilities. The percentage of neutral responses to the relevance of information in online databases is high (37%). This may reflect uncertainty over the quality of information retrieved from online databases. Respondents may consider that information contained in online databases is no more relevant or reliable than other information sources, such as internet and print materials. Alternatively they may consider that some information from databases is reliable and some is not. This issue could benefit from further investigation, e.g. by focus groups.

Table 10
How difficult/easy is it to retrieve information from databases n=219

Statement	Very difficult	Quite difficult	Neutral	Quite easy	Very easy
Ease of use in using databases	4%	14%	46%	28%	8%
		18%		36%	

We would expect that, based on respondents' self confidence in searching databases (see Table 8) that they would rank ease of use of retrieving information easy. However the majority (64%) view it as difficult or neutral. These results may reflect that respondents

believe that are competent searchers, but relevant material is either not available or the searching capabilities of databases are not sufficiently effective. They may see stark differences between the volume of results they retrieve from search engines (regardless of quality) and the volume they retrieve from databases.

eBooks

The following data was extracted from questions 13-20 of the online survey and supplemented by interviews with school librarians.

Table 11
Use of eBooks n=219

Action	Percentage
Use eBooks	28%
Do not use eBooks	72%

This result is similar to the studies (e.g. Gregory, 2008; Woo, 2005) in which the majority of respondents were non-eBook users. As the students cannot access eBooks at their schools, they may buy eBooks themselves or access them from HKPL, which has about 7800 English and 30,000 Chinese eBooks these are available for free(Hong Kong Public Libraries, 2009).

Table 12
eBook use by school n=219

School	Use	Non-use
	Percentage	
School A	24%	76%
School B	32%	68%
School C	37%	63%

eBook usage rates do not differ greatly among the targeted schools. A plausible reason why School C has the highest rate of use is that they provide an eBook service to teachers and staff. Teachers in School C may introduce eBooks to students, raising their awareness of eBooks.

Table 13
Reasons for not using eBooks n=156

Reason	Percentage
Lack of awareness of eBooks	42%
There is a printed version available	17%
Lack of training on using eBooks	12%
Difficult to access	11%
Difficult to read eBooks	9%
Difficult to use platform	6%
Others	4%

A number of earlier studies (e.g. Ebrary, 2007; Gregory, 2008; Jamali, Nicholas, & Rowlands, 2009) identified lack of awareness as the major reason for students not using

eBooks. As their schools did not provide eBook services to them, there was no provision of eBook training, which would compound difficulties in using eBook platforms. The reason "difficult to read eBooks" may also be interpreted as "do not want to read on the screen". Many researchers consider this a major reason non-use of eBooks. In Gunter's (2005) study 56% of the respondents said "they did not like reading long text extracts on a screen" (p. 520). Eyestrain was identified as a reason for non-use in Gregory's (2008) research, while Jamali, Nicholas & Rowland (2009) believe that "the problem with screen reading is not only that it leads to tired eyes; users also found it harder to concentrate and absorb the information when they read from a screen" (p. 41). An interesting single response in the "others" section was "parents do not allow". This could reflect parental concern over the reliability of information available over the internet or concern that children are spending too much time using computers.

Table 14
Frequency of eBook use n=62

Action	Percentage
Everyday	12
Once a week	13
Once a month	12
Uneven	63

Only a minority are habitual eBook readers. Responses to statements about eBooks in Table 15 below suggest that this lack of habitual eBook use is due to the respondents' overall preference for traditional books.

Table 15
eBook users' views on eBooks n=62

Statement	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally Agree
I would rather use an eBook than a printed copy	12%	25%	47%	12%	5%
		37%			17%
I would like more books to be available as eBooks	5%	10%	35%	40%	10%
		15%			50%
I would use an eBook only if there were no printed copies available	5%	7%	42%	32%	15%
		12%			47%

eBook users were asked to react to three statements about eBooks. These responses may help to explore their eBook reading behaviour in a deeper way. Only 17% of respondents would choose an eBook rather than a printed copy. This indicates that many members of Generation Y are still comfortable with traditional books and is confirmed by the responses to statement 3 where 47% would use an eBook only if there were *no* printed versions available, i.e. they view eBooks as a substitute for the printed copy. However, exactly half of the eBook users would like to have access to more eBooks. 15% do not want more eBooks available, confirming the finding that some eBook users are forced to use them due to an absence of print substitutes.

Table 16
Rating of eBooks n=62

Rating	Percentage
Excellent	12%
Good	57%
Satisfactory	26%
Unsatisfactory	3%
Poor	2%

More than 70% of eBook users rated eBooks as excellent or good, indicating that the attitude of respondents towards eBooks is positive. 5% indicated that the rating of eBooks was not satisfactory. These are probably those who only use eBooks when there are no print alternatives.

Table 17
Effective methods for eBook promotion n=62

Promotion method	Percentage
Printed information/user guide given to students	28%
Training sessions provided by library staff	27%
Information/user guide distributed via email	19%
Printed information/user guide available in library	9%
Printed information/user guide posted on notice boards	5%
Information/user guide posted on library website	5%
Other	7%

Promotion is important for all library services and resources. Respondents ranked six suggested promotion methods and could suggest an additional method. Apart from printed and online information/user guides, the respondents rated training highly. This is an interesting finding: it highlights the problem of platform use that was noted in the literature on eBooks. It also raises an interesting issue concerning library training for the information resources of outside organisations. The respondents' libraries do not hold eBooks, so they are sourced outside, probably mainly from HKPL. HKPL has a history of collaboration with schools so this may be another opportunity for collaboration. Another method that respondents suggested was to inform students about eBooks via Facebook. Most students have a Facebook account, so the promotion method is matched to user behaviour.

Conclusions

The survey responses and interviews with school librarians suggest a number of key implications relating to online databases and eBooks that address the research questions and surface other relevant issues.

Databases

- The majority of respondents use online databases, but only a few are habitual users and a significant number (28%) do not use databases
- The internet, accessed by search engines, is the major source of information for respondents. There is no evidence that respondents effectively evaluate the reliability of retrieved information
- There is overall awareness of the existence of databases: only 18% of non-users

volunteered it as a reason for non use

- Respondents were mostly confident of their searching abilities. This is likely to reflect misplaced confidence as: more than half of the respondents had not attended database training; respondents perceive databases as difficult to use and respondents rely on search engines for most of their research. This inference is supported by the results of unpublished research. Junior secondary school students expressed confidence in their searching ability but their concept of a search strategy was to "copy and paste the given topic into the search box of *WiseSearch*" (Lau, Cheung, & Wong, 2009, p. 5). Additional searching techniques were ignored
- Database training is insufficient in terms of: penetration of students and content. This is recognised by the school librarians who expressed a desire to provide more and deeper training but have resource limitations, notably staff time and student time
- Database cost and matching database content to curricula are major concerns for library managers. Database costs restrict the number that schools can subscribe to. According to the librarians, they do not cover the range of students' information needs. Although many databases are multi-disciplinary, students cannot always find relevant information. This encourages them to switch to the internet where they easily retrieve large number of documents. Additionally, many teachers require training to familiarise them with the potential and limitations of databases
- Teachers in a range of subjects require students to use databases to complete assignments, but it is not uniform. Not all teachers are aware of databases, or skilled in their use. This is an impediment to the widespread integration of database use in the curriculum

eBooks

- eBook features are important to students. Reasons for non-use of eBooks may be related to their features especially the way they differ from traditional print formats
- Awareness of eBooks is important: most of the non-eBook users identified it as a reason not using eBooks
- eBook users want access to more eBooks
- eBook policy may affect eBook usage rates. All three targeted schools do *not* provide eBook services to students, reducing their exposure to eBooks and forcing eBook users to seek them elsewhere
- eBook cost is a major concern for library managers. Pricing models for eBooks are complicated. One librarian stated that pricing is complicated and unstable, and had deterred her from buying eBooks

General

A key issue relating to both databases and eBooks is that of promotion. We would argue that promotion and training are complementary: it is not possible to have adequate promotion if the skills are not there to take advantage of the databases, leading to unrealised expectations. Students' perception of the relative merits of WWW search engines and databases seems, at best, uninformed. The librarians interviewed are aware of this but resource implications restrict their ability to provide, according to their assessment, sufficiently rigorous training. Similarly with eBooks, there are complications with effective use. The targeted libraries do not contain eBooks. However eBooks and databases are accessible at the HKPL, so collaboration between the schools and HKPL may address this problem.

Further Study

We would like to enhance and extend this survey in a number of ways, by:
- Refine the survey instrument
- Add focus groups and interviews for students to get more qualitative data
- Survey a larger number of schools in Hong Kong
- Implement the survey on an annual basis to chart progress
- Survey schools in other countries (tentative discussions have taken place regarding schools in Australia and Taiwan) to compare results and facilitate information exchange

Appendix: Survey Instrument

1. Name of school

   ☐ School A
   ☐ School B
   ☐ School C
   ☐ Other (Please specify:_____)

2. Your grade

   ☐ Y13   ☐ Y9
   ☐ Y12   ☐ Y8
   ☐ Y11   ☐ Y7
   ☐ Y10

3. Age   ☐

4. On average, how often did you use online databases for your school work over a week since beginning of school term?

   ☐ 1-3 times   ☐ 4-6 times
   ☐ 7-9 times   ☐ 10 or more times
   ☐ Haven't used because databases are not useful
   ☐ Haven't used because I don't know what online databases are
   ☐ Haven't used because (Please specify:_____)

5. How many subject(s) require you to search online databases? (You can tick more than 1 option)

   ☐ English   ☐ Mandarin   ☐ Mathematics
   ☐ Biology   ☐ Chemistry   ☐ Physics
   ☐ History   ☐ Geography   ☐ Computer Studies
   ☐ Economics   ☐ Art   ☐ Music
   ☐ German   ☐ Sports/PE   ☐ Drama
   ☐ Others, (Please specify:_____)

6. What online database(s) you frequently use? (You can tick more than 1 option)

   ☐ Global NewsBank   ☐ Encyclopedia Britannica Online   ☐ Proquest
   ☐ Gale (Infotrac)   ☐ WiseLearning   ☐ Brockhaus
   ☐ EBSCOhost   ☐ Grove Music Online   ☐ Novelist
   ☐ WorldBook
   ☐ Others (Please specify:_____)

7.   Have you attended any database training course/ lessons?

☐ Yes   ☐ No, why not?_____

8.   Do you access online databases from home?

☐ Yes   ☐ No, why not?_____
☐ Didn't know it's available

9.   Which resources do you use most often? Please rank (1=used most, 4=used least, leave blank=never used)

☐ Online databases
☐ CD-Rom
☐ Internet
☐ Print materials (e.g. Books, magazines, journals)
☐ Others, (Please specify:_____)

10. Your views towards online databases:

	Totally Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Totally Disagree
I think online databases are useful for learning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am confident in my own searching skill	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I think the use of online databases is relevant for my study	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Ease of use of databases:

	Very Difficult	Quite Difficult	Neutral	Quite Easy	Very Easy
Overall, how difficult/easy is it to use databases?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. Any other comments?

13. Do you know the collection of your school library includes electronic books (eBooks)?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

14. Do you have any experience using eBooks including public libraries, school libraries or other places?

☐ Yes   (please go to Q.15)
☐ No

If you have NOT read an eBook, why not? (Please go to Q.19 after answering this question)

☐ Lack of awareness of eBooks   ☐ Difficult to access

☐ There is printed book available   ☐ Lack of training on using eBooks

☐ Difficult to read the eBook   ☐ Difficult to use platform (e.g. eBook readers)
☐ Other (Please specify:_____)

15. How did you read these eBooks? (You may choose more than one answer)

- ☐ On the computer screen
- ☐ Downloaded to a reader e.g. PDA
- ☐ Printed them out

16. How often do you read eBooks?

- ☐ Everyday
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Uneven

17. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Totally Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Totally Disagree
I would rather use an eBook than a printed copy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would use an eBook only if there were no printed copies available	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would like more books to be available as eBooks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. Overall, how do you rate eBooks?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Unsatisfactory
- ☐ Poor

19. What do you think would be the MOST effective way to inform students about eBook service and how to use it?

- ☐ Printed information/user guide distributed to students
- ☐ Printed information/user guide available in library
- ☐ Printed information/user guide available on notice boards
- ☐ Training sessions provided by library staff
- ☐ Information/user guide distributed to students by email
- ☐ Information/user guide posted on library website
- ☐ Other (please specify: _____)

20. Any other comments?

Statement of Originality

This statement certifies that the paper above is based upon original research undertaken by the authors and that the paper was conceived and written by the author(s) alone and has not been published elsewhere. All information and ideas from others is referenced.

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