INTERNET INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF 3RD YEAR LIS UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EAST AFRICAN SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE, MAKERERE UNIVERSITY AND UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY-LIS PROGRAMME

By

Ezra Kalule, BLIS (Mak)
Reg. Number: 2011/HD05/4341U

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Science in Information Science of Makerere University

OCTOBER 2015
Declaration

I, Ezra Kalule, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that it has never been presented to any University, College or Institution for any award of a diploma or degree.

Signature………………………………… Date………………………………………

Ezra Kalule
APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with the approval of my University Supervisors

…………………………………                                                        ……………………………

Assoc. Prof. Constant Okello-Obura Date
Principal,
College of Computing and Information Science
Makerere University

…………………………………                                                        ……………………………

Dr. George William Kiiyengi Date
Dean,
East African School of Library and Information Science
Makerere University
Dedication

To my lovely Mum, Lydia Nakimera,

My brothers especially George, and my sister Dinah,

My daughter Cleopatra and son, Colton

You were my inspiration, challenge, and encouragement

all the way through my Postgraduate studies.
Acknowledgements

First, I thank God, for having helped me finish this study which represents a great achievement for my academic career. I wish to acknowledge my supervisors, namely Assoc. Prof. Constant Okello-Obura and Dr. G.W. Kiyangi, for their valuable orientation, comments and recommendations throughout the development of my dissertation.

I also want to thank Dr. Sarah Kaddu and Prof. I.M.N Kigongo-Bukenya for their support, and Collaboration, and for mentoring me during the research process. My appreciation also goes to my friends Herbert Bukenya (Mutesa 1 Royal University), Ronald Kizito, Bene Nakimuli (both from Ndejje University), who provided me with the necessary services such as photocopying, access to the internet, love and care during the production of this work.
# Table of Contents

Declaration .......................................................................................................................... i

Approval .............................................................................................................................. ii

Dedication ............................................................................................................................ iii

Acknowledgements .............................................................................................................. iv

Table of contents .................................................................................................................. v

Tables ..................................................................................................................................... ix

Figures ................................................................................................................................... x

Abbreviations ....................................................................................................................... xi

Abstract ............................................................................................................................... xii

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY** ......................................................... 1
1.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 1
1.2 Background of the study ................................................................................................. 1
1.3 Statement of the problem ............................................................................................... 7
1.4 Purpose of the study ....................................................................................................... 7
1.5 Rationale of the study .................................................................................................... 8
1.6 Objectives of the study ................................................................................................ 8
1.7 Research Questions ...................................................................................................... 8
1.8 Significance of the study ............................................................................................... 8
1.9 Conceptual Framework ................................................................................................. 9
1.10 Contextual Scope ......................................................................................................... 11
1.11 Definition of Key Concepts ......................................................................................... 11

**CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW** ................................................................... 12
2.0 Introduction .................................................................................................................... 12
2.1 Information seeking in the information age .................................................................. 12
2.2 Theories and models of information seeking ............................................................... 13
2.3 Information – seeking of University students ............................................................... 15
2.4 Internet Information needs of undergraduate students ................................................ 16
2.5 Internet access points used by students in search for information ................................ 17
2.6 Challenges faced by students when searching for information from the internet .......... 18
2.7 Impact of internet on information seeking behavior of students .................................. 20

**CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY** ...................................................................... 22
3.1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 22
3.2 Research Design.......................................................................................................................... 22
3.3 Area of Study .................................................................................................................................. 22
3.4 Population of the Study ................................................................................................................... 23
3.5 Sample Size .................................................................................................................................... 23
3.6 Sampling .......................................................................................................................................... 24
3.7 Sampling techniques ....................................................................................................................... 24
3.7.1 Simple random sampling ............................................................................................................. 25
3.8 Data Collection Methods and Procedures ...................................................................................... 25
3.8.1 Structured Questionnaire ........................................................................................................... 25
3.8.2 Semi-Structured Interviews ........................................................................................................ 26
3.8.3 Participant Observation ................................................................................................................ 27
3.8.4 Document Review ......................................................................................................................... 27
3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation ....................................................................................................... 28
3.9.1 Data Analysis ............................................................................................................................... 28
3.9.2 Data Presentation .......................................................................................................................... 29
3.10 Data Quality Control ...................................................................................................................... 29
3.10.1 Methodological triangulation ..................................................................................................... 29
3.10.2 Reliability and Validity ............................................................................................................... 29
3.11 Ethical Considerations ................................................................................................................... 30
3.12 Limitations of the study ................................................................................................................ 30

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS & PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS .............................................. 32
4.1. Introduction.................................................................................................................................... 32
4.2 Demographic characteristics of the respondents .......................................................................... 32
4.2.1 Gender of the respondents ......................................................................................................... 33
4.2.1.1 Distribution of respondents by university ............................................................................. 33
4.2.2 Respondents’ age group ............................................................................................................. 33
4.2.3 Respondents’ course and option. ................................................................................................ 34
4.2.4 Level of Computer Proficiency by the respondents ................................................................. 35
4.2.5 Respondents’ first time to use a computer ............................................................................... 35
4.2.6 Level of Internet Proficiency by the respondents ................................................................. 36
4.2.6.1 IT courses in the BLIS Curriculum .................................................................................... 37
4.2.6.2 Special training on Internet use ........................................................................................... 38
4.3 Internet Information needs/reasons for use of the internet .......................................................... 39
4.4 Strategies used for seeking online information .......................................................................... 40
4.4.1 Accessibility of the internet ........................................................................................................ 40
4.4.2 Internet access points ................................................................................................................ 41
Tables

Table 1: Distribution of gender by University……………………………………………………33
Table 2: Respondents’ age group…………………………………………………………………33
Table 3: Options/Electives……………………………………………………………………………34
Table 4: Possession of Special Computer Skills………………………………………………35
Table 5: First time to use a Computer……………………………………………………………35
Table 6(a): Possession of Internet Search Skills………………………………………………36
Table 6(b): Specific Internet Search Skills………………………………………………………36
Table 7: Possession of IT courses in the Curriculum…………………………………………37
Table 8: Special training on Internet use…………………………………………………………38
Table 9: Internet Information needs………………………………………………………………39
Table 10: Access the Internet………………………………………………………………………40
Table 11: Internet Access points…………………………………………………………………40
Table 12: Means of Internet Access……………………………………………………………..41
Table 13: Independent or Assisted Internet Search……………………………………………41
Table 14: Internet Accessibility………………………………………………………………………42
Table 15: Periods of Visit to the Internet…………………………………………………………43
Table 16: Time spent on the Internet per visit…………………………………………………..44
Table 17: Frequency of the Internet by respondents……………………………………………45
Table 18: Challenges faced by students while accessing the internet…………………………47
Table 19: Suggestions to the Challenges encountered…………………………………………48
Figures

Figure 1-Conceptualized relationship among variables………………………………………….10
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviations</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLIS</td>
<td>Bachelor of Library and Information Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASLIS</td>
<td>East African School of Library and Information Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIS</td>
<td>Library and Information Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCDC</td>
<td>National Curriculum Development Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCHE</td>
<td>National Council for Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCU</td>
<td>Uganda Christian University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UIS</td>
<td>University ICT Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIS</td>
<td>Library and Information Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COCIS</td>
<td>College of Computing and Information Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUELE</td>
<td>Makerere University e-learning Environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

The study aimed at examining the internet information-seeking patterns of LIS undergraduate students of EASLIS, Makerere University and UCU- Library and Information Science Unit.

The main objective of the study was to examine the internet information seeking behavior of 3rd year undergraduate Library and Information Science students of EASLIS and UCU. The specific objectives of the study were to identify the information needs of 3rd year LIS undergraduate students of both UCU and EASLIS; identify how 3rd year LIS Undergraduate students seek information from the internet and document the challenges faced by 3rd year LIS students when seeking for information from the internet and to suggest strategies for strengthening the information seeking patterns of LIS students.

The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design, using randomly selected respondents from both EASLIS and UCU. The researcher adopted both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Data was collected using three methods, structured questionnaire, Semi-structured Interview and document review. Triangulation of methods, rigorousness research process, and piloting of instruments were used as data quality control strategies. The sample size consisted of 213 third year LIS undergraduate students from both institutions, yielding a response rate of 85%.

The major findings show that respondents have different information needs and their information seeking behaviour differs. The means to access the internet also differed, depending on the pertaining situations. Some students used their mobile phones, modems or personal laptops as their favourite to access the needed information, while others preferred to use the universities’ facilities. Although facilities are available in either institution, they are not sufficient to cater for the growing student population. Both institutions seemed to have the basic infrastructure to facilitate internet use, although EASLIS had slightly better facilities than UCU. The common and major challenges from both Universities are slow internet speed, power blackout, lack of enough facilities in the access points, no internet connectivity most of the time, computer laboratories were ever busy with IT students in the case of UCU; computer laboratories were reported to be opened late; some computers had secret codes for specific people such as staff, and most internet ports in the computer laboratories were not functioning.
The study concluded that the internet information-seeking behaviour of the respondents from both institutions was diverse and greatly dependent on one’s information searching skills. Respondents used the internet for fulfilling various information needs; majority of the respondents from both Universities used internet for additional information for course materials, chatting with friends and family and for communication purposes. Majority of the respondents had access to the internet irrespective of the means and ways used to obtain it; University resources were the main means of accessing the internet.

The study recommended that Internet facilities located in both universities be made more functional to encourage Internet use by students within the campus. Lecturers from both universities should encourage students to submit their assignments using electronic means; both universities should increase their bandwidth, Internet Access points should be installed in the buildings within the two institutions and halls of residence and hostels within the Universities. Adequate space and ICT facilities should be provided; special training should be offered to students on how to use the Internet and its services; alternative power supply at both institutions should be provided to have a steady supply of Electricity for effective Internet services.