

eJUST
ejournal user study

Stanford University Libraries
HighWire Press

E-Journal Usage and Scholarly Practice

*An ethnographic perspective on the
role and impact of e-journal usage
among users of
biomedical literature*

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Objectives

- To describe the emerging role and fit of e-journals
- To understand the range and types of dimensions that shape e-journal usage
- To understand the impact of e-journals on scholarly practice

Findings I

The role and fit of e-journals in scholarly practice

- Scientific e-journals are accountable to the worlds of print and the Internet
- E-journals belong to a cluster of technological innovations that shape the way scholars adopt these journals

- The most significant current source of value from e-journals is in the scholars' ability to search them.
- Online searching emphasizes the article as container (or structure) of content

Findings II

Scholarly usage of e-journals: idiosyncratic and contextually based practices

- No single pattern of usage predominates for e-journals
- Scholars craft multiple routines for using e-journals to support a range of information practices

- Key drivers shaping usage
 - Scholarly goal
 - Infrastructure
 - Time and place
 - Professional characteristics

- Convenience drives usage
 - and it is a relative term among scholars
- The idea of a tradeoff between paper and electronic formats is misleading
 - both are important tools for thinking and working

Scholars

- monitor and review content regularly to keep current
- conduct direct research for retrieval
- study and read intensively to extract knowledge
- circulate and exchange content to build peer networks

Scholars...

- Organize content to create context and relevance
- Document original content to establish ownership of ideas

- E-journals provide a bridge between publicizing and publishing scholarly work
- E-journal features get blurred with the features of the broader search-and-retrieval environment

Findings III

*Impacts of e-journals on
scientific scholarly practice:
a new relationship to
information, knowledge, and peers*

E-Journals

- Increase peripheral vision
- Facilitate participation in a greater flow of information and scholarly communications
- Provide new ways for presenting scientific results that contribute to new thinking processes
- Make data more visible and increase evaluation and scrutiny

E-Journals

- Create new knowledge boundaries and domains of equivalencies
- Create new kinds of work in scholarly practice

Findings IV

*Insights on e-journal adoption and
implications for the future*

- E-journals are part of a cluster of innovations and technologies that can be leveraged to create value for scholars
- Scholars work in an integrated media environment, with synergies between paper and electronic journals

- Scholars obtain more value from e-journals when the journals support a wide range of information practices
- E-journals offer different types of value for searching, reading, and publishing
- The zone between informal publicizing and formal publication is a rich and critical area for scholarly communications
- E-journals challenge the notion of journal brand

E-journals improve the efficiency of scientific scholarship

E-journals facilitate new forms of scholarly practice through new relationships to information, knowledge, and peers