



Concept of Reference Information Sources Available on the Internet

The concept of reference information sources available on the Internet refers to the modern counterpart of traditional reference sources, where the electronic format enables efficient storage, retrieval, and dissemination of information with the aid of electronic devices and computers.

Definition

Reference information sources available on the Internet can be defined as "reference information sources that rely on the Internet for their availability, facilitating access to information using modern technologies, and may be free or subscription-based, with or without a printed counterpart or a CD-ROM version".

Classification of Electronic Information Sources Available on the Internet

Electronic information sources available on the Internet can be categorized into two main types:

1-Sources that have a printed counterpart: These sources are available on the Internet and can also be published in other formats.

2-Sources that are unique to the Internet: These sources are specifically designed for the Internet and do not have a printed counterpart.

Types of Reference Information Sources Available on the Internet

Some examples of reference information sources available on the Internet include:

1-Search engines: Tools that enable users to search for information on the Internet.

2-Subject directories: Organized directories of websites and resources on specific topics.

3-Portals: Websites that provide a gateway to various resources and services.

4-Weblogs (Blogs): Online journals or diaries that provide information on specific topics.

5-Email discussion groups: Online forums where users can discuss topics of interest.

6-Newsgroups: Online forums where users can discuss topics of interest.

7-Email: Electronic mail that enables users to communicate with each other.

Benefits of Reference Information Sources Available on the Internet

The benefits of reference information sources available on the Internet include:

1-Access to a vast amount of information: The Internet provides access to a vast amount of information on various topics.

2-Cost savings: Electronic sources can reduce costs associated with purchasing and maintaining printed sources.

3-Space savings: Electronic sources can save physical space in libraries and other information centers.

4-Remote access: Electronic sources can be accessed remotely, enabling users to access information from anywhere.

5-Efficient searching: Electronic sources enable efficient searching and retrieval of information.

6-User satisfaction: Electronic sources can provide users with a wide range of information and services, leading to increased satisfaction.

7-Resource sharing: Electronic sources enable libraries and other information centers to share resources and provide access to a wider range of information.

8-Changes in the role of librarians: The Internet has changed the role of librarians, who now need to be skilled in navigating electronic sources and providing guidance to users.

Backup and preservation: Electronic sources can be backed up and preserved for future use.

Characteristics of Reference Information Sources

Some common characteristics of reference information sources, whether in printed or electronic format, include:

1-Consultation rather than continuous reading: Reference sources are designed to be consulted for specific information rather than read continuously.

2-Secondary or tertiary sources: Reference sources often rely on primary sources and provide organized and analyzed information.

3-Compilation of information: Reference sources often compile information from multiple sources.

4-Organized structure: Reference sources are organized in a way that facilitates efficient searching and retrieval of information.

5-Concise and compressed information: Reference sources often use abbreviations and concise language to convey information.

6-Comprehensive coverage: Reference sources aim to provide comprehensive coverage of a topic, although the extent of coverage may vary.

Comparison between Printed and Electronic Reference Sources

The following table highlights the key differences between printed and electronic reference sources:

Table 1: Comparison between Printed and Electronic Reference Sources

Electronic reference available online	Printed reference
Ease of updating: Electronic sources can be updated quickly and flexibly.	Difficulty in updating information: Updating information requires issuing a new edition or supplement, which can be costly and time-consuming.
Accessibility: Electronic sources can be accessed anywhere, anytime, and by an unlimited number of users.	Need to visit the library: Using printed sources requires visiting the library, which can be inconvenient for users.
Comprehensive content: Electronic sources can include text, multimedia, and links to related sources.	Single-user access: Only one user can access a single copy of a printed source at a time.
Search functionality: Electronic sources offer advanced search functionality, including multiple search options and strategies.	Difficulty in searching: Searching in printed sources can be challenging, especially when using encyclopedias.
Information retrieval: Electronic sources enable easy access to information through various search options and links.	Information retrieval: Information retrieval in printed sources is done using indexes, abstracts, and tables of contents.
Time span: The time span of electronic sources is limited to the last update.	Time span: The time span of printed sources is limited to the latest edition, until a new edition is issued.
Virtual reading: Reading from electronic sources can cause eye strain.	Reading comfort: Reading from printed sources can be more comfortable for the eyes
Devices and software: Accessing electronic sources requires special devices, software, and internet connection.	No need for devices: Reading from printed sources does not require special devices or equipment.
Accessibility for people with special needs: Electronic sources can be accessed by people	Inaccessibility for people with special needs: Printed sources may not be suitable for people with special needs who cannot visit

with special needs who cannot visit a library.	the library.
Flexibility in reproduction: Electronic sources can be easily reproduced and distributed.	Time and effort: Preparing copies of a single reference source consumes a significant amount of time and effort.
Environmental benefits: Electronic sources are environmentally friendly, as they do not require organic materials for production.	Environmental impact: Printed sources can have a negative impact on the environment due to the use of organic materials in paper production.
Space efficiency: Electronic sources do not occupy physical space.	Space requirements: Printed sources occupy a large amount of space for storage.