

Internationalising the Institutional Website: International Students' Use of University Websites

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Previous qualitative and descriptive research have shown that the social networks of international students may have an impact on both their information needs and the information sources they rely on. However, regardless of their social networks, early indications from preliminary research seems to indicate that students seldomly rely on one student portal or source for all their information needs. Yet, Universities tend to spend a lot of resources putting up a lot of information on their websites in an effort to be a student portal for all their students. Through a survey instrument at one Australian University, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Do International Students rely on the University website for all their information needs?
2. Which group(s) of International Students are more/less likely to use the University website for their information needs?

In order to achieve these objectives, we conducted a quantitative study with 165 international students at the University of Melbourne. Our initial analysis of the data shows that international students belong to various types of social networks, and they need a range of information types relating to academic and non-academic activities and that they use a range of information sources to satisfy their needs. The initial analysis also shows that the identified social networks of international students have an effect on the types and sources of information. The concept of one student portal to satisfy International Students' needs is not borne out in this study. This paper suggests some practical implications to effectively provide information to international students based on their social networks.

Key Words

International students, social networks, Information types, information sources