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## SEARCH ENGINES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS



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### ABSTRACT:

Search engines help the internet users to get required information in the web. There are millions of search engines in web to help the users and due to competition, the search engines are providing different types of services like e-mail, translation, specialized search such as research oriented documents, etc. As such, the search engines are found to be useful and also following the five laws of library and information science.

### KEYWORDS

*laws of library and information science.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The internet is a worldwide network of computers storing immense quantities of various types of information. The number of host computers connected to the Internet was only 213 in 1981 but increased to 16146000 in January 1997, according to the survey conducted by Network Wizards. It is growing very rapidly, having approximately doubled its number since 1989. It is one of the greatest innovations in the history of communication technology. The impact of the Internet may be as profound as the invention of the printing press, for it has the potential to make research work easier and more productive if utilized in an efficient and proper way (Akaho and Ahmad, 1998).

The Internet is playing a major role in library and information services also. Searching the Internet is becoming critically important in library and information sciences for providing user services and its usefulness and application has been reported in various fields of the of different subject disciplines. In the previous section, the general overview was provided. Each of the search engines that are available in the web, are having almost similar features, having unique aim, which is searching the web pages. Of course, all the search engines seem to be unique in nature, there are various significant differences among these engines. The present paper deals with comparative analysis of about 21 selected search engines in various aspects.

## COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SEARCH ENGINES:

To assess the different unique features such as purpose of the search engines, country of origin, favoured countries, languages, coverage, scope, etc. the different search engines covered in the study are compared by analyzing these specific features of each search engine. The comparative analysis of all the search engines covered in the present study are shown as under:

### 1. Country of Origin of Search Engines:

Country of Origin provides information about the where the search engine was launched. It is noted that United States of America is pioneer in producing software and hardware in the world. Hence, the share of this country is also assessed in the country of origin of the search engines. The country of origin of different search engines covered under the study is shown in the following table:

**Table No. 1. Country of Origin of the Search Engines:**

Name of Search Engine	Country of Origin
A9	US
Aliweb	UK
Alltheweb	US
Altavista	US
Ask	US
Askwiki	US
Baidu	China
Chacha	Indiana
Copernic	US
Dogpile	US
Excite	US
Google	US
Guruji	India
Hotbot	US
Lycos	US
Khoj	India
MSN	US
Rediff	India
Webcrawler	US
Yahoo Search	US

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From the above table it is clear that the United States of America is the biggest contributor in providing important Search Engines including A9, AlltheWeb, Altavista, Askwiki, Copernic, Dogpile, Excite, Google, Hotbot, Lycos, MSN (Windows Live), Webcrawler and Yahoo Search. It is noted that there are three Search Engines of Indian origin namely, Guruji, Khoj and Rediff India. The Aliweb search engine is launched in the UK, Baidu Search engine is founded in China, and Chacha is from Indiana.

**2. Scope of the Search Engines:**

Scope of the Search Engines here refers to the files from which country a search engine search. Majority of the Search Engines covered under the study are searching the files and documents worldwide. However, the specifically, the scope of the search engines covered under the study is as under:

**Table No. 2. Search Engines v/s Scope**

Name of Search Engine	Scope
A9	Worldwide
Aliweb	Worldwide
Alltheweb	Worldwide
Altavista	Worldwide
Ask	Worldwide
Askwiki	Worldwide
Baidu	China
Chacha	Worldwide
Copernic	Worldwide
Dogpile	Worldwide
Excite	Worldwide
Google	Worldwide
Guruji	India
Hotbot	Worldwide
Lycos	Worldwide
Khoj	India
MSN	Worldwide
Rediff	Worldwide
Webcrawler	Worldwide
Yahoo Search	Worldwide

The above table revealed that all the search engines are searching the documents from all over the world, except baidu, Guruji and Khoj. It is noted that the baidu searches documents only from china, and the remaining Guruji and Khoj search engines searches the documents and files from India only.

**3. Search Engines and Countries favoured:**

Favoured country refers to the search engines provide search facility to search documents available from specific country domain only. Hence, many of the search engines provide the search facility pertaining to specific country only. The following table shows the comparative study of countries favoured by each search engines covered under the present study.

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**Table No. 3. Search Engines v/s Countries favoured**

Name of Search Engine	Number of Favoured Continents & Countries
A9	1 (US)
Aliweb	1(UK)
Alltheweb	1 (US)
Altavista	28
Ask	21
Askwiki	7
Baidu	1 (China)
Chacha	1 (Indiana)
Copemic	1 (US)
Dogpile	1 (US)
Excite	10
Google	160
Guruji	1 (India)
Hotbot	15
Lycos	3
Khoj	1 (India)
MSN	45
Rediff	3
Webcrawler	10
Yahoo Search	34

The above disclosed that Google provides search facility over 160 countries in the world, followed by MSN (Windows Live) which provide search facility over 45 countries, Yahoo Search provide search facility over 34 countries, Altavista provides search facility over 28 countries, Ask provides search facility for 21 countries, Hotbot provides search facility for 15 countries, Excite and Webcrawler provides search facility for about 10 countries, Askwiki searches for 7 countries, Lycos and Rediff providing search facility for about 3 countries, and the remaining A9, Aliweb, All the Web, Baidu, Chacha, Copernic, Dogpile, Guruji and Khoj are limited to a single country only.

#### **4. Languages Preferred and covered by the Search Engines:**

The Search Engines provide the web search in different languages all over the world. These include, English, French, Latin, German, Chinese, Arabic, Dutch, etc. Hence, there is need to languages covered by individual search engines. The following table presented the information about the number of the languages covered by these search engines:

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**Table No. 4. Languages Preferred and Covered by Search Engines:**

Name of Search Engine	Number of Languages covered
A9	1
Aliweb	1
Alltheweb	36
Altavista	36
Ask	6
Askwiki	6
Baidu	1
Chacha	1
Copernic	2
Dogpile	1
Excite	10
Google	117
Guruji	6
Hotbot	10
Lycos	13
Khoj	1
MSN	9
Rediff	1
Webcrawler	10
Yahoo Search	37

The above table revealed that the Google is leading among all the search engines covering 117 languages all over the world, followed by Yahoo covers 37 languages, Altavista and All the web searches documents in about 36 languages, Lycos covers 13 languages, Excite and Hotbot covers about 10 languages, MSN covers about 9 languages, Ask, Askwiki and Guruji covers about 6 languages, and the remaining search engines, Aliweb, baidu, dogpile, chacha, khoj and rediff covered searching in one language only.

### 5. File Formats Search:

It is noted that there are different types of file formats, which a search engine search by providing special options. The different file formats include the Word format (.doc), web pages (.html, .xml), Images and pictures (.bmp, .jpeg, .jpg), Printed document Formats (.pdf), Mp3 and audio files, video files and software. Previously pages in non-HTML formats were excluded by the search engines. But, now most of the search engines translate all those non-HTML files such as pdf, Word, Excel, Corell suite, etc. into HTML and provide them in the search results. Similarly, scriptbased pages, whose links contain or other script coding, no longer cause most search engines to exclude them. Pages generated dynamically by other types of database software (e.g., Active Server Pages, Cold Fusion) can be indexed if there is a stable URL somewhere that search engine spiders can find. There are now many types of dynamically generated pages like these that are found in most general web search engines (Rathinasabapathy: 2007).

Most of the search covered under the study, are providing search options to search these kinds of files in the web. However, there are a few search engines, which do not provide separate options to search some specific formats. The file formats covered by different search engines covered under the

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study are stated in the following table:

**Table No. 5. Variety of File Formats Search provided by Search Engines:**

Name of Search Engine	Word	Web/HTML/XML	Image/Pictures	MP3/Audio	Video	Software
A9		v				
Aliweb	v	v	v	v	v	
Alltheweb	v	v	v	v	v	
Altavista	v	v	v	v	v	
Ask	v	v	v	v	v	
Askwiki	v	v				
Baidu	v	v				
Chacha	v	v	v	v	v	v
Copernic		v				v
Dogpile	v	v	v	v	v	v
Excite	v	v	v	v	v	v
Google	v	v	v	v	v	v
Guruji	v	v	v	v	v	v
Hotbot	v	v	v	v	v	v
Lycos	v	v	v	v	v	v
Khoj	v	v				v
MSN	v	v	v	v	v	v
Rediff	v	v	v	v	v	v
Webcrawler	v	v	v	v	v	v
Yahoo Search	v	v	v	v	v	v

The above table depicted that the Search engines- Chacha, Dogpile, Excite, Google, Guruji, Hotbot, Lycos, MSN, Rediff, Webcrawler and Yahoo Search provides the searching of all the kinds and formats of documents that are available in the web providing different options as to different file formats. The Aliweb, Alltheweb, Altavista, and Ask provide options to search only word files, web files, images, pictures, mp3 and audio files and video files, but does not provide options to software. Askwiki and Baidu provides options to search web files and word documents. Copernic searches only web files and software. Khoj provide search options to search only word documents, web files and software.

## 6. Special Features of the Search Engines:

It is noted that many of the search engines provide different special features such as calendar, jokes, horoscopes, computer software, entertainment, recreation, health, living, shopping, Money, Stock Market, Research and Academic search, Earth Maps, etc. But a few search engines does not provide these features to the users. The following table presented the special features provided by the search engines.

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**Table No. 6 Special Features of the Search Engines**

Name of Search Engine	Calender & Horoscope	Jokes	News/ Magazines	Computing/ Software	Entertainment/ Recreation	Health/ Living	Money/ Stock Market	Shopping	Research/ Academic Search	Others *
A9										
Aliweb	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Alltheweb										
Altavista					vy	vy	vy	vy		
Ask										
Askwiki									v	
Baidu			v		v					v
Chacha										
Copernic										
Dogpile										
Excite			v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Google	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Guruji					v				v	
Hotbot										
Lycos	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Khoj	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
MSN	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Rediff	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Webcrawler										
Yahoo	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	v

It is observed from the above table that the Aliweb, Lycos, Khoj (Sify), MSN, Rediff and Yahoo Search Engines provide all the special features mentioned above. The Altavista provides the special features pertaining to Entertainment, Recreation, Health, Living, Money, Stock Market and Shopping as powered by Yahoo. Baidu provides the entertainment, recreation, News, magazines and other special features. Excite provides the special features such as computer software, entertainment, recreation, health, living, shopping, Money, Stock Market, Research and Academic search, Earth Maps, etc. Guruji provides only entertainment, recreation, Academic and Research oriented information (Gyan). Ask wiki provides information, that is useful for academic and research purpose. But the remaining, namely, A9, Alltheweb, Ask, Chacha, Copernic, Dogpile, Hotbot and Webcrawler does not provide any of such special features.

### 7. Search Engines with Commercial Advertisements:

It is noted that many of the search engines provide commercial advertisements and classifieds in their web portals. A few of these search engines are shown as under:

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**Table No. 7. Search Engines with Commercial Advertisements**

Name of Search Engine	Commercial Advertisements
A9	
Aliweb	v
Alltheweb	
Altavista	vy
Ask	v
Askwiki	
Baidu	
Chacha	v
Copernic	
Dogpile	
Excite	v
Google	v
Guruji	
Hotbot	
Lycos	v
Khoj	v
MSN	v
Rediff	v
Webcrawler	
Yahoo	v

It is clear from the above table that among the search engines covered under the study, Aliweb, Altavista, Ask, Chacha, Excite, Google, Lycos, Khoj, MSN, Rediff and Yahoo Search engines provides the commercial advertisements and classifieds, whereas the remaining A9, Alltheweb, Askwiki, Baidu, Copernic, Dogpile, Guruji, Hotbot and Webcrawler does not provide any of such commercial advertisements and classifieds.

### 8. Search Engines with Job Careers:

Many of the Search Engines provides information about the Job careers. A few of them are presented in the following table:

**Table No. 8. Search Engines with Job Careers**

Name of Search Engine	Job Careers
A9	v
Aliweb	v
Alltheweb	
Altavista	vy
Ask	
Askwiki	
Baidu	
Chacha	v
Copernic	
Dogpile	
Excite	v
Google	v
Guruji	v
Hotbot	
Lycos	v
Khoj	v
MSN	v
Rediff	v
Webcrawler	
Yahoo	v

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It is noted from the above table that A9, Aliweb, Altavista, Chacha, Excite, Google, Guruji, Lycos, Khoj, MSN, Rediff and Yahoo Search Engines provide the job careers and the remaining Alltheweb, Ask, Askwiki, Baidu, Copernic, Dogpile, Hotbot and Webcrawler does not provide job careers.

**9. Translation of the Text in the Web Pages:**

As the web pages are designed and presented in different languages all over the world, there is need to translate the web pages published in different languages into English, French, Hindi and such other familiar languages. A few of the search engines provide such facilities. It is also noted that majority of search engines does not provide such translation of the text. The following table presented the translation of the text in the web pages as provided by search engines covered under the present study.

**Table No. 9. Translation of the Text in the Web Pages**

Name of Search Engine	Translation facilities
A9	
Aliweb	
Alltheweb	
Altavista	v
Ask	
Askwiki	
Baidu	
Chacha	
Copernic	
Dogpile	
Excite	
Google	v
Guruji	
Hotbot	
Lycos	
Khoj	
MSN	
Rediff	
Webcrawler	
Yahoo	v

The above table presented that Altavista, Google and Yahoo Search Engines provide translation facilities of the web pages and the remaining search engines covered under the study do not provide such translation facilities.

**10. Purpose of the Search Engine:**

Many of the Corporate and Commercial organizations, educational institutions, Learned organizations, etc. have launched their own search engines. Hence, they have their own purpose to launch the search engine. The purposes of the Search engines covered under the study are stated as under:

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**Table No. 10. Purpose of the Search Engine:**

Name of Search Engine	Purpose
A9	Online Shopping of Amazon
Aliweb	General
Alltheweb	General
Altavista	General
Ask	General
Askwiki	Educational
Baidu	General
Chacha	General
Copernic	Software/Desktop Search
Dogpile	General
Excite	General
Google	General
Guruji	General
Hotbot	General
Lycos	General
Khoj	General
MSN	General
Rediff	General
Webcrawler	General
Yahoo	General

The above table revealed that of the search engines covered under the study, Aliweb, Alltheweb, Altavista, Ask, Chacha, Dogpile, Excite, Google, Guruji, Hotbot, Lycos, Khoj, MSN, Rediff, Webcrawler and Yahoo Search engines are general purpose search engines. Askwiki is launched for education and knowledge purpose. A9 is launched for online activities of the Amazon online business. The main purpose of Copernic is to deal in software and computing utilities.

**11. Special Search of Scholarly and Academic Information:**

It is worth to emphasize that internet and web is mainly used for scholarly communication of information. Hence, it is noted that there is need for options in the Search Engines to search scholarly and academic research oriented information from the web. But only a few search engines provide this option. The following table shows the special search of scholarly articles and academic information provided by the search engines.

**Table No. 11. Special Search of Scholarly and Academic Information:**

Name of Search Engine	Available
A9	
Aliweb	v
Alltheweb	
Altavista	
Ask	
Askwiki	v
Baidu	v
Chacha	
Copernic	
Dogpile	
Excite	
Google	v
Guruji	
Hotbot	
Lycos	
Khoj	
MSN	v
Rediff	
Webcrawler	
Yahoo Search	

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The above table depicted that of the web search engines covered under the study, only Aliweb, Askwiki, Baidu, Google and MSN provide option to search scholarly information and academic information from the web. On the other hand, the remaining search engines, A9, Alltheweb, Ask, Chacha, Copernic, Dogpile, Excite, Guruji, Hotbot, Lycos, Khoj, Rediff, Webcrawler and Yahoo search engines does not provide option to search academic information.

### 12. Search Pattern of the Search Engines:

It is noted that on the basis of the purpose, the search engines provide their services. As such the searching pattern of search engines depends on their purpose. The search pattern of the search engines is presented in the following table:

**Table No. 12. Search Patterns of the Search Engines**

Name of Search Engine	Search Patterns
A9	Book Search
Aliweb	Web Contents
Alltheweb	Web Contents
Altavista	Web Contents
Ask	Web Contents
Askwiki	Wiki-Media
Baidu	Web Contents
Chacha	Web Contents
Copernic	Desktop/Software
Dogpile	Web Contents
Excite	Web Contents
Google	Web Contents
Guruji	Web Contents
Hotbot	Web Contents
Lycos	Web Contents
Khoj	Web Contents
MSN	Web Contents
Rediff	Web Contents
Webcrawler	Web Contents
Yahoo Search	Web Contents

It is noted from the above table that A9 is specialized in book search. Aliweb, Alltheweb, Altavista, Ask, Baidu, Chacha, Dogpile, Excite, Google, Guruji, Hotbot, Lycos, Khoj, MSN, Rediff, Webcrawler and Yahoo Search engine provides general search of all the web contents. Askwiki searches only academic information wikimedia. Copernic is specialized in Desktop Search and Software search.

### 13. Electronic Mail Service:

In addition to the Search services, many of the search engines provide electronic mail service to the users. In particular, following search engines provide electronic mail service to their users.

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**Table No. 13. Search Engines providing Electronic Mail Service:**

Name of Search Engine	Providing E-Mail Service
A9	
Aliweb	
Alltheweb	
Altavista	
Ask	v
Askwiki	
Baidu	
Chacha	v
Copernic	
Dogpile	
Excite	v
Google	v
Guruji	
Hotbot	
Lycos	v
Khoj	<b>vS</b>
MSN	v
Rediff	v
Webcrawler	
Yahoo	v

(√S- E-mail services are provided by host of Khoj:- Sify.com)

It is clear from the above table that of the search engines covered under the study, Ask, Chacha, Excite, Google, Lycos, Khoj (Sify), MSN, Rediff and Yahoo search engines are providing e-mail services to their users, whereas the remaining A9, Aliweb, Alltheweb, Altavista, Askwiki, Baidu, Copernic, Dogpile, Guruji, Hotbot and Webcrawler are not providing any e-mail services to their users.

#### **14. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Help:**

In case of use of search engines, there are certain queries, doubts and questions such as how to... will arise to the users. For this purpose, many of these search engines, provides the Frequently Asked Questions to use the Search engines with necessary answers, for operating of these search engines. The following search engines FAQs to their users.

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**Table No. 14. Frequently Asked Questions and Help on Search Engines:**

Name of Search Engine	FAQs/Help provided
A9	
Aliweb	v
Alltheweb	v
Altavista	v
Ask	v
Askwiki	v
Baidu	
Chacha	v
Copernic	
Dogpile	v
Excite	v
Google	v
Guruji	
Hotbot	v
Lycos	v
Khoj	v
MSN	v
Rediff	
Webcrawler	v
Yahoo Search	v

The above table revealed that majority of the search engines covered under the study are providing Help or Frequently Asked Questions to the users, so as to help the users in searching. Particularly, Aliweb, Alltheweb, Altavista, Ask, Askwiki, Chacha, Dogpile, Excite, Google, Hotbot, Lycos, Khoj, MSN, Webcrawler and Yahoo Search Engines provide helps and Frequently Asked Questions to the users. The remaining Search Engines, A9, Baidu, Copernic, Guruji and Rediff will not provide the help or FAQs to their users.

### CONCLUSION:

It is observed from the above study that, millions of search engines are providing different kinds of services to users apart from just web search. Due to competition, different search engines are providing different types of services to its users. Ultimately, the users of the internet are getting diverse benefits of searching, translation, scholarly information, etc depending on their requirements. To conclude, the search engines are designed by different service providers according to the laws of library science so as to search the web and also provide information to needy users and these search engines are also incorporating different features from time to time. In this way, they are saving the time of the internet users in getting required information from web.

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