

**TRAINING NEEDS FOR ELECTRONIC INFORMATION USE IN THE
COLLEGE OF LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

BY

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Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF INFORMATION SCIENCE

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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DECEMBER 2007

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my former supervisor

Mr Jacobus Christiaan Theron

who contributed to my dissertation. May his soul rest in peace.

I declare that

“Training needs for electronic information use in the College of Law at the University of South Africa”.

**is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated
and acknowledged by means of complete references.**

.....

Signature

(Mr FT Constable)

.....

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- * I would like to express my sincere appreciation to many individuals for their valuable contributions to this research study. I am greatly indebted to Dr Mabel Minishi-Majanja, who directed this research, and I thank her for her encouragement and help along the way.
- * I am grateful for the opportunity to conduct my study in the College of Law at the University of South Africa.
- * I wish to thank all the law academics at Unisa for their cooperation in completing the questionnaires.
- * Special thanks are extended to Ms Leanne Brown and Ms Ruth Scheepers for their willingness to spend long hours editing and providing suggestions and comments on my transcript.
- * I am sincerely grateful to my family, especially my mother [Matshidiso Eugenia Liphoto-Constable], wife, and two children [Yolanda (daughter) and Asemahle (son)], for their support and encouragement.
- * A special thank you to Mr Vuyisani Manzi for sacrificing his time in assisting me with the corrections.
- * I thank Ms Makgomo Manale for formatting my work with such professionalism.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the training needs of law academics by examining their ability to use legal electronic information resources at Unisa effectively. Using the survey method, a questionnaire was used to collect data. The data was descriptively analysed. The study revealed that law academics are aware of the wide variety of electronic resources relevant to their work. Further, these academics possess the necessary basic skills to use these resources. However, the majority of academics do not have high levels of confidence in using specific electronic legal resources.

This study concluded that, despite the library's provision of user training sessions for academics, training does not focus on legal electronic resources. The variety of responses revealed the diverse training needs of law academics. The study recommended that training needs analysis be conducted by subject librarians who would conduct specialised legal electronic training.

KEY TERMS: law academics; legal electronic training; legal electronic information resources; user needs analysis; subject librarians; literacy skills; electronic databases; information seeking, searching and retrieval.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has been characterised by the dominant role of information, which is increasingly available electronically. The reliance on technology by professionals in various fields has dramatically changed the way in which jobs are performed and the world is viewed. Pickering (1996:1) states that “the catalyst for legal change is the placement of information in electronic form and the widespread availability of information as well as the means for accessing, communicating and manipulating information in this form. These technologies constitute the seeds of legal change ...”. According to Small (1995:32), “the information professional within this environment has an increasingly important role to fulfil in relation to training lawyers in the principles of legal research techniques and database skills. Legal publishers are now producing more material on CD-ROM and this whole area of legal information access is developing rapidly - hopefully we are not too far away from the day when loose-leaf filing will become a distant memory!”

The use of electronic resources has been adopted by most teaching disciplines at the University of South Africa, and the College of Law, with its different schools, is no exception. Pettit (1996:2) points out that “the electronic revolution means that the role of all in academia is changing, be they law academics, publishers or librarians”. Technological skills should be taught by all disciplines, since increasingly information is available electronically. Early preparations will help to curb the challenges brought about by technology. With this in mind, this research investigated the training needs of law academics in accessing electronic information in the College of Law at the University of South Africa.

1.2 CONCEPTUAL SETTING

The availability and use of information by the legal profession has been influenced by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). In the past, legal professionals depended heavily on information which was available in print format, but now more and more of this information is accessible electronically. This poses a challenge for the legal profession as most legal practitioners are not trained to use the technological tools needed in this field. This challenge has prompted the introduction by law librarians of training programmes for legal

professionals in the use of electronic sources of information, or computer literacy for legal professionals. Another challenge facing legal professionals is the acquisition and enhancement of computer skills that will assist them in performing their tasks effectively and independently. Both legal professionals and law librarians must be informed of current events in the legal fraternity and need to stay abreast of new technological developments.

Law is a demanding yet exciting profession. It is made particularly challenging by the fact that regulations are frequently amended, due to political, economic, social and international relations. These changes are made electronically before they can be accessed in other formats.

According to the Bileta Report (1996:4), "the study of law can no longer be considered a 'talk and chalk' discipline. The skills associated with new technology are of such importance that proficiency in this field is now viewed as an integral element in the education and skills development of all undergraduate and postgraduate lawyers." These views support the objectives of the Skills Development Act of South Africa, Act 97 of 1998.

The main purpose of this Act is:

- (i) to develop the skills of the workforce; and
- (ii) to increase investment in education and training in the labour market and to improve return on that investment.

Employers are encouraged by this Act to train and re-train their employees, in order to develop skills by investing in education and training.

Paliwa (as cited by Aquatias, 1998:2) supports this notion by further suggesting that "users of electronic legal information today need:

- access from the desktop
- training
- friendly interfaces
- search and navigation systems
- a harmonisation of standards and interconnectivity (i.e. a common interface)
- consistency and accuracy".

Paliwa (1998) further believes that the advent of electronic legal information would make legal information more easily accessible, and would encourage self-education.

Training in the use of legal electronic information uses concepts that may be familiar to information professionals but unfamiliar to legal professionals. Therefore, in the following subsections, these concepts are introduced in order to highlight their significance in this study, as some of them are used differently in different settings. These concepts are:

electronic information resources, end-user searching, electronic training, end-user training, training needs, information needs and information-seeking behaviour, legal information services, and information infrastructure.

1.2.1 Electronic information resources

These are documents in libraries that are available in an electronic format, and which require special equipment and skills to be accessed: for example, CD-ROMs, electronic databases and the Internet. According to Olson (1999:9), “the amount of legal resources available electronically is vast and continues to grow rapidly”.

Electronic resources in any field of study have a number of advantages over printed books and journals. Olson (1999) points out the following advantages:

- * An electronic text can be searched by any combination of keywords, so that a query can match a very individual and specific need.
- * Information retrieved can be downloaded, manipulated, and used in other documents.
- * In addition, resources can be updated daily or weekly, with no delays for printing and postal delivery.

The tools used in searching for information will largely depend on the type of query and the information required by the end-user.

1.2.2 End-user searching

End-users are defined as professionals who frequently need updated information in order to perform their jobs properly (Van Brakel, 1989:52). End-users may be information professionals,

legal professionals, or professionals in other fields. Therefore, end-users are the information consumers, the patrons of libraries and information centres (Mischo and Lee, 1987:227). Kemp (1990:3) observes that users are “those for whom information systems are created – the ultimate beneficiaries”. In the context of their direct use of information systems, they are often referred to as end-users. Three different kinds of end-users are identified by Cronin and Davenport (1988:317), namely:

- End-users with subject knowledge as well as information retrieval skills (SK + IR).
- End-users with only subject knowledge (SK).
- End-users with only information retrieval skills (IR).

Cognisance of this distinction is essential for those who provide training to end-users. It is important for these trainers to know end-users’ level of education and training in order to be able to satisfy their needs.

The shift towards retrieving information electronically has brought about some changes, although traditional formats are still being widely used. Over the decades, there has always existed a large group of professionals who retrieve information for their own use from traditional, mainstream, online services. According to Ojala (1986:92), an “end-user searcher is a person accessing online databases and performing search operations for the purpose of finding information to be used by that same person rather than another”. Ojala (1986) further mentions that, when we drop “searcher” from the phrase, we find in Webster’s the broadest definition of an end-user, namely “the ultimate consumer of a finished product” (Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 2000). The finished product in this case is the information for which the end-user is searching. Therefore, she concludes that every member of society is a potential end-user of information.

1.2.3 Electronic training

In any organisation today, training is of great importance, and as a result, a great deal of money is spent on it. “Training is an active process aimed at developing knowledge, skills and attitudes of employees to prepare them for a specific task or job” (Benade, 1993:4).

Pepper (as cited by Ondari-Okemwa, 2000:3) defines training as being “the organised process concerned with the acquisition of capability or the maintenance of existing capability”. Buckley and Caple (as cited by Ondari-Okemwa, 2000) define training as “a planned and systematic

effort to modify or develop knowledge, skill, or attitude through learning experience, to achieve effective performance in an activity, or range of activities". Prytherch (as cited by Ocholla, 1995:12) views training as "a systematic instruction of all staff at all levels in new attitudes or new skill and perhaps new knowledge".

The definitions of training indicate its importance in organisations. There is a clear role for librarians in libraries today and their role has evolved to include that of providing training.

1.2.4 End-user training

End-user training is the means of transferring knowledge by an experienced trainer, or, in this case, an information specialist, to the end-user. In this study, end-users are the law academics. Thus, end-user training refers to the training of law academics by librarians in acquiring and mastering new skills for accessing information from electronic or print sources. End-user training has a positive impact on the success of the organisation and the richness of the work lives of the personnel involved (Mischo and Lee, 1987:227).

1.2.5 Training needs

A training need exists when an employee lacks the knowledge or skill to perform an assigned task satisfactorily (Christopher, 2004:5). There are two ways of looking at training needs. The first method takes a proactive approach, and the second method involves a supervisor or manager approaching the training department to fix a problem (Christopher, 2004:5).

1.2.6 Information needs and information-seeking behaviour

According to Choo (2000:26), "Information needs arise from the problems, uncertainties, and ambiguities encountered in specific organizational situations and experiences." The information needs of legal professionals are influenced by their field of specialisation and research interests. Leckie (1996:1) observes that "within the universe of potentially relevant information, what is required by a particular lawyer will vary because lawyers (and law firms) often specialise in a certain area of the law, in an attempt to focus their practice". Leckie (1996) further maintains that this has an impact on information needs and use. Information needs refer to information inputs which are required by users in order to fulfill their tasks.

Information needs may be expressed, observed or even predicted (Prasad, 1991:26). This means that the individual may be either aware or unaware of such needs.

Information-seeking behaviour refers to information-seeking patterns (Mogane, 1998:9). Mogane (1998) further observes that "the user of information experiences an impulse to seek for information and is at times aware or not aware of the specific behaviour of seeking for information". Information-seeking behaviour which results from the recognition of some need (Wilson, 1981) is defined by Ucak and Kurbanoglu (as cited by Krikelas, 1983:6-7) "as any activity of an individual that is undertaken to identify a message that satisfies a perceived need. In other words, information seeking begins when someone perceives that the current state of possessed knowledge is less than that needed to deal with some issue (or problem)."

1.2.7 Legal information services

Thomson (1996:5) regards law as "a system of rules instituted by act of parliament, custom or practice applying to individuals and corporate bodies in order to punish those who offend the conventions of society". The constitution is a good example of a law which is supreme in most countries. The word "law" is utilised in everyday communication. All disciplines have laws governing them. Law refers to rules or norms that govern behaviour.

Law, in this case, governs or regulates the behaviour of human beings. This means that the law consists of standards, rules or norms that determine how people should behave and interact with one another. The law is there to serve the people.

Susskind (1996:11) argues that "the law is at the heart of our personal and social lives, it is the lifeblood of the commercial world and it is central also to our national security". Schuller and Ogloff (2001:3) acknowledge that "law touches virtually every aspect of our daily lives and that what we do is governed by the laws of our country".

1.2.8 Information infrastructure

There are various definitions of the concept "information infrastructure". Infrastructure is defined by Kurshan, Harrington and Milbury (1994:97) as the physical equipment (hardware and software) that enables a network to function.

Dalton (1988:72) argues that, “An information infrastructure facilitates the flow of research results from one sector of the community to another through the use of communication channels such as management information systems, computer technology, telecommunications research organisations and library and information services.” An information infrastructure can be perceived as a set of negotiated technical and social agreements of certain reach and range, using private or individual resources for the public or common purpose of enabling information to flow across a series of jurisdictions or processes, using digitally networked media (Ryan, 1993:3).

A national information infrastructure forms an integral part of a country’s general infrastructure. It is connected to the substructure made up of organisations, systems, manpower, expertise and so forth, which exists for the purpose of making information, data or knowledge available, in order to enable researchers, technologists, administrators and others to make effective decisions and to accomplish tasks (Kurshan, Harrington & Milbury, 1994).

The impact of informatisation may be felt at personal, organisational, local, regional, national and international levels, through a set of arrangements, facilities, products and services, as a supporting structure that may be collectively described as an information infrastructure (Dick, 2002:94). Dick (2002:95) further explains that this information infrastructure is variously called an information highway, an information superhighway, and a global information superhighway. When an infrastructure is applied to information, the results are a global information infrastructure (GII) and national information infrastructures (NII).

Levitan (1982:40) refers to information infrastructure as an “underlying foundation with a range of components, including:

- * People (the information users and producers who direct, prioritize, interpret, and apply data and information to policy problems;
- * Documents, databases, and other information entities that hold information and data collections; and
- * Information processes (such as collection, storage, retrieval, dissemination, communication, and display), and information technologies.”

1.3 CONTEXTUAL SETTING

Bak (2003:85) defines contextualisation of a problem as “an analysis of the circumstances in which the problem or ideas arose”. A contextual setting means more than just how the ideas arose, but also refers to the characteristics or types of people or organisations under investigation. To begin with, the University of South Africa (Unisa) is a distance learning academic institution that offers various qualifications. There are five colleges within Unisa, and each college has different schools with various departments.

The colleges within Unisa are:

- (i) College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences
- (ii) College of Economic and Management Sciences
- (iii) College of Human Sciences
- (iv) College of Law, and
- (v) College of Science, Engineering and Technology.

The current College of Law is a merger of the former (old) University of South Africa (Unisa), the Technikon of Southern Africa (TSA) and Vista University Distance Education Campus (Vudec). The college has two schools with nine teaching departments. These schools are:

School of Law: Constitutional, International and Indigenous Law; Criminal and Procedural Law; Jurisprudence; Mercantile Law and Private Law.

School of Justice: Correctional Services Management; Police Practice; Security Management and Criminology.

Besides these two schools, the College includes the following centres, institutes and units:

Centres: Centre for Business Law; Centre for Indigenous Law; Centre for Human Rights Law; Legal Terminology in African Languages; Legal Aid Clinic; and the VerLoren van Themaat Centre for Public Law Studies.

Institutes: Institute for Foreign and Comparative Law.

Units: Unit for Legal Historical Research.

The College offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and in addition to these, various certificate programmes.

This study emerged as a result of the researcher having worked for the College of Law as a librarian. The researcher observed that some academics had difficulty in retrieving information they needed from electronically available legal resources. They thus gave preference to print resources, which did not always contain up-to-date information. This problem could have been due to several factors, such as a lack of IT skills, educational background or personal preferences. Owing to technological developments, the legal profession requires a high level of electronic retrieval skills, since up-to-date information is increasingly available only electronically.

The target group in this study is the academic staff of the College of Law, in particular the School of Law, which is located on the main campus. The academic staff fall into the following categories: Dean; Deputy Dean; Professors; Associate Professors; Senior Lecturers and Lecturers. There are two libraries available to these academics, both of which are on the main campus. There is a college library, only accessible to academics, and the main library, which is accessible to everyone. Support provided by these libraries is critical to the attainment of competitive research outputs by law academics.

The School of Justice, students and administrative staff have been excluded from this study. Reasons for this are given in 1.8 of this study.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The main problem addressed by this study is that there are no training programmes in place for law academics who wish to use electronic resources to access information, and secondly that law academics' training needs have not been clearly identified. The electronic availability of legal information presents a challenge to legal professionals who have limited skills in using electronic resources. The inability to use electronic legal resources may result in performance shortfalls at work. Information-seeking skills of professionals, and their knowledge in using computers, is critical in this century. Staff training is a vital and challenging task that has come to be associated with the determination of the future of many organisations (Ondari-Okemwa, 2000:258). Ondari-Okemwa (2000) further observes that "without relevant and appropriate training, employees of an organisation may fail to perform at the level expected of them, in the process leading to the collapse of business and organisations".

Many lawyers are not convinced that they should become computer literate (Woodbury, 1995:10). One reason they provide for this attitude is that the computer world is far from perfect, and that computers can mysteriously cause havoc. This study attempts to determine how to train law academics in the College of Law at the University of South Africa to use electronic resources.

There is currently insufficient research to serve as guidelines for this study.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided this study:

- 1.5.1 How is the College of Law affected by the application of technology in accessing electronically available information?
- 1.5.2 Can the law academics successfully access electronically available information?
- 1.5.3 Are the electronic training needs of law academics at the University of South Africa being addressed by the College of Law library and the main library?
- 1.5.4. Are the needs of law academics pertaining to information and electronic training being assessed and satisfied by the College?
- 1.5.5 Who should be responsible for determining the training needs and for training of law academics at the University of South Africa?

1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to investigate the training needs of law academics with regard to their use of electronic information resources, and to determine the extent to which Unisa is addressing these needs. It also aims to create the awareness that ICTs form an integral part of law, and that the know-how for manipulating electronic resources is pivotal.

The objectives of this study are:

- 1.6.1 To identify the existing electronic information resources in the legal field.
- 1.6.2 To determine the challenges faced by law academics in using legal electronic resources.
- 1.6.3 To investigate the training needs of law academics with regard to electronic information use in the College of Law at the University of South Africa.

1.6.4 To identify which effective training methods are available.

1.6.5 To make recommendations regarding the training of legal professionals.

1.7 UNDERLYING ASSUMPTION

The underlying assumption in this study is that training in the use of electronic legal resources is a necessity, because more and more current information is now available electronically. Owing to the introduction of technology in the legal field, technological skills of law professionals have thus taken on great importance.

1.8 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

According to Bak (2003:23), delimiting a study requires careful analytical thinking. The main focus group in this study will be the School of Law, excluding the School of Justice, centres, institutes and units. These latter are excluded because of the limited scope of this dissertation. The manageability of this study also depends on the group to be studied. In this case, 120 law academics from the College of Law constitutes a manageable group .

It is also convenient for the researcher to study the group located on the main campus. In the College of Law, only academics will be studied, thus excluding administrative staff and student/academic assistants. Their exclusion is due to the fact that they do not fall into the category of academics. The academics included in the study comprise: the Dean, Deputy Dean, professors, associate professors, senior lecturers and lecturers. In order to further delimit this study, only permanent academic staff members in the College will be included, excluding those on Research and Development (R and D) leave.

The College of Law has been chosen because the researcher is a former employee of this College, and has observed and worked with its staff. The researcher is therefore aware of some of the problems they experience in using legal electronic resources.

Finally, this study is limited to training, rather than the broader areas of information needs or information use, for the following reasons:

- (i) Training will develop specific skills of lecturers in using electronic resources.
- (ii) Librarians are no longer simply providers of information – they are now trainers.

- (iii) Colleges invest in training staff and enhancing their skills in order to improve their competence at work.

1.9 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The main significance of this study is that it will:

- suggest what needs to be done in terms of training law academics, and how this can be done.
- empower law academics with technological skills, in order for them to be independent - researchers who can manipulate electronic information retrieval tools.
- recommend training programmes that could be followed in the College to train law academics.

This study could be valuable to the College of Law, the law academics and librarians in general. The results could help the College to formulate a training policy, if none exists at present. The subject librarian of the College will be able to train academics by addressing their known problems, provided that a needs analysis has first been carried out.

1.10 MOTIVATION OR RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Technology cannot be divorced from the law profession, because it enhances the quality of legal education and the skills of legal professionals. Therefore, training in how to use electronic information resources is essential, and should be implemented. The main motive of this study is to highlight some of the difficulties that law academics experience in using electronic legal resources to access information. This problem has resulted in the reliance of some academics on the law librarian to conduct searches for them, including simple searches that could be done by the academics themselves in their offices.

In the process of the researcher's contact with law academics and his updating them on new developments in legislation and the latest decided cases, it became clear that their training needs in terms of accessing electronically available information required investigation. This could be due to the fact that the College of Law or main library does not offer in-service training in this regard.

1.11 SEQUENCE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

Chapter 2: The information and training needs of law academics at Unisa in a changing electronic information environment

Chapter 3: Legal information resources in South Africa and at the University of South Africa

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Chapter 5: Data analysis and interpretation of results

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

References

Appendices

1.12 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 has provided a background to this study on training needs of law academics in the College of Law at the University of South Africa in terms of electronic information use. In this chapter, the problem statement, research questions, aims, delimitations and significance of the study have been explained. Both conceptual and contextual frameworks have been discussed in this chapter. The sequence of chapters in this study has also been briefly outlined, and other issues considered to be important have been mentioned. The next chapter discusses the information and training needs of law academics at Unisa in a changing electronic information environment.

CHAPTER 2

THE INFORMATION AND TRAINING NEEDS OF LAW ACADEMICS AT UNISA IN A CHANGING ELECTRONIC INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the information and training needs of law academics in a changing electronic information environment. Like other democratic countries, South Africa recognises the right of access to information. The *Promotion of Access to Information Act* came into effect in 2000, allowing people the right of access to information that is privately and publicly held.

The accessibility of information in various formats influences the information needs of users. To satisfy the different information needs law academics may have, these needs must be identified by law librarians. Such an information needs identification process is essential to the provision of effective information services, as well as in the determination of training requirements.

Needs identification is a complex process that requires the identifier to have special skills and knowledge. The present trend of technological development in legal practice and other disciplines has resulted in ever-changing needs and, in particular, a need for training of professionals.

2.2 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Information Technology (IT) impacts on the tasks we perform in every profession. According to Duncan (1997:3), “every activity of an organization creates and uses information (Porter, 1985), so benefits from applying IT may be found in many different areas and have an organisation-wide impact (Earl, 1989; Flynn and Goleniewwska, 1993)”.

Knowing what law academics expect is a key component in the provision of relevant and useful information by law librarians. Tam and Robertson (2002:369) state that “libraries and information services face many challenges from changes in the information environment, most of which have occurred as a result of developments in electronic information resources and the evolution of the ‘digital age’”. Accessing information by using electronic sources is unavoidable

in the legal profession. This shift has resulted in changes in how documents and information are handled – for example, how they are catalogued, stored, organised and retrieved. Further, they point out that “developments in information technologies and advances in telecommunications have revolutionized the worldwide information society”. These developments have transformed the role of librarians from providers of information to trainers.

According to Crawford (as cited by Herman, 2001:432), “... evolving technology holds great promise for helping meet the information needs of humanists ... [provided that] the former logical and simple methods of locating information are replaced by new tools that appear equally logical and simple”.

In a way, technology must complement information available in print. Herman (2001:452) comments that “in keeping with the commonly held notion that information technology based services and resources can and do play an increasingly important part in scholarly work, universities have been offering their faculty a plethora of ingenious modes of electronic access to information, aimed at meeting their information needs, with the libraries traditionally fulfilling groundbreaking and leadership roles in these endeavours”. He further warns that electronic systems and methods for acquiring information should be viewed as a means to an end, to be chosen when it seems that information needs can best be met in this way, and when it is deemed suitable for individual inclinations and capabilities.

Paliwala *et al.* (1997:34) state that “the advent of electronic publication of law reports represents the possibility of a great shift in the nature of this work and for those who advocate the greater use of this technology, it is vital that this is based on an appreciation of existing systems and their use”. An electronic resource in the legal fraternity can now offer services that are impossible to ignore. This offer calls for training in order to keep pace with technological developments. Technological changes in all the colleges at Unisa affect the learning environment, and in some schools computer literacy is a prerequisite. The Unisa Library has embraced the changing educational and learning environment by making the library accessible, both physically and via electronic networks, and by providing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) support to its users.

2.3 THE INFORMATION NEEDS AND INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF LAW ACADEMICS

Information is a basic human need, and is vital to every aspect of society. According to Fidzani (1998:330), “To serve effectively the information needs of graduate students, librarians need to know how much students know about finding information, knowledge organization, information use and ability to find information.” Law librarians at Unisa should follow this advice when dealing with law academics. Knowing the competencies of one’s users in terms of finding electronic information is essential for designing effective training programmes for them.

According to Otike and Matthews (2000:242), “Lawyers operate in an information-intensive environment. Everything they do, whether providing legal advice, representing a client in court, or drafting a legal document requires information.” Law academics also work in an information-intensive environment, having access to volumes of information, both electronically and in print format. Cohen (as cited by Otike and Matthews, 2000:243) acknowledges that “a lawyer seeks information for three purposes: First, as a counselor, he seeks to determine what the law is on a particular problem, or how the court will act if the problem before it is ever litigated. Second, as an advocate, he may seek information to support an already determined position, in order to persuade someone (usually a court) of what law should be applied, or how the law should be applied. Third, lawyers seek legal support for a client’s position, or legal rationale for a proposed course of action”. Crawford (as cited by Davadason and Lingam, 1996:36) maintains that “information needs depend on:

- (i) Work activity;
- (ii) Discipline/field/area of interest;
- (iii) Availability of facilities;
- (iv) Hierarchical position of individuals;
- (v) Motivation factors for information needs;
- (vi) Need to take a decision;
- (vii) Need to seek new ideas;
- (viii) Need to validate the correct ones;
- (ix) Need to make professional contributions; and
- (x) Need to establish priority for discovery, etc.”.

Otike and Matthews (2000:243) concur that “information needs of lawyers are generally influenced by the kind of work lawyers do”. In this way, the needs of law academics are influenced by their work, their field of interest, experience or hierarchical position. They further state that “the need for information is greatly influenced by the age and experience of a lawyer”.

They argue that the older a lawyer, the more experienced he/she is in legal practice and, therefore, the less he/she might need to consult information sources, whereas junior staff members need to seek information, as they are still on a “learning curve”.

Kebede (2002:19) points out that “users’ information needs have indeed changed (and are still changing) as a result of the emergence and expansion of electronic forms in which information content is being made available for users’ access and use”. According to Kuhlthau and Tama (2001:25), “information workers consider information seeking as a necessary, but preliminary activity, to the more significant endeavour of using information for constructing new knowledge to accomplish the tasks and goals that encompass their work”.

2.3.1 FACTORS AFFECTING USERS’ INFORMATION NEEDS

Devadason and Lingam (1996:60) list the following factors that affect users’ information needs:

- (i) The range of information sources available;
- (ii) The uses to which the information will be put;
- (iii) The background, motivation, professional orientation and other individual characteristics of the user;
- (iv) The social, political, economic, legal and regulatory systems surrounding the user; and
- (v) The consequences of information use.

2.4 REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ELECTRONIC INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

Kebede (2002:16) argues that “for their proper exploitation, EISs (Electronic Information Sources) have unique requirements that users should own or have access to. These unique requirements, from the users’ point of view, basically comprise: availability and accessibility of appropriate computer hardware and other related equipment; availability and accessibility of appropriate software, which includes quality and ease of use of the interface and retrieval or

search engine; and adequate user knowledge and skills in order for users to interact with and manipulate the hardware, software and the different EISs as well as to identify and define their needs in the electronic environment” (Johnson, 1997; McCreddie and Rice, 1999; Palmquist and Kim, 1998).

In addition, Johnson (as cited by Kebede, 2002:17) contends that “in one of the more detailed discussions of these unique requirements of EISs, the following are included:

- (i) Network, hardware and software compatibility, plus compliance with industry standards;
- (ii) Availability of network, hardware, and software resources and cost implications;
- (iii) Availability of electrical and telecommunication lines and cost implications;
- (iv) Quality interface, which includes ease of use for library staff and users;
- (v) Effectiveness and efficiency of retrieval or search engines;
- (vi) Training implications for staff and patrons”.

Availability of the library’s electronic resources to users in institutions is another important component of the information environment. Failure to meet these requirements means that access and use of information by law academics will be just a dream. Continuous training programs for both librarians and law academics should be prioritised, thus enabling them to manipulate electronic resources with ease.

2.5 IDENTIFYING AND MEETING INFORMATION NEEDS OF LAW ACADEMICS IN AN ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENT

Identification of the information needs of law academics is essential for the planning of effective, new, information services, and for improving the effectiveness of existing information services. Sophisticated methods of identifying and meeting lecturers’ needs are required, although the identification process is a difficult task to perform.

According to Devadason and Lingam (1996:2), “the turbulent and changing information environment calls for continual research to ensure that the needs of the information users are satisfactorily met and that the information professionals acquire the required expertise to cope with the operational management of the information resources and plan for the future”. In order to achieve this, an identification process is inevitable.

Kebede (2002:20) suggests that the following major steps be taken in order to continue identifying and meeting users' needs in an electronic environment: "keeping informed of requirements of EISs; assessing existing capabilities of users, both personal and environmental on a continuous basis; determining the difference between users' capabilities and the requirements of EISs; and determining the nature of EISs to be provided so that they are accessible and usable within the capabilities of the users".

In contrast, Davedason and Lingam (1996:2) propose various methods for gathering information on the various factors that influence information needs. "The major steps in the process of identifying information needs are:

- (i) Study of the subject (s) of interest to the organization / user(s);
- (ii) Study of the organization and its environment;
- (iii) Study of the immediate environment of the user(s);
- (iv) Study of the user(s);
- (v) Formal interview;
- (vi) Identification and recording of information needs;
- (vii) Analysis and refinement of the identified information needs".

There are many distinct types of users, all of whom have different needs and behaviour patterns which must be taken into consideration. For instance, in this study the College of Law consists of several departments, namely Indigenous Law; Mercantile Law; Jurisprudence; Constitutional and International Law; Criminal and Procedural Law; and Private Law. Professionals in these departments have different needs, and one cannot therefore offer the same training to all these groups. Databases that are used to access information in Labour Law are not the same as those for Criminal Law. In this case, a needs analysis for each group must be conducted in order to determine a training technique that can be most effectively applied.

Before embarking on a programme to train end-users, a thorough training needs analysis must be conducted. This is done for several important reasons:

- to identify the training needs of end-users (legal professionals), and
- to ensure that training is designed to meet their needs.

Understanding user needs will provide a convenient way of deciding on the relevant training method for these particular end-users.

2.5.1 TYPES OF INFORMATION REQUIRED

The type of information required depends to a large extent on the type of work that a lawyer is engaged in (Otike and Matthews, 2000:244). There are different fields of specialisation within the field of law, and therefore users' needs will differ. Law academics are engaged in research in their respective fields, and this will also affect the type of information they require.

2.5.2 TRAINING IN THE USE OF LEGAL ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

The paradigm shift from accessing information using traditional sources to the current situation, characterised by technological developments, presents a great challenge. A review of the literature indicates that innovations in technology are making it possible for the consumer of information, the end-user, to gather his own information online. The information specialist's role is thus changing from that of a provider to a trainer and leader in the information-gathering process.

The results of various training methods, including face-to-face training, user manuals and computer-assisted instruction, as well as alternatives to training such as transparent and simplified systems, all suggest that the best way to teach online searching is to take people by the hand and, in an intimate and relaxed setting, show them how to search. This utopian view does not fit well with reality. The challenge today and in the future is to train large numbers of end-users in a cost-effective way. As a consequence of the explosion in the number of users, training innovations have become a necessity.

In the introduction it was mentioned that this chapter reviews the need for training law academics in the College of Law at the University of South Africa to access electronic resources. Effective training methods that could be used to train legal professionals to use electronic resources, their training needs and the purpose of training, are also discussed here.

2.6 THE IMPACT OF END-USER TRAINING

Over the past few years, online searching has moved from libraries into homes and offices, creating a group of people known as end-user searchers. End-user training has been available in some libraries since the 1970s, and became widespread in the 1980s. The impact of end-user training is noted by Wood (1986:213), who states that “librarians’ evolving role from search intermediary to consultant and educator ... is a direct result of end-user searching”.

Users, having been liberated into a post-modern world of information provision, that is, electronically available information, find it less attractive to utilise traditional library services. Information can now be accessed from their offices, avoiding them having to visit the library physically. End-users search the resources for themselves, and libraries are being forced to change as an increasing number of users are no longer solely dependant on libraries. The idea of end-user training emanated from these changes brought about by technology.

According to De Beer (2002:12), developments in recent decades in the field of information and communication techniques and technology have had dramatic impacts on human beings and on societies, and on their activities. The direct connection of end-users to electronic information sources presents a major challenge to the traditional methods, values and work practices of information specialists. End-user training in using electronic resources is therefore a necessity, and should be carried out by information specialists as part of their day-to-day activities.

2.6.1 THE NECESSITY FOR END-USER TRAINING

In the next few paragraphs attempts are made to provide reasons for the necessity of training in using electronic resources. There are various reasons why end-user training is important, particularly in South Africa, where the Skills Development Act (SDA) (Act 97 of 1998) supports the idea of training in general. The purpose of the SDA is to:

- develop the skills of the workforce;
- increase the investment in education and training in the labour market, and to improve returns on that investment;
- grant employees opportunities to develop existing skills and acquire new ones by means of learnerships and other training; and
- provide employment prospects for the disadvantaged, to offer redress through training and education.

Therefore, information specialists in South African libraries and other information centres are training end-users, thus complying with what is stipulated in the Act. End-user training is vital in ensuring that users value and use library resources independently. Research has shown that end-users are more comfortable when conducting their own searches, without the help of an intermediary. This, however, is only possible if they have received and mastered the necessary skills. Training boosts end-user searching skills, morale and overall performance in dealing with the library's electronic resources. In other words, end-user training is a way of ensuring that end-users are capable of using technology, such as the Internet, CD-ROMs and, in this case, legal databases, effectively.

Training is an essential ingredient for helping trainees to acquire new skills, and to view technology as an agent of change rather than destruction. According to Witiak (1988:51), there are two main reasons why a person might want to receive training in online searching: Firstly, it could be to gain a general knowledge of the tool that we call online searching, to learn what it involves and how it fits into the overall scheme of information retrieval, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of online searching. Secondly, by seeking training, users can develop the skills needed to conduct online searches. The reasons given by Witiak echo what is stated in the Skills and Development Act (SDA). Therefore, end-user training has a positive impact on the success and richness of the work life of the end-user. Training is always part of the learning process empowering end-users. It is natural to want control of one's life, and knowing how to search gives the end-user independence and the freedom to find information when needed.

2.6.2 FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED BEFORE TRAINING

There are four factors that need serious attention in a training programme (Witiak, 1988).

These factors are:

- The duration of the training programme.

This depends on the objectives of the training, and the trainer's perception of the availability of time.

- Administration of the passwords.

One of the solutions is to have passwords for end-users that can be checked out, requiring each end-user to get his/her own password at the time of training.

- Budget for training.

End-users should pay a limited amount for training in order to cover such costs.

- Skilled training facilitators to provide additional support during training.

2.6.3 METHODS FOR END-USER TRAINING OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

It is important to know who will be responsible for training end-users, because a sound background and experience in the field of training is vital. Traditionally, training has been done through workshops given by database producers or providers (Witiak, 1988:51). Train-the-trainer programmes represent a cooperative effort between database providers/producers and intermediaries.

By taking an active role in end-user training, intermediaries can enhance their position as information specialists. This is also confirmed by Mitchell (2003), in her Internet training, where she states that “because the training has been so successful, we are seen as information specialists when it comes to information retrieval from online sources”.

Training programmes should be designed to provide end-users with the necessary skills to search electronically. Workshops are one form of training that may be adopted, if they suit the needs of end-users. Alternatively, other training formats include:

- Self-instruction manuals – this means that the trainers prepare a manual that is simple to use, and whose content is easy to read.
- Video cassettes – this format is common practice. It can also reach quite a number of users, but must be copyrighted. Training is done by means of a video cassette, in which the trainer explains every step of the training process. There are advantages as well as disadvantages to this method. The disadvantages are that it cannot serve the needs of blind or hard-of-hearing people. It can only be used where there is a television set and video machine available. Electricity it is also required.
- Tutorial discs – tutorial discs have the same disadvantages as video cassettes.

End-user training may be in the form of formal, one-on-one or group sessions, on demand or by arrangement between trainers and end-users. A campus-wide campaign is another method in which trainers deliver training and orientation in auditoriums and computer-based training rooms.

"Tell me, and I will forget! Show me, and I might remember! Let me do it, and I will know!"
(Author unknown).

"Let me do it, and I will know!" This statement clearly indicates that hands-on practical experience is vital. It is something that cannot easily be forgotten. Therefore, in training legal "gurus", one must decide which of the above methods best suits a specific department. There are thus certain issues that need to be addressed prior to developing a programme of user education or training. Garrod (2001:34) lists the following issues which need to be addressed:

- What level of IT literacy have users achieved?
- What level of information-handling skills have users attained?
- How do you assess a user's IT and information skills and when?
- What type of advisory services are appropriate, e.g. telephone, voice mail, e-mail, face-to-face, online help, etc.?
- What are the training implications for staff and end-users if these are introduced?
- Do library staff have appropriate training skills to deliver or develop user education or training? Would a proprietary package be more suitable?

2.6.4 END-USER SEARCHING AND NEW ROLES FOR INFORMATION SPECIALISTS

The rapid proliferation of databases available to end-users has impacted dramatically on the role of information specialists. There are fears among these specialists, because some view these changes as the end of their profession. However, others view them as an opportunity to utilise their expertise. The changing role is due to the introduction of electronic information resources, which seem to be replacing traditional forms of accessing information. Technology must be used to our advantage, and not be viewed as impacting negatively on our job activities and lives in general.

End-user training has both a negative and a positive impact on the role of information specialists. From a positive perspective, end-user training develops staff skills, and from a negative perspective, it increases the workload. This is because training preparations have to be made prior to the actual training. Besides that, there is more involved before one can implement and achieve the goals. Janke (1984:18) argues that the creation of an effective end-user depends to a great extent on the provision of professional supportive services, not unlike

the kind of services that we, as librarians, have been accustomed to provide to patrons in manual reference work.

What is being witnessed now is the birth of a new breed of librarians or information specialists, who will offer their services online. Janke (1984) further maintains that the advent of self-service online searching obliges librarians to take a very close look at its implications, which could be widespread and profound. Technology is here to stay, and it is our duty to ensure that it does not overtake us. This means that information specialists must always be at the forefront, and should always dictate and improve their skills through hands-on training using available technology. The changing information environment needs professionals who are familiar with the emerging and fast-growing technology.

According to Farber and Shoham (2002:97), "it is hard not to covert satisfaction among librarians conducting surveys at the purportedly proven fact that an intermediary is needed. It was believed that these surveys demonstrated that, when end-users perform searches using systems specially designed for them, they prefer to ask the librarian to "hold their hand".

2.6.5 ADVANTAGES FOR END-USERS

In a survey conducted by Mitchell (2003) to establish the level of proficiency of Anglo-American clients when doing searches on the Internet, it was revealed that many of these clients, about 60% in total, were happy using the Internet. She lists the following advantages for end-users:

a) Time

The results of Mitchell's survey revealed that some end-users spent less time finding information on the Internet after they had been trained. Do-it-yourself searching saves time and the user gains control over the information retrieval process.

b) Increased confidence

Knowledge about different search engines boosts confidence. End-users, through skills acquired in training, may become more confident in searching for themselves.

c) Accuracy

Fewer hits will be retrieved by an experienced or knowledgeable searcher. This signifies accuracy in refining one's searches, and knowing what to do. The end-user is the best person to decide on the level of satisfaction and accuracy of the information needed, and to make the final judgement about when the need has been met.

End-user training is a way of developing information literate users, which in turn helps information specialists to maintain their dignity and obtain the respect of other professionals. In general, training may help to improve the levels of efficiency, effectiveness and general competence of end-users. The onus for ensuring ongoing training rests not only with trainers and companies, but also with the government, through projects to empower people with the necessary skills. Therefore, adequate funds should be made available for this purpose.

2.6.6 TIPS AND PITFALLS IN TRAINING OF END-USERS /OBSTACLES IN END-USER SEARCHING

Mitchell (2003) provides the following tips with regard to end-user training:

- Conduct thorough research before you start with training, and attend several training courses. Your clients are intelligent people who will soon realise if you are not as knowledgeable as you should be.
- Choose your own examples carefully, and make sure that they work, so that you do not get caught out by them.
- Check your examples and exercises before each session – results change, especially when it comes to the invisible web content retrieved by search engines.
- Stay up-to-date with changes and new features of the different search tools – read journals and/or other sources with news about developments.
- Do not assume that end-users understand the meaning of the terms "and" and "or" in a search strategy – most of them do not.

From the above, it is clear that the trainer must not make assumptions about end-users' level of information literacy. It is also important to show end-users that one knows what one is talking about. Trainers should keep themselves informed about new developments by researching and reading up in the field.

When considering the methods of training discussed earlier, it is important to note that these methods pose some serious challenges. These challenges have been identified by Leslie and Campana (1999:2):

- * Successfully identifying end-users in general;
- * Figuring out what training outreach needs to go to which group of end-users;
- * Finding the resources to train the trainer;
- * Finding the resources to prepare good print- or web-based instructional material and tutorials;
- * Finding the resources for face-to-face training, whether individually or in groups;
- * Lack of attendance of training sessions due to a corporate culture that moves at a very fast pace; and
- * Evaluating the effectiveness of training programmes.

Training professionals face the daunting task of having to ensure that training meets specific needs, and that it is available when and where needed, at an affordable price. Training must be aligned with the organisation's core vision and mission statement and should add value. Selecting the use of the most appropriate technology will enhance the value of the training programme.

2.6.7 TRAINING THE TRAINER

Heller (2002) argues that, "Training the trainer means identifying an existing staff person, or several staff members, who have some technology expertise and teaching this person to train other staff members to use the technology. By training one key person to train others in the organization, you distribute the knowledge and create a repository of knowledge within the organization so that no one person carries all of the organization's knowledge." This means that library staff at Unisa responsible for training should receive training themselves before transferring any acquired knowledge. Training the trainers, such as subject librarians and any other qualified library personnel, will ensure that the library stays abreast of its training programmes

2.6.7.1 Reasons to train the trainer

Reasons for training the trainer vary from organisation to organisation. Heller (2002) has provided the following reasons:

- It is a relatively inexpensive and painless way for organisations to make the most of technology by training internal staff who will in turn train the rest of the employees within the organisation;
- By developing internal training resources the organisation is empowering itself and its employees.

2.7 SUMMARY

End-user training has come a long way, and the process is still evolving owing to technological developments. It is clear that the role of professionals in various fields is changing, and this includes the role of information specialists. These changes call for expertise beyond librarianship, and this can only be achieved through learning and training. Knowledge gained through self-training or learning can be transferred to end-users by means of training. Instead of reacting to the dilemma presented by technology, information specialists should be proactive and continue training end-users, since their needs are constantly changing owing to the availability of electronic information.

The following chapter focuses on legal information resources in South Africa and at Unisa.

CHAPTER 3

LEGAL INFORMATION RESOURCES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries are increasingly providing access to electronic resources such as CD-ROMs, Internet, online services and so forth. New legal electronic resources are being made available at a rapid pace, and because they are difficult to manipulate, users require training and skills if they are to exploit them optimally.

There is an ongoing debate between professionals, associations and different disciplines as to whether or not organisations will survive in this era without the use of computer technology. As far as modern technology is concerned, there is no going back in many or professions or fields of specialisation.

Legal information is readily accessible to anyone looking for it, either via libraries in a text format, or in the form of electronic resources. This chapter discusses most of the legal information resources which are accessible to law academics, in South Africa generally and more specifically at the University of South Africa.

3.2 PURPOSE OF THE LAW

Maisel and Greenbaum (2001:15) state that "there is no single, completely accurate definition of the meaning of law". Furthermore, they suggest that law can be considered as a system of rules which seeks to regulate or control the behaviour of citizens in a politically organised society, by prescribing what is acceptable conduct. The College of Law has a pivotal role to play in teaching law as a form of social control in society.

3.3 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Legal information is accessible via print and electronic resources. The printed sources of South African legal information are available in the Unisa library, and can be categorised into two parts, namely:

- * Primary sources; and
- * Secondary sources.

3.3.1 Primary sources

A primary source of information is original material or a document containing firsthand information which stems from the original source or person. California State University Monterey Bay Library defines primary sources of information as “the original material source on which other research is based”. Primary sources of legal information in South Africa are available in statutory materials, decisions of the higher courts, legal proceedings and the old authorities. Primary sources present original thinking, so they are a good source of information as they provide direct or first-hand information to the law academics. There are different kinds of primary sources, for example, patents, survey research, diaries and letters that are original in nature.

3.3.1.1 *Statutory material*

These are the acts of parliament which are available electronically and in the Government Gazette. Butterworths and Juta provide access to South African legislation in printed and electronic formats, in the **Juta Law Statutes** and **Butterworths Statutes of South Africa** respectively. Legislation in South Africa is also published in indexes which are accessible in the Government Gazette Index, Juta’s Index to the South African Government, and Provincial Gazettes.

3.3.1.2 *Case Law*

These are the decisions made by the high court, and are also primary sources of legal information. Case law information is available in the following sources:

- South African Law Reports (SA), with the most important judgements from all South African higher courts;
- South African Criminal Law Reports (SACR), which provide access to civil and criminal cases;
- All South African Law Reports (All SALR), which provide judgements from South African higher courts;
- Butterworths Constitutional Law Reports (BCLR), which provide judgements from all constitutional court cases;
- Index to South African Case Law; Butterworths Law Reports (BLLR), which provides access to Industrial Court judgements and those from the Labour Appeal Court;
- Juta's Index and Annotations to the South African Law Reports; and
- Butterworths Consolidated Index and Noter-Up to the South African Law Reports and All South African Law Reports.

3.3.1.3 *The old authorities*

The old authorities are based on works published in the 17th and 18th century, covering the old Roman-Dutch laws or English Law. These laws were applied by the courts of law in South Africa although it is stipulated that any application of the old authorities must be lawful. This means that the application should not contradict what the Constitution of the country states.

3.3.2 Secondary sources

Secondary sources are works that interpret or analyse an historical event or phenomenon (California State University Monterey Bay Library). They contain information that has already been interpreted and commented on, and lack the immediacy of a primary record. These are materials produced after an event has happened.

Examples of secondary sources are:

- Biographical works
- History
- Commentaries
- Encyclopaedias
- Textbooks
- Periodical literature.

These sources are helpful in many areas, and lawyers depend on them. Dictionaries such as *Hiemstra's Engelse-Afrikaans Regswoordeboek* and *Sisson- South African Judicial Dictionary* are secondary sources, as are encyclopaedias such as *Law of South Africa (LAWSA)* and *Current Law*.

Commonly used journal indexes are the *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals*, *Index to South African Periodicals (ISAP)*, *Consolidated Index to the Tydskrif vir Hedendaagse Romeins-Hollandse Reg (THRHR)*, and indexes to the *South African Law Journal*.

Some well-known law journals include *Acta Juridica*, *Comparative and International Law Journal of South Africa (CILSA)*, *Industrial Law Journal (ILJ)*, *South African Journal of Criminal Justice (SACJ)*, *South African Law Journal (SALJ)*, and *Tydskrif vir die Suid Afrikaanse Reg (TSAR)*. Law books are also secondary sources in that they describe, comment on, or index South African law.

3.4 TYPES OF LEGAL ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SOURCES AT UNISA

Kebede (2002:15) believes that the current change in format in which information is made available, from print and other formats to electronic formats, is bringing about changes in the information needs of users. This statement suggests that all professionals should invest in information technology (IT) in order to survive into the next century. Access to any electronic resource requires some level of knowledge for both librarians and end-users, obtained through training in conducting electronic searches. These skills are important, and could easily be acquired during undergraduate studies and through in-service training. Training of academic staff and students at Unisa is conducted by qualified library staff using the Gold Fields Electronic Learning Centre. This centre is well equipped with Intel Pentium D (Dell) computers which have access to the Internet and all the programs required for training at Unisa. Some of these programs are: Windows XP, Access, Excel, Powerpoint, subject databases, DeepFreeze, Microsoft Internet Explorer and Adobe Acrobat Professional 7. Students who are registered with Unisa may have access to the library but are required to pay an access fee. Those who are not registered are offered a special membership to access the library at a stipulated amount. The legal electronic resources that are available at Unisa are: e-books, e-journals, e-statutes, e-government material and treaties, e-case law and general reference works.

3.4.1 e-Books

Legal electronic resources provide full-text access to books. For example, Butterworths' *LexisNexis Direct* provides access to textbooks, practitioners' manuals and commentaries on statutes. *Current and Completed Research*, for example, which provides the dissertation topics of registered postgraduate students, can be accessed in the *Union Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations* via SABINET Online. *Butterworths Publications* is another electronic resource which provides the full-text of certain of their published textbooks.

As far as internationally resources are concerned, *Quicklaw* is a Canadian database that offers information on books and book reviews published in that country.

3.4.2 e-Journal articles

Butterworths' *LexisNexis Direct* provides access to full-text articles from various fields of specialisation in law, for example, insurance and income tax law, employment law, and many others. The following are some of the databases that provide access to e-journal articles: *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals*; *Index to South African Periodicals*; *Emerald* (Electronic Management Research Library Databases); *Quicklaw*; *Westlaw*; *LexisNexis*; *Jutastat Labour Library*; *SA ePublications*, and so forth. Law academics at Unisa have access to all these databases.

3.4.3 e-Statutes, Government material and Treaties

Butterworths Publications is a database that provides full-text access to e-statutes, e-regulations, and e-proclamations. Via Butterworths Online, access to other databases is possible, for example, *Constitutional Law Library*, *Tax Library*, *Commercial Law Library*, *Labour Law Library*, *Civil Procedure Library*, *Law of South Africa*, *Current Law*, and so forth. *Jutastat Publications* provides access to *SA Statutes* and *Statutes of Zimbabwe*, while IR Network (Industrial Relations Network) provides access to SA labour relations, ILO conventions, bills and discussion papers, and rules and regulations.

3.4.4 e-Case Law

The following databases are very useful to the legal profession, as references can be made to them. Most of them provide full-text access to cases, for example: Butterworths' *LexisNexis Direct*; *Butterworths Publications*; *Daily Law Reports*; *IR Network*; *Jutastat Publications*; *Current Legal Information* and *LexisNexis*. In some cases, legal professionals make use of international judgements, comparing them to South African cases, and the most useful databases for this are *Quicklaw*; *FindLaw* and *Westlaw*.

3.4.5 General reference works

Information on South African law can be found in three types of reference works which are available in most law libraries, that is, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and current awareness services. A comprehensive range of law dictionaries is available for law professionals, in order to explain and translate difficult legal terms or concepts.

These dictionaries are:

- *Bell's South African Legal Dictionary*;
- *Sisson- The South African Judicial Dictionary*;
- *Hiemstra's Engelse-Afrikaanse regswoordeboek*;
- *Ferreira- South African Legal Abbreviations*;
- *Hiemstra and Gonin (eds) – Trilingual Legal Dictionary (English-Afrikaans- Latin) 3rd ed.*

The most frequently used legal encyclopaedia is the *Law of South Africa (LAWSA)*, which provides tables of statutes, cases and indexes. LAWSA should be used hand-in-hand with *Current Law*, which is LAWSA's companion service that advises on the most recent legal developments. The new developments which appear in *Current Law* will be discussed separately in this chapter, under the topic "Current Awareness Services in the legal field."

3.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF LEGAL ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

A large amount of legal information is available electronically. The time taken in finding information is reduced when a person has relevant information-seeking skills. New ways of

searching for information have been introduced, and users should be trained in using these resources. Electronic access is possible from home if one has a PC and access to the Internet. In some cases, technology has modified what previously existed, so that up-to-date information will be available via computer. The University of South Africa library recently introduced e-journals, which are a useful tool for library users. This suggests that there has been a shift from print to electronic information resources. An understanding of both electronic and print resources is indispensable to all professionals, regardless of their field of expertise.

Kebede (2002:20) suggests that, “in order to continue identifying and meeting users’ needs in an electronic environment, the following are necessary:

- keeping informed of the requirements of EISs (Electronic Information Sources);
- assessing the existing capabilities of users, both personal and environmental, on a continuous basis, determining the difference between users’ capabilities and the requirements of EISs; and
- determining the nature of the EISs to be provided, so that they are accessible and usable in terms of the capabilities of users”.

Susskind (1996:3) predicts that “lawyers’ failure to embrace the techniques and applications of IT will result, in due course, in their providing a substantial disservice to the community. And for lawyers businesses it may eventually mean commercial suicide.” Finally, without the necessary electronic training in conducting legal searches, it is unlikely that electronic information resources will be successfully used in order to satisfy end-users’ information needs.

3.6 INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR THE LEGAL PRACTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Legislation, case law and the South African Legal Information Institute are some of the information resources for South African law. The South African resource page provides links to the South African constitution, government, courts, law schools, legislature, legal resources, treaties, dispute resolution, intellectual property law, law guides, associations, and societies. These sources are available at *Washburn University School of Law* website (see references).

Information on South African law is available in various sources that are accessible to the public. Sources of law are better described as the places from which laws originate, and where

they can be found. According to the Unit for Basic Legal Education (2000:21), there are two main sources of law in South Africa, namely:

- Authoritative sources of South African law have binding authority over all the citizens of this country. Lawyers and law academics base their legal opinions on these authoritative sources. South African law assumes that every citizen is aware of what the law says or prescribes. These are sources such as legislation, case law, Indigenous African law and common law.
- Persuasive sources of law, unlike authoritative ones, do not have binding authority, but are often consulted by judges, lawyers and law academics. Persuasive sources may have some influence when a rule or principle has to be determined. Persuasive sources are practical in nature and some examples are modern legal writings which do not have authority as sources of law.

According to Olson (1999:9), the number of legal resources available electronically is vast, and continues to grow rapidly. This growth in electronic resources calls for more training and development of law academics, who face this challenge. Electronic resources have a number of advantages over printed books and journals. Olson (1999) lists two advantages as being that:

- an electronic text can be searched by any combination of keywords, so that a query can match a very individual or specific need;
- information retrieved can be downloaded, manipulated, and used in other documents.

In addition, resources can be updated daily, weekly or monthly, with no delays for printing. This explains why more and more people are turning to the Internet for locating information, in this case, legal information for law academics and lawyers. Susskind (2000:146) predicts that “legal education will be transformed through the availability of online, interactive, multimedia systems, which will enable judges, lawyers, and students to learn and be trained remotely”.

South Africa has the following legal information resources accessible to legal professionals: Acts Online; Commercial Law in South Africa; Constitutional Court of South Africa; Wits Law School Constitutional Law Archive; Land Claims Court of South Africa; Legal Resources Centre; LexAfrica – A network of Law firms in Africa; Natal Society; Parliamentary Monitoring Group; Legal City; South African Law Commission; South African Law Update; UCT Faculty of Law; Unisa College of Law; Weekly Legislation Update (Butterworths); Wits Law; Potchefstroom

University Faculty of Law and the list of human rights treaties acceded to or ratified by South Africa.

3.6.1 Authoritative sources

An explanation of what authoritative and persuasive sources are has been discussed under section 3.6 of this chapter. Authoritative sources of information in South Africa are:

- Legislation/Acts/Statutes: Law academics, judges and lawyers consult these sources to find out what the law says with regard to the problem they are faced with. Legislation is the most important authoritative source of information in any country, including South Africa. Legislation in South Africa is also accessible online, which contains fairly up-to-date information on acts. Examples are:
 - (i) Acts / Legislation Online
 - (ii) South African Legal Information Institute (SAFLII)

The College of Law at Unisa has access to the abovementioned sources. Knowledge on how to access these sources is very important, but currently this presents a challenge to the law academics.

- Case Law or Court Decisions: This source provides information on previous decisions of South African courts. In South Africa, the Constitutional Court of South Africa provides access to all judgements, as well as pleas already decided. Law academics usually refer mostly to decided cases, or may write articles based on an authoritative court decision on a specific case. SAFLII also provides access to case laws.
- Other sources of law: these are common law and indigenous African customary law. This information is also available from SAFLII and WORLDLII (see references).

3.6.2 Persuasive sources

Persuasive (influential) sources of information in South Africa are:

- Foreign law: in South Africa, courts may refer to foreign laws when dealing with the Bill of Rights.

- Modern legal writers: writings by legal practitioners, academics and even judges may be consulted, because they may have an influence when a legal principle or rule has to be determined.
- Certain sources, such as journal articles and books, are also acknowledged in some decided cases.

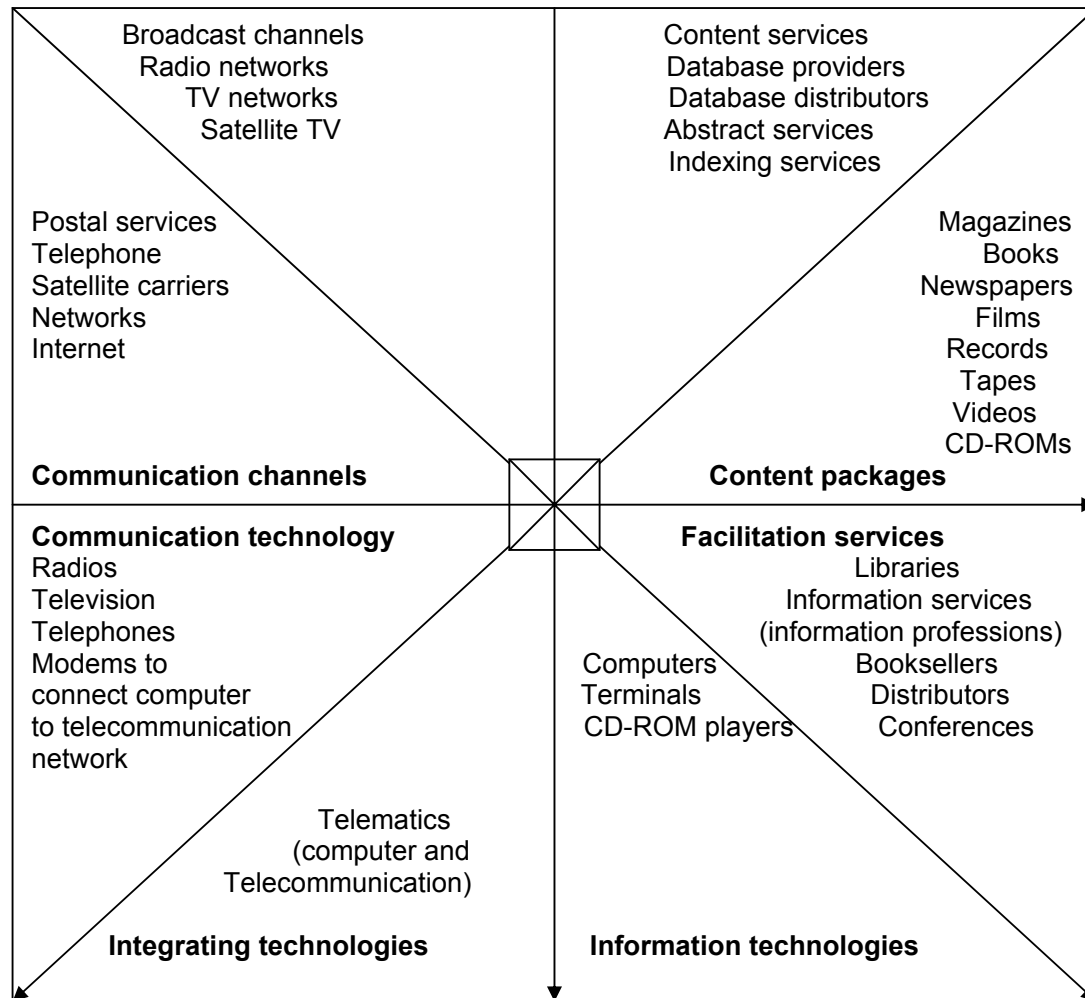
3.7 THE COMPONENTS OF AN INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE

There are several information infrastructures that exist presently. According to INS101-U (2002:56), infrastructures exist to create, communicate and deliver useful information for all economic, social, and political activities in the country. The national capabilities for making knowledge and information accessible, transferable, and putting it to work, are often referred to as a country's information infrastructure, which comprises seven elements:

- (a) A nucleus of physical information resources (libraries, documentation centres, information analysis centres, etc);
- (b) A supply of trained information personnel;
- (c) Linkages to personal information sources;
- (d) Linkages to significant decision-making bodies;
- (e) Two-way communication channels with users;
- (f) An organisational system that brings together and energises these resources, personnel and linkages;
- (g) National policies that promote the systematic development of the infrastructure.

Libraries and information services are some of the components of an information infrastructure which are accessible to the general public. The components for law are the statutes, journals, books, CD-ROMs, databases, Internet, and so forth.

Zurkowski (1984:177) provides an illustration of the components of the information infrastructure and their interdependence in the diagram below:

Figure 3.1.**Components of the Information Infrastructure:**

Taken from Zurkowski (1984:177)

3.8 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

New developments in information and communication technology (ICT) have created a picture of the digital information infrastructure as a powerful enabler of economic and social enterprise. Most information infrastructure initiatives and organisations in developed and developing countries are concerned with the development of facilities-based telecommunications, often through strategies for privatisation and deregulation, or by encouraging competition for locally dominant voice-carriers. However, information infrastructure also encompasses Internet

services, applications software, operating systems and computers, as well as information products and services (see figure 3.1: components of the information infrastructure).

Information infrastructure for libraries comprises the underlying foundation for libraries and the branches they serve, and includes the following components: people, structures, content, processes and technology. Information infrastructure is already creating a whole new way of learning, working and entertainment.

When fully deployed, information infrastructure will link individuals around the world, private and public institutions ranging from schools and businesses to libraries and laboratories. It will also revolutionise the way people and businesses relate to each other. It will unleash enormous potential to improve the quality of life, by providing virtually unlimited access to public services and many additional sources of information.

3.9. LEGAL INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR LAW ACADEMICS AT UNISA

Law academics in the College of Law at Unisa have access to the legal resources discussed earlier in this chapter. In addition, they have access to the following electronic databases: *Civil Procedure Library, Commercial Law, Legal Net, Constitutional Law Library, Law of persons and Family Law Library, Law of South Africa and Current Law, Legal Information Service for Local Government, Butterworths Index and Noter-up to the All SA and the SALR, Labour Law Library, Occupational Health and Safety Library, Statutes of South Africa, Property Law Library, Intellectual Property Law Library, Company Law Library, Income Tax, Comparative Law, Internet Legal Resources Guide, Jutastat, South African Legal Links, and Legislation.*

3.10 CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICES IN THE LEGAL FIELD

New developments in the legal profession must be communicated by library professionals to law academics through intranet and other methods of communication within the organisation or institution. By so doing they are alerting the users of that library to what is new regarding the profession. For instance, Butterworths has weekly legislation updates that have to be made known and this alerting service is called the current awareness service. Most libraries provide some form of current awareness service (CAS) to users in the form of newspapers, magazines or bulletins. This study discusses CAS focusing only on electronic awareness services because the theme of the study is the electronic resources of information. New developments are

providing a more favourable climate for CAS, based wholly on electronic sources and targeted at individual researchers.

According to Weaving (1991:300), “a successful CAS must provide adequate coverage of sources of information, be timely and selective, arouse the client’s interest, and be able to provide back-up information”. Weaving (1991) further maintains that the benefit of a CAS to the client is threefold. “Firstly, it keeps the client in touch with what is going on in the area of his/her company’s interests and topics of importance to him/her, and ensures that the information is filtered so that only the relevant remains. Secondly, it can supply useful methods, ideas, concepts, experiences or information, which can result in a saving of project time and provide ideas for new work. Thirdly, those who are in the habit of keeping themselves up to date can use CAS to save time, which they might otherwise have spent looking through publications or waiting for them to be circulated”.

There are several databases that offer current awareness, for example: electronic *Butterworths Legislation Update*. *Current Law* offers a current awareness service with regard to new developments in the legal field. The new developments range from government notices, amended regulations, bills, decided cases, commencement dates of statutes, authoritative Government Gazette numbers, tables of cases and statutes, lists of commissions of enquiry, and recently published books. The law librarian should make sure that updates on new developments are e-mailed to end-users on a weekly basis.

3.11 SUMMARY

This chapter has highlighted the legal information resources available to law academics at Unisa, and has also drawn a picture of what is available elsewhere via computer. Primary, secondary and electronic sources of legal information were broadly discussed, in order to illustrate the range of information available to legal professionals. The discussion also showed that, in order to access electronic legal resources, one needs to be trained in using computers. For example, training in the use of legal electronic resources is crucial in this era of technological advancements, particularly for law academics. Legal electronic resources, if properly used, can be used as a tool to gain an advantage over one’s competitors.

The next chapter will discuss the methods that were used to collect data for this research.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the method used to collect data for this study. The advantages and disadvantages will be briefly highlighted, in order to justify the selection of the most suitable method. The objective of this chapter is to discuss the method used to solve the problems and sub-problems identified in the research statement. The population, questionnaire construction and administration are some of the key topics discussed in this chapter. This study has adopted the quantitative approach by using a survey questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents under study. The reason why a quantitative approach was selected appears in the next sub-section.

4.2 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

This study utilised the quantitative research because it can be classified as a descriptive, analytical or experimental approach, and creates numbers which can be statistically analysed. O'Sullivan and Rassel (1995:478) define quantitative research as "a type of research in which values of variables are characterised by numbers or symbols that scientifically test theory". Quantitative research relies on a questionnaire administered to each respondent, in order to obtain reliable and quantified results.

According to Creswell (2003:18), "a quantitative approach is one in which the investigator uses primarily postpositivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories), employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data". Questionnaires, interviews, and computer-generated data are used to collect quantitative data, whereas a qualitative research approach is used when there is little concrete knowledge about the research topic.

According to Liebscher (1998:669), "a quantitative research methodology is appropriate where quantifiable measures of variables of interest are possible, where hypotheses can be formulated and tested and inferences drawn from samples to population". Liebscher (1998) further states

that “quantitative research is based primarily on positivistic thought and qualitative research is more constructivist in theory”. A quantitative approach was regarded as the best method for this study, because it reduces or arrange large amounts of possibly confusing data into numerical summaries. It is also used to provide valid and ojective descriptions of what is being researched. It is worth noting that presenting quantitative results presents a challenge to most researchers because of the statistical analysis involved.

4.3 POPULATION

A population is defined as the entire group of persons or set of objects that the researcher wants to study. O’Sullivan and Rassel (1995:34) have defined the concept clearly as “any group that is the subject of research interest”. The population under investigation in this research was all the permanent law academics in the College of Law at Unisa, Pretoria (Main Campus). They were chosen and issued with the questionnaires in order to obtain more information in relation to their needs for training in the use of electronic information.

According to Denscombe (1998:21), “To generalise from the findings of a survey, the sample must not only be carefully selected to be representative of the population: it needs to include a sufficient number. The sample needs to be of an adequate size.” The College of Law comprises five departments, namely: Constitutional, International and Indigenous Law; Criminal and Procedural Law; Jurisprudence; Mercantile Law and Private Law. The population of 120 law academics was drawn from these five departments. Since the College of Law was the focus of the study, uniform representation from each department was not deemed necessary. Nevertheless, extra care was taken so as to have reasonable representation from each department, as shown in Table 5.1. Permanent law academics were chosen from the School of Law. The School of Justice, centres, institutes and units were excluded from the study, since this is a dissertation of limited scope. The choice of the School of Law fairly represents the College of Law when looking at the total number of respondents.

A total number of 63 staff members or law academics responded to the questionnaire. Two of the 63 respondents were disqualified from the study because they were not permanent academic staff members (Academic Assistants). The final sample of 61 represents a 51% response rate, and therefore 51% of the total population.

4.4 DATA GATHERING METHODS

There are different methods that researchers use to gather data in any study.

The main data-gathering methods are:

- The use of records, files, and existing evidence;
- Observation;
- Interviews;
- Questionnaires.

A survey questionnaire was the appropriate method of investigating the research problem identified in this study. The six different types of survey research identified by Czaj and Blair (2005:33) are:

- (i) Mail or postal surveys;
- (ii) Internet surveys;
- (iii) Telephone surveys;
- (iv) Face-to-face surveys;
- (v) Combination of methods;
- (vi) Focus groups used to obtain different reactions to one topic, and generate synergy, provided the participants are from the same organisation and level.

The mail or postal survey was used in this study because of its advantages for the issue being investigated. The advantages that were identified by Czaja and Blair (2005:36) are that :

- “The mail survey is significantly less expensive;
- Data is not collected by interviewers;
- Questionnaires usually allow respondents to consult household or personal records when the need arises;
- The response rate when using questionnaires is great, due to their anonymity.”

The main disadvantages of mail surveys identified by Czaja and Blair (2005:36) are that:

- “They are subject to response bias because they do not achieve good response rates from people with low education, those who do not like to write, have difficulty reading, and those who do not have an interest in the topic.

- The questionnaire may be formulated in such a way that the instructions are not clear or completely self-explanatory, because the researcher is not present to assist respondents if something is confusing or complex.
- The researcher has little control over who actually fills out the questionnaire.
- Answers to open-ended questions are less thorough and detailed in mail surveys than those administered by interviewers”.

In this study, data was collected by means of a survey questionnaire. The advantages of questionnaires outlined above prompted the researcher to choose a questionnaire as the most appropriate and relevant way of collecting data for this study. A number of researchers have attempted to define the concept "data" – according to Neuman's definition (1997:327), data are the "empirical evidence or information that one gathers carefully according to rules or procedures."

4.4.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey questionnaire is defined by Czaja and Blair (2005:59) as the "conduit through which information flows from the world of everyday behaviour and opinion into the world of research and analysis; it is our link to the phenomena we wish to study". According to Denscombe (1998:89), "Questionnaires rely on written information supplied directly by people in response to questions asked by the researcher".

This study aimed to obtain structured responses on the training needs of law academics in accessing electronic information, and therefore a questionnaire was developed for this purpose. It is important to note that questionnaires are flexible in terms of what they can measure. The questionnaire was chosen as the best instrument for collecting data in this study because:

- Data from a large number of respondents suits a questionnaire, and obviates having to arrange interviews with each respondent. The number of respondents was considered before a decision was made to use a questionnaire;
- Administering a questionnaire is practical and cost-effective, especially if the respondents and the researcher are situated in the same area;
- Questionnaires, in this study, would provide quantitative data that would be easy to collect and analyse;
- Answers to the questions would test the hypothesis and would not be susceptible to bias.

A questionnaire was constructed and some of the questions asked were taken from similar studies based on needs analysis, but were modified to suit this study. Respondents were allowed to remain anonymous, in order to give them the opportunity of expressing themselves freely, without fear of victimisation, and to promote honest responses. Anonymity and confidentiality helps to maximise the response rate. See Appendix I for the questionnaire that was administered in this study..

4.4.1.1 Structure of the questionnaire

A questionnaire is the most commonly used form of survey when collecting original data. The questionnaire in this study consisted of open-ended and close-ended questions. There were five sections and 16 questions designed to collect data.

When formulating questions for this questionnaire, the main objectives of the study were taken into consideration. A structured, unambiguous and self-administered questionnaire was designed in order to obtain relevant data. In order to ensure that it achieved the objectives of the study, it was necessary to specify how many and what type of questions would be asked, and how they would be structured. This questionnaire used clear, understandable language, was short and gave clear instructions to respondents.

Consideration was given to the following guidelines or principles as identified by Hannabus (1995:3):

- Specify the research problem, that is, what you want to achieve through the survey (Hannabus 1995:3). Questions that were asked in this questionnaire attempted to obtain answers to the problems or research questions identified in chapter 1.
- Study the advantages and disadvantages of different survey techniques, and select the most appropriate one. The advantages and disadvantages of a questionnaire are dealt with in general in this chapter, so as to indicate why the questionnaire was chosen for this research.
- The questionnaire must try to minimise non-responses, but also ensure that the data collected is complete, valid and reliable.
- It should minimise the probability of bias in respondents' answers.
- The researcher must validate the questionnaire with internal departments to ensure that the objectives will be achieved.

- The questions must be placed in a logical order. Easy-to-answer questions were asked first, and the questionnaire concluded by asking difficult but relevant questions.
- “A covering letter should be written, because it justifies the study to the respondents, and often determines whether or not they will co-operate” (Bailey, 1987:137). This questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter, which appears as Appendix 2.
- Instructions must be provided to allow respondents to fill in the questionnaire easily.
- This questionnaire was formulated in such a way that both open and close-ended questions could be included. According to Powell (1994:87), open-ended or unstructured questions are formulated to allow free responses, unlike closed-ended questions, which limit responses.
- Avoid double-barrelled or ambiguous questions.
- Respondents may remain anonymous.
- Respondents may provide general comments at the end of the questionnaire.

The questions were also discussed with a statistician, in order to check whether they would elicit the required responses. The questions were then grouped according to five sections that used a “tick a box” question format. These were:

Section A: Demographics:

Sought information on age group, gender, department, position, status as a part-time or full-time employee and length of service.

Section B: Computer literacy level:

Sought information on the extent of use of information technology or basic computer skills of the law academics.

Section C: Use of electronic legal resources:

Sought information on the use of legal electronic resources that are available to the law academics at Unisa.

Section D: Training received:

To determine whether or not law academics were trained in using legal electronic resources to access information.

Section E: Training still needed:

This section sought information on any other training required in using electronic sources of information.

The questions were arranged in such a way in order to elicit the required information for this study. Another important aspect of questionnaires is that the researcher obtains responses to

the questions that he or she has asked. Usually, questionnaires are designed with the analysis and presentation of results in mind.

4.4.1.2 Questionnaire administration

The questionnaire was personally administered (self-administered questionnaire) to the law academics by the researcher. The Dean of the College of Law was approached by the researcher for permission to conduct this study. The law academics were informed in a meeting, and were requested to respond to the questionnaire.

A covering letter written by the researcher was attached to the questionnaire, and an explanatory note concerning the aim of the study was included. The covering letter and explanatory note were designed to encourage a better response rate. See Appendix 2 for the covering letter. The respondents were given two weeks to fill in the questionnaire, which was collected after that time by the researcher from the College secretary, whose assistance in this regard is greatly appreciated.

4.5 MEASUREMENT OF VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity and reliability are very important in all measurements. Validity in research refers to the accurate interpretability of the results (internal validity) and the generalisability (external validity) (Wiersma, 1991:6). Is the test valid for a particular situation? This is what validity means.

There are different types of validity measures, for example, content validity, criterion validity and construct validity. Content-related evidence has to do with the adequacy of content sampling. The content of items is logically analysed. Criterion-related evidence (concurrent and predictive) is analysed by means of empirical analysis. The relationship between scores on the tests and those on another measure obtained at the same time (concurrent) and at a later time (predictive), are empirically analysed. Construct validity is logically analysed.

Reliability simply means that when a phenomenon is measured under different conditions, it must yield the same score. The following are the different types of reliability: stability reliability, representative reliability and equivalence reliability. It is impossible, when conducting research or surveys, to achieve perfect reliability and validity.

In research, psychometric measurements often depend upon estimation rather than direct measurement, and as a result, the measurement might not be perfectly accurate. It is particularly with regard to this type of measurement that reliability testing becomes important, and for which different reliability tests have been developed. With categorical questions, such as the ones included in the present study, concepts are directly measured, and there is little question about the accuracy of what they are measuring. Reliability analysis is therefore not really applicable to the type of data collected in this study.

4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN DATA COLLECTION

According to Bak (2004:28), “if your empirical research will involve people and/or vertebrate animals as research subjects, you will probably have to include an ethics statement in your proposal”. The inclusion of ethics in any research is aimed at ensuring that no individual is subjected to any harm as a result of the research. There were no significant ethical issues to be considered in this research, except to protect the identities of respondents, by not requesting their names, and to acknowledge sources or works published by other authors. It was explained to the respondents that the results would be made available as feedback, and that permission had been granted to conduct this research in the College of Law.

The ethical issues that Creswell (2003:64) pointed out are:

1. Do not put participants at risk, and respect vulnerable populations. In this study, the researcher developed an informed consent form for participants to sign before participating in this study. This exercise is usually performed to determine participants with special needs, to assess any legal, psychological, or physical harm, and so forth.
2. Other procedures during data collection involve gaining the permission of individuals in authority to provide access to study participants at research sites. In this study, a letter was written to the Dean of the College of Law to obtain permission to conduct this study. A meeting between the Dean and the researcher was organised, in order to explain the purpose of the study and the outcomes thereof.
3. Protection of the rights of participants should be guaranteed. This was communicated in the questionnaire, where participants were assured that they could remain anonymous if they so wished, and that the information they provided would not be used against them.

4.7 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data in the current study was categorical in nature, and the appropriate analysis was descriptive in nature. Descriptive research is the numerical index that describes or summarises some characteristics of a frequency in a frequency distribution (Frank and Althoen, 1994:10).

The chi-square (χ^2) is the statistic which tells us whether a relationship under investigation is likely to be due to chance. This statistic is appropriate for use when conducting cross-tabulations between two sets of categorical variables. The χ^2 is computed for tables of frequencies, and it works by testing the relation between two variables by assessing the discrepancy between a theoretically expected frequency and an obtained or observed frequency (Rosnow and Rosenthal, 1999:329).

As indicators of significance, a tool to assist in deciding if a finding is significant, the p-value was computed. The most commonly used confidence levels are the 95% confidence interval and the 99% confidence interval. These levels of significance, namely 0, 05 and 0, 01, are somewhat strict, and are used when the purpose is to limit the risk of incorrectly rejecting the null hypothesis, or erroneously concluding a significant result.

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has explained the appropriate method used in this research to collect data. Reasons why one method was selected as the best one, excluding others, were also clearly given. The advantages and disadvantages of the most appropriate method for this research were highlighted. The choice of quantitative method depended mainly on the research questions provided in chapter 1. An explanation of why the entire population was studied, instead of choosing a sample, was provided.

The next chapter will focus on the statistical analysis of data obtained from the questionnaires.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyses the results of the data that were obtained from 61 questionnaires. The results presented in this chapter are based on the sections identified in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The first section (A) focused on the profile of respondents in terms of certain demographic variables. This demographic profile of respondents helped to provide a context for the results. The second section (B) focused on the extent of the use of information technology by respondents. The third section (C) concerned the use by the law academics of electronic information resources available at Unisa. Section (D) examined whether or not law academics were trained in using legal electronic resources to access information. Finally, section (E) elicited information on any other training required by law academics in using electronic information resources.

5.2. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In Chapter 1, it was noted that the main aim of this study is to assess the training needs of law academics in using electronic information resources, and the extent to which Unisa is addressing these needs. It also aims to create awareness that ICTs form an integral part of law, and that the know-how for manipulating electronic resources is important. Questionnaires were sent out to 120 permanent law academics to solicit views on their use of legal electronic resources, the type of training received in using legal electronic resources, any other training still needed, and finally, to assess their computer literacy level. The overall response rate for the questionnaires received and analysed was 61 out of 120 respondents, which translates to 51%. In analysing each question the total number of respondents is indicated in each diagram or table by “N”, for example, N=61.

5.2.1 SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The questions asked in this section focused on age, gender, department, position (occupational level) and length of employment in the College of Law. Table 5.1 below provides the biographical details of respondents.

TABLE 5.1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE [N= 61]

Variable	Scaled responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Age category	Younger than 20 years	0	0.0
	20 – 29 years	6	9.8
	30 – 39 years	20	32.7
	40 – 49 years	25	41.0
	50 – 59 years	10	14.7
	60 years or older	1	1.6
Gender	Male	19	31.0
	Female	42	69.0
Department	Constitutional, International and Indigenous Law	11	19.3
	Criminal & Procedural Law	23	40.4
	Jurisprudence	5	8.8
	Mercantile Law	9	15.8
	Private Law	9	15.8
	Other	4	7.0
Position (Academic level)	Professor (P)	20	32.8
	Associate Professor (AP)	16	26.1
	Senior lecturer (SL)	18	29.5
	Lecturer (L)	4	6.6
	Other (Researchers)	3	4.9
Length of employment in the College of Law	Less than 1 year	7	11.5
	1 – 2 years	3	4.9
	3 – 8 years	18	29.5
	9 – 14 years	11	18.0
	15 – 20 years	9	14.8
	21 years or more	13	21.3

Most respondents were aged between 30 and 50 (72.6%). The single largest age group was the 40-49 year olds, with 25 or 40.3% representation. Younger respondents, aged 20-29, totalled only six (9.8%). There were 11 older respondents, (16.3%) over the age of 50). The sample was therefore predominately middle-aged. The relatively older age group (predominately 40-49) is therefore consistent with the high levels at which the respondents are employed within the organisation.

It was interesting to note that the percentage of females was higher in the College of Law at Unisa, especially considering that the legal profession in South Africa has been for the most part male-dominated. Future studies could seek to determine whether this indicates a shift in the profession, or if it is uniform within the academic environment.

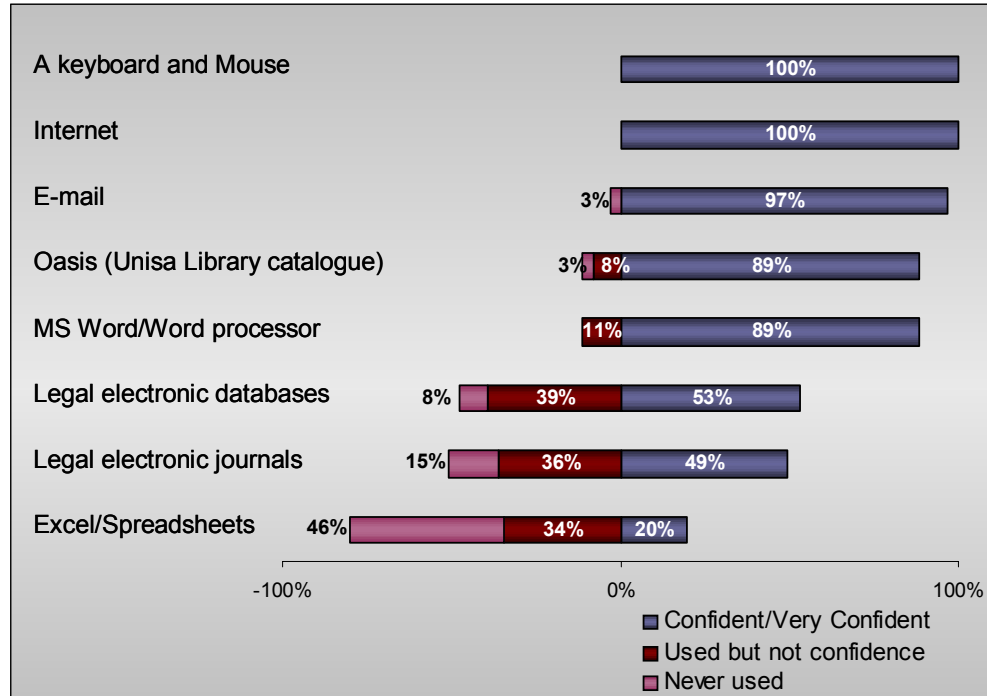
In terms of the academic level of respondents, the College of Law is positively skewed towards senior academics, that is, 58% at the professorial level. Seven percent of respondents did not indicate their departments and therefore, in Table 5.1, these were listed as unknown.

Most respondents were from the Criminal and Procedural Law department (40.4%), and there was an equal spread over other departments: Private Law and Mercantile Law (both 15.8%); Constitutional, International and Indigenous Law (19.3%); and Jurisprudence (8.8%). The College of Law and all the law academics were the focus of this study, and uniform representation from each department was not deemed necessary.

When looking at the length of service, UNISA or the College of Law, as an employer, may be considered as having a good retention strategy, owing to the fact that most respondents had been with the College quite some years, as reflected in Table 5.1.

5.2.2 SECTION B: COMPUTER LITERACY LEVELS

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of confidence in using the following: a keyboard and mouse; word processing packages; spreadsheets; e-mail; the Internet; Oasis library catalogue; electronic databases; and electronic journals. Diagram 5.1 below illustrates the distribution of responses to this question. The levels of "confident" and "very confident" in the graph below are combined, in order to give one percentage for the confidence level.

DIAGRAM 5.1**COMPUTER LITERACY LEVEL [n=61]**

The use of positive and negative scales (see above) in measuring computer literacy levels of respondents reveals respondents who are positive and more confident, and those who are negative or not so confident in using Excel, e-mail, MS Word and so forth. Respondents were very confident in their ability to use a mouse and keyboard (100%), the Internet (100%), and e-mail (97%). The 39% that appear at -100 indicates that for that question the respondents used legal electronic databases but were not confident, and that 8% had never used them.

5.2.2.1 Keyboard and mouse

As diagram 5.1 indicates, all (100%) academics in the College of Law at Unisa consider themselves to be competent in using the keyboard and mouse. This suggests that they have mastered basic computer skills, and thus may be interpreted as having the ability to use computer key functions.

5.2.2.2 Word processing packages

There were a few (11%) of the law academics who indicated that they could use word processing programmes but were not confident doing so, whereas the majority (89%) were

confident or very confident. This indicates that law academics use word processing programmes often, contributing to their increased level of confidence and competence.

5.2.2.3 Spread sheets

Diagram 5.1 indicates that 34% of the academics in the College had never used Excel or other spreadsheet programs, and an additional 46% were not very confident in using them. One can deduce that this resource is less used, or this may be an indication that this is not a key skill for law academics. There is therefore a need to verify whether or not this program is needed in the College of Law. Of interest is the relationship between the use of Excel and age. Diagram 5.2 below indicates the percentage of respondents who had “never used” Excel in terms of the different age groups. It appears that the older the respondents, the more likely they were to have had no exposure to the program. This may indicate that the younger generation of law academics were trained in this programme elsewhere, before joining the College.

5.2.2.4 Oasis library catalogue

The law academics’ confidence in their abilities to use Oasis (the Unisa library catalogue) and word processing programmes were both high, although there were a few who were not very confident. In terms of Oasis usage, there were 8% who indicated that they used the catalogue, but were not confident, and another 3% who had never used it. These findings indicate that training of law academics in using Oasis is necessary. The Oasis catalogue is an electronic database which serves as a starting point when searching for information at Unisa. Academics have the use of trained librarians to assist them – nevertheless, it is desirable for them to make use of this assistance only when they have done a preliminary search by themselves (to save resources and costs). It is therefore important that all academics are familiar with Oasis, and that library orientation should ideally be compulsory for newly appointed employees, so as to encourage usage of the library.

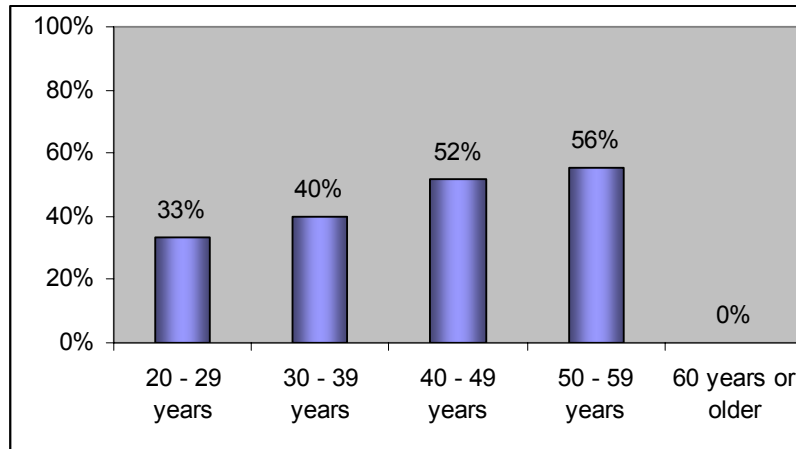
5.2.2.5 E-mail and Internet

Law academics’ confidence levels were high when it came to using the Internet and e-mail. As with the keyboard and mouse, the use of e-mail is a relatively basic requirement, in order for academics to function effectively in their jobs. There is also a high confidence level in the use of

the Internet, which is somewhat positive because Internet use is not as necessary a skill for law academics.

DIAGRAM 5.2

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE “NEVER USED” EXCEL BY AGE [n=61]



Although exposure to the Excel program seems to correlate with age, confidence levels in using the program are less correlated with age, as, for example, 40% of the 30-39 year olds were confident in using the program, compared to 52% of the 40-49 year olds. In addition, none of the 50-59 year olds were confident in using the program, while 33.3% of the 20-29 year old respondents were confident.

5.2.2.6 Electronic databases

Diagram 5.1 shows that only one in two (50%) of the academics were confident or very confident in using legal electronic databases. Eight percent had never used electronic databases, and 39% were not confident in their use. This confidence level is relatively low. Training in the use of these electronic databases should help to increase the confidence and usage levels.

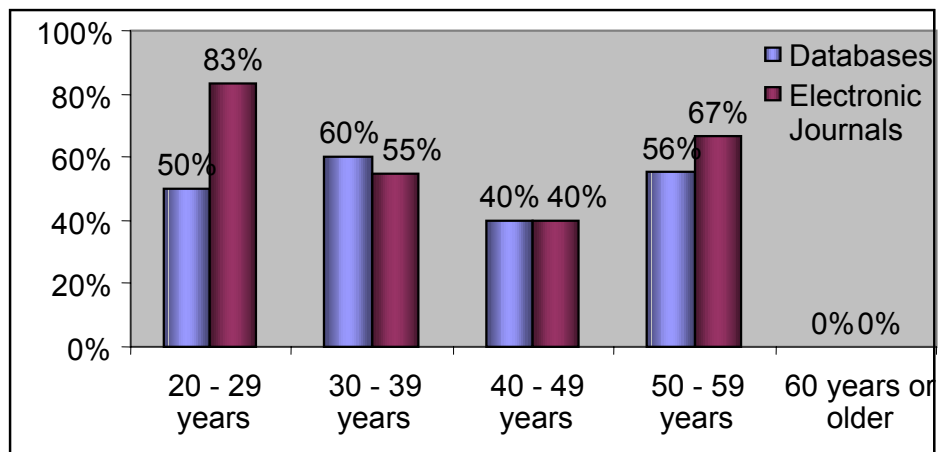
5.2.2.7 Electronic journals

Only 49% of the academics were confident or very confident in using electronic journals, as compared with 36% who had used electronic journals but were not confident. The academics who had never used e-journals totalled 15%. A worrying factor is that the percentage of those

who were using this resource but were not confident, plus those who had never used it, is high (51%). An assumption can be made that academics need some form of practice or training in using this database. This resource is an important information tool for law academics, and an inability to use electronic journals could affect their ability to conduct quality research.

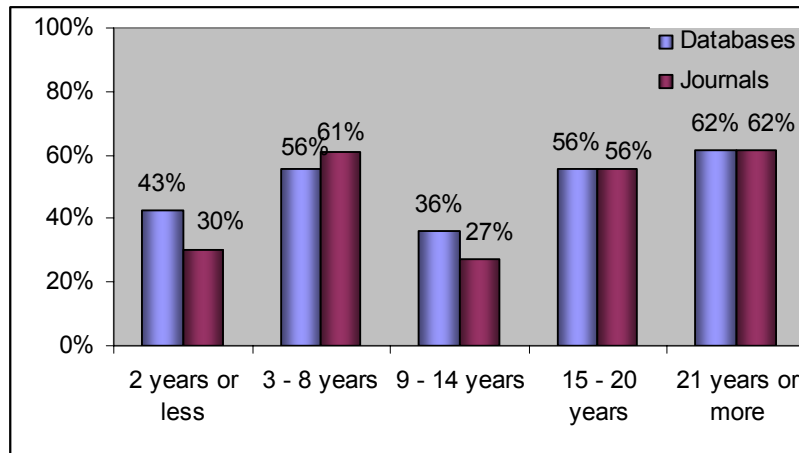
DIAGRAM 5.3

PERCENTAGE OF CONFIDENCE IN USING DATABASES AND ELECTRONIC JOURNALS BY AGE OF RESPONDENTS [n=61]



Another interesting finding is that the length of employment at Unisa (in other words, the number of years' experience in using university-specific resources) does not seem to have had an effect on the degree of confidence in using the various electronic resources. It is interesting to note that 50% of respondents between 20-29 years of age use electronic databases, almost as many as the 56% of those between 50-59 years who make use of them.

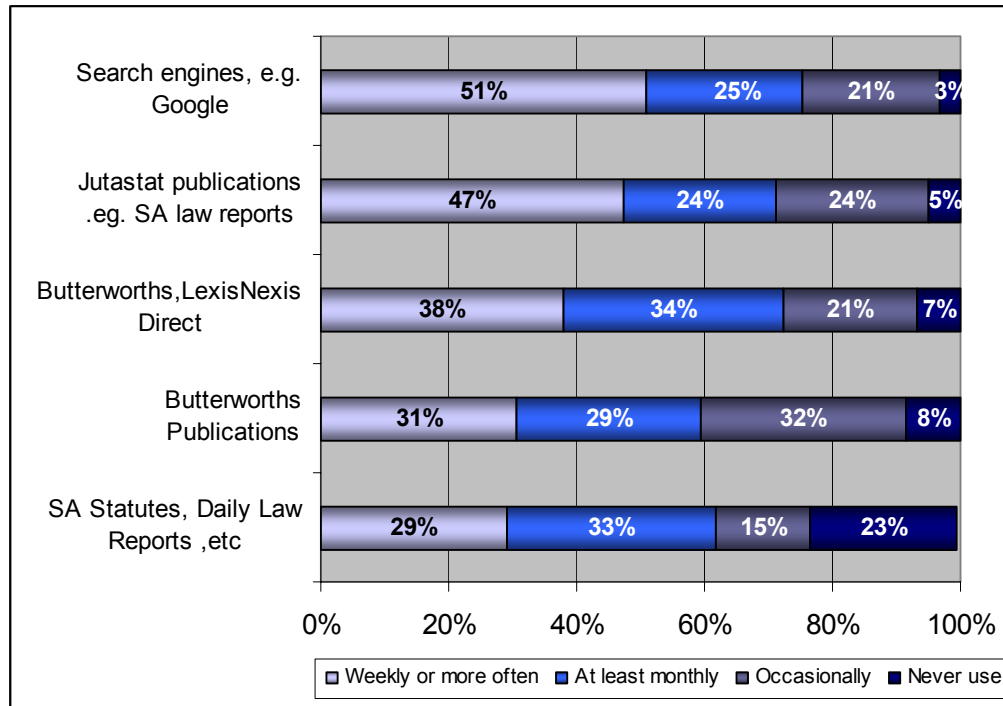
Diagram 5.4 below indicates that, of those respondents who had worked at Unisa for 3-8 years, 56% were confident in using the databases, while only 36% of those who had worked for 9-14 years were confident. There is some indication that academics who had not been at the university for very long (2 years or less) were less confident. However, due to the importance of these electronic resources for research and teaching activities, one would expect academics to quickly acquire the necessary skills, and therefore, formal training at the start of employment might assist in speeding up the learning process for academics.

DIAGRAM 5.4**PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO WERE CONFIDENT/VERY CONFIDENT IN USING DATABASES AND ELECTRONIC JOURNALS, BY LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT [n=61]**

Note: the “less than one year” and “1-2 years” groups were combined, due to the small base size (three people) in the 1-2 years group.

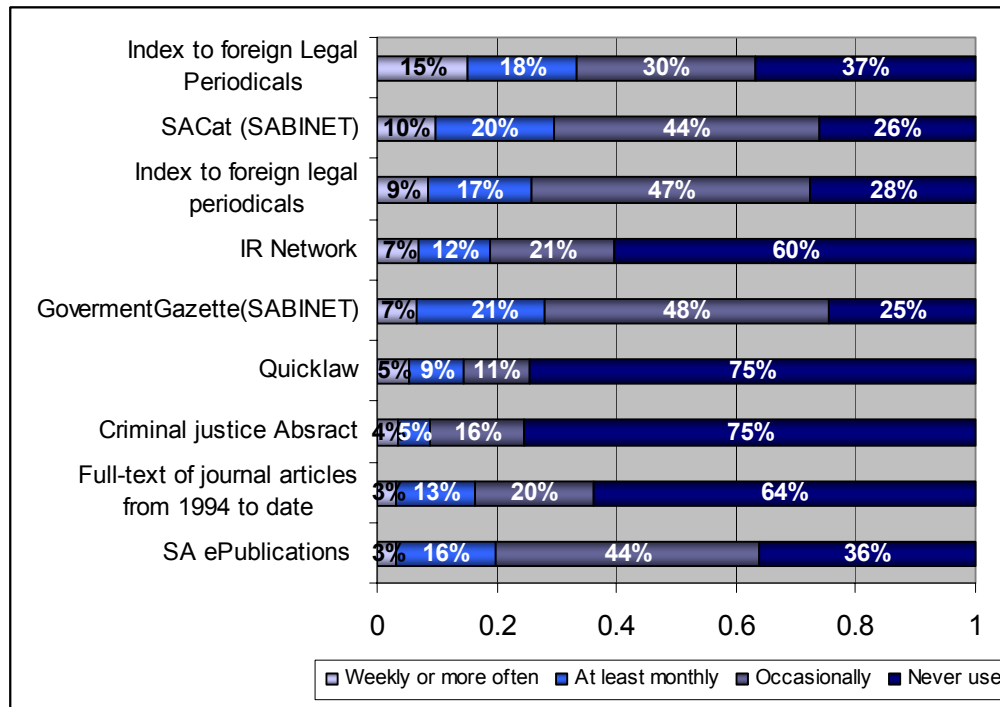
5.2.3 SECTION C: USE OF ELECTRONIC LEGAL RESOURCES

An investigation into the various law-specific and general electronic resources available to law academics sheds more light on which particular resources were used or not used. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they made use of the specific electronic legal resources. Due to the large number of sources included in this question, the responses have been divided into two diagrams. Diagram 5.5 indicates the sources used most often, while Diagram 5.6 indicates the less frequently used sources.

DIAGRAM 5.5**USAGE OF LEGAL ELECTRONIC RESOURCES: MOST USED [n = 61]**

The resources most frequently used were general search engines such as Google (51% weekly usage), Jutastats Publications (47% weekly usage), Butterworth's LexisNexis Direct (38% weekly usage), Butterworth's Publications (31% weekly usage), and SA statutes such as Daily Law Reports etc. (29% weekly usage). These resources were also heavily used, at least monthly. The Butterworth's sources were popular with 72% of respondents who used LexisNexis monthly or more often, and 60% who used Butterworth's Publications just as frequently.

Two thirds of respondents (76%) used search engines at some time or another during a month. This usage of search engines is consistent with the high confidence levels of respondents in terms of using the Internet. The fact that 23% of respondents indicated that they had never used the electronic SA statutes and Daily Law Reports may be an indication that these academics still rely on printed information.

DIAGRAM 5.6**USAGE OF LEGAL ELECTRONIC RESOURCES: LESSER USED SOURCES [n = 61]**

Some sources were never used by many of the respondents. These included: the IR Network, which was never used by 60% of the respondents. Quicklaw and Criminal Justice Abstracts were not used by 75% of respondents, while full-text electronic journal articles from 1994 to date were not used by over 64% of the respondents.

The Industrial Relations Network (IR Network) is a research tool that is used mostly by lecturers dealing with labour issues. Usually, the information available there is updated daily, depending on the cases decided by the Labour Court. This is a highly specialised network, which may be the reason for its limited usage by Unisa labour law lecturers. The IR Network serves as an example to illustrate that certain sources are indeed more specialised, and are only applicable to certain sub-sections of the law.

Table 5.2 below indicates how the use of certain sources was more prevalent in certain departments within the College of Law.

The percentage of respondents who “never used” a specific electronic resource is represented in Table 5.2 for each department.

TABLE 5.2

USAGE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES BY DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS: PERCENTAGE OF USAGE (NEVER USED)

	Private Law (n = 9)	Mercantile Law (n = 9)	Jurisprudence (n = 5)	Criminal & Procedural Law (n= 23)	Constitutional, International & Indigenous Law (n = 11)
Butterworths Publications	89%	89%	60%	100%	100%
Butterworths, LexisNexis Direct	100%	100%	60%	90%	100%
Criminal Justice Abstracts	44%	44%	0%	20%	10%
Full-text electronic journal articles from 1994 to date	44%	67%	20%	30%	36%
Government Gazette(SABINET)	78%	100%	40%	91%	45%
Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals	78%	100%	40%	67%	82%
Index to South African	78%	78%	40%	59%	82%

Periodicals e.g. CILSA; SAYL; THRHR; SALJ; SAJHR; TSAR						
IR Network	44%	44%	0%	50%	18%	
Jutastat publications .e.g. SA Law Reports	100%	100%	60%	100%	100%	
Quicklaw	44%	33%	0%	32%	9%	
SACat (SABINET)	67	100	40	78	73%	
SA ePublications	56%	78%	40%	65%	64%	
SA Statutes, Daily Law Reports	56%	89%	60%	83%	73%	
Search engines, e.g. Google	100%	100%	80%	96%	100%	

The Jurisprudence department made the least use of all electronic resources, although it should be taken into account that this department was represented by only five respondents. It is noteworthy that respondents from the Jurisprudence department had all been with Unisa for a relatively short period of time (60%, or three, for fewer than two years). This might reinforce the need for ongoing training in all departments when new employees join the university.

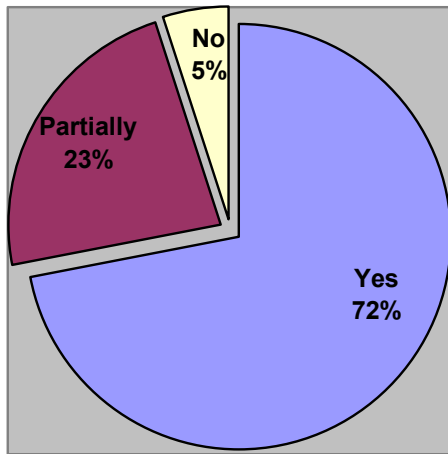
As noted earlier, the usage of the IR Network was very low among academics, especially those working in the Constitutional, International and Indigenous Law department (only 18% responded that they had used it). Constitutional, International and Indigenous Law, as well as the Criminal and Procedural Law department, also used the Criminal Justice Abstracts less than the other departments (20% and 10% respectively, as opposed to 44%). The low usage of the Criminal Justice Abstracts among particularly the Criminal and Procedural Law respondents is interesting, as it appears to be a relevant source for these respondents in particular.

There is, therefore, an indication that some departments might have particular training needs, especially in terms of the sources that are relevant to them. It would be necessary first to determine the exact needs of each department, but the overall indication is that a training need exists.

The academics were more satisfied with, and competent in, using search engines, but this is not to say that they do not require training in how to conduct searches. While they might use the Internet confidently (100% – see Diagram 5.1) and use search engines often (51% – see Diagram 5.6), law academics might not be aware that there are more methods for searching via the Internet. As they seem to rely heavily on this resource, it is advisable to include training in advanced search methods for academics.

There seems to be a very strong reliance on Google, as compared to the legal electronic databases and journals that are more relevant to law academics, as seen in Table 5.2. The challenge faced by the law librarian in this situation is to popularise the importance of using/accessing readily available electronic information in journals and various legal databases.

Diagram 5.7 below indicates that only 5% of respondents did not find any value in the electronic resources, while 23% found at least partial value.

DIAGRAM 5.7**VALUE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES [n = 61]**

All age groups, males and females, and career levels found similar value in the electronic resources (cross-tabulations revealed no significant differences, as the p-values were all above 0.05 when applying the chi-square test for significance).

It can, however, be seen from Table 5.3 that different departments found different degrees of value in the electronic sources. The chi-square value of 17.68 has a significant p-value of 0.024 (>0.05). The Jurisprudence department was most likely to find that these sources did not contribute to their competency levels (40%, or two out of five respondents). While it should be remembered that this department has a small base size, these were also respondents who did not use the various sources as often. It is possible that they did not see the value in these sources for this reason, or the low usage could be explained by the fact that they did not find them necessary or valuable.

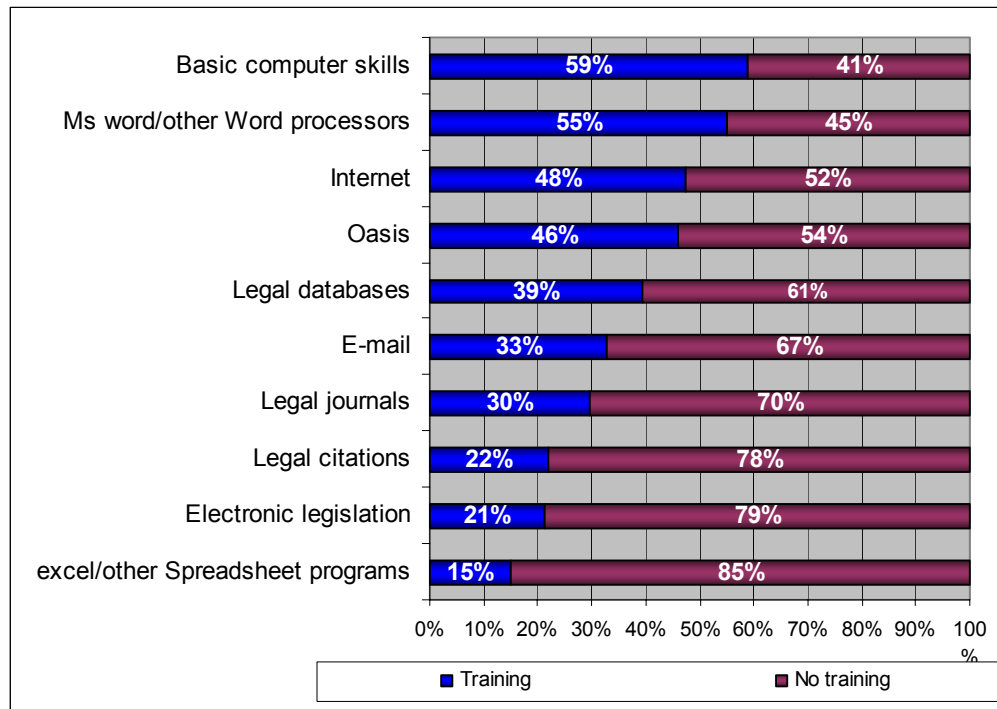
TABLE 5.3**BENEFITS OF USING ELECTRONIC RESOURCES BY DEPARTMENT [n = 57]**

	Improved competence levels		
	Yes	Partially	No
Constitutional, International and Indigenous Law (n = 11)	72.7%	27.3%	0.0%
Criminal & Procedural Law (n = 23)	69.6%	26.1%	4.3%
Jurisprudence (n = 5)	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%
Mercantile Law (n = 9)	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Private Law (n = 9)	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%

In general, it can therefore be concluded that these electronic sources are of importance to nearly all academics in the College of Law, and it is therefore vital that these sources be used effectively. Training in these resources will increase not only confidence in their use, but also create awareness of their value and potential.

5.2.4 SECTION D: TRAINING RECEIVED

This section of the questionnaire investigated the training that respondents had received, and their satisfaction with this training. Diagram 5.8 below illustrates the percentage of respondents who indicated that they had received training, versus those who had not received any training in basic computer skills (59% vs 41%), MS Word (55% vs 45%), Internet (48% vs 52%), Oasis (46% vs 54%), legal databases (39% vs 61%), e-mail (33% vs 67%), electronic legal journals (30% vs 70%), legal citations (22% vs 78%), electronic legislation (21% vs 79%) and Excel/other spreadsheet programs (15% vs 85%). These percentages reflect the fact that some of the law academics need training in the areas where they indicated they lacked the most competence, as can be seen in the diagram above.

DIAGRAM 5.8**PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO RECEIVED TRAINING [n = 61]**

In general, not many respondents had received any training in the use of Unisa-specific sources such as legal journals and citations. OASIS was the only Unisa tool in which almost half (46%) of respondents had received any training. As this source is the backbone of the library system, and the starting point for any literature searches, this low percentage serves as a cause for concern.

Eighty-five percent of respondents indicated that they either did not receive any training in the use of spreadsheet programs, or could not remember having received training. This lack of training would explain, to some extent, the low levels of confidence in respondents' skills that were observed in Diagram 5.1.

While 67% of respondents had also not received any training in the use of e-mail, all respondents indicated that they were confident in using it. E-mail is, however, used daily, and is relatively easy to understand. Just less than half of respondents (48%) had received Internet training, and this relatively low formal training percentage further supports the fact that respondents might benefit from training.

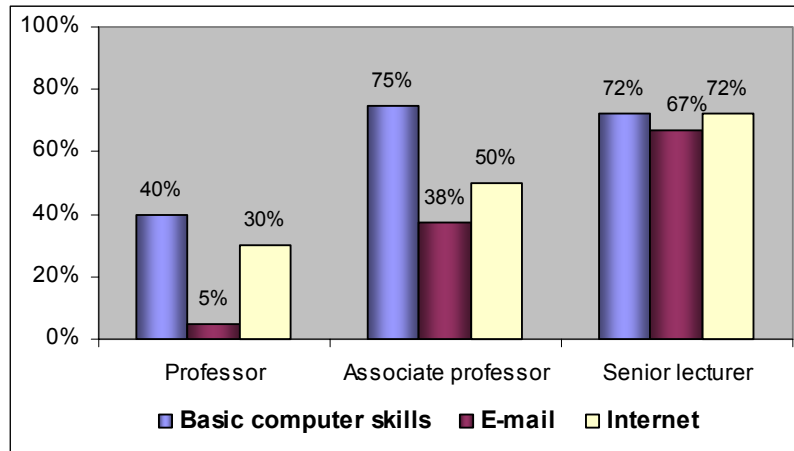
MS Word and basic computer skills training were most likely to have been received by the sample. Fifty-five percent indicated that they had received MS Word training, and 59% had received some form of basic computer training.

An investigation into whether or not respondents on different academic levels had received different levels of training was conducted by means of cross-tabulation between the level and the variable “received or not received training”. A chi-square test was performed in order to determine if these differences were significant. Table 5.4 below summarises the responses from the chi-square test. As can be seen, there were significant differences in the general skills in terms of basic computer skills, e-mail and the Internet. In terms of Unisa-specific skills, there were no differences between post levels in terms of those who had received training in Oasis ($p = 0.457$), legal databases ($p = 0.488$) and legal journals ($p = 0.390$).

TABLE 5.4
VALUE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES BY DEPARTMENT [n = 57]

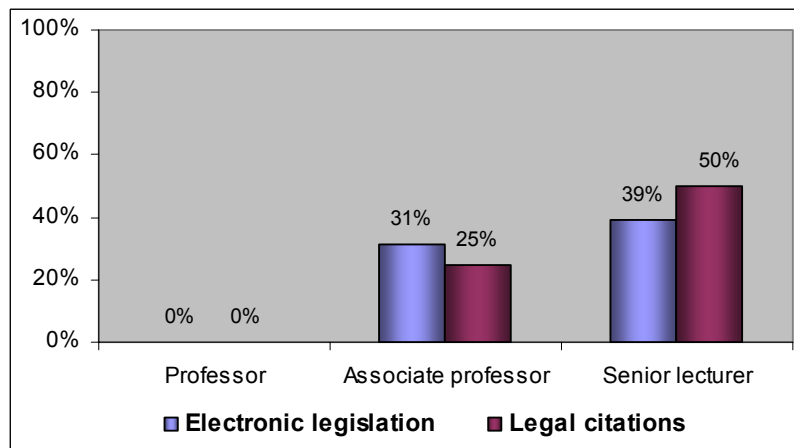
		Chi-square	p-value
General	Basic computer skills	10.721	0.030
	Ms Word/other word processing packages	9.007	0.061
	Excel/other spreadsheet programs	8.789	0.067
	E-mail	18.118	0.001
	Internet	9.631	0.047
Unisa	Oasis	3.637	0.457
	Legal databases	3.436	0.488
	Legal journals	4.118	0.390
	Electronic legislation	10.52	0.033
	Legal citations	13.887	0.008

Those areas where significant differences were found are graphically illustrated in Diagrams 5.9 and 5.10. Due to the small base size of lecturers (four) and others (three), they are not represented in the diagrams, as generalisation and confidence in these results then becomes more questionable.

DIAGRAM 5.9**TRAINING RECEIVED IN GENERAL SKILLS BY ACADEMIC LEVELS**

Professors seem to have received the least training in terms of general computer skills, such as basic computer literacy (40%), e-mail (5%) and the Internet (30%). Senior lecturers were most likely to have received training in these areas. The same trend is seen in the Unisa-specific sources.

For those who had received training, a Likert scale (satisfaction scale) was used to determine the extent to which they were satisfied with the training that they had received in various areas. Respondents rated the different areas, such as basic computer skills, etc., on a scale ranging from "very satisfied" to "satisfied" and "dissatisfied".

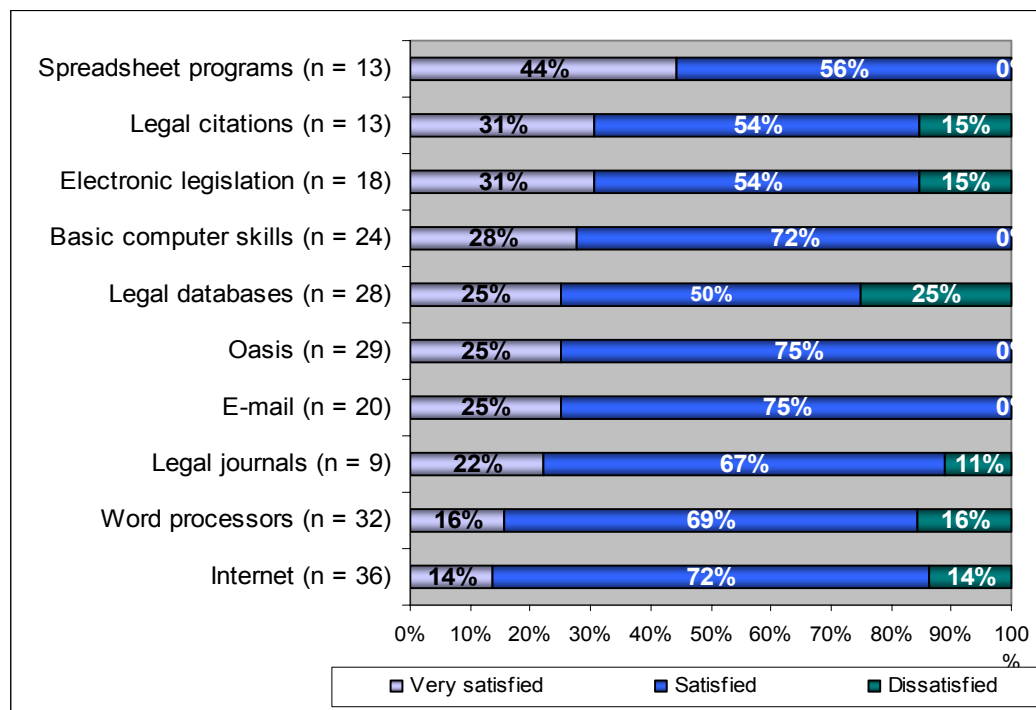
DIAGRAM 5.10**TRAINING RECEIVED (BY ACADEMIC LEVEL) IN UNISA-SPECIFIC SOURCES**

The base size for each question was only the number of people who had actually received training – in other words, those who did not say “can’t remember” or “no training”, and the percentages were re-based to 100%.

While not many respondents received training in spreadsheet programs such as Excel, the few who had (13 people) were either very satisfied (44%) or satisfied (56%). Those respondents who had received training in Oasis, e-mail and basic computer skills were also predominately satisfied.

DIAGRAM 5.11

SATISFACTION WITH TRAINING RECEIVED



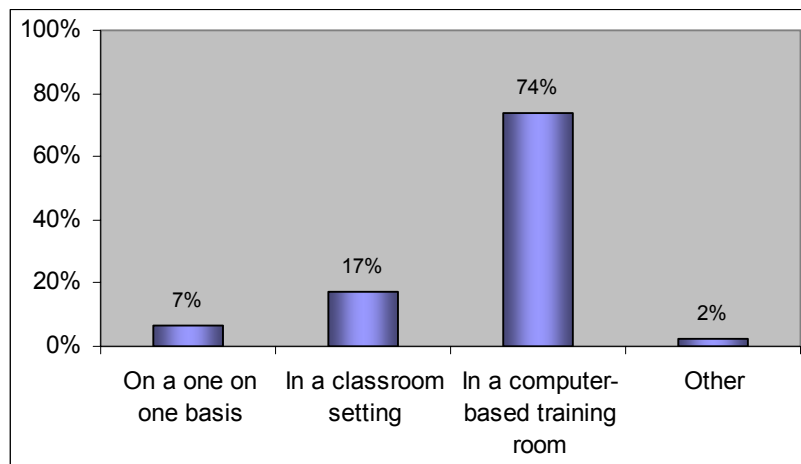
Training in legal databases was rated the poorest overall, with 25% of the 28 respondents who had received training rating it as dissatisfactory. Word processing training received a 16% dissatisfaction rating. While 31% were very satisfied with the legal citations and electronic legislation training, an additional 15% were dissatisfied. As the base sizes were too small when looking only at the satisfaction of those who had received training, it is not possible to split this variable by any of the demographic variables. Seventy-five percent of respondents for each resource indicated that they were satisfied with training received in Oasis and e-mail, while none indicated dissatisfaction. This may indicate that no training is needed for this resource,

except when an academic staff member is new in the College and has never used Oasis or e-mail before. The 25% and 11% dissatisfaction with regard to training received in legal electronic databases and legal electronic journals may be a sign that training is a necessity here.

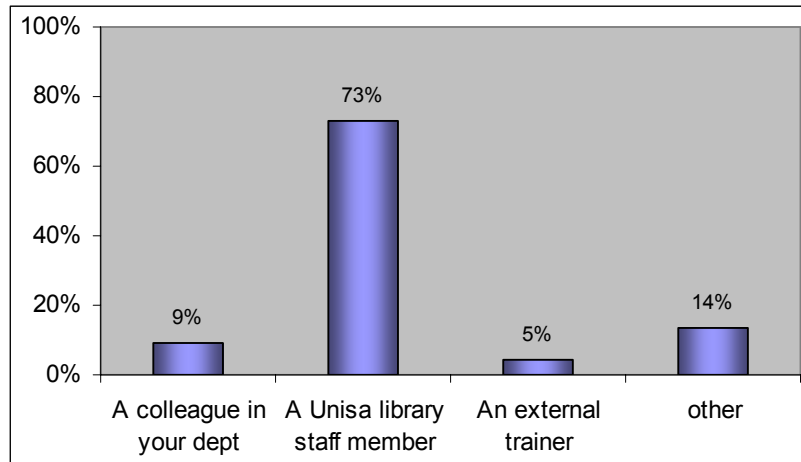
Diagram 5.12 below illustrates how the training received was presented. The base size of only 46 indicates the fact that not everyone had received training. Most training took place in a computer-based training room (74%), which is generally appropriate when considering the nature of the subjects covered during training. Academics who received training were trained at Unisa, using existing infrastructures such as the computer-based training room in the library, and 17% received training in a classroom setting.

DIAGRAM 5.12

HOW TRAINING WAS PRESENTED [n = 46]



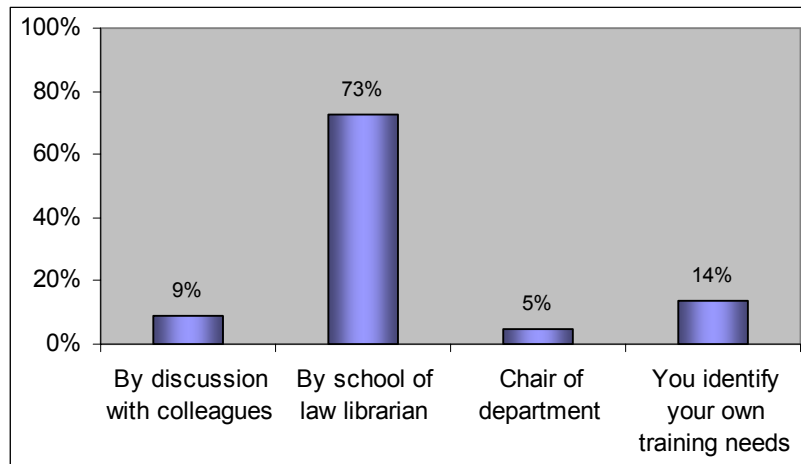
In addition to the question of where respondents were trained, they were also asked to indicate who conducted the training. Diagram 5.13 below shows the percentage distribution across all categories of trainers. The base size for this question was 44, and two more respondents omitted to answer this question than the previous question. To the question of how the respondents were trained, 74% of them answered that they had received their training in a computer-based training room, and this was followed by 17% who were trained in a classroom setting. These findings suggest that law academics prefer their training to take place in a computer-based training room. This entails some hands-on experience in manipulating ICTs.

DIAGRAM 5.13**WHO TRAINED THE RESPONDENTS [n = 44]**

Most training was conducted by a Unisa library staff member (73%). External trainers were not often used (5%). This shows that Unisa library staff members, in this case the librarian responsible for training, should continue training the law academics. Nine percent indicated that there is some form of skills transfer taking place amongst academics in the College of Law, and this points to the fact that knowledge sharing is important.

5.2.5 SECTION E: TRAINING STILL NEEDED

Respondents were asked to indicate how their training needs were identified, and Diagram 5.14 below indicates the responses to this question.

DIAGRAM 5.14**HOW TRAINING NEEDS WERE IDENTIFIED [n = 58]**

In the past, the training needs of respondents were predominantly identified by the School of Law librarians (73%). Only 14% identified their own training needs. This is an indication that the librarian's role has to shift from merely providing information to including that of training his/her customers. It is necessary for every person to identify his or her own training needs. While librarians may have some idea of the training needs of academics, a self-assessment of needs is part of best practice in the area of training.

While only 14% had done any self-assessment of training needs up to the present, when asked whether they needed any training in using legal electronic information resources, two-thirds of them agreed that they did. Diagram 5.15 below illustrates these responses graphically.

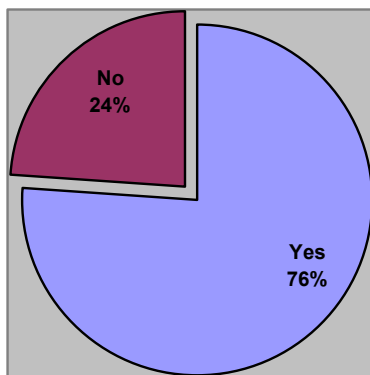
DIAGRAM 5.15**TRAINING IN USING LEGAL ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES [n = 61]**

Table 5.5 below shows that, while associate professors showed a slightly increased need for training, this was not significant (chi-square = 4.21; $p = 0.326$).

TABLE 5.5
NEED FOR TRAINING BY ACADEMIC LEVEL

	Do you need training in using legal electronic information resources?	
	Yes	No
Professors	65%	35%
Associate professors	94%	6%
Senior lecturers	67%	33%

Training needs were also consistent among persons from different age groups, as can be seen in Table 5.6 below. There were no significant differences between age groups, as the chi-square of 1.395 has a p-value of 0.845, which is not smaller than 0.05.

TABLE 5.6
NEED FOR TRAINING BY AGE GROUP [n = 61]

	Do you need training in using legal electronic information resources?	
	Yes	No
20 - 29 years	67%	33%
30 - 39 years	70%	30%
40 - 49 years	80%	20%
50 - 59 years	67%	33%
60 years or older	100%	0%

This question was followed by a list of possible training courses from which respondents could select. These training courses were: Internet; LexisNexis; Butterworth's; SA Law Reports; Labour Law Reports; Mercantile Law; and Oasis library catalogue. Furthermore, they were

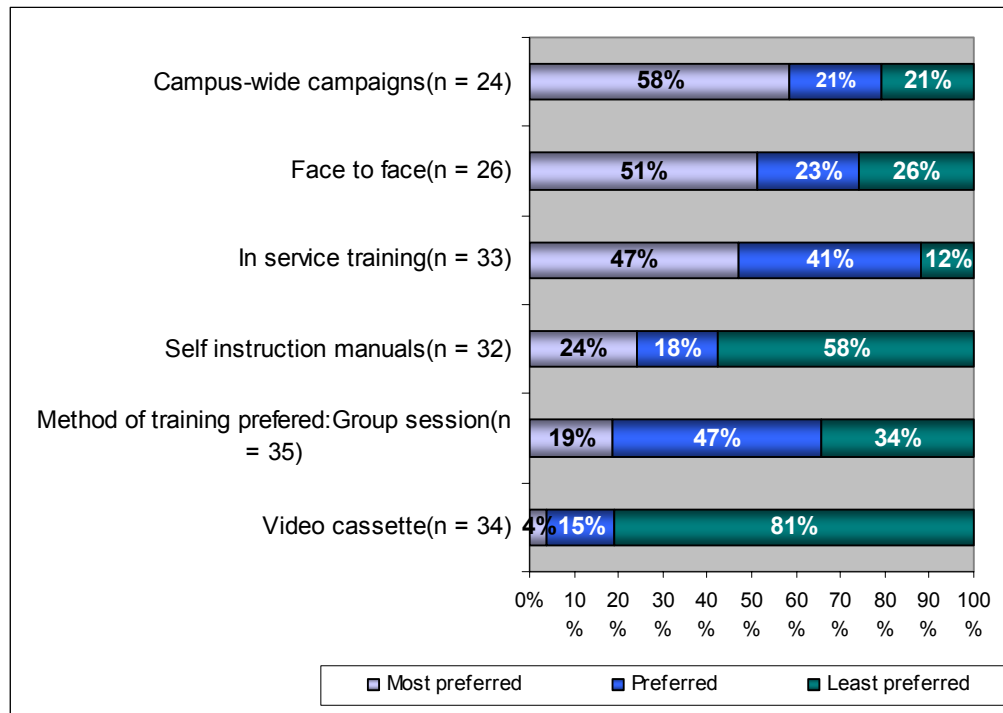
requested to provide or list their own training needs, which could be different from those already listed.

Scores for the courses listed as most preferred for training were as follows:

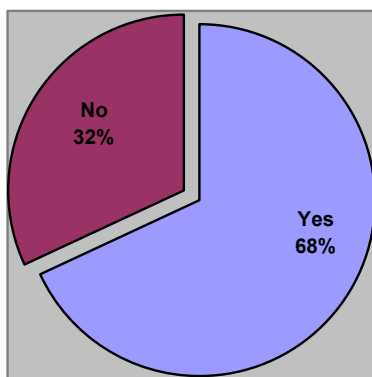
- 100% preferred LexisNexis training, i.e. 28/28 x 100, where $[N=28]$.
- 100% preferred training in SA Law Reports, i.e. 20/20 x 100, where $[N=20]$.
- 100% preferred training in Labour Reports, i.e. 8/8 x 100, where $[N=8]$.
- 100% preferred training in Mercantile Law, i.e. 9/9 x 100, where $[N=9]$.
- 93.1% preferred Butterworth's training, i.e. 27/29 x 100, where $[N=29]$.
- 83.3% preferred training in Oasis, i.e. 10/12 x 100, where $[N=12]$.
- 80% preferred Internet training, i.e. 8/10 x 100, where $[N=10]$.

Base sizes were sometimes very small for the various options, such as eight or 10 responses, which often indicates, with self-completion questionnaires, that the missing responses might simply stand for a "no". This only serves to reinforce the strong need for training in all areas. From the results in Table 5.6, one can deduce that training is definitely needed in the abovementioned sources, plus others that the law librarian may deem important. It is worth noting that law academics believe that they will benefit from training in electronic resources to improve their current skills: fifty of the 61 respondents indicated that they would benefit from training in, and information on, legal electronic resources.

Most respondents have a desire for training and also see value in it, and they were asked to indicate which of a variety of methods they would prefer. Fifty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they preferred campus-wide campaigns. Face-to-face and in-service training were also popular training methods. This is evident from Diagram 5.16 below, which indicates responses of 51% and 47% respectively in this regard.

DIAGRAM 5.16**MOST PREFERRED METHODS OF TRAINING**

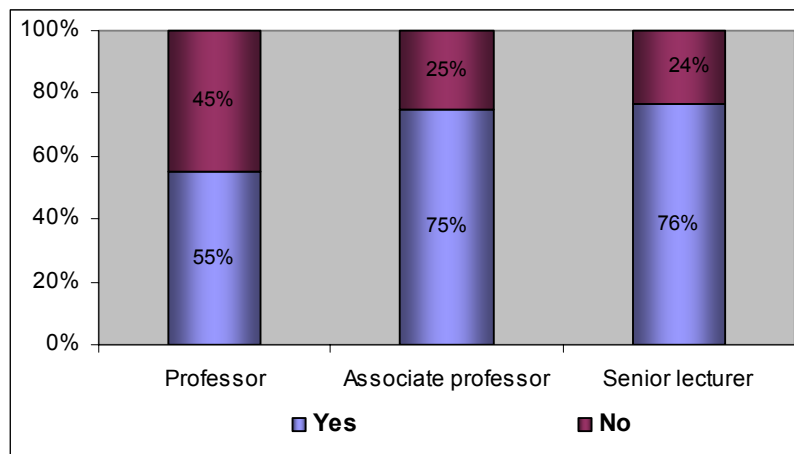
Respondents were asked whether they would prefer training in electronic legal resources to be integrated into the law curriculum. Diagram 5.17 below indicates that 68% answered that they would.

DIAGRAM 5.17**ELECTRONIC LEGAL RESOURCES TRAINING: INTEGRATION INTO THE LAW CURRICULUM [n = 60]**

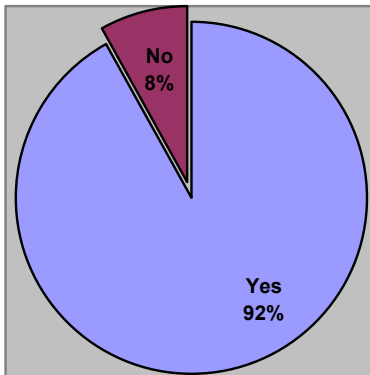
While not significant (chi-square = 2.417; $p = 0.291$), there is some indication that full professors were slightly less enthusiastic about the inclusion of electronic training in the curriculum. Only 55% of professors agreed that this was a good idea, as opposed to 75% of associate professors, and 76% of senior lecturers.

DIAGRAM 5.18

ELECTRONIC LEGAL RESOURCES TRAINING: INTEGRATION INTO THE LAW CURRICULUM BY ACADEMIC LEVEL



Lastly, respondents were asked if they thought that ICT (Information and Communication Technology)-based training had an important role to play in the School of Law. Only 8% (five respondents) did not think so. In the above diagram (5.18), professors, associate professors and senior lecturers saw the integration of ICT(s) into the law curriculum as being very important. This is evident from the scores for those who said “yes”. Diagram 5.19 below shows that 92% of the law academics need training based on electronic information use or ICT(s).

DIAGRAM 5.19**IMPORTANCE OF ICT- BASED TRAINING IN THE SCHOOL OF LAW [n= 60]**

5.3 SUMMARY

This chapter has revealed that only a few respondents had received formal training in the subject-specific sources, such as legal journals and citations. The findings have also revealed that most respondents express a need for training and see value in it. They were therefore asked to identify which method of training they would prefer. Diagram 5.16 indicated that respondents preferred campus-wide campaigns (computer room-based training), followed by face-to-face and in-service training.

In general, it can be concluded that electronic sources are of importance to nearly all academics in the College of Law, and it is therefore vital that these sources are effectively used. The respondents acknowledged the importance of ICTs, and the role that they play in shaping the legal profession. Respondents agreed that electronic legal resources should be integrated into the law curriculum, in order to empower students with electronic information skills.

The next chapter discusses conclusions and provides recommendations based on the findings.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The study on training needs for electronic information use by law academics was conducted at the University of South Africa, with the purpose of investigating these needs among academics, and the extent to which Unisa is addressing these needs. It also aimed at highlighting the importance of ICT(s) as an integral part of law, and the fact that skills in manipulating electronic resources are crucial to law academics. Primarily, the objective of this study was to determine whether law academics lack the computer skills needed in order to search for legal information for themselves. Secondly, the aim was to recommend training programmes that could be followed by the College of Law in training academics. The research findings have assisted in making the following informed conclusions, based on the objectives of the study.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions were drawn based on the objectives of this study. This discussion gives attention to the research questions that were identified in Chapter 1, subsection 1.5. Each question is discussed in terms of the responses that were given by respondents in the College of Law at Unisa, with regard to using legal electronic resources.

6.2.1 Existing electronic information resources for law

The Unisa Library makes available a range of electronic information resources for all the colleges, and these include:

- Oasis library catalogue
- South African resources
- Unisa Library e-Journal Finder
- e-Books
- theses and dissertations
- e-Reference sources

- e-Newspapers
- digital collections
- Google Scholar.

Technological development has resulted in an increase in the number of electronic information sources available at the university, and this is evident from the abovementioned list of electronic resources that Unisa academics have access to. The law databases available at Unisa appear as Appendix III at the end of this dissertation. There is a growing need for access to electronic resources in all fields of specialisation, including the legal field, and this has been confirmed by the responses of academics when asked whether ICT-based training has an important role to play in the College of Law. The findings indicate that 92% of the academics in the College see the importance of ICT(s), and most (55% of professors, 75% of associate professors and 76% of senior lecturers) prefer that training in legal electronic information resources be integrated into the law curriculum. This study therefore concludes that, in the training of law academics, Unisa could utilise existing electronic information resources for law.

6.2.2 The challenges faced by law academics in using legal electronic resources

This study was based on an assumption by the researcher that law academics may be experiencing problems or lack knowledge in using legal electronic resources. This stems from the fact that they rely more on the librarian to conduct searches, even simple searches, for them. The findings from this study revealed that law academics do have the necessary basic computer skills. For example, 100 % of the academics indicated that they were able to use a keyboard and mouse, as well as the Internet, whereas 89% could use MS Word and Oasis. The confidence levels in using legal electronic databases and journals, however, were 53% and 49% respectively. These percentages are very low for such important information resources in the College of Law. The conclusion is that higher levels of confidence could be achieved through training academics to use all the legal resources available. In this case, training should be offered and made compulsory by the College, since much information is now available electronically, as indicated in Diagrams 5.5 (most used legal electronic resources) and 5.6 (less used electronic resources), as well as Table 5.2 (usage per department), in Chapter 5.

6.2.3 Training needs of law academics in using electronic information in the College of Law at Unisa

It is imperative to identify the training needs of individuals before the actual training is planned or implemented. This will make it easier to focus the training on addressing immediate

problems. There are various needs assessment methods that can be employed in different contexts. Findings from this study, discussed in chapter 5, clearly point to the fact that academics should identify their training needs, and librarians should then organise training relevant to, and perhaps even beyond, the formers' expectations. The law academics indicated that they all needed training, although the focus on training was not the same. The findings of "Usage of legal electronic resources", as illustrated in Diagram 5.5 of subsection 5.3 in Chapter 5, reveal that respondents' use of certain sources was more prevalent in certain departments than others.

Law subject librarians can play a pivotal role in the writing of training manuals and in the training itself. Training should be budgeted for, and in so doing, the benefits of training academics will be felt by the College of Law's management. The above points should be considered by the College of Law when planning to train its staff members or law academics. The law subject librarian at Unisa may decide on the most preferred method of training (58% prefer computer room-based training). This can also be confirmed when the law subject librarian conducts a needs analysis in the College. The findings revealed that academics have diverse training needs:

- 100% preferred LexisNexis training;
- 100% preferred training in SA Law Reports;
- 100% preferred training in Labour Reports;
- 100% preferred training in Mercantile Law;
- 93.1% preferred Jutastat and Butterworth's training;
- 83.3% preferred training in Oasis); and
- 80% preferred Internet training.

6.2.4 Effective training methods

Most of the literature consulted indicates that a careful analysis of training needs must be conducted before deciding on methods of delivering training. Training is necessary to improve the skills of those who receive it, but it costs money and time. Poor training potentially reduces productivity, whereas good training achieves significant returns on investment. In order to get the most out of training investment, one has to:

- Deliver training aligned with the strategic plans of the organisation;
- Concentrate on personal development plans or training needs of employees;

- Recognise prior learning and emphasise interactive training;
- Provide different types of training for employees; and
- Provide management support to employees.

With the above in mind, trainers can benefit by making their training a success, and by choosing the most appropriate training method.

The findings revealed that 58% of law academics prefer campus-wide campaigns (computer room-based training), followed by face-to-face training (51%) and in-service training (47%). It is important to use all the methods that make sense in terms of the organisation's needs. In short, effective training should focus on improving the skills and competence of all the academics in the College of Law, with regard to using legal electronic resources. The conclusion here is that effective training for law academics should be conducted. In this case, one can point to the fact that the kind of training presented should focus on Return on Investment (ROI) for the academics and the College of Law.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above conclusions, it is imperative that some way forward concerning the recommendations be made as suggested in the research questions. The following recommendations could assist the College of Law in improving the existing skills of law academics when using electronic resources:

1. The responses illustrated in Diagrams 5.1 and 5.5 of chapter 5 show that academics are less competent in using the more specialised legal resources such as legal databases and journals. More focused training that addresses these specialised databases is recommended. This would give academics a chance to become acquainted with each of these resources.

Law academics believe that ICT-based training is crucial in the legal field, and it is recommended that practical, in-service training focusing on improving legal electronic

2. skills or legal research is conducted for those who enter the academic arena/field introduced by the College.

3. The findings of this study revealed that all academics have some specific training needs (see Diagram 5.14 of Chapter 5) relating to the use of electronic information resources. Law subject librarians should organise these training sessions, focusing on different information resources, for example, Internet, Oasis, different subject databases, MS Word, and so forth. It is recommended that the Unisa library should continue training academics. It is further suggested that subject librarians take the responsibility of offering training to users, using the available resources on the campus.
4. The College of Law should utilise the services of a training representative in the College who will liaise with the law subject librarian. Each school has a training representative to whom staff members in general can communicate their training needs. The representative then negotiates with the Human Resources training section of Unisa to organise such training, and pays the trainer where necessary.
5. To address the issue of low confidence in using specialised legal electronic databases and journals, a compulsory course for law students should be introduced to address this recurring problem. Alternatively, a computer driver's licence course or a certificate of competence in using computers should be completed before graduating.
6. It is recommended that a training needs analysis be conducted before the actual training. This would help the trainer (law subject librarian) to offer training related to the needs of academics in the College of Law.
7. The College of Law should introduce regular training for newly appointed academic staff, and dedicate at least one week per month for two months (in blocks) to this, to avoid interrupting service delivery. Week one could focus, for instance, on basic computer literacy skills, while the second week could offer training in advanced legal electronic skills related to the usage of all relevant legal databases and journals, facilitated by the law subject librarian.

6.4 SUMMARY

This study has revealed that academics in the College of Law require training in using electronic sources of information. It is also clear that all the law academics are computer literate and can access electronic databases with ease, although some are less confident. Their knowledge and skills were acquired outside Unisa, because they were never offered any in-service training by

the College on how to access legal electronic information. A proactive approach regarding training of all law academics by subject librarians is a necessity, and the College of Law, through its curricula, should introduce a compulsory module for undergraduate students, focusing on training in legal electronic information resources. This training should be conducted in collaboration with the law subject librarian.

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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LAW ACADEMICS AT UNISA (MAIN CAMPUS: PRETORIA).

This survey seeks to explore the information and training needs of law academics concerning the use of legal electronic information sources, e.g. electronic versions of Butterworth's, Jutastat and LexisNexis, in the College of Law at Unisa. The results of this survey will assist the College in implementing or introducing modules and training programmes, aimed at law academics and students, in conducting electronic searches at Unisa.

PLEASE NOTE:

- * There are no right or wrong answers.
- * Your responses will be treated confidentially.
- * Results will be made available.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer each question by ticking the appropriate box

SECTION A: Demographics

1 Age category:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Younger than 20 years | [] |
| 20 – 29 years | [] |
| 30 – 39 years | [] |
| 40 – 49 years | [] |
| 50 – 59 years | [] |
| 60 years or older | [] |

2. Gender:

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| Male | [] |
| Female | [] |

3. Your department, e.g. Mercantile Law []

4. Position:

Professor []
 Associate Professor []
 Senior lecturer []
 Lecturer []
 Other (please specify)

5. Is your post:

Permanent []
 Temporary []
 Other (please specify)

6. How long have you been employed by the School of Law?

Less than 1 year []
 1 – 2 years []
 3 – 8 years []
 9 – 14 years []
 15 – 20 years []
 21 years or more []

SECTION B: Computer literacy level

7. Please rate your level of confidence when using the following:

	Never Used	Used but not Confident	Confident	Very Confident
A keyboard and mouse				
MS Word/other word processor				
Excel/other spreadsheet program				
E-mail				
Internet				

Oasis (the Unisa Library Catalogue)				
Legal electronic databases				
Legal electronic journals				

SECTION C: Use of electronic legal resources

8. How often do you use the following legal electronic resources?

[You may mark more than one option]

	At least daily	At least weekly	At least monthly	Occasionally	Never Use
SA ePublications, e.g. Acta Criminologica; SA Human Rights Yearbook.					
IR Network					
Criminal Justice Abstracts					
Butterworth's, LexisNexis Direct, e.g. SA Statutes & Provincial legislation					
SACat (SABINET)					
Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals					
Government Gazette (SABINET)					
IR Network					
Jutastat Publications, e.g. SA Law Reports.					

Butterworth's Publications (reported cases; statutes; regulations; proclamations & noters-ups)					
SA Statutes, Daily Law Reports, etc.					
Quicklaw					
Emerald (Electronic Management Research Library Databases), e.g. Full-text of journal articles from 1994 to date.					
Index to South African Periodicals, e.g. CILSA; SAYL; THRHR; SALJ; SAJHR; TSAR					
Search engines, e.g. Google					

9. Would you say that your use of legal electronic resources listed in Question 8

[Please tick the appropriate box]

	Yes	Partially	No
Has improved your competence level	[]	[]	[]
Has not improved your competence level	[]	[]	[]

SECTION D: Training received

10. How satisfied are you with the legal electronic training you received in the following:

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Can't remember	No training received
Basic computer skills					
MS Word/other word processor					
Excel/other spreadsheet programs					
E-mail					
Internet					
Oasis(the Unisa Library catalogue)					
Legal electronic databases					
Legal electronic journals					
Electronic international legislation					
Electronic legal citations					

**[If you did not receive any training, please proceed to Question 13,
SECTION E]**

11. How were you trained?

On a one-on-one basis (Face-to-face) []

In a classroom setting (Group setting) []

In a computer-based training room []

Other (please specify)

12 By whom were you trained?

A colleague in your department []

A staff member (librarian) in the Unisa Library []

An external training company/trainer []

Other (please specify)

SECTION E: Training still needed

13 How are your training needs identified?

By discussions with colleagues in your department []

By the School of Law's librarian []

By the COD (Chair of the Department) []

You identify your own training needs []

Other (please specify)

14. Do you need training in using legal electronic information resources?

Yes []

No []

If **yes**, please specify in which of these resources or areas you feel you need training:

[You may mark more than one option]

Internet ☐

LexisNexis ☐

Butterworth's, LexisNexis Direct,
e.g. SA Status and Provincial legislation ☐

Jutastat, e.g. SA Law Reports, etc. ☐

Labour Law Library ☐

Mercantile Law Library ☐

OASIS (the Unisa Library catalogue) ☐

Please indicate any other resources or areas not listed above, in which you need training:

.....

.....

.....

15. Do you think that you will benefit from training on how to access information in legal electronic resources?

Yes ☐

No ☐

16. Which method of training would you prefer?

[Indicate by writing 1 = most preferred; 2 = Preferred; 3 = least preferred, in the boxes provided]

In-service training (in-house training) ☐

Face-to-face (one-on-one training) ☐

- Group sessions ☐ []
- Self-instruction manuals ☐ []
- Video cassettes ☐ []
- Campus-wide campaigns (training in computer-based training rooms) ☐ []
- Other (please specify)

17. Would you prefer training in electronic legal information to be integrated into the law curriculum?

- Yes ☐ []
- No ☐ []

If **yes**, what would be your preference?

- Separate first-year course (optional) ☐ []
- Compulsory course ☐ []
- Integrated into each subject of the law degree ☐ []
- Separate final-year course (optional) ☐ []
- Other (please specify)

18. In your opinion, do you think that ICT (Information and Communication Technology)-based training has an important role to play in the School of Law?

- Yes ☐ []
- No ☐ []

Please motivate your answer:

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Mr T.F. Constable
Tel: (012) 429 6070
TvW 10-171

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION SCIENCE**

QUESTIONNAIRE

Mr. T.F. Constable

TvW 10-171

UNISA

14 March 2007

Dear Respondent,

I am conducting research on “***Training needs for electronic information use in the School of Law at the University of South Africa***” for my dissertation, as part of the requirements for a Master’s degree in Information Science.

This research intends to explore the information and training needs of law academics concerning their use of legal electronic information sources in the College of Law at the University of South Africa.

I understand the burden that this imposes upon you, and appreciate the time and effort you will devote in completing this questionnaire. I will send a copy, summarising the outcomes of this study, to the Dean once it is completed. All the information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Please return the questionnaire by 27 March 2007, by sending it to:

Tsepo Constable

TvW 10-171, Department of Information Science

Thank you very much for your time and effort.



















Sincerely,













Tsepo Festus Constable

Law databases available for law academics on-campus at Unisa









(<http://bibinf.unisa.ac.za/infoweb/sbj-db-subjects.html>)

 Nielsen BookData	Bookfind Premier	bibliographic	instruction
 BRILL	Brill Online Journals	full-text	
 LexisNexis [™] Butterworths	Butterworths Electronic Library	full-text	
 Bibliolink	Child Abuse, Child Welfare and Adoption Database	bibliographic	instruction
ProQuest	Criminal Justice Periodicals	partly full-text	instruction
 CSA	Criminal Justice Abstracts	partly full-text	instruction
 CSA	Criminology: A SAGE Full-text Collection	full-text	instruction
 CSA	CSA Sociological Abstracts	partly full-text	instruction
 Sabinet Online	Current and Completed Research	bibliographic	instruction
 Sabinet Online	Daily Law Reports	full-text	instruction
	Database of African Theses and Dissertations	bibliographic	
ProQuest	Dissertations and Theses	bibliographic	instruction
 EBSCO HOST	Econlit	partly full-text	instruction
 CSA	Education: A SAGE Full-text Collection	full-text	instruction
 CSA	ERIC	partly full-text	instruction

	Gale Virtual Reference Library	full-text	instruction
	Gale's Ready Reference Shelf	full-text	instruction
	Global Books In Print	bibliographic	instruction
	Government Gazettes	full-text	instruction
	HeinOnline	full-text	instruction
	Inaugural Lectures	bibliographic	
	Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals	partly full-text	instruction
	IngentaConnect	partly full-text	instruction
	Inspec	partly full-text	instruction
	International Political Science Abstracts	partly full-text	instruction
	ISAP	bibliographic	instruction
	JSTOR	full-text	instruction
 Wincdnet	Jutastat English Reports, 1220-1965	full-text	
 Wincdnet	Jutastat Labour Library	full-text	
 Wincdnet	Jutastat South African Criminal Law Reports	full-text	
 Wincdnet	Jutastat South African Law Reports	full-text	
 Wincdnet	Jutastat South African Law Reports (Archive)	full-text	
 Wincdnet	Jutastat South African Statutes	full-text	

 Wincdnet	Jutastat South African Tax Library	full-text	
 Wincdnet	Jutastat Suid Afrikaanse Wette	full-text	
	Legal Information Systems	*****	instruction
	Legal Periodicals Full-Text	partly full-text	instruction
	Legal Periodicals Retrospective	partly full-text	instruction
	LexisNexis Butterworths Online	full-text	
	Making of Modern Law	full-text	instruction
	MasterFILE Premier	partly full-text	instruction
	MEDLINE	partly full-text	instruction
	Nexus Database System	bibliographic	instruction
	Oxford English Dictionary	full-text	
	Oxford Reference Online - Premium Collection	full-text	instruction
	Oxford University Press Journals	full-text	instruction
	PAIS Archive	bibliographic	instruction
	PAIS International	partly full-text	instruction
	Parliamentary Bills	full-text	instruction
	Philosopher's Index	partly full-text	instruction
	Political Science: A SAGE Full-text Collection	full-text	instruction
	Proquest Education Journals	partly full-text	instruction

	Proquest Psychology Journals	partly full-text	instruction
	Provincial Gazettes	full-text	instruction
	PsycARTICLES	full-text	instruction
	Psychology: A SAGE Full-text Collection	full-text	instruction
	PsycINFO	partly full-text	instruction
	Religious and Theological Abstracts	bibliographic	instruction
	SA ePublications	partly full-text	instruction
	SA Media	partly full-text	instruction
	Sabinet Legal Products	full-text	instruction
	SACat	bibliographic	instruction
	SAIR Directory Online	full-text	
	SANB	bibliographic	instruction
	Social Sciences Citation Index	partly full-text	instruction
	SpringerLink	partly full-text	
	Subsidie	bibliographic	instruction
	SwetsWise	partly full-text	
	Taylor and Francis Online Journals	full-text	

	Tenders (TradeWorld)	bibliographic	instruction
	Testaments to the Holocaust	full-text	instruction
	Theses Canada Portal	partly full-text	instruction
	Times Digital Archive	full-text	instruction
	UCTD	bibliographic	instruction
	Ulrichsweb	bibliographic	instruction
	Unisa Law Index	bibliographic	
	Unisa Library e-Journal Finder	partly full-text	instruction
	UnisaETD: electronic theses and dissertations	full-text	
	Urban Studies and Planning: A SAGE Full-text Collection	full-text	instruction
	World of Learning	full-text	instruction
	WorldCat	bibliographic	instruction
	Yearbook of International Organizations	full-text	instruction