

USE OF E-JOURNALS CONSORTIA IN INDIA: A NEW VISION FOR LIBRARY RESOURCE SHARING AND NETWORKING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Dr.(Mrs.) Daya Patil (Dalve)
Librarian
S.B.E.S. College of Science,
Aurangabad.
Maharashtra, India.

Rathode S.S.
Librarian
Sai College of Computer Education
Ranjani Tq. Kalamb Dist. Osmanabad.
Maharashtra, India.

Abstract

This paper deals with the consortia which is used by colleges, universities, deemed universities and research institutions in India. Electronic journals bring new challenges for the library and information professionals to give full text access of scholarly publications in electronic version to its end users. Library consortium add a vital layer of co-ordination, resource sharing and expertise allowing individual libraries to easily obtain large number of titles while also providing advantageous pricing depending from the contribution by the member libraries, some consortium has external funding, many are self-supporting. The N-LIST consortium provides access to e-resources especially to college library. Through UGC-Infonet digital library consortium access has been provided to large number of scholarly journals since January 2004 with assumption that broader, faster, better access makes more use of information.

Keywords: -Resource sharing, Library resource sharing, Library networking, Library cooperation, Consortium, etc.

Introduction

The purpose of the e-journal consortium is to provide access to scholarly literature in all streams of learning, and to increase the resources and data available to the colleges and universities for teaching and research. Access via e-journal consortium is made via internet protocol address and all member colleges, universities and institutions of the project have put up separate computer terminals for using facility. Training has been imparted to library professionals as well as academicians in the use of e-journals and other programmes put forth by the executing organizations. The consortium would provide the best current and archival periodical literature from all over the world to the academic community. Besides, it would also go a long way in reducing the survey shortage of periodicals faced by the libraries.

With the globalization of education and competitive research the demand for journals has increased over the years. Due to financial constraints, increasing cost of print documents, storage problem and publication of larger number of journals, no library is able to procure process or store all the documents that the library user's demand and these cannot afford to acquire even half of all the published material in terms of money required to purchase. The only solution to solve all constraints is the library cooperation in the form of resource sharing. Inter library loan and resource sharing plays an important role in providing effective services by reducing the cost of publication. Resource sharing can be achieved by forming a consortium.

A library consortia is not a new phenomena. Its origin can be attributed to ‘Library cooperation’ or ‘Library resource sharing’ activities of 1960’s and 1970’s. Library consortium is an association of libraries having a common interest and which comes together for the purpose of resource sharing among its member libraries. It is group of libraries or other such like organizations that form a partnership to achieve the common goal like shared cataloguing or resource sharing, which cannot be achieved by an individual library. A consortium gives new vision and plays pivotal role in library resource sharing and networking in higher education and research.

A consortium among the college libraries is helpful in various ways. It will be useful for getting cooperation among its member libraries in acquiring electronic databases, communication of information and inter library loan. It will be helpful for rational use of college library budget even small libraries also can derive mere benefits out of their small budget. Consortia provide an effective information infrastructure to the member libraries. It provides platform for discussing and sharing professional issues. Through consortia unit cost of information can be reduced drastically.

Objectives of the present study

- 1) To spread the awareness regarding e-journals consortia available in India.
- 2) To know the need and importance of library resource sharing and networking in digital era.

Concept of Resource Sharing

Resource sharing means an operation in which more than two parties agree to share voluntarily the cost of the operation, and in which the member has something useful to contribute to other members. It is also known as library cooperation. In the context of library, cooperation denotes sharing of resources. It means sharing of resource of a group of libraries.

The word resource sharing can be analyzed as follows:

Resources: - All of the resources of the library.

Sharing: - To be participate in sharing of the resources.

Hence in the context of libraries the meaning of resources sharing is to provide resources of the libraries to other libraries on demand, when they are needed.

Library Resource Sharing and Networking

The sharing of library resources started with the concept of inter library loan, under which a library can get a document from another library on loan for a certain period. It was followed by the term "Library Cooperation", but now in its revised and improved form it is called as "Resource Sharing". Today, it is called "Library Network", or "Library Consortia", which is one of the cooperative ways of sharing online resources. The inter library loan means sharing of the resources of one library by the other libraries on demand, when they are needed by its user i.e. sharing one's assets with others.

Library Cooperation / Resource Sharing / Networking / Consortia all denote a mode of cooperation among a number of libraries whereby the library collection, function or services are shared by a number of libraries. According to Allen Kent the goals are to provide a positive net effect on the library user in terms of access to more material or services and or on the library budget in terms of providing level service at less cost, increased service at level cost or much more service at less cost than if undertaken individually.

Library Cooperation

Library cooperation is a social phenomenon by which libraries are mutually engaged to increase the service capabilities of a single library and by which the librarians extend their option to serve clients. It includes sharing materials or function or services that constitute a library system. A material includes both documentary and non-documentary forms. The function covers the activities concerning the acquisition, processing, storage etc.; include techniques, activities and procedures employed to establish contact between the document and its consumer i.e. lending, reference, documentation, translation, etc.

Definition of Consortia

A consortium is an association of two or more individuals, companies, organizations or governments (or any combination of these entities) with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources for achieving a common goal. Consortium is a Latin word, means partnership, association or society. A word consortia or consortiums are plural of consortium.

Objectives of consortia

- 1) Basically consortia have been created for acquisition and sharing use of e-journals.
- 2) It is possible for the users of participating libraries to access and/or download the required materials remotely.
- 3) The objective of consortia can be widened to make them efficient instruments of sharing of all types of library resources.

Types of consortia

Theoretically consortia can be of various types depending on their characteristics:

a) By type of libraries covered:

- 1) Consortia of multi-type libraries
- 2) Consortia of same type libraries

b) By geographical area of coverage:

- 1) Local level consortia
- 2) State level consortia
- 3) National level consortia
- 4) International level consortia

Functions of consortia

- 1) Obviously existing consortia are basically serving as buying clubs.
- 2) With little initiative these can be developed into effective platforms for sharing valuable resources of libraries, both printed and non-printed.

3) Besides resource sharing, these consortia can also take up several activities for the mutual benefit of the participating libraries.

Need for E-Consortia

Technological developments, electronic publishing of scholarly journals, pricing models of publishers for consortia gives new opportunities for libraries to provide instant access to information. Following factors justifies the need of consortia development for the management of electronic resources:

- a) **Overloaded Budgets:** Libraries are committing larger portions of their budgetary allocations for either procuring or assessing electronic resources while the allocation keeps on diminishing. The libraries with their diminishing or at best static financial allocations have to consider new ways to consolidate globally accessible electronic resources. Consortia are formed with an objective to enhance the purchasing power of the participating institutes in this critical situation of major financial crunch faced by the libraries and information centers. A consortium facilitates the member libraries to get the benefit of wider access to e-resources at affordable cost and at the best terms of licenses.
- b) **Information explosion:** There has been the sudden onslaught of new materials and electronic versions of old materials resulting in the availability of information in numerous

forms. This flood shows no signs of abating. Full-text electronic scholarly and popular books are becoming available in online form, and a deluge of such materials and providers over the next few years is expected. A consortium, with the collective strength of resources of various institutions available to it, is in a better position to address and resolve the problems of managing, organizing and archiving the electronic resources.

c) Impossibility of self-sufficiency: With the proliferation of information in myriad forms, it is difficult for any library to be fully sufficient to cater to the information needs of its user community. Financial constraints, space curb, human resources inadequacy also stress upon the need for the libraries to opt for the consortia approach.

d) Willingness of publishers: This approach has helped to get attractive discounted rates and most of publishers responded positively to the call of consortia and are enthusiastic to give the best possible offers. Another reason for the eagerness of publishers to enter the Indian market, which holds very high future potentials.

e) Diversity of user needs: The technology has changed expectations of researchers, their patience, and their willingness to accept services that are available on demand. The Web-based electronic resources are an apt answer to the expectations of users. Library users

want to have access to that material as quickly as possible, and many of them want information at their computer screens.

f) Quick Access: The technology provides an unparalleled media for delivery of information with greater speed and economy. Academic and Research users can now hope to have access to their learned journals articles in electronic form as the electronic access is comparatively cheaper. Users are beginning to expect electronic delivery that is speedy and accessible at remote.

g) Improving quality standard of research: The research productivity of all institutions is expected to improve with increased access to international e-databases and full-text resources, so libraries are willing to add electronic resources to their collection and opting for consortia approach.

h) Professionalism of Library Science: This concept has tremendous influence on the consortia initiatives. The changing role of librarian as a conservator to a navigator/disseminator of information has enhanced the value of library consortia.

i) Future developments: One of the important issues related to technology is stability of the systems that they deploy to store, retrieve and deliver the electronic resources. Consortia

help to have a watchful eye on coming latest technological changes in publishing industry and associated legislations which can affect the libraries directly or indirectly.

Important Library consortia in India

In the late 1980's the first US state-wide consortium-Ohio Link-was established, it was the first library consortium in the world. It received widespread attention at they were able to obtain additional state funding for their cooperative work. Library consortia have come up in many countries.

In India the first limited purpose and successful consortia like model can be traced to Tata Institute of fundamental research (TIFR) in 2000, which used the consortia model offered by springer for multi-site licensing and cross sharing of content among all the libraries falling under TIFR's affiliation. Today a growing number of consortia around the world have signed license agreement and are operational, ranging from small to big, and regional and national level consortia. In India most of the consortium are founded and supported by Government agencies.

a) N-LIST Consortium

The Project entitled "National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content (N-LIST)", being jointly executed by the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, INFLIBNET Centre and the INDEST-AICTE Consortium, IIT Delhi provides for i) Cross-subscription to e-resources subscribed by the two Consortia, i.e. subscription to

INDEST-AICTE resources for universities and UGC-INFONET resources for technical institutions; and ii) Access to selected e-resources to colleges.

The N-LIST project provides access to e-resources to students, researchers and faculty from colleges and other beneficiary institutions through servers installed at the INFLIBNET Centre. The authorized users from colleges can now access e-resources and download articles required by them directly from the publisher's website once they are duly authenticated as authorized users through servers deployed at the INFLIBNET Centre.

N-LIST: Four Components of N-LIST Consortium

- i) To subscribe and provide access to selected UGC-INFONET e-resources to technical institutions (IITs, IISc, IISERs and NITs) and monitor its usage.
- ii) To subscribe and provide access to selected INDEST e-resources to selected universities and monitor its usage.
- iii) To subscribe and provide access to selected e-resources to 6,000 Govt./ Govt.-aided colleges and monitor its usage.
- iv) To act as a Monitoring Agency for colleges and evaluate, promote, impart training and monitor all activities involved in the process of providing effective and efficient access to e-resources to colleges.

Current Status of N-List

As on **Feb 11, 2015**, a total number of **4409** colleges have registered themselves with the N-LIST programme including Govt. / Govt.-aided colleges covered under the section 12 B/2F of UGC Act as well as Non-Aided colleges.

b.) UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium

The UGC-Infonet digital library consortium is an ambitious program initiated by UGC to facilitate access to scholarly e-journals and databases in view of limited resources subscribed by majority of universities. This project is our pride in the field of education and research which was formally launched the concluding day of UGC's golden jubilee celebrations by his Excellency the president of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam at Vigyan Bhavan on 28 December 2003 by dedicating a bouquet of e-journals to the nation. More than 4000 scholarly journals and databases from around 23 major publishers/vendors made available to around 100 Universities and other institutes and the remaining universities will be provided access in stages, from the users point of view, it is great bonanza for them is the absence of such access.

Facility of UGC-Infonet Consortium: An Overview

The consortium facilitates the libraries to get benefit of wider access to electronic resources at affordable cost and the best terms of licenses. A consortium with the collective strength of resources of various institutions available to it is in a better to address and resolve

the problems of managing, organizing and archiving the electronic resources. Moreover, the technologies are available on demand. The web based e-resources is an apt answer to the expectations of researchers. The need of e-journals usage at universities in India is basically for the following reasons.

- 1) Indian Universities are finding it hard to maintain the subscriptions to even for core journals due to ever increasing cost of the journals subscription and also shrinking budget.
- 2) The average number of subscription to international journals by Indian Universities is even less than 300 titles, whereas the average number of journals subscribed by the western countries is much higher.
- 3) Shrinking fiscal resources, price hike in scientific and technical journals and also social science titles also.
- 4) Academic and research users can now access to their learned articles in electronic form.

Members of UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium

The UGC through its program of UGC-Infonet digital library consortium has come forward to help the university libraries, so that access to large number of scholarly online journals is made available to the user community. So far total 419 universities and institutions are members of UGC-Infonet digital library consortium in all over India.

c.) INDEST-AICTE Consortium

The “Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology (INDEST) Consortium” was set up in 2003 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development on the recommendation of an Expert Group appointed by the Ministry. The IIT Delhi has been designated as the Consortium Headquarters to coordinate its activities. The Consortium was renamed as INDEST-AICTE Consortium in December 2005 with the AICTE playing a pivotal role in enrolling its approved engineering colleges and institutions as members of the Consortium for selected e-resources at much lower rates of subscription.

The Consortium enrolls engineering and technological institutions as its members and subscribe to electronic resources for them at discounted rates of subscription and favorable terms and conditions. The Ministry provides funds required for subscription to electronic resources for 62 centrally-funded Government institutions including IITs, IISc Bangalore, NITs, ISM, IIITs, IIMs, NITTTR’s and few other institutions that are considered as core members of the Consortium. 60 Govt./Govt.-aided engineering colleges are provided access to selected e-resources with financial support from the AICTE and 102 universities/institutions have joined the Consortium under its self-supported category in 2012.

The INDEST-AICTE Consortium is the most ambitious initiative taken so far in the country. It is the biggest Consortium in terms of number of member institutions in Asia. The Consortium attracts the best possible price and terms of agreement from the publishers on the

basis of strength of its present and prospective member institutions. The Consortium subscribes to over 12,000 electronic journals from a number of publishers and aggregators.

Objectives

The INDEST-AICTE Consortium has the following objectives:

- i) To subscribe electronic resources for the members of the Consortium at highly discounted rates of subscription and at the best terms and conditions;
- ii) To extend the benefit of consortia-based subscription beyond the core members to other engineering and technological institutions;
- iii) To impart training to the users and librarians in the member institutions on subscribed electronic resources with an aim to optimize the usage of subscribed electronic resources;
- iv) To find more avenues of cooperation and interaction amongst member libraries;
- v) To increase scientific productivity of member institutions in terms of quality and quantity of publications;
- vi) To help new engineering institutes and colleges to make the right choice of e-resources;
- vii) To find more avenues of co-operation and interaction with other consortia.

E-resources and Operation of INDEST AICTE consortium

The INDEST AICTE consortium subscribes resources for various categories of institutions. All electronic resources subscribed are available from the publisher's website. Local hosting of resources has not been considered at this stage. The consortium operates through its headquarter set-up at the IIT Delhi. The Ministry of Human Resource

Development provides funds required for subscription to electronic resources for 62 core members including IISc, IIT's, IISER's, NIT's, IIM's, and few other institutions and for operation of the consortium.

Members of INDEST AICTE consortium

Total members of INDEST AICTE consortium is (1373). They are as following:

- 1) IIT's and IISc (8)
- 2) NITs, ISM, SLIET, and NERIST (26)
- 3) IISERs and New IITs (13)
- 4) IIMs (13)
- 5) IIIT, IIITM, and NITIE (8)
- 6) AICTE-supported members (60)
- 7) Self-supported Institutions (1245)

d.) IIM Consortium(Indian Institutes of Management Consortium)

The IIM library consortium is a collective activity of all six IIM libraries towards a common goal of sharing resources. With the availability of the state-of-the art information technology solutions and the web revolution, the IIM libraries in India are now better off in terms of easy access to a wealth of information through meaningful co-operation among themselves.

The year 2000 was a landmark in the history of IIMs, with the formation of the IIM Consortia. IIMK took leadership in the formation of the IIM Consortia, and had the first meeting in Calicut. The objective was to ensure among the IIMs, optimum utilization and enhancement of the resources, and to minimize the expenditure by consortia based subscriptions to the commonly subscribed databases and journals. The idea was to approach publishers of CD-ROM Databases to begin with, as a consortium, for better pricing and services. Eventually, other digital databases and journals were also planned to be covered by the programme. The meetings were proved to be very productive and successful. During the first meeting itself, a host of databases were jointly purchased at very competitive prices, and a number of others promised supply of their products at a nominal cost.

IIM Consortia Resources

1. Blackwell Hss Collection
2. Capitaline
3. Nexis.com+Corporate Information
4. ISI Emerging Markets
5. Kluwer Online
6. Taylor &Fransis
7. John Wiley

Conclusions

Resource sharing plays an important role in providing effective services and can be achieved by forming a consortium. A consortium gives a new vision in library resource sharing and networking. A consortium plays a meaningful role to assist academic and research community. The infrastructure facilities should be enhanced for the better utilization of consortiums. The need and purpose of e-journal consortium is to provide peer reviewed electronic journals, current and archival literature forum all over the world to academic and research community.

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