

Electronic Journal and Consortia Purchase : New Trends in Indian Academic Libraries

By

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ABSTRACT

Over the past few years, library consortia have emerged as a new trend in subscribing to electronic journals. Various institutions have either formed or joined different consortia and offering large number of electronic journals to the library users. The paper discusses about the existing consortia (FORSA, INDEST, INFLIBNET Consortia, HELINET etc.) and electronic resources subscribed under these consortia. In the past university libraries in India have been deprived of access to electronic journals. Now after launching of INFLIBNET consortium, academic community can access to the scholarly journals. UGC has recently taken major initiative and launched its consortia through INFLIBNET, which offers large number of electronic resources. The paper attempts to provide an overview of existing library consortia in India.

KEYWORDS : Library Consortia, Electronic Journal, INFLIBNET, INDEST

0. INTRODUCTION

India is one of the developing countries in the world, with the second largest population and thousands of institutions. According to certain estimates, there are a total of 71069 established libraries in India out of which 8267 are academic libraries (Universities 223, Deemed to be universities 37, Open universities 7 and 8000 College libraries). Academic libraries spend an estimated cost of Rs. 200 crores a year on subscribing to international scholarly and research journal which gives access to about 8000 journals to academicians. On an average an Indian university library subscribes to less than 300 journals.

Academic libraries in facing many constraints namely declining budgets and fluctuating foreign currency which forces cuts in journals subscriptions every year. Further, academic users especially teachers and research scholars are becoming more and more aware about the resource availability in the world due to the access to Internet and World Wide web. Librarians are forced to think of designing new policies to ensure access to quality resources in a cost effective manner. In response, libraries have moved in rapidly growing consortia movement, which is becoming one of the most important issues among librarians these days.

1. ELECTRONIC JOURNAL

Journals are rapidly moving online. There is a rapid proliferation of electronic scholarly journals. E-journal enables one to read full-text articles via the web. Each publisher has different policy for access, license, price and archival of electronic journals. They are trying to maintain the old mode of operation for the print versions of their journals, with the old cost structure, and in addition produce an electronic version. There is no single and accepted price model for electronic journals. Diverse pricing models offered by the publishers are :

- ❖ Price of print plus add on surcharge for the electronic version.
- ❖ Price for electronic and add-on surcharge for the print version.
- ❖ Print + electronic for the same price as print alone.
- ❖ Price related to size of library budget.
- ❖ Price related to number of simultaneous users.
- ❖ Document delivery (per article or section price).
- ❖ No relationship to any print product (often those are not directly related to a specific print resource).
- ❖ Capital cost for buying into the resource plus a small annual access fee.
- ❖ Sliding scales of various sorts (for example, the more users, the cheaper the per-user price).
- ❖ Consortia price: Heavy Discounts, particularly for multiple institutions
- ❖ Certain categories of users (such as students) get a cheaper price

Both publishers and librarians have to negotiate terms and license agreements and make ensure that they comply with the license policy. Development in this direction is going on and the Statement

of Current Perspective and Preferred Practices for the Selection and Purchase of Electronic Information Statement of Current Perspective and Preferred Practices for the Selection and Purchase of Electronic Information have set out the library community's requirements and provided a benchmark by which publishers policies and practices can be judged.

2. LIBRARY CONSORTIA

The exact date for the introduction of the term "library consortium" is not clear but the concept of a consortium as being an association or partnership has long been a tenet of librarianship. The published literature indicates that the concept is not new (Kopp, 1998) it refers to co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration between, and amongst, libraries for the purpose of sharing information resources. However libraries have not used it widely until about the 1980s. The main drive for co-operation has been the increase in the output of publications or the Information explosion, the rise in the cost of publications coupled with stringent budget allocations, and growth in student enrolment.

A library consortium is a formal association of libraries, not under the same institutional control, but usually restricted to a geographical area, number of libraries, types of materials, or subject interest, which is established to develop and implement resource sharing among members. Basic purpose of consortia is sharing of resources, money and manpower. Consortia are regarded as an effective strategy to increase the buying power and unlimited access to electronic resources. Publishers, aggregators offer heavy discount to their products under consortia purchase, hence member library can save significant amount of library budget. In recent years libraries have realized that there is an advantage in developing a common strategy. The library consortia have become powerful negotiating parties, which succeed in adding their own clauses to contracts and no longer sign "standard" contract texts offered by licensors/ publishers.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of library consortia is to control and reduce information costs, to improve resource sharing, to develop a network information environment and to share licensing issues with each other. The basic objectives can be listed as follows:

- ❖ Avoid duplication of subscription of e-resources and promote the rational use of funds
- ❖ Better negotiation for purchase of electronic journals with vendors that conventional library can not do
- ❖ Promote better, faster and more cost-effective ways of providing electronic information resources to the information seekers
- ❖ Ensure continuous subscription to these periodicals
- ❖ Reduce the cost of access to electronic journals to member's institution and share the expenditure.
- ❖ Increase the universe of publications available to the users through collection sharing.

4 TYPES AND GROWTH OF CONSORTIA

Library consortia in India are still a new phenomena and yet at implementation and experimental phase but is growing at the very fast rate. It is worth noting that in the last seven or eight years (1995-2003), saw some of the important developments in consortia. More or less these consortia are central funded except few. There are academic groups funded by member institutions for a specific purpose. Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy & Astrophysics (FORSA) is an example of such consortia. National level consortia also known as library networks with multiple objectives for resource sharing are in existence for last ten years and serving the academic community across the country. INFLIBNET is one such example, established by University Grants Commission. DELNET is another network with countrywide members effectively managing document delivery, using its union catalogue. DELNET charges membership fee from the institutes and offers fee-based services. There are other institutional based consortia viz. INDEST for Engineering and Management institutes which offers full text and indexing and abstracting databases to member libraries. CSIR is subscribing to scientific journal on consortia mode for it's 200 research labs. Similarly in medical science, HELINET consortia is subscribing to e-journals for its members. All these developments took place recently and many more institutions are expected to form and join consortia.

There are different Consortia models and they are, highly decentralized organizations to highly centralized ones. There are central funded consortia as well as self-sustained, institution based consortia. Each consortium has its own guidelines and policy. The centrally funded consortium has a sponsoring agency, and probably a separate source of funds. In central funded consortia, members have no option but to join, accept and agree on the services offered under the consortia.

5. CONSORTIA INITIATIVES – INDIAN SCENARIO

Many library consortia around the country have been formed on different lines. They range from informal gatherings of library professionals for the purpose of sharing information and promoting a united front to more formally organised operations. The following consortium represents are active in India.

5.1 Forum for resource sharing in Astronomy & Astrophysics (FORSA)

Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy & Astrophysics (FORSA) was established in 1981. This is an informal group consisting of Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Inter-University Centre for Astronomy & Astrophysics (IUCAA), National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA), Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Raman Research Institute (RRI), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Nizamiah Observatory (NO) and Uttar Pradesh State Observatory (UPSO). It is subscribing to Indian Astrophysics Consortium (Kluwer Journals, 2002+) and Nature on-line (Nature Publishing, 2002+). It is also working out the consortia purchase of AIP and other publishers.

5.2 CSIR Consortia

National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR), New Delhi and other Laboratories of CSIR formed consortia, called "Consortium for CSIR Laboratories for Accessing e-journals". This consortium offers the access to Elsevier Science journals for a period of four years.

5.3 Health Science library & Information Network (HELNET)

Health Sciences Library & Information Network (HELNET) was an initiative of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka. HELNET is the first medical library consortium in the country, launched on 15th March 2003. The objective is to set up a network of libraries in the colleges affiliated to the RGUHS, to promote resource sharing and digitization of library resources. Under the HELNET scheme, the members can access to around 600 scholarly, international biomedical journals, from 24 leading publishers, at about one-third price of their print subscription. Moreover, the member colleges can get all time access to the current journals as well as archives i.e. the back-volumes of journals for a period of 7-10 years. The University has spent Rs. 2 crores for establishing the consortium on a cooperative e-access model and subscribing to Elsevier's Science Direct, Ovid Biomedical Collection, Annual Reviews Biomedical Suite, J-Gate Custom Content for Consortia (JCCC@INDEST) and J-Gate.

5.4 Indian National Digital Library in Science and Technology (INDEST)

INDEST is consortium of 38 members of engineering institutes, located at different states. Resources subscribed under the consortia are highly scientific in nature. Consortia members are categorized in to three sections. Core members of the consortia are seven IITs and IISc. All NIITs/RECs along with few more engineering institutions fall under second category and in third category are IIITs. Accesses to resources for these categories have also been classified. For example all IITs can access to major full text databases from different suppliers whereas category two institutions can access to only four fill text databases. However, IISc, IITs have major role in selection, negotiation and renewal of the e-resources. Institution desirous to access the resources can join and became member of this consortium. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is funding agency for the consortia and release the funds required for subscription to electronic resources for the all 38 institutions viz. IISc, IITs, NITs, IIMs and a few others (as per recommendation of the MHRD expert group) directly to the consortium headquarter set-up at one of the beneficiary institutions. The consortium is biggest in the field of Engineering and Technology, with its members spread across the country. It offers access to multiple electronic resources from different reputed publishers. The resources subscribed under the consortia can be divided in to following two categories.

Full text Databases : EIL Online, Science Direct, Ideal Library, Link Information, ABI/INFORM, ACM Digital Library, Applied Science & Technology Plus.

Bibliographic databases : EI COMPENDEX on EI Village, INSPEC on EI Village, Web of Science, SciFinder Scholar, MathSciNet, JCCC and J-GATE (Informatics India).

5.5 INFLIBNET Consortium

INFLIBNET (Information and Library Network) Centre is an autonomous Inter-University Centre (IUC) of University Grants Commission (UGC) involved in modernization of academic libraries in India. Since its inception, Centre has initiated multiple programmes, viz. development of union catalogue, software development (SOUL) and Human resource development. Today, INFLIBNET under UGC, emerged as strong force to serve the academic community and transform the entire higher education system by offering major scholarly journals under consortia purchase. Recently, for initiating electronic access to academia, INFLIBNET / UGC have started consortium process for access to major databases. An expert committee had been setup by the INFLIBNET for selection of E-resources in different disciplines. After series of the meeting, committee has made important recommendations. Director, INFLIBNET had several meeting with university librarian in various regions to identify the titles. While recognizing the recommendations, INFLIBNET has initiated consortium purchase of electronic journals.

INFLIBNET has launched e-journal consortium on 6th April 2003. There is no formal membership structure of the consortia. All Academic institutions, which come under the purview of UGC, are members of the consortia. It is a largest academic library consortium in India, located at its headquarter at Ahmedabad. The myriad licenses for access to electronic journals which includes Full Text and Abstracting & Indexing abstracting databases would benefit million of users in India. It offers high quality collection of full text electronic resources to academic community, comprising of faculty, staff, researchers and students. In first phase, facility will be extended to fifty universities and it will be extended further to remaining universities and colleges. The first fifty universities have been selected based on certain criteria, viz. existing infrastructure, no. of scientific research and Internet connectivity. Major funding for the subscription for the access to e-journals for three years will be released by UGC. There won't be any financial burden to the universities. After three years, UGC will review the model licensing of this consortia. Unlike other consortia in India, INFLIBNET consortia is modernizing the University Campuses with State-of-the-art campus wide networks and setting up of its own nationwide communication network named UGC-Infonet. ERNET India, a scientific society under the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, in partnership with the University Grants Commission is setting up UGC-Infonet. ERNET will provide 64 kbps to 2 MBps backbone connectivity to the universities.

The consortium covers the access to electronic journals from all disciplines ranging from arts, humanities, social science and sciences. Under the consortia, INFLIBNET has signed an agreement with following publishers/societies :

Sr. No	E journal providers/Database	Coverage	Scope
1	Project MUSE	220 Journals	Full text
2	Royal Society of Chemistry	27 journals	Full text
3	Institute of Physics	34 journals	Full text
4	Cambridge University Press	68 journals	Full text
5	American Chemical Society	31 journals	Full Text
6	Nature		Full text
7	Chemical Abstracts databases		Bibliographic
8	Biological Abstracts		Bibliographic

At the time of writing this paper, INFLIBNET was in the process of negotiation with following scholarly publishers, societies and aggregators:

Sl.No	E-journals/Databases	Publishers/Aggregators	Coverage
1	MathScinet	American Mathematical Society	75
2	Gateway Portal Access INGENTA	GIST	20000
3	Gateway Portal Access JGATE etc.	Informatics	9500

In future, INFLIBNET will widen the scope of Consortium and propose to subscribe many more publications. Databases under active consideration are American Institute of Physics, American Physical Society, Elsevier, Springer Verlag, JSTORE, Blackwell, Kluwer Online, Taylor and Francis, John Wiley, Oxford University Press etc.

6. CONCLUSION

It is an indication that present consortia are just beginning and this trend is bound to continue. In future, we will witness the formation of many more consortia. The advancement of Information technology and to meet the challenges of changing environment in the field of Library and information science, librarians have to work out rules of co-operations for resource sharing and form consortia and offer unlimited resources to the library users.

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BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHORS



Prem Chand started his career in the year 1990 from Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie. Joined INFLIBNET in 1996 and has around 13 years of experience in Library Automation and Networking. He has published many papers in various journals and conferences. He has completed number of projects. Presently engaged in Development and Maintenance of online union catalogue of different types of document of university libraries in India. His areas of interest are Bibliographic Formats, Standards, ILL, Library Automation and Networking.



Dr. Veena Saraf holds B.Sc., BLISc., MLISc., M.Phil., Ph.D., PGDCA. She has teaching experience of more than 20 years. Joined IT College, Lucknow University in 1981 as lecturer later on joined North Eastern Hill University in 1986. Currently she is Reader in the Dept. of Library & Inf. Science, NEHU. She has published more than 35 papers in various journals and edited two books and has number of Ph.Ds. to her credit. Her research areas are user assessment studies, application of IT in libraries, Library Management particularly leadership styles and problems, assessing library effectiveness in various libraries and research methodologies applicable to library science.



K. Prakash has been with the INFLIBNET Centre since 1995. He has basic degree in Science and Masters Degree in Library and Information Science from Karnatak University, Dharwad. He has done specialization course in “Information Technology Applications to Library and Information Services” from NCSI, IISC Bangalore. He has qualified SLET. Before joining to INFLIBNET, he has worked in academic and industrial libraries. Presently he is working in Serials Database Development, Training Activities etc. He has contributed several papers in Seminars and conferences. He is a life member of several professional bodies.