

Full Length Research Paper

Local, regional and global collaborative efforts amidst the global financial crisis: Consortia

Har Kaur

Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh India.

Accepted 23 August, 2010

The main objective of this paper is to analyze the result of the change in the information seeking behavior of the users which has led to the exponential growth of literature which has been contributed by the libraries themselves by providing maximum e-resources. Further how librarians are providing these resources and advanced information to users by using various resources. As the needs of readers have been increased many folds with the easy availability of E-resources. The librarians have to manage this increasing need with in the same funds. This Information explosion, diversity of user need, financial crunch and impossibility of self-sufficiency has led to the formation of consortia at local, regional, national and international level. Therefore, to meet the increasing needs of the users is to be a member of some consortia. In this way librarians are also contributing in the saving of the government revenue. The paper also elaborates how various consortia's are playing an important role in meeting these diverse needs of the users by subscribing various resources which can be used by the member libraries, in addition these consortia are saving government revenue as well.

Key words: Library consortia, information seeking behavior, users, librarians.

INTRODUCTION

As we have heard that "knowledge is power," or information, the raw material of knowledge, is power. But the truth is that only some information is power that is "reliable information". If we make a decision based on wrong or unreliable information, we do not have power - we have defeat. The exponential growth of literature has posed a threat to modern libraries. This growth is contributed by the libraries themselves by providing more and more resources specifically electronic resources to cope up with the changing needs of users.

Information seeking behaviors of users has been changed from asking for a book or journal to a particular article in addition to e-databases. They begin their search at a multi-journal website with links to full text and databases,

such as PUBMED, MEDLINE, publisher databases like Ovid, Science Direct, High Wire, than at a specific journal. Internet search engines, E-print services, author websites, full-text databases, electronic journals, and print resources are all used to some extent by most of the users. Decline in the physical visit to library has been observed as users use these resources in their comfort zone. In the print era the users use to start their search from a book or journal. But now the preference of users has been fully changed. It was observed, that most users preferred online resources instead of print. This inclination towards E-resources is natural and may be observed from the tables. Previous study of the authors showed that almost 75% users need E-resources in one form or the other.

LIBRARY CONSORTIA

This information explosion, diversity of user need, financial crunch and impossibility of self-sufficiency has led to the formation of consortia at local, regional, national and international level. Library Consortia is an association of a group of libraries to achieve mutually common objective. It is felt that the concept of E-journals consortia can work well with the libraries without requiring additional fees to access the E-journal (MHRD, 2002). Working in an atmosphere, which is fully affected by Information Communication Technology (ICT), librarians are mastering the use of electronic resources to better understand and meet the information needs of the users and further train them in using new searching tools for better search. Consortia provide the following common benefits to the libraries involved:

1. Access to otherwise un-subscribed reading materials.
2. Scope for electronic archives.
3. Getting deep discounts through joint pricing negotiations.
4. Developing common resources databases.
5. Effective document delivery system.
6. Enhanced search facilities.
7. Better scope for developing a union catalogue among participating libraries.

No library in the world alone can provide all the E-resources to its readers. To this end, some of the libraries come together to form consortia thereby subscribing to e-resources. By forming consortia, librarians are contributing to the economy of their country by saving government revenue to a great extent. Some big and successful consortia's of India have made savings by sharing the following E-resources.

Major consortia's of India

1. INDEST
2. UGC- INFONET
3. HELINET
4. ICMR
5. CSIR
6. FORSA
7. ISRO
8. IIM library consortium
9. FORSA and many more.

The following are the few major consortia with the e-resources subscribed by them.

INDEST (aniit.iitd.ac.in/indest)

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)

has setup the "Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology (INDEST) Consortium" (Table 1). In the beginning full text resources and databases would have cost Rs164 crores as per their list price, while through consortia the total price comes to Rs 18.60 crores for all member institutions under the consortium, a total over all saving of Rs 145.50 crores. It was estimated that the participated institutes have saved up to Rs. 965 lacs on resources because the facility is being provided through the consortia.

UGC-infonet (<http://www.inflibnet.ac.in/UGC-InfoNet>)

UGC-Infonet is an ambitious programme of UGC to interlink all the Universities in the India with state-of-art technology (Table 2). It is providing Internet Connectivity to 158 Universities. INFLIBNET is responsible for executing and monitoring the entire project. This consortium has made the saving of Rs 623 crores approximately on the resources subscribed during last 3 years. The actual list price of these resources were about 694 crore rupees and under this consortium INFLIBNET has paid 72 crores rupees only. So far 149 universities have already been connected through this national consortium.

HELINET (<http://jgate-helinet.informindia.co.in>)

Before launching Health Science Information Network (HELINET), Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) conducted a survey in many medical colleges, which revealed, colleges spend between Rs 10 to 15 lakhs as subscription fee on 120 journals on an average, out of which 50 to 60 are international journals. The survey clearly showed the need for more journals at affordable rates. Under HELINET, RGUHS bought international journals at only 10 to 20% cost of the original print, which means the university uploads over 500 journals per year, namely:

1. Science Direct
2. Ovid
3. MD Consult
4. Annual Reviews
5. Springer
6. Thieme Verlag
7. Taylor and Francis
8. Blackwell
9. Bentham
10. Ebrary
11. Oxford University Press

NML (ERMED) consortia

NML initiated ERMED E-journal consortium in 2008 with

Table 1. Indian national digital library in engineering sciences and technology, (INDEST) consortium.

Full Text E-resources	http://paniit.iitd.ac.in/indest/
ABI / Inform Complete	http://www.il.proquest.com/pqdauto
ACM Digital Library	http://www.portal.acm.org/portal.cfm
ASCE Journals	http://www.pubs.asce.org/journals/jrns.html
ASME Journals (+ A M R)	http://www.asme.org/pubs/journals/
Capitaline	http://www.capitaline.com/intranet/INDEST_consortium.htm
CRIS INFAC Ind. Information	http://www.crisil.com/
EBSCO Databases	http://www.search.epnet.com/
Elsevier Science Direct	http://www.sciencedirect.com/
Emerald Full-text	http://www.iris.emeraldinsight.com/
Euromonitor (GMID)	http://www.euromonitor.com/gmid
IEEE/IEE Electronic Library Online (IEL)	http://www.ieeexplore.ieee.org/
INSIGHT	http://www.insight.asiancerc.com/
Nature	http://www.nature.com
ProQuest Science (formerly ASTP)	http://www.il.proquest.com/pqdauto
Springer Link	http://www.springerlink.com/
Indian Standards	http://10.180.1.34/bisindex/start.shtml
Bibliographic Databases	http://paniit.iitd.ac.in/indest/
COMPENDEX on EI Village	http://www.engineeringvillage2.org/
INSPEC on EI Village	http://www.engineeringvillage2.org/
MathSciNet	http://www.ams.org/mathscinet
SciFinder Scholar	http://www.cas.org/SCIFINDER/SCHOLAR/index.html (access through a Z39.50 Client to be installed on each PC)
Web of Science	http://isiknowledge.com
J-Gate Custom Content for Consortia (JCCC)	http://jccc-indest.informindia.co.in

Table 2. UGC-Infonet Consortium (<http://www.inflibnet.ac.in/UGC-InfoNet>).

Full - text e-resources	http://www.inflibnet.ac.in/econ/eres.php?memID=80
American Chemical Society	http://www.pubs.acs.org/
American Institute of Physics	http://scitation.aip.org/publications/myBrowsePub.jsp#AIP
American Physical Society	http://scitation.aip.org/publications/myBrowsePub.jsp#APS
Annual Reviews	http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/
Blackwell Publishing	http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/
Cambridge University Press	http://journals.cambridge.org/
Elsevier Science	http://www.sciencedirect.com/
Emerald	http://www.emeraldinsight.com/
Institute of Physics	http://www.iop.org/EJ/
J-STOR	http://www.jstor.org/
Nature	http://www.nature.com/
Oxford University Press	http://www.oxfordjournals.org
Portland Press	http://www.portlandpress.com/pp/journals/default.htm
Project Euclid	http://projecteuclid.org/
Project Muse	http://muse.jhu.edu/
Royal Society of Chemistry	http://www.rsc.org/Publishing/Journals/
SIAM	http://epubs.siam.org/
Springer Link	http://www.springerlink.com/
Taylor and Francis	http://www.informaworld.com/

40 members including 28 ICMR + 10 DGHS + AIIMS + NTR Health University, Vijaywada, Andhra Pradesh. It

provided electronic journals from 5 publishers, which contained 1515 medical journals. ERMED invested Rs.

Table 3. ERMED, E-journal consortium ([http:// www.ERMED .jccc.in](http://www.ERMED.jccc.in)).

Abbreviation	Publisher's name
APA	American Pediatric .Assn
LWW	Lippincott William Wilkins
Proquest	Proquest
BMJ	British Medical Journal
OUP	Oxford University Press
RSM	Royal Society of Medicine
IOS Press	IOS Press
CUP	Cambridge University Press
Indian Journals	Indian Journals

Table 4. Members of International Consortia (ICOLC) icolc.net

S/No.	Name of the consortia	URL
1.	CSIR (Central Scientific and Industrial Research)	http://ejournal.niscair.res.in
2.	INDEST (Indian National Digital Library in Engineering, Science and Technology)	http://paniit.iitd.ac.in
3.	UGC – infonet e-journal consortium	http://web.inflibnet.ac.in
4.	FORSA (Forum for resource sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics)	http://www.fcla.edu

2.6 crore for electronic journals in 2008. In 2009 the ERMED members increased from 40 to 72 as it was expanded to Government Medical Colleges/Institutes across the country (Har and Kumar, 2009). NML paid Rs. 7.55 crore for Government Medical Colleges/Institutes. The letter for self payment has also been sent to some Private Medical Colleges/Institutes. ERMED is providing over 1600 medical journals in 2009 from 9 leading medical journal publishers (Table 3). Out of the already discussed major consortia, Table 4 presents a few consortia which are the members of international consortia (ICOLC).

CONCLUSION

After being a member of consortia, the successful operation of any library depends to a large extent on the need to meet the maximum needs of the users. Consequently, the librarians must be aware of how the faculty members seek information. As these days internet search engines, E-print services, author Websites, full-text databases, electronic journals, and print resources are all used to some extent by most of the users. Convenience remains the single most important factor for information retrieval. Speed of access, ability to download, print and send articles are top advantages of electronic journals for all groups.

Diversity of user needs, financial crunch and impossibility of self-sufficiency can only be solved with the help of consortia. Consortia have become an essential part of every library to meet the various needs

of its users. Consortia have all the benefit to the users, librarians and most benefited is the government. It can further be concluded that consortia are playing an important role in meeting the increasing needs of the users and E-databases help them to achieve their objectives. Consortia has proved a new sun rise in the life of librarians, otherwise the profession of librarianship was felt graying.

SUGGESTIONS

Library Consortia are not free from problems. There are various issues related to consortia like uninterrupted online access, perpetual access to back issues, pricings, licensing, copyright and archival solutions etc. These issues should be strategically tackled to get the best out of consortia.

With better understanding of user needs, the profession of librarianship is growing and the credit goes to the E-resources, IT (Information Technology), ICT (Information Communication Technology) and ultimately consortia. In regard to information seeking behavior of users in medical libraries, it is recommended that library staff or reference librarians could use their time in a better way by focusing on assisting users.

Reference librarians should help users to improve their skills in information seeking activities and to find the different type of information they need.

Librarians should train the users in learning the use of OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog), search engine, E-mail, and CD-ROM techniques, and inform them of the

web sites available through the various networks. Hence, the library must provide adequate ICT facilities for reference librarians, such as Internet, laser printers, scanners, fax machine, telephone, etc to offer various services in the library.

To know the available resources deeply, orientation programs are necessary. Hence, it is suggested that the advanced training for librarians and well as users at different levels should be started. Librarians must observe the satisfaction level of the users. They should be guided according to their needs.

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