# COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ONLINE BOOK SHOPS IN INDIA

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## Abstract

*Twelve Online Book shops in India have been studied in terms of facilities provided by them. The important parameters studied include advanced search, Discount, Online payment and Browse by category. The shops were ranked based on the number of facilities provided by them. The rankings give an idea as to which are the best shopping sites.*

**Keywords :** Online Book shops, Collection development,  Acquisition of books

## 1.      Introduction

Books are the basic information source in any Library. Developing the collection is one of the basic tasks of a Librarian. The collection is developed based on the organizations requirement. Books Acquisition process involves the task of procurement from the point of request received to books receipt and bill payment. Before the advent of Internet, the Acquisition process was done manually which was extremely time consuming. However, with the emergence of Internet, many Online Book shops have come up and provide an easy way to procure books. In this article, we have analyzed 12 Indian online book shops based on the services and facilities provided on their website.

## 2.      Why Online Books Shops ?

In any Library, the Acquisition process can be simplified by shopping books online. Online Books shops being run on Web Servers are open 24 hours a day. Bibliographic data of books can be easily checked and verified using the online catalogues provided on the site. Updating the online catalogue is much easier and faster than the printed catalogue. Apart from this, the price and discount offered can be known instantly helping in optimum budget planning and utility. By just having a Computer with Internet connection, all information can be obtained at the user desktop. With rapid developments in e-commerce, ordering process is also hassle free thereby reducing the time delay in procurement of books. Books which are not available can be requested using 'Wishlist' provided on the website

## 3.      Methodology

In the present study, we have made a comparative study of 12 book shops based on 10 parameters as mentioned in table 1 below. Each of the websites was visited and the facilities provided on the site noted. While it was not possible to order books from all the sites, we have only checked out whether the online ordering process is really working or not. A weight age of 10 points was assigned to each facility provided else 0 points when not available. The Book shops have been ranked based on the total number of points obtained.

Table 1 : Comparative study of Online Book shops

| Book Shop And Address | Simple Search | Advance Search | Discount | Online Payment | | Wish list | Preview the Contents of the book | Cover Page preview | Site Navigation E/G/P | Collection Specialization Gen/S&T | Browse by Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Credit Card | Cheque / DD | | | | | | |
| **Fabmall.com** http://www.fabmall.com/Stores/Books/booksHome.asp?CatalogId=Books | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | E | Gen | Y |
| **Atlantic Publishers & Distributors** http://www.atlanticbooks.com | Y | Y | N | N | N | N | N | N | G | Gen | N |
| **Bagchee** http://www.bagchee.com | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | E | Gen | Y |
| http://www.gobookshopping.com | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | N | N | Y | G | G | Y |
| **Firstandsecond** http://www.firstandsecond.com | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | N | N | G | G | Y |
| **Jain Book Agency** http://www.jainbookagency.com | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | N | N | N | E | G | Y |
| **Prakash books** http://www.prakashbooks.com | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | N | N | Y | E | G | N |
| **Nbcindia** http://www.nbcindia.com | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | E | G | Y |
| **Om Book Shop** http://www.om-books.com | Y | N | N | N | Y | N | N | Y | P | G | Y |
| **Sapnaonline** http://www.sapnaonline.com | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | N | Y | E | G | Y |
| **Eswar** http://www.eswar.com | Y | N | Y | N | Y | N | N | N | G | G | N |
| **Computer Bookshop** http://www.cb-india.com | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | P | Comp. | Y |

## 4.    Comparative study

Table 2 shows the rankings based on the points assigned to the Book shops. A cursory glance at the table reveals that Fabmall, Bagchee and computer Book Shop stand First followed by Sapna Online and NBC India with Second rank and First and second.com and Gobookshopping with Third rank. Prakash Books and Jain Book agency stood at Fourth rank followed by Om Books at Fifth rank. All the book shops except computer book shop have multi disciplinary collection of Books. Of the 12 book shops, eight of them provide Advance Search facility and nine of them provide Browse by category facility. With regard to Online payment facility, seven of them accept Credit card. Six of them provide 'Wishlist' facility wherein a user can request for Books not available with the shop.
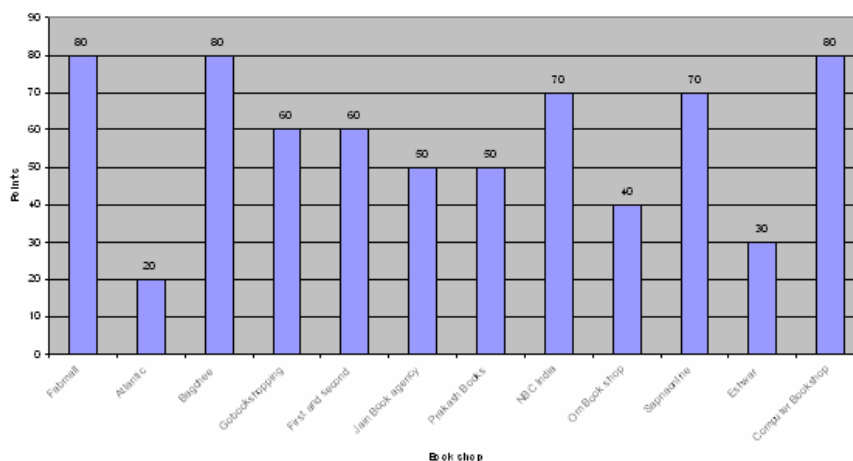
**Table 2 Rankings of Online Book shops**

| Sl.No | Rank | Points | Online Book Shop |
|-------|------|--------|------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 80 | Fabmall |
| 2 | 1 | 80 | Bagchee |
| 3 | 1 | 80 | Computer Book shop |
| 4 | 2 | 70 | Sapna Online |
| 5 | 2 | 70 | NBC India |
| 6 | 3 | 60 | First and Second |
| 7 | 3 | 60 | Go Book shopping |
| 8 | 4 | 50 | Prakash Books |
| 9 | 4 | 50 | Jain Book Agency |
| 10 | 5 | 40 | Om Book Shop |
| 11 | 6 | 30 | Eshwar |
| 12 | 7 | 20 | Atlantic |

## 5. Problems with Online Book shops

**Database updating:** For a online book shop, it is necessary that the bibliographic data and cost price of the book be update frequently, lest it will create problems in identifying the correct book and payment for the same.

**Online payment**: while paying online using credit card, security issues are a matter of concern. The site should have secure servers and encryption facilities to safeguard online transactions. The other problem is as most Libraries do not have a credit card, it is not possible to use the service of online shopping using this mode.

**Shipping charges:** Most Book shops charge extra for packing and postage**.**

**Receipt of material:** Unlike purchasing a Book from the market, where we physically check the book and buy, there may be cases where the books may be received in damaged condition.

## 6. Conclusion

In light of the discussion above, shopping for books online looks much simpler and faster than purchasing from the market. However, the joy of browsing through the book shelves and glancing through the pages before purchasing a book is not available here. For specific requirements and crosschecking of bibliographic data of books, online books shops can always be used.

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