

## UGC-INFONET - The E-Journals Programme for Universities

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### Highlights

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has initiated a programme to provide electronic access over the Internet to scholarly literature in all areas of learning to the university sector in India. The programme is wholly funded by the UGC. All universities which come under UGC's purview will be members of the programme, and it will gradually be extended to colleges as well. The programme will be executed by Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre, Ahmedabad which is an autonomous institution under the UGC. Access to various E-Journals will formally begin on January 1, 2004. Trials are already in progress.

The programme will increase in a very fundamental way the resources available to the universities for research and teaching. It will provide the best current and archival periodical literature, from all over the world, to the university community. The programme will go a long way in mitigating the severe shortage of periodicals faced by university libraries for many years, due to the ever widening gap between the growing demand for literature, and the limits of available resources.

The E-Journals programme is a cornerstone of the UGC-INFONET effort, which aims at addressing the teaching, learning, research, connectivity and governance requirements of the Universities. The effort was announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the network was activated by the Hon'ble Minister for Human Resources Development, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, at the inauguration of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the UGC on December 28, 2002 at New Delhi. The E-Journals programme demonstrates how communication networks and computers can be used to stretch and leverage available funds in furthering these aims. The programme has been made possible due to the close and understanding cooperation between the UGC, ERNET, the Inter-University Centres IUCAA, INFLIBNET and CEC, and national and international publishers.

### History

Professor Arun Nigavekar, Chairman, UGC set up a committee to study the possibility of setting up a consortium of universities, to obtain access over the Internet electronic editions of scholarly journals in all areas of learning of interest to Universities. Journals covering current research, reviews and literature databases would be included in the programme, and gateway portals would be provided for users to easily access and navigate through the vast amount of literature. The committee had detailed discussions with university faculty, library science professionals, publishers and other experts, and considered data gathered by INFLIBNET from various sources. The committee then made recommendations to the Chairman, UGC as to how the programme could be structured and executed. The Chairman, UGC then set up an expert committee to identify specific publications, interact on terms and conditions with publishers, and to make final

recommendations. It was also decided that INFLIBNET would be the nodal agency to execute the programme and to administer and monitor it as per the guidelines set by the expert committee from time to time. Following the recommendations of the expert committee, the Chairman, UGC has authorised INFLIBNET to enter into agreements with various publishers and to begin subscriptions.

### **The Consortium**

The consortium will cover all the universities in India which come under the purview of the UGC, and will gradually be extended to the colleges as well. The first phase of the programme covers more than 50 universities and additional universities will join the programme as soon as they have access to the Internet, which is separately being provided by the UGC. It is expected that the entire university system will be covered by June 2004. Universities will become members of the consortium after signing a MOU with the UGC and INFLIBNET. The UGC will provide funds for the programme, which will be cost free for the universities.

### **Coverage**

The E-Journals programme aims at covering all fields of learning of relevance to various universities including:

- Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
- Physical and Chemical Sciences
- Life Sciences
- Computer Science, Mathematics, Statistics

The literature made available will include journals covering research articles, reviews and abstracting databases. Access will be provided to current and archival literature. Portals will be provided which will enable users to navigate easily through all the literature that is made available.

### **Operation**

INFLIBNET will administer and monitor the programme and will have independent electronic access to all the publications to help with the process. It will be provided one free print copy of each journal, subscribed under the consortium, by each publisher for archival purpose. A web site will be created to provide all needed information to consortium members about the status of the programme. INFLIBNET will carry out training programmes in various places to spread awareness and to develop expertise in the university community in the use of E-Resources. Special training programmes will be conducted on different University campuses by publishers of complex databases.

### **Current status**

As of October 6, 2003 agreements have been reached with the following publishers:

1. Project Muse (John Hopkins University): More than **220 journals** in social sciences, humanities and mathematics.
2. American Chemical Society: **31 journals** in chemistry.

3. Chemical Abstract Service (CAS): Chemical abstract databases
4. Royal Society of Chemistry: **27 journals** in chemistry.
5. Institute of Physics: **34 journals** in physics.
6. Cambridge University Press: **68 journals** from different scientific disciplines.
7. BIOSIS: Biological abstract databases.
8. Nature Publications: Nature.

Discussions are in progress with several other publishers and their publications are expected to become available in stages.

### **Future plans**

Resources will be made available to the universities through a continuous process which will bring in literature covering an ever increasing number of fields from a wide range of publishers all over the world. Programmes will be initiated to digitise and make electronically accessible literature which is present only in the print form, often unpublished, in various institutes and universities in India. Appropriate packages of the literature will be developed for use by students and teachers in various colleges. The community of teachers, library professionals and students from the university system will be consulted on a continuing basis in the development of the programme so that it remains up to date and useful.

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