Implications of Selection & Collection Policies for E-resources: With Special Reference to Visva-Bharati Library

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The value of information is more appreciated than ever. Information collections are no longer geographically bound. Most of the libraries have had some degree of success with web based resources and electronic journals. In these instances e-resource will integrate easily into the infrastructure. There is growing awareness and use of e-resource by academics and students. In view of the above, the present paper tries to highlight the types of e-resources, general criteria for selection of e-resource, licensing factor relating the e-resource acquisition, argument in favour of collecting the e-resource, etc. Finally the paper would like to disclose the strategy and present state of e-resource collection in the Visva-Bharati Library.

Keywords: Aggregated Resources, Archiving, Database, E-resource Procurement, Quality Stock, Website

1. Introduction

The Visva-Bharati Library recognizes the growing importance of digital resources to the information needs of its clientele. Digital resources offer faculty, staff, and students the ability to satisfy their information needs from their homes, offices, and other remote locations. They have many value-added features not found in other formats, but they also present challenges unique to the digital environment. This policy is to be used in conjunction with the library's general collection development policy. New resources may be suggested by the faculty, staff, or student of Visva-Bhararti and are submitted to the librarian for its appropriate consideration in the 'E-Resources Selection Committee'.

2. Definition

An "electronic resource" is defined as any work encoded and made available for access through the use of a computer. It includes both online data and electronic data in physical formats (e.g., CD-ROM). To avoid confusion with these terms as used in the copyright process, online will refer to intangible works; physical to a tangible work.

The term "acquire" refers to any electronic resource, online or physical, which the library receives through its various, typical acquisitions processes, or which the library provides access to through official contractual, licensed, or other agreements; any of these electronic resources may or may not be owned by or housed at the library. "Collect" refers to electronic resources owned by the library and selected for the

permanent collection, including works created by the library. It may also include works stored elsewhere for which the library has permanent ownership rights. "Link" refers to pointers from the library's internet resources or bibliographic records to the library and non-library electronic resources, created and maintained by library staff for a variety of purposes; "link" is not an act of acquiring, and electronic resources linked do not necessarily constitute an acquisition by the library.

2. Types of E-resources

The library prefers web-based digital resources in lieu of other types and methods of electronic access.
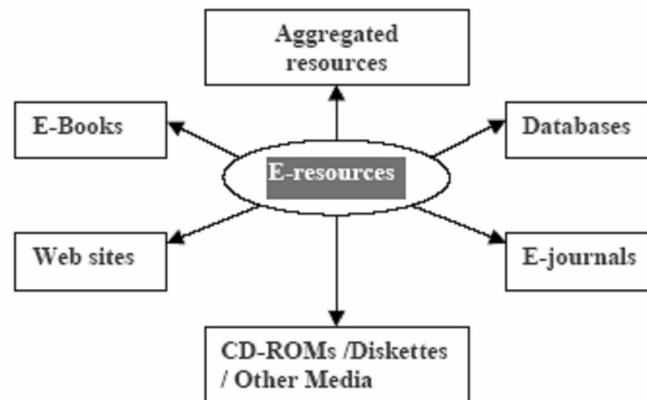
I. **E-journals:** As with print journals, e-journals require a long-term commitment from the library in terms of financial and human resources to acquire and maintain. As more and more scholarly journals become available in digital as well as print versions, the library must decide whether to maintain both versions or cancel the print when the online version becomes available. The library subscribes to an e-journal only if it is full-text, not if it has just abstracts or tables of contents. In addition to the Digital Resources Committee, the Journal Review Committee may also review e-journal requests in conjunction with a print journal request.

➲ **Free with Existing Print Subscription:** The library provides access to the free web version of a print journal to which it subscribes if the following criteria are met

♦ Access is provided by IP address and /or proxy server (no passwords)

♦ Licensing terms are acceptable

♦ Access is not for a limited time or trial basis, except for purposes of evaluation

- ➲ **Additional Cost to Existing Subscription:** E-journals that are not included in the cost of a print subscription are reviewed by the Digital Resources Committee on a case-by-case basis.

- ➲ **Online-Only:** This category includes those e-journals that are available online only, as well as those which are published in both print and online, but to which the Library is considering only online access. These are reviewed by the Digital Resources Committee on a case-by-case basis.

II. **E-Books:** The library selectively acquires e-books if free, if included in a digital resource package (see number 3 below), or if the e-book fills a unique user need.

III. **Aggregated Resources:** These products typically combine more than one type of digital resources into one package. For example, MDConsult includes both e-journals and e-books. The contents of aggregated products that include both relevant and out-of-scope resources are reviewed on a title-by-title basis by HS/HSL information specialists. Only those resources that are relevant are included in the library's catalog and on the library's web page.

IV. **CD-ROMs/Diskettes/Other Media:** In general, CD-ROMs, diskettes, and other digital media are not collected unless they can be networked and are for reference use. These formats are acquired only occasionally if the content is unique, not available in any other format, and present no technical support difficulties. CD-ROMs that accompany print material are retained only if the content is supplemental to the text and only at the discretion of the subject specialist.

V. **Databases:** General information and bibliographic databases are selectively acquired. Cost, anticipated use and the interface are considered to be criteria for selecting the database.

VI. **Web sites:** These are generally identified and selected by HS/HSL subject specialists according to their relevance to the library's collection using the library's Web site evaluation checklist.

3.   **General Selection Criteria**

I.   Selection criteria need to be consistent with the university libraries' plans for establishing an electronic information environment.

II.   Electronic resources should fall within current collecting guidelines as described in the collection development policy as well as other appropriate guidelines. Selectors should also rely on their own expertise in making decisions.

III.   All electronic resources should be relevant and appropriate to the libraries' user community and reflect current academic needs and the university's mission. Consideration should be given to electronic resources that provide coverage of underrepresented or high-priority subject areas.

IV.   In the selection of electronic resources, the availability of appropriate hardware and software should be considered. For CD-ROM products, consideration also needs to be given as to whether the product can be networked. If additional software needs to be acquired to run the product, this factor should be noted.

V.   If the electronic resource duplicates another resource already available in the libraries, the proposed electronic resources should offer some value-added enhancement; for example, wider access or greater flexibility in searching. If a product changes format, the selector/service unit should reevaluate and make a selection/retention decision.

VI.   In addition to the cost of the product, if any, the following hidden costs need to be considered: licensing fees, hardware, software, staff training and continuing education, duplicating support materials, updates, maintenance, cost of additional simultaneous users, and any other costs.

VII.   Due to the volatile environment of electronic resources, each electronic resource will be reviewed annually by the selector/service unit.

VIII.   The product should be "user-friendly," that to provide ease of use and guidance for the user via appropriate menus, help screens, or tutorials.

IX.   The product should equal or improve the quality of library resources.

X.   The libraries' cooperative / consortium arrangements may influence the outcome of the criteria.

XI.   Additional selection guidelines are available for free, Web-based resources (see "Guidelines for Selection of Free, Web-based Resources") and for electronic journals (see "Guidelines for Selection of Electronic Journals").

In addition to the above criteria, the following factors are also to be taken into considerations for E-resources:

I.   **Content**
        a. How often is it updated? Are any portions embargoed?
        b. Is the content appropriate for a digital format?

II.   **Functionality**
        a. Are keyword and Boolean operators available?
        b. Is response time acceptable?
        c. Is the screen design easy to read and follow?
        d. Is the interface already in use at HS/HSL and familiar to users?
        e. Are special features available (e.g., linking, usage reports)

III. Legal Issues – With respect to licensing, the library has following definitions and expectations:

- The library's authorized users include the students, faculty, and staff of university
- UMB and UMMC students, faculty and staff should be able to access digital resources from any location of the campus.
- The preferred method for authenticating authorized users is via IP address ranges.
- The number of users in a multi-user license is determined by anticipated demand and available funding.
- The "fair use" provision of the Copyright Law applies to all formats. The library expects all licenses and agreements to allow use of the resource for supplying interlibrary loan requests in accordance with the Interlibrary Loan provision.
- The library expects all licenses and agreements to allow the use of the resource in course reserves (print or digital) by authorized users in connection with specific courses.
- The purchase or leasing of digital information should include provisions for perpetual access to that information.

IV.   Archiving
   a. Does the library need to have archival access to this resource?
   b. Is the resource archived? if so, is it leased or purchased?
   c. Does the publisher/vendor or independent third party archive it?
   d. What form does the archiving take? (Online, CD-ROM, etc.)
   e. Will the library continue to have access to the data if the subscription is canceled, publication ceases, content is sold to a different publisher, or the technological platform changes?
   f. Are there additional costs for archival access?

V.   Publisher/Vendor Services
   a. Is customer service acceptable?
   b. Do they provide support materials and technical help?
   c. Do they generate useful statistical reports?

VI.   Are other Digital Formats Available? If so, what are the advantages of each format?

VII.   Technical Requirements
   a. Is additional hardware or software required to use it?
   b. Can the product be networked?
   c. Is their significant, unscheduled downtime?
   d. Are there special security requirements?
   e. Is the resource stable (i.e., is the software "buggy")?

VIII. What are the training issues (for staff and library clientele)?

Archival and cost issues are of paramount importance to consider for online-only resources.

A vendor's ability to work with these definitions and meet these expectations is an important factor in the evaluation and selection of digital resources. The library's prerogative and authority in making sound selection decisions should not be compromised by vendor-defined conditions and constraints.

4.   Evaluation

Methods of evaluation may include comparisons to similar products, demonstrations, literature reviews, and peer consultation. Criteria may include:
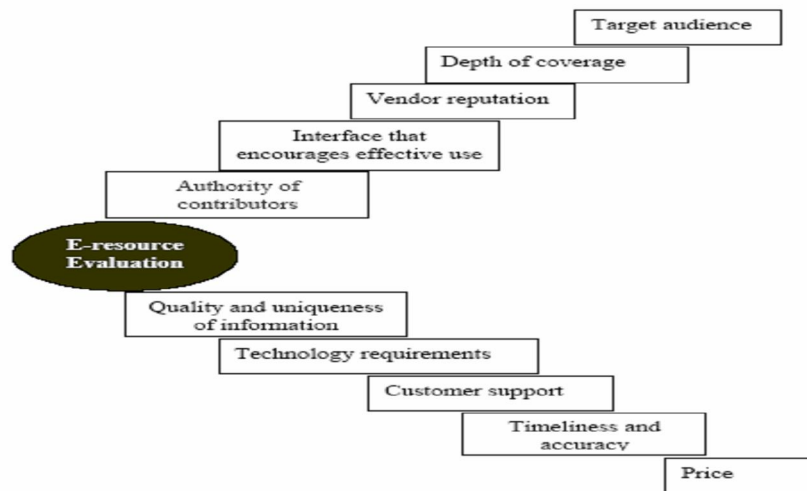
5.   Argument in Favour of Procurement and use of e-resources
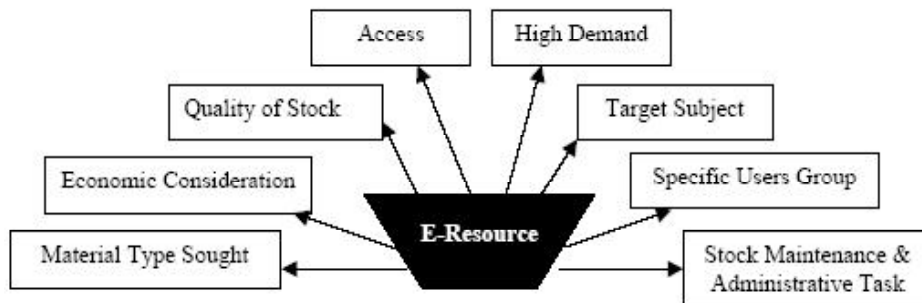
5.1 Access

- Easier access for users – no need to come to the library
- Increased flexibility and availability to more users over a wider area
- Helps to address the problems of a multi-site organization
- Helps to increase access to those unable to acquire a print copy
- Improves circulation; but only if the user licenses reflects the demand
- Important for distance learners; but authentication issues may mean it's more trouble than it's worth; and they don't all have access to PCs / the Internet
- Electronic versions may have a higher turnover rate than print versions; therefore, more borrowers in a shorter time – i.e., maximisation of usage
- Increases access to resources outside the institution; but users are dependent on their access to the technology and their I.T. skills.

5.2 Stock Maintenance and Administrative Task

- E-resource require no handling and can be issued / returned instantly
- They free up staff time from shelving
- They ease pressure on physical space
- There is less need for stock editing
- Issues of vandalism and hidden / missing books solved
- Cannot be damaged
- If the content goes out of date, the e-book can be removed [but this raises archiving/preservation questions]
- Cheaper overall?

5.3 Quality of Stock

- Could extend access to a wider range of material on individual subjects [but only if the material is available in e-format]
- Could give access to a wider range of O/P material [ditto]
- Can be easily updated [but note that there are archiving / preservation issues]

5.4 Economic Considerations

- Might be able to afford a wider range of reference materials (or might not!)
- Might be more cost-effective for short-life titles
- Printing out [which both academics and students are likely to want to do] is, on the other hand, a wasteful exercise
- Cost effectiveness depends on the publishers' / aggregators' models, and level of take-up
- Better for part-time students with other commitments, providing they can obtain access.

There are also some other factors behind paying priority of e-book acquisition.

5.5. High Demand
- High demand materials for speed of turnover and improved access
- Areas of stock known to be in heavy demand, particularly where the library serves more than one site
- Recommended textbooks
- Reading list texts – because of currency and availability of recent editions
- Core texts / key texts – to allow greater access [independent user satisfaction survey shows inadequate supply of key textbooks is the second greatest complaint in libraries, after photocopying facilities]
- Reference books
- E-learning courses
- Short term loan collection items. [Note: much of this material range is currently not available in e-format]

5.6. Material Types Sought
- Reference materials first – especially, using a model which enables them to be regularly updated
- Areas where currency is important and e-versions may work out cheaper than buying expensive print copies.

5.7. Target Subjects
- Subject areas where users need to gain easy access to shortish "chunks" of material
- Subject areas where it is known that the students have high computer usage / ownership rates: I.T., business, e-commerce
- Subject areas, which attract a high, proportion of part-time and distance learning students: business, professional courses.

5.8. Specific User Groups
- Distance learning programme reading lists
- Textbooks used by distance learning students
- Those wanting O/P materials, which are currently unavailable elsewhere.

We are all aware about the fact that librarians currently occupy a pivotal role in both purchasing and promoting e-resources, and this has been attributed in part to the emerging supply chain configuration. Before examining further the librarian's role in promoting E-resources and exploring the issues raised above within the context of how to address them, it is useful to have some quantitative information about the specific teaching, learning and research applications for which librarians believe that they are buying E-resources.

6.   Issues and Challenges in E-resource Procurement

In this section we will discuss issues concerning the procurement of e-books based on experiences from UBL and also consortia collaboration on a national level. We will also look into free e-book alternatives such as are made available in institutional repositories, online reference services and other open access services currently available. When the first e-book resources were purchased in 2003 the following factors were decisive for the purchase:

- ⊃ Content and updates
- ⊃ Price and opportunities for consortia collaboration
- ⊃ User interfaces and search options
- ⊃ Adaptability to library catalogue, import functions etc.
- ⊃ Available statistics
- ⊃ Technical requirements

7.   E-resources at Visva-Bharati

We have already started e-resource procurement process since few years back. Here, we would like to point out the e-resource available in the Visva-Bharati library;

a) E-Books:	817 Purchased E-books (on Literature & Classics, Philosophy & Religion, History, Agricultural & Bio. Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Mathematics, Physics & Astronomy, Chemistry and Books having Reference in nature.)
	700 + free online digitized books.
	More than 700000 books database through OPAC search
b) E-Journals:	i) 5500 + through UGC-Infonet Digital library Consortia.
	ii) 1050 + as free from publishers
	iii) 50 + through on-line on subscription basis.
c) CD-ROM:	a) 650+ containing text materials with problems and solutions.
	b) 50+ containing music items.
	c) 25+ containing animations.
	d) 40+ containing learning materials of different languages.
	e) 5+ containing reference materials.
	f) 106 DVD containing 5500+ full texts of Books.

d) Institutional Digital Repositories (IDR) – Scanned Question Papers

e) Digital format conversions of the following documents are under progress:

- ⮌ Tagores Manuscripts
- ⮌ Bengali Manuscripts
- ⮌ Proceedings of the Executive Council
- ⮌ Annual Report
- ⮌ Budget Estimate
- ⮌ Pay Roll and Records of the Employee

8. Selection & Collection Strategy of Visva-Bharati

Selection & Collection policies of E-resources of Visva-Bharati comprising the following steps

- ⮌ Allotment of funds for the collection of e-resources should be passed in the Library Committee meeting immediate after the Grant received from the UGC or other funding Agency;
- ⮌ At the same time Library Committee has constituted an 'E-resource selection committee' comprising University Librarian, Faculties and Administrators (Vice Chancellor/Registrar/ Principals).
- ⮌ For the collection of required information (Cost of the Packages, Name of the vendors, terms of supply, renewal cost, Licensing etc.) the library has organized several e-presentation / demo programme with the help of the different e-publishers / aggregators.
- ⮌ After the demo programs organized by the e-publishers / aggregators, where faculties and scholars have to submit their opinion/recommendation after attending the demo session.
- ⮌ We are screening the above recommendations by keeping the following things;
- ⮌ a. Our basic objectives are to collect the minimum number of e-books but try to cover maximum faculties;

  .a Primarily we should avoid the purchase from the e-aggregators;

  c. We should go through ownership acquisition model;

  d. We should go through pick and choose option;

  e. We should always try to complete the purchase within the allotted amount
- ⮌ Then on the basis of the fund, price of the e-books submitted by the respective e-publishers / aggregators and recommendation submitted by the faculties and scholars library authority has prepared a probable statement with the following points- name of the Vendors & Packages, Subject Covered, No. of Titles, Year, List Price, Offer Price, Conversion Rate, Offer Price in Indian Currency, Mode of Acquisitions, Renewal Fees etc.
- ⮌ With the help of the above proposal, E-resource Selection Committee takes decision for purchasing of e-books on various subjects for the Visva-Bharati Library from the different e-publishers / aggregators on the perpetual basis.

➲ Then, as per the recommendations of the E-Resource Selection Committee, librarian places order and signs the MOU & License Agreements with the aggregators for the acquisition of the e-books on perpetual access.

➲ Subsequently, the collection has incorporated in the library website and users of the Visva-Bharati library have opportunities to browse the same as per their requirement.

➲ As we have not initiated the subscription of e-journals, thus the library yet to frame the policies. But, the basic fact will be almost remained same. To avoid the repetitions of journal subscription, the Visva-Bharati library would like to review the Titles of Print Journals subscribed in the library with the title available for access through the UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium. With the process, the fund saved from the same may be utilized for the subscription of new titles either in electronic or print mode.

➲ For the Institutional Digital Repositories we have already started the digitization process of question papers of final examination of different courses of UG and PG. Afterwards we would like to digitize the title and content page of the Ph.D thesis, latest syllabus, etc.

➲ Under the Mega Digital Library Project (Govt. of India) digitization of Valuable documents is published before 1923, published collection of Gurudev R.N.Tagore is already under process with the joint collaboration of CDAC, Kolkata. DVD received so far from the CDAC, Kolkata are already being available for the users through our library portal.

➲ To strengthen the R&D activities of the university, the Visva-Bharati library offers Inter-Library Loan services to its users with the help of DELNET membership. The database services of the DELNET is being used exclusively for the checking the availability of the titles.

In these ways, the Visva-Bharati library injects the e-resource culture for the benefit of the library users of all domains. On the basis of the feedback and availability of fund library will further proceed for the e-book collection.

9. Conclusion

Emerging generations of e-resource readers will have features which will considerably improve their readability – built-in electronic dictionaries and on screen note-pads, the ability to highlight passages of text, the option to change the orientation of the display by rotating the screen contents (a useful option for left handed readers). To cope up with the changing environment, the Visva-Bharati Library is also trying to initiate our library by collecting e-resources and introducing the required ICT based infrastructure. As a result of which, Visva-Bharati has already purchased e-books and trying to offer IT-based services to its users. It may be stated that it is very much difficult to suggest a model to collect the e-resources of any library. Still, to get the optimum collection of e-resources library has to go through some strategies so that e-resource acquisition process should be of biased free and impartial. We hope that the Visva-

Bharati library will have the handsome number of e-collection if the institute gets enough financial supports for acquiring the e-resources.

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