
SHARING E-JOURNALS IN CONSORTIA ENVIRONMENT : DEVELOPMENT IN DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract

Due to the increase in cost of e journals, the library professionals have initiated the sharing resources in cooperative acquisitions, document delivery and inter library loans. The paper highlights the importance of library consortia in this digital era stating its salient features and pricing models. This paper also discusses about the FORSA and INDEST Consortium.

Keywords : Consortia, Digital Era, E-journals.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, in an environment of information and publication explosion, it has become practically impossible for any library to remain self-reliant. In a situation of growing demands of the readers and depleting levels of financial resources, no library is able to obtain all the material on demand.

Resource sharing is nothing but sharing of library resources by certain participating libraries among themselves on the basis of the principles of cooperation. This is applicable in the matter of use of documents, manpower, facilities, services, building space or equipment. In such a cooperation venture, it becomes possible for a user in any of the participating libraries to make use of the resources of not only his own library but also of those other participating libraries. Thus, through resource sharing, libraries can improve the total collection of reading material, consolidate their technological capabilities, improve their information dissemination tools and extend their library and information services to a larger user community.

Today new electronic environment is challenging the scientific and technical journals. The number of e-journals and e-versions of paper journals has increased substantially with the increased availability and use of the Internet. In this information era, the shift from print based communication to electronic channels of communication in the dissemination of information through various forms like digital, electronic publishing and now the latest web accessible or online journals is very much evident. With the advent of internet and introduction of e-journals during 1990s the library consortia have taken a new role with the purpose of expanded access to e-journals i.e. a) access to more number of journals. b) Multiple access and c) access to supplementary non-print materials like multimedia.

2. FEATURES OF ELECTRONIC JOURNALS

The positive features of electronic journals as compared with print journals are as follows:

1. Allow remote access
2. Can be used simultaneously by more than one user
3. Provide timely access
4. Support different searching capabilities
5. Accommodate unique features (links to related items, reference linking)

6. Save physical storage space
7. Can support multimedia information
8. Do not require the physical processing (receiving and building)
9. Can be environmentally valuable, and
10. Can be saved digitally

3. E JOURNALS ADVANTAGES

- Timely
- Retrospective and advanced search features
- Easy to access
- Saves storage space
- Interactive
- Supports multimedia
- Links to related references
- Unlimited in Size

4. DISADVANTAGES

- Uncertainty of permanent access
- Desire to browse the print version / difficult to read computer screen

5. LIBRARY CONSORTIA

A consortium is a group of libraries that want to have a central place to store content in centralized manner and distribute to all associated libraries.

Basically, consortia means group of libraries coming together with common interest. One of the libraries or agencies work as coordinator for identification of libraries for each publisher, the aim of consortia is to achieve what the members of the group cannot achieve individually.

According to oxford English dictionary, Consortium means temporary co-operation of a number of powers, companies etc. for a common purpose. It is an association of similar type of organizations/institutions who are engaged for producing and servicing the common things for providing services for a specific purpose of its users. In the context of library, consortium is a community (a co-operate) of two or more information agencies that have formally agreed to coordinate, cooperate in or consolidates certain functions to achieve mutual objectives. It is a joint venture of any group of libraries to fulfill the common goal. Consortia may be formed on a local, regional, national international basis; on a functional or format basis; or on a subject basis. Majority of the libraries particularly in developing countries are thinking today about the cooperative purchasing for any group of libraries, consortia should be formed and are often useful for establishing a formal structure regarding resource sharing with formal agreement for each participant library. In this method of cooperative collection development of each and every participant library can easily access to specific collections.

A consortium is said to be “ a cooperative arrangement among group institutions or an association or society”. Consortia are commonly formed to increase the purchasing power of the collaborating institutions to expand the resource availability and to offer automated services.

6. CONSORTIA NEGOTIATION OBJECTIVES

- Discounts for electronic journals
- Ideally, choice of electronic-only
- Added value
- Standardised licensing
- Single year agreements
- Extended electronic access

7. TYPES OF CONSORTIA FOR E-JOURNAL

Consortia for Single Title : Single subscription for print journal and access is possible for e-journal from different physical location. eg. a) Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore has its main office at Bangalore and five branch offices in different cities of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. E-journals can be accessed from different physical locations by a single subscription of print journal. B) All IITs subscribe to the printed version of chemical abstracts and have access to chemical abstracts online by paying an additional cost.

Consortia for group of titles :

- J-Gate by Informatics India Pvt. Ltd
- BioOne by American Institute of Biological Sciences,
- EBSCO's Database by EBSCO Information Service Group
- OCLC a US based Consortium of libraries

Consortia for Single Publisher :

- Elsevier Science provides access to their e-journals through science direct
- Blackwell Science through INGENTA provides access to their e- journals
- Springer Verlag through springer Link
- Kluwer Online
- Academic Press through IDEAL
- Ovid Technologies through their journals offer Ovid Full text offer access to their e-journals.

8. SALIENT FEATURES OF THE CONSORTIUM

1. Small group of homogeneous, like-minded professionals have facilitated better communication and understanding between publishers and an agent issuing individual invoice, single payment, signing by individual library.
2. Model facilitated cross e-access to all print journals subscribed

3. Members are not burdened with marginal interest journals, which otherwise is a standard offer of bundled journals from publishers.
4. Institutional usage statistics is provided periodically, viz weekly, fortnightly and monthly
5. It was win-win situation for both publishers and consortium participants in terms of the decreased cost of electronic access to e-journals and increased volume of sales for publishers.

Library consortium has been successfully implemented in the libraries of developed countries like USA, UK, Germany and France etc. There are many leading consortia like OHLIO Link, HEAL-Link, Georgia's Galileo, Virginia's VIVA and China's CALIS. These consortia are having one common goal i.e. pooling their collective financial resources to increase greater economic control over their market places. In India, there are major consortia like FORSA, UGC INFONET and INDEST.

Forum for Resource sharing in astronomy and astrophysics (FORSA) was developed in 1981. The members of FORSA are IIA, IUCAA, NCRA, PRI, RRI, TIFR, SO, HCRI and CASA-OU. Here they have specified the two consortia formation i.e. Indian Institute of Astrophysics Consortium with Kluwer and FORSA consortium for Nature on-line (Nature Publishing)

Following are the developments among the FORSA libraries,

- All libraries have automated their collections
- Facilitate e-access to journals
- Actively participate in resource sharing
- Document delivery (e-mail, fax and speed post)
- Database merging of all libraries holdings
- To participate in "Virtual Observatory" project in support/ supply of information
- Consortia plan for sharing E-journals and databases with publishers like Kluwer, Nature Publishing, IOP, etc.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development set up the Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Science and Technology Consortium. The ministry provides funds required for providing access to electronic resources subscribed for the consortium to the core members. This consortium has divided into 3 types of members.

1. Core member Institutions
2. Members with financial support from AICTE
3. Self supported Engineering colleges and organizations

INDEST consortium has broadly categorized the two types of electronic Resources.

1. Full text
2. Bibliographic Databases

Influencing Factors for E-Journals Pricing:

- Quantum of business

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- Number of consortia members
 - Types of institutions
 - Contract period
 - Number of IP enabled nodes
 - Number of campuses
 - Value added services
 - Rights to archive
 - Perpetual access
 - Training facilities
 - Multi year agreement

E-journals Pricing Models :

- No Universally Acceptable E-journals
- Pricing and Licensing Models
- On going experimentation
- Negotiation possible
- Charge for content
- Delivery format optional

Pricing Survey :

- Most still charge a 'bundled' price
- More publishers offering electronic version unbundled from print ...and at a lower price
- Growing numbers offering article pricing (typically \$15 US)
- More offering consortia pricing
- More providing access after cancellation
- More will charge for archive

Pricing : Publishers Issues:

- Free titles on Internet
- Free access against print subscription
- All titles of a publisher for fixed fee
- Surcharge on print subscription
- Discounts for electronic journals
- Capped annual inflation
- Discounts on non-subscribed titles
- Access to subject clusters of the journals
- Protection of current revenue

- Uncertainty of new subscription
- Single point payment

8. CONCLUSION

Resource sharing and consortia arrangement of libraries is a cooperative activity. In the interest of the consortia group there should be a commitment from all the members in giving their best for the success of the purpose. There are many terms and conditions from the publishers' vendors to give consortia offer for their products. These have to be accepted in a cooperative spirit. Each library should act with speed commitment otherwise publishers will not be encouraged to give access to their databases of journals. Various library consortia models are emerging and it is necessary to get exposed to procedures for licensing keeping in mind negotiations with the publishers across the table.

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