

Library Consortium: A Look through CSIR's NEIST

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Abstract

Library consortium brings together library professionals and libraries for activities and objectives that cannot be effectively undertaken individually. Consortium is a collection of mass resources which produces good results at least average cost. It is a cooperative programme which gives clarity of purpose and competitive advantage by sharing of library resources and programs with mutually supportive missions. This paper tries to present an overview of library consortium on NEIST (North East Institute of Science and Technology), which is one of the CSIR's (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) institutions.

Keywords: Consortium, CSIR, NEIST, Knowledge Resources

1. Introduction

Globalisation is without question greatly responsible for the modernization of the work process. It also bears obligation for the whole process of the social responsibility because the social conscience for the knowledge of the society in which we live has grown. The root of library consortia might have started as early as in 1880s, according to *Library Journal* that published articles on library cooperation which suggested that libraries should work together to share their collection.

Arnold Hirshon on the role of a consortium says, "For any library that is trying to develop a customer service program - and for consortia that are trying to assist in that effort - it is important to understand the trends that are affecting the client base, the component parts of the customer service plan, the process to be followed to develop and implement that plan, and where consortia can provide added value".
consors 'sharing, partner'

Consortium is a Latin word, meaning "partnership" "association" and is derived from 'con' together and 'sors' meaning brotherhood, joint interest, partnership, etc. In other words, consortium is an association of two or more individual company's organizations or governments (or any combinations of these entities) with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources. The basic aim of the consortium is to deliver more than an individual aspect. Today, consortia range anywhere from multi-state regional associations to groups designed to meet the needs of a narrowly focused cluster of libraries. In fact, it is common for a library to be a member of a number of consortia, some mandated, some for a variety of reasons according to the need of users and suppliers. Information services and database vendors or aggregators are continually offering new possibilities of access and using the databases. While the prevailing way of using the databases several years ago was on the CD-ROM, today it is an online access via Internet to important information sources as there is an increasing number in full-text documents as well.



2. Need of Consortium

Various factors that have necessitated the need for consortia are as given below.

2.1 Increasing Research Base

Increasing multidisciplinary research in various fields is marking development of various new subjects in different dimensions, as such the application of Nano Technology in various scientific fields. Thus to get the information in fastest possible way for a user in the field of research, the consortium is inevitable as it is not possible to acquire the literature by an R&D organization according to the need of its researchers and scientist individually.

2.2 Escalating Prices

The graph of price escalation in terms of licenses and acquiring knowledge is growing upward. The reduction of cost can be achieved for members of consortium by increasing the buying power, risk-sharing capacity and unified lobbying potential. Basically larger the members of consortium, larger the power of negotiations to reduce the price of required knowledge.

2.3 Image

Libraries have always had a solid and staid image. It is just like a static image in the mind set of users for whom it is like the same system year after year. Attempts to modernize the image of libraries may face some obstacles because, libraries have to project an image of newness and modernity that is at odds with the reality of the user. Consortia that have good marketing efforts themselves may be in a position to help their member libraries to redevelop a new and snappier image.

2.4 Services

Traditionally, library services have been building-based and with limited service hours. Most services are available only part of the time that the building is open - and not necessarily the most important times. However, with the trend toward flexible and customized services, clients want their services to be anytime, anywhere services. Consortia may be able to play an effective role for their libraries through the coordination of non-peak hour reference according to the demands of the users.

2.5 Technology

Users want services that employ the latest technologies. To deliver this level of service requires a high capital investment because these services are increasingly expensive to develop and maintain by libraries which is occasionally outdated. They are turning increasingly to consortia to provide not only training services so they can keep up with the latest technology, but also consulting assistance or even outsourced support to maintain library system.

2.6 Workforce

Most library staff has significant difficulty dealing not only with the pace of change but also with the vast changes in the content. This creates a substantial disconnect between customer expectations and the library's ability to meet those expectations and the result can be poor customer services. To rectify this problem, intensive and ongoing staff training programs are essential. Consortia are in a good position to provide the training assistance according to the libraries' needs.

2.7 Resource Sharing

Opportunity for equitable resource sharing is possible through consortium mode. As a member of consortium it is on equitable and economical scale

to strive comparable excellence and recognition in their R&D activities.

3. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is a multidisciplinary R&D organization, with a chain of 38 laboratories and institutes, broadly grouped in five areas, namely: Biological, Chemical, Engineering, Information and Physical Sciences. The work areas of two laboratories/ institute are not identical which amounts to heterogeneous and interdisciplinary R&D nature of CSIR. The CSIR consortium is a close end consortium it means it is limited to its laboratories and institutes. The print journal subscription of CSIR was 8384 in 1993 which further decline to 3356 in 2000 and 2756 in the year 2005. This decline was drastic due to high escalation of prices and thus it lead to an alarming situation for CSIR when it was competing for its global R&D recognition and comparable research output. Prior to consortium, CSIR was spending 250 million annually for acquiring knowledge resources. But access to adequate knowledge base of CSIR was on constant shrink and it reached a 20 to 200 print media range which reflects very weak base knowledge resource required to compete with the leading organizations of the world.

The CSIR- North East Institute of Science and Technology (NEIST), formerly (Regional Research Laboratory), Jorhat was established in the year 1961 as one of the multidisciplinary laboratories of Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) under its Chemical Science Group of laboratories in Assam. Its major thrust R&D activities have been to develop indigenous technologies by utilising the immense natural wealth of India.

4. Neist and Use of Consortium

4.1 Use of Knowledge Resource

The resource that is subscribed by the organization is to be monitored unless it is of not much use. So the usage made available by the service provider provides the statistics of user usage. Usage for the years 2011 (Table 1), 2012 (Table 2) and 2013 (Table 3) has been compiled. It can be seen in Table 1 that, in the year 2011 there had been 8 publishers which declined to 6 publishers for the year 2012 and 2013. The usage for ACS consortium journal was highest for the year 2011 which is followed by consortium of Springer, RSC, ASTM, Annual Reviews with lowest use of IEEE consortium. Whereas, consortium of John Wiley and Sons have the highest usage for the year 2012 and 2013 followed by consortium of RSC, Annual Reviews, ASTM, CUP and lowest being is IEEE . The reason behind the decline of the publishers from the financial year 2011 and the financial year 2012 and 2013 has been due to the decreasing fund allotment. The total usage for the year 2011, 2012 and 2013 is represented in the Figure 1.

Table1: NEIST, Consolidated Usage Statistics in 2011

S. No.	Publisher	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1	ACS	471	934	616	834	2262	674	618	774	468	419	966	874	9910
2	Annual Reviews	3	3	3	2	2	2	7	25	0	2	0	16	53
3	ASTM	2	9	11	3	7	17	2	0	11	0	19	16	97
4	IEEE	0	2	1	9	1	3	0	2	2	1	1	1	23
5	OUP	56	24	66	116	73	46	40	13	17	27	22	36	536
6	RSC	80	100	218	165	798	226	213	327	195	151	267	208	2948
7	Springer	406	345	820	399	796	764	410	1333	314	289	704	276	6856
8	Wiley-Blackwell	245	233	431	294	363	377	298	420	328	304	348	315	3956
Total		1263	1650	2166	1822	4302	2109	1588	2894	1335	1193	2327	1742	24379

(Source: NEIST Library)

Table 2: NEIST, Consolidated Usage Statistics in 2012

S. No.	Publisher	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1	AAAS	0	2	6	4	4	2	6	2	6	2	2	8	44
2	Annual Reviews	3	2	5	2	3	5	2	6	5	2	1	1	37
3	CUP	4	0	8	0	0	12	0	4	2	0	0	0	30
4	IEEE	1	2	1	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	9
5	John Wiley and Sons	916	1052	1090	692	1002	928	1282	2016	1082	964	968	4902	16894
6	RSC	117	193	283	149	64	255	432	328	344	332	446	446	3389
Total		1041	1251	1393	847	1075	1202	1724	2357	1439	1300	1417	5357	20403

(Source: NEIST Library)

Table 3: NEIST, Consolidated Usage Statistics in 2013

S.No	Publisher	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1	Annual Review	18	4	4	4	17	11	10	2	4	0	3	2	79
2	ASTM	4	15	6	3	0	8	0	21	0	0	9	11	77
3	CUP	1	2	1	2	12	6	10	6	0	0			40
4	IEEE	0	1	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	3	17
5	RSC	178	462	254	377	569	647	370	321	333	358	261	220	4350
6	WILEY	504	685	550	695	697	736	800	520	854	387	450	413	7291
Total		705	1169	817	1081	1297	1410	1192	872	1193	746	723	649	11854

(Source: NEIST Library)

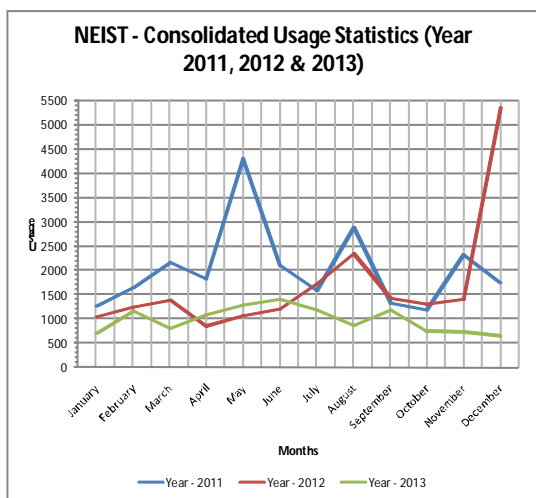


Figure 1: NEIST- Consolidated Usage Statistics

4.2 Print versus E-Access

The usage of e-resources is substantially higher than print being concurrently accessible to large number of users. In case of M/S Elsevier, print subscription in all laboratories/ institutes of CSIR is 550 journals titles and out of these 390 are unique being duplicates/triplicates. This means that 390 journals are of equal use at a time. A print journal subscription may be in one or two labs and accordingly its use will remain confined to such labs only but in case of e-access, the same journal would be in more than 10 labs/institutions. Thus the e-access is higher and relatively gives wider prospects.

5. Wider the Access, Wider the Impact Factor

The impact factor of an academic journal is a reflection of the average number of citations of recent articles published in the journal. There are no indications that the growth rate of literature has decreased in the last 50 years. At the same time, publications using new channels, for example, conference proceedings, open archives and home pages

are growing fast. The data shows that impact of consortium helps in increasing the publication of articles in different international journals for the year 2013 (Table 4). The publications were less in month of February with 14 publications and the highest was in July with 1504 (Figure 2). Though the data is not completed for the year 2013, but the achievement is increasing in the field of science and represents the impact of scientific articles in international arena.

Table 4

S. No.	Month of the Year 2013	No. Of Publications
1	January	265
2	February	14
3	March	710
4	April	999
5	May	1317
6	June	1188
7	July	1504
8	August	1367

(Source: NEIST library)

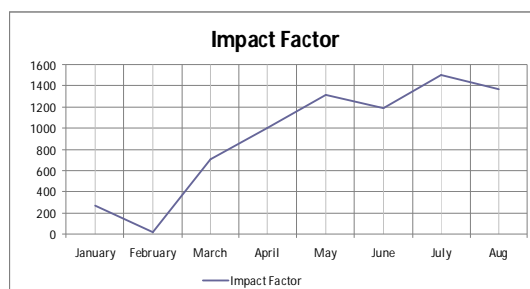


Figure 2

6. Disadvantages of Consortium

6.1 Consortium Publisher's Obligation

The CSIR as a whole and NEIST as sub system, the consortium is close-ended which states that they do not welcomes other institutions that would like

to join. Its service is extended only to its members. The consortium publishers allow one download and do not allow multiple user download at the same time. As a result, the libraries have to fix timing for it is users. The NEIST library provides one hour to its users at a time thus it reduces the user portability during the demand time. The e-resources are provided for the contract year only which is usually from January to December. The same text is not available for the next year and they do not provide print form also. Again the negotiation is to be done for the previous year text to make it available to its users.

6.2 User Issues

The consortium reduces the need of library personnel as users' feel that they do not need mediator to search information on their behalf instead they can access information as end users in an interactive mode. The studies conducted in the west reveal that there is under use and over use of information and the information they access is of questionable quality. The information professionals can play a crucial role here in guiding and training users to help them find and use quality resources.

6.3 Publisher's Issues

The publisher's consortium does not come cheap though they provide improved services. They increase the price year by year and librarians have to bargain for the suitable price. Price rise is an escalating factor as month of the e-journals are foreign and with increase of foreign currency exchange rate the price also increases. The agreement has to be done for a year and cannot be done month-wise.

6.4 Commercial Document Delivery

The traditional practise within the libraries has been to subscribe to as many journals as a research li-

brary could reasonably afford and use interlibrary loan to acquire occasional articles from ultra low-use journals. With the emergence of consortium by publishers which provides subscribed journals as well as low cost journals is a win-win situation for the libraries. It is not uncommon for the publishers themselves to encourage ad hoc consortia groups to form secure longer sales for the publisher by offering better price for group purchase. Fears were expressed that such big deals with the major publishers would leave no money for purchasing the materials provided by smaller or society publishers.

6.5 Institutional Support

It may be difficult for a library to get support from the scholarly community. It is not possible unless there is institutional mandate or an extremely aggressive library program of soliciting and depositing research papers. With the strong growth in commercial scholarly publishing now, the authors are getting royalty for their contribution. It thus makes obsolete the early practice to fund scholarly publishing with modest subscription in combination.

6.6 Disappearing Collection

Traditionally, library usually was a place where collections were hold. But shifting of focus from printed collection to digital/electronic collection in the new millennium is the beginning of the disappearance of physical collection from the library. Almost all digital journals are not physically held in the libraries which provides access to them but rather exist only on publishers' or society's web site.

7. Conclusion

Fortunately, the challenges provide libraries with opportunities. Within libraries there has been a growing recognition of "marketplace competition" and

the need to differentiate their services through market segmentation. Finally, the recent rapid growth of library consortia presents libraries with more partners than ever before to help work through the change management. Expectations of scientists in the area of data and information management have evolved and increased over the past decades as science itself has moved into the data intensive era. The main drivers of these changing expectations are the changing nature of science, science funders, policy makers and governments as well as society at large in some instances. Consortium based access to information opens wide spectrum of knowledge access and provides equal opportunities to all. Higher access leads to higher amount of information. NEIST is one of example which shows that scientific field is not successful without the help of different consortium. To keep pace with the progress of science and technology internationally, consortiums are the best option.

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