

Library consortia for Academic Libraries in the E-Publishing Era

by

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ABSTRACT

Academic libraries in India have been affected by an uncertain financial environment in which resource buying has been restricted, causing them to look at ways of extending their purchasing capabilities to compensate for reduced budgets. Technological developments, electronic publishing of scholarly journals, emerging of consortia, pricing models of the publishers gives new opportunities for libraries to provide instant access to information. Library consortium is the one of the emerging tool kit for libraries to survive in the e-publishing environment. An attempt has been made to identify the objectives, types, major issues and approach for consortia in Indian environment. The paper also highlights some of the important consortia arrangements at International level. The proposed models for academic libraries through different vendors / publisher has been discussed at the end.

Keywords: Internet, E-Publishing, Consortia, Academic Libraries

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0. Introduction

The academic libraries are committed to providing and making accessible the best possible international, educational, Research, cultural, and recreational materials to serve the academic and research community in the country. The libraries most important technology goal is to give all citizens access to information regardless of format, and regardless of where the information is stored. The secondary goal is to make that access available from anywhere in the community in so far as possible. Network is essential partner in this exercise as it

facilitates access to vast information services. Networks have potential to improve library services in several ways. The continuous improvement in the networking and Internet technology helps libraries to reduce the cost of information provision, thus creating new opportunities for the libraries to play their role in information provision to its end users. In recent years libraries worldwide have been affected by an uncertain financial environment in which resource buying has been restricted, causing them to look at ways of extending their purchasing capabilities to compensate for reduced budgets. The developments of E-Publishing has given a way for the new concept i.e. Library consortium which is emerging as one of the survival tool kit for academic libraries.

The libraries, like those in most developing countries, suffer from inadequate funding or stringent budget cuts. This has affected the level of services offered to users both in terms of quality of collections and the degree of staff support provided. In the present circumstances only a few libraries can afford to have a wide range of information resources within their budget. It would not be wiser or cost-effective to duplicate information resources among the libraries in the country leads to cooperative purchase option through consortia purchase and provide wide access to information resources over the Internet.

1.0 What is Library Consortium:

Group of libraries come together with common interest to form consortium. One of the libraries or agencies work as coordinator for identification of libraries for each publisher, negotiation, legal etc. The aim of Consortia is to achieve what the members of the group cannot achieve individually.

2.0 Need for Consortia

?? Indian Universities are finding it hard to maintain the subscriptions to even for core journals due to ever increasing cost of the journals subscription and also shrinking budget.

?? The average number of subscription to international journals by Indian University is even less than 500 titles, where as the average number of American universities is more than 4000 titles.

?? Improving the quality and standard of research in Indian universities and bringing it to a level of global recognition by improving the access-base of literature to them is essential.

?? Whole world is moving towards electronic publishing and the cost of the electronic publishing is much cheaper than that of the print version

?? Academic and Research users can now hope to have access to their learned journal articles in electronic form as the electronic access is comparatively cheaper.

??

3.0 Consortia - objectives

?? Increase the cost benefit per subscription.

?? Promote the rational use of funds.

?? Ensure the continuous subscription to the periodicals subscribed.

?? Guarantee local storage of the information acquired for continuous use by present and future users.

?? Develop technical capabilities of the staff in operating and using electronic publication databases.

?? Strategic alliance with institutions that have common interest resulting

?? Reduced information cost

?? Improved Resource Sharing

4.0 Electronic publishing - Root for consortia purchase

?? Technological developments, electronic publishing of scholarly journals, emerging of consortia, prizing models of the publishers gives new opportunities for libraries to provide instant access to information.

?? Number of publishers offer consortia, if their purchase power is big enough - access to their whole range of journals - that is every member of the consortium gets electronic access not only to the journals currently subscribed to but all the journals published.

?? Many libraries currently subscribes only to those journals that they can afford, though interested on other journals but they cannot afford to provide access to those. This approach helps them to provide access.

?? Such a consortium agreement will give the library and also the user extended access - that is better service - and reduce the costs

5.0 Types of consortia

?? No single model for consortia

?? varies from highly decentralized organizations to highly centralized ones

- ?? The degree of centralization of a consortium is the primary factor affecting not only how member institutions interact each other, but also relationship with external party(publisher/vendor)
- ?? More decentralized the consortium, the greater the degree of autonomy each member retains
- ?? Correlation between the amount of autonomy that the individual institution retains and the ability of the consortium to achieve set goals as a group
- ?? If the authority is highly centralized, the consortium is more likely to have dedicated staff to perform ongoing work

5.1. Loosely Knit Federations

- ?? Local or Regional (e.g. city wide groups)
- ?? Governed by its members
- ?? No central staff not funding
- ?? Very flexible but no bargaining power
- ?? With low common interest. No central authority, limited or no group purchasing power.
- ?? Yields minimum return

5.2. Multi-type Multi State Network

- ?? Statewide or multiple state
- ?? Low common interest
- ?? Central staff but no funding
- ?? Some what flexible
- ?? Little bargaining power

5.3. Tightly Knit federations

- ?? Statewide or single library (Research libraries)
- ?? High common interest
- ?? Have an action agenda
- ?? May have sponsoring agency
- ?? publisher discounts are slightly high
- ?? Central staff possibly central funding
- ?? Fairly flexible and moderate bargaining power

5.4. Centrally supported Consortia

- ?? Single state
- ?? High common interest (members jointly agree on services to purchase based on shared interest)
- ?? Significant action agenda
- ?? Central staff and strong funding
- ?? Moderately inflexible
- ?? Strong bargaining power

6.0 Library consortium at International Level

Library consortia can be organized according to a variety of models ranging from loosely affiliated "buying clubs" to tightly integrated virtual or actual organizations. The many hundreds and possibly thousands of library consortia around the world are organised along many different lines. They range from informal gatherings of library directors for the purpose of sharing information and promoting a united front through to more formally organised operations either sponsored by a single member institution or owned by all member institutions through a separate incorporated entity. The following list represents a small sample of the range of library consortia within the academic library community.

- 6.1 *Arizona University Libraries Consortium [United States].* AULC is a voluntary alliance of six university libraries situated in close proximity in Arizona. A major function is the collective purchase of electronic information. AULC employs no staff and is not incorporated.
- 6.2 *Consortium of Academic Libraries in Manchester [<http://rylibweb.man.ac.uk/calim/index.html>], [United Kingdom].* CALIM was established in 1992 as an alliance of five university libraries in the Manchester region. The aim is to reduce duplication through a common technical platform, collaboration in the delivery of information, standardisation of user services and joint staff development. CALIM has two staff and is not incorporated.
- 6.3 *CAVAL (Co-operative Action by Victorian Academic Libraries) Limited [<http://www.vicnet.net.au/?caval/>], [Australia].* CAVAl was established in 1978 as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. The 13 members are the universities in

the state of Victoria and the State Library. CAVAL's resource sharing strategy comprises interlibrary loans, a reciprocal borrowing program, a union catalogue and a cooperative storage facility. CAVAL employs six staff and special project staff are employed to support individual activities. CAVAL is incorporated.

- 6.4 *Illinois Library Computer Systems Organisation* [<http://www.ilcso.uiuc.edu>], [United States]. ILCSO was formed in 1980 and was funded by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. It was set up expressly to provide shared infrastructure, most notably a shared library system and union catalogue to support statewide access to resources. It now also provides an electronic database service, an UnCover agreement, and access to a range of other electronic services. The ILCSO office has seven staff and the University of Illinois provides all of the computing, help desk, financial, planning and administrative staff. ILCSO is not incorporated.
- 6.5. *Missouri Research Consortium of Libraries*, [United States]. This new consortium (MIRACL) comprises six university libraries in close proximity and supports reciprocal borrowing and interlibrary lending and a union catalogue linked to the individual library systems. MIRACL has no staff and is not incorporated.
- 6.6 *Pennsylvania Academic Library Connection Initiative* [<http://www.lehigh.edu/~inpalci>], [United States]. PALCI came into being in 1997 and joins together 38 private and public university libraries to provide a virtual union catalogue, a system for client initiated loans and to secure discounts on electronic databases. There is one staff member. PALCI has recently incorporated and is currently developing bylaws.
- 6.7 *Washington Research Library Consortium* [<http://www.wrlc.org>], [United States]. One of the more closely integrated consortia in the USA. WRLC was founded in 1987. Membership comprises seven universities. Member universities share book collections through reciprocal borrowing and interlibrary loans, an online library system containing multiple electronic resources, a union catalogue and a cooperative storage facility. WRLC has 16 staff. It is incorporated and entirely self-funding.
- 6.8 *National Science Council of Taiwan* has signed an extensive multi-year contract for the purchase of **ScienceDirect OnSite** and for **ScienceServer** software. More than twenty universities and colleges will participate in the nationwide consortium. The consortium will have electronic access to the full text of more than 1,000 Elsevier Science journals offered through ScienceDirect OnSite. The digital library, powered

by ScienceServer software, will contain more than 400 Gigabytes of data, with issues from 1995 to the present of all covered journals

7.0 The major issues of Consortia Approach

- ?? Selecting a coordinating agency to deal on behalf of entire group of participants and executing and monitoring the work.
- ?? Identification of universities interested in participating and agreeing to common terms and conditions
- ?? Identification of potential publishers to provide access under consortia purchase.
- ?? Negotiating with publisher to get a commonly acceptable and affordable price.
- ?? Source of funding to meet the subscription cost.
- ?? Legal issues involved in contracts and usage of material within the consortia
- ?? Informing the usefulness / importance of the consortia to the VC's Dean of Studies, Professors etc to act upon the issue.
- ?? Identifying the necessary infrastructure for electronic access to resources.
- ?? Issues relating to Backup of databases
- ?? Identification & selection of databases to be acquired and hosted by nodal agency & member libraries
- ?? Documentation & training to staff
- ?? Access rights - whether to provide direct access from publisher site or mount databases at nodal agency
- ?? INFLIBNET can work as facilitator (nodal agency) for academic libraries in India

8.0 Proposed Consortia models for Academic Libraries in India

8.1 Academic Press

Brings out 176 journals, in print & web editions. The academic Press consortia can work like

- ?? Lets assume there are 200 universities subscribing to some of the AP journals by paying amount X.
- ?? Out of 200 some of them may be subscribing to very few or no subscription at all, but they can be covered.

?? In a consortia mode, the cost of accessing all the 176 journals irrespective of number of subscriptions by individual libraries, will be $X * 0.94$.

Advantages - Publishers

- ?? Can get payment from one nodal agency
- ?? Reduce the print version which is expensive
- ?? Can avoid additional expenses postal etc
- ?? No extra effort, once loaded can be used by many

Difficulties Expected

- ?? Collecting subscription cost at one place
- ?? Many universities are yet to have Internet connectivity
- ?? Academicians may still require output in print form as they are not familiar in the use of electronic version

8.2 Institute of Physics

- ?? 35 international journals published
- ?? Substantial reduction in the overall unit cost of information
- ?? Already have negotiated with 22 such agreements covering 1900 institutions
- ?? No annual price increase for next three years
- ?? IOP guarantees that any increase will not exceed beyond 8%.
- ?? access to full text of all articles featured within the IOP's journal publications with full text of 1992-2001.
- ?? Discount for print copies at the rate of 15% of the full institution rate (85% discount)

Members	Cost of Journals	Discount	Fixed Annual License fee
Up to 20 Minimum	$X * 20$ = UKP 551,420/-	70.9%	UKP 160,000.00
Up to 50	$X * 50$ = UKP 1,378,550/-	81.8%	UKP 250,000.00
Up to 100	$X * 100$ = UKP 2,757,100/-	89.1%	UKP 300,000.00
Up to 200	$X * 200$ = UKP 5,514,200/-	93.6%	UKP 350,000.00

Looking at the cost of 20 subscriptions IOP is offering 70.9% discount to subscribe all the 35 titles by all the 20 libraries looks little expensive in the Indian context. Further negotiation may be required.

8.3 Science Direct-Elsevier

?? Salient features:

?? Full text articles of Elsevier Science print journals 1997 onwards plus the subject collection.

?? More than 1100 + titles

?? Direct linking between the bibliographic to full text.

?? Training – train the trainer

?? Multiple access domain

?? IP Domain verification

?? Bulk ID's and Passwords

?? Individual ID's

?? Cost saving in Science Direct fee

?? Maximum Price high of 6.5% in 2002 & 2003.

?? Science Direct navigator (group of 10 databases) US \$ 20,000 per Univ. but for UGC consortium member it will be US\$ 5000 each

Further negotiation is can be had with science direct for subscription to set of journals selected by the member libraries in each discipline for set of libraries. This model will provide access to selected titles by group of libraries under the umbrella of consortia.

8.4 Mathematical Review from American Mathematical Society

?? Monthly publication by American Mathematical Society (AMS) covering the bibliographical information along with abstracts of the literature on mathematics published all over the world.

?? This is available in print, on CD-ROM and on-line through Internet.

?? More than 16,00,000 (16 lakhs) items are covered in this database and over 47,000 items are added every year.

?? This publication is subscribed by only 12 universities in India.

?? The subscription cost of this database per year for the print version is :

??	Base fee	\$5549.00
??????	Product Delivery fee	\$574.00
??	Total amount in US\$ per copy	\$6423.00

?? Supposing coordinating agency like INFLIBNET takes initiative and identifies, say another 30 universities who are potential users of Mathematical Review having full fledged department with good number of potential members and students and negotiates with the American Mathematical Society (AMS) as a co-ordinator, for existing 12+30 = 42 universities, the AMS may offer:

?? Consortia pricing i.e. existing 12 universities will continue to pay \$6423.00 and new set of 30 universities will pay only \$574.00 per year and receive one copy each of the print version of Mathematical Review.

?? Similarly, if these set of new libraries wants to access this database through Internet, they will have to pay anywhere between US\$250 – 1,000 per university. INFLIBNET or the coordination agency will have to ensure as a coordinator the timely payment and supply

8.5 Gale Group - A Thomson Company

?? Provides TOC with abstracts of more than 6500 titles

?? Around 2700 titles with full text

?? Experiment was carried out for union list of journals shows that 1946 titles matched

?? For 500 titles the cost was around 5 Lakhs

?? In a consortia mode, offered subscription to 250 journals for five user license. This will allow simultaneously 5 users to access the 250 selected journals irrespective of location from where you have logged in.

?? Single subscription can be there in the beginning

?? No restriction on the number of times you log in

8.6 J-Gate - the e-Journal Gateway

?? J-Gate hosting TOC and Abstract of 10,000+ e-Journals

?? Hosting full-text for Indian and other publishers willing to licence the content and acting as an archival site for their e-journals

?? Providing common IP -enabled access interface for all the journals a library subscribes to

- ?? provides electronic document delivery service
- ?? Promoting special consortium deals for participating publishers through J-Gate
- ?? Has more than 9000 e-Journals with a link to full text access
- ?? Assuming that if a library subscribes to 400 journals, a study shows that, around 250 titles available in e-form.
- ?? One can have access to these titles through J-Gate
- ?? Can have six libraries journals with TOC and can direct the users for full text.

Through J-gate it could be possible if INFLIBNET or the coordination agency negotiate for subscription on consortia mode, the price may be reduced reasonably and the coordinating agency can also maintain a mirroring site of all the titles subscribed under the consortia so that, access can be provided such a list to other libraries also. This needs further discussion among the academicians.

9.0 Conclusion

To summarize, purchasing by consortia has become a very important feature of the academic library scene. Even with all the advantages, finding and negotiating purchases for library consortia is not an easy process.. There is no doubt, however, that consortial purchasing is worth the effort.

- ?? Forming a consortium of libraries - way of life to maximise resource base
- ?? To meet the genuine needs of users participating library need to take active part
- ?? Major publishers are willing to come forward
- ?? In the fast changing society, coming together and serving better - wise & economical way
- ?? Our libraries face resource crunch, to optimize the infrastructure and access to information through consortia
- ?? INFLIBNET & Participating libraries work together to achieve set goals
- ?? The developments in electronic publishing and the new models offered by publishers displays a number of opportunities if library managers dare to take the necessary decisions.

To end on a positive note, there is no reason why the next ten years should not see the availability of consortial deals for access to all electronic publications.

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