

Library consortia: a boon for libraries

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Abstract

The increase in prices of the electronic resources and scarcity of resources has forced the libraries to explore the alternative means of subscription. The revolution in information technology in past few years has surpassed the ability of individuals and institutions to cope with it. Expectations of the users from the libraries have also increased rapidly. The phenomenon of consortia has become very important in the last few years. The paper discusses the meaning, need, advantages, disadvantages, consortia models and various initiative in India.

Key words: Consortia, Indest, Csiir, Infonet, Forsa, Helinet, Icmr,

Historic overview

"The concept of e-consortium was founded in February 1999 by Rick Craft and a group of 15 prominent service providers who thought the value of collaboration for the benefit of their clients. It started as a "virtual network" allowing end users to utilize the e-consortium website to learn more about these companies and how they can fulfill their needs.

The group linked their clients with each other from their own network. The clients become aware of each others' business and saved their time and finance by sharing information. By February 2001, e-consortium had the necessary infrastructure to provide marketing services to its provider network. This enabled a new line of consultative services to be offered directly from the e-consortium offices to individual growing and emerging companies. These services were designed to understand both the nature and finance of client companies, by understanding the issues on both sides - the services needed and the provider's service offering, e-consortium serves as a resource for both parties a win-win relationship".

(Available at http://www.e-consortium.net/aboutus_bottom.html)

Introduction

It is well known fact that every library cannot

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procure all the information which is desired by its users. They cannot satisfy the all informational thrust of their users. This happens due to the lack of resources available with the libraries. To sort out this problem concept of library cooperation came into existence. In present scenario the term of cooperation has changed into library consortia. Consortia can be defined as the cooperation and coordination among the group of libraries to achieve certain combined objectives. Consortia are commonly formed to increase the purchasing power of the collaborating institutions to expand the resource availability and to offer automated services. India is a developing economy which always faces lack of resources i.e. infrastructure, skilled man power and finance. But it does not mean that libraries cannot satisfy the informational needs of their users. Answer to the problem is resource sharing. In current scenario the term which is widely in use for resource sharing is library consortium. The term has international recognition. Due to the revolution in the field of information technology, the expectations of users from the library have increased and this compelled the libraries to share their resources to cater to the informational thrust of the users. Here comes the concept of library consortium. Consortium is a mutual agreement between various agencies/libraries which agree together to cooperate with each other to achieve certain common objectives.

Definitions

"The term consortium is derived from the field of economics and refers to the grouping together of different independent companies in order to

bring together financial or material resources under a single managing body for the joint performance of specific operations. A consortium may comprise an informal group with reciprocal agreement between partners or it may constitute a separate legal entity in itself. A purchasing group may be considered as an example on an informal consortium." (Ghosh,M, Biswas,S.C. and Jeevan V.K.J 2006).

"A consortium is an association of two or more individuals, companies, organizations or governments (or any combination of these entities) with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources for achieving a common goal. Consortium is a Latin word, meaning 'partnership, association or society' and derives from consors 'partner', itself from con- 'together' and sors 'fate', meaning owner of means or comrade."(Available at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consortia)

According to online free dictionary "An association or a combination, as of businesses, financial institutions, or investors, for the purpose of engaging in a joint venture." (available at <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/consortia>)

According to Webster's new International Dictionary "Library consortia is an agreement, combination, or group formed to undertake and enterprise beyond the resources of any one member"

Need and goals of consortia

Day by day increasing cost of the journals, information explosion and advancement in technology has encouraged the society in sharing of their scarce resources in the area of online search of e- resources such as e-journals. Due to the development in Informational technology publisher are providing their journals online. Consortia have opened the doors for healthy growth for publishers and libraries. This is only due to the consortia that the libraries are able to subscribe electronic information on reduced rates.

Following are the goals of consortium

To organize the shared programs for the development of research and educational promotion...

To serve as a clearing house for the exchange of information

To sort out the problems related to education and research.

To work for the overall development of education and research

Conduct cooperative programs to make the people aware of the benefits of consortia (Katsirikou, Anthi, 2003).

Advantages of consortia

Following are the advantages of consortia:

Saving of financial resources

Attraction to foreign investors

Possibility to achieve Objectives

It is helpful to provide better services

Reduction in cost

Widens access of e-resources

Sharing of resources

Relations /Interaction between the libraries

Smaller libraries are benefited

Possibility of worldwide effect (Moghaddam & Talwar 2009)

Disadvantages of consortia

Duplication of efforts

Wastage of resources

Confusion for libraries /publishers

Reduction in purchase power (Moghaddam & Talwar 2009)

Indian scenario

Formation of library consortia is the need of the hour for the purpose of sharing of information. In India many consortia has been formed in different areas to share information. Following are the some of the renowned consortia working in India.

Indian National Digital Library of Engineering, Science and Technology (INDEST)

INDEST is a consortium setup under the ministry of MHRD which subscribes electronic resources/databases for 38 leading engineering and technological institutions in India including Aims ,NITs,IISc etc.. The MHRD is providing

funds for the access of electronic resources subscribed by the consortium of these core members. The consortium has its headquarter at IIT, Delhi. Presently all the resources can be accessed directly from the website of the

publisher. It is only due to this consortium that best offers are provided to the libraries by the publishers at lowest cost. Full text e- resources subscribed by the INDEST includes the publications of following publishers.

ACM Digital Library	http://portal.acm.org/portalcfm
ASCE Journals	http://scitation.aip.org/publications/myBrowsePub.jsp
ASME Journals (+ AMR)	http://scitation.aip.org/publications/myBrowsePub.jsp
ASTM Standards & Digital Library	Standards: http://enterprise.astm.org Journals: http://journals.pastm.org/
Capitaline	http://www.capitaline.com/intranet/INDEST_consortium.htm
CRIS INFAC Ind. Information	http://www.crisil.com/
Digital Engineering Library (DEL)	http://www.digitalengineeringlibrary.com/
EBS CO Databases	http://search.epnet.com/
Elsevier's Science Direct	http://www.science-direct.com/
Emerald Full-text	http://www.emeraldinsight.com/
Emerald Management Xtra	http://www.emeraldinsight.com/
Engineering Science Data Unit (ESDU)	http://www.esdu.com/
Euromonitor (GMID)	http://www.portal.euromonitor.com/portal/server.pt
IEEE / IEE Electronic Library On line (IEL)	http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/
Indian Standards	Intranet Version
INSIGHT	http://www.insight.asianrc.com/
Nature	http://www.nature.com/
ProQuest Science (formerly ASTP)	http://www.il.proquest.com/pqdata
Springer Link	http://www.springerlink.com/
IET Digital Library	http://www.ietdl.org/
Emerald E-books (Business Mgmt & Economics Collection)	http://www.emeraldinsight.com/
COMPENDEX on EI Village	http://www.engineeringvillage2.org
INSPEC on EI Village	http://www.engineeringvillage2.org
Gate Custom Content for Consortia (JCCC)	http://jcc-indest.informindia.co.in/
MathSciNet	http://www.ams.org/mathscinet
SciFinder Scholar	http://www.cas.org/SCIFINDER/SCHOLAR/index.html (access through a Z39.50 Client to be installed on PC)
Web of Science	http://isiknowledge.com
About Open Access	oaresources.html
Open Access E-Journals	oaresources.html#journals
Open Access Directories	oaresources.html#directories
IRs @ member Institutions	oaresources.html#IRs

(Available at <http://panit.iitd.ac.in/indest/>)

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. (CSIR)

National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources formerly INSDOC and other laboratories of CSIR formed a consortia named as consortium for CSIR for accessing e-journals. This consortium is providing access to online journals of ACS, AIP, ASCE, Blackwell, CUP, Elsevier, IEEE, John Wiley, OUP, RSC, Springer, Emerald and Taylor and Francis of Elsevier science which are very beneficial for the scientists of CSIR. (Available at <http://124.124.221.7/ejournal/ejournalhome1.htm>)

UGC-Infonet

University Grant Commission launched a consortium for its member universities to promote the use of e-journals /databases among the academicians, researchers and students through its network INFONET. The project of INFONET is operated by the INFLIBNET centre located at Ahmedabad. Under this consortium access is provided to the journals of American Chemical Society, American Institute of Physics, Blackwell publications, Cambridge university press, Oxford university press, Springer and Royal Society of Chemistry etc. The access to the journals is provided through the IP. The University Grant Commission is bearing the all expenses of electronic journals. (Available at http://www.ugc.ac.in/new_initiatives/infonet.html)

The publishers of the journals under Infonet Consortium are listed below.

UGC-INFONET RESOURCES	
1	American Chemical Society
2	American Institute of Physics
3	American Physical Society
4	American Mathematical Society
5	Annual Reviews
6	BIOSIS
7	Blackwell Synergy
8	Cambridge University Press
9	Chemical Abstracts Service
10	Elsevier Science
11	Emerald Journals
12	Encyclopedia Britannica Online
13	Ingenta Gateway Portal
14	Institute of Physics
15	JGate Gateway Portal
16	JSTOR
17	Nature
18	Portland Press
19	Project Euclid
20	Project Muse
21	Royal Society of Chemistry
22	Science Online
23	Springer & Kluwer Link
24	Taylor and Francis
25	Oxford University Press
26	SIAM Site-1 SIAM Site-2

Forum for resource sharing in astronomy and astrophysics (FORSA)

FORSA was launched in 1981. This consortium is network of eight astronomy libraries called FORSA. The institutions specialized in astrophysics and astronomy is participating in this consortium. Under this consortium publisher and the library both are benefited, because libraries get the journals at the reduced rates where as publisher increases the sale of their publications. (Birdie, Christina and Alladi, Vagiswari 2002)

Health sciences library and information network (HELINET)

The abbreviation HELINET stands for Health Science Library and Information Network. It came into existence due to the hard work of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Science, Karnataka. This is the first medical library consortium. Under this scheme members can access the journals of reputed publishers in the field of biomedical sciences at the lower price.

It came into existence with the idea to improve the quality of education and research through the use of high quality of information. Before its inception, access for foreign journals was restricted to 100 journals for each college. The credit goes to the HELINET. It is due to the HELINET that access to more than 600 journals has become possible for each college. Under this consortium access to E journals of Williams & Wilkins, Elsevier Science, American Medical Association, W B Saunders Company, G.T. Verlag, MD Consult, Royal Society of Medicine, American College of Physicians, Springer, Lippincott, BMJ Publishing Group and Oxford University Press, etc. are available.

(Available at <http://125.17.162.197/HELINETHOSTCONSORTIUM/homehelinethost.htm>)

ICMR consortia

To promote the resource sharing ICMR has taken initiative to provide access to more than 550 journals subscribed presently by 24 ICMARs network of library and information centers by subscribing JCCC@ICMAR. The access is also provided to more than 200 journals of biomedical and near about 12000 journals covered under J-Gate has also been subscribed by the

council.(Available at http://icmr.nic.in/library_bull/jan_2005.pdf)

Consortia models

There are following popular consortia models stated as under:

National consortia

It provides the access of e- resources at national level. INDEST and INFONET are the examples of such consortia.

Budget sharing model

Only participant libraries form such type of consortium and take the decision according to their budget provisions e.g. FORSA and IIM .

Centrally funded model

In such model, all the efforts are made by the parent body. The parent body is responsible for all the funding. INFONET of UGC is the example of centrally funded model.

Open consortia

In such consortia members are free join and leave the consortia any time. INDEST consortia is example of such type of consortia

Closed consortia

In such consortia only specified members can become the part of consortia

Efforts made by the publishers

In such type of consortium members get the maximum discount from the publishers. Members and publishers remain in win win position. Emerald is the example for this.

(Available at http://dlist.sir.arizona.edu/2008/01/shalu_bedi_and_kiran_sharma_library_consortia.pdf)

Conclusion

From the whole study it is concluded that Libraries cannot satisfy the informational requirements of their users by their own

resources due to the lack of resources. This is the need of the hour to cooperate with each other for the optimum use of their resources. Due to the revolution in the field of information technology the expectations of users from the library has increased and this compelled the libraries to share their resources to cater to the informational needs of the users. Here comes the concept of library consortium. This is a common agreement between various libraries which agree together to cooperate with each other to achieve certain common objectives. They have to form the consortia to save their manpower and finance. Workshops may be organized between the universities to enlighten the libraries w.r.t the importance of consortia. UGC is spending such a huge money for the subscription of online journal, the practice shall become futile if the research is not promoted even after this wonderful boon of consortia .

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