

Resource Sharing and Networking: Issues and Challenges

V. Sheela*, N. Mamatha**

Abstract

The idea of resource sharing is a requirement based, founded on the principle of give and take. At the time of information era, shared the proliferation of publications and the phenomenon has transformed the collection development policies had to be introduced in order to select the most important and core documents, and share the remaining with other librarians or networks. It is because of rising costs of publications and their phenomenal growth in each subjects. To make resource sharing more fruitful among libraries at different geographical locations and to cover all types of document's for that various library networks are came in to existence. In general networking can be categorized as library network, computer network, and communication network. Among the above three networking library network is very pioneer in nature. The concept of library network evolved in the form of resource sharing over the years. The world resource sharing has been in need with different terminology called; Inter library loan, Library cooperation, Library network, Library Consortia.

Resource sharing is a kind of contract among the participating libraries wherein each participant is ready to share the resources among themselves. According to Allen Kent , "Resource sharing is a mode of operation whereby functions are shared in common by a number of libraries".

Here we are going to give more emphasis on impact of computer network and library network in resource sharing. One of the great library networking in the resource sharing at the university level is INFLIBNET. In this paper a brief description of INFLIBNET on resource sharing and networking in the university libraries.

Keywords: Microcomputers; Networking; Information Technology.

Introduction

Libraries are facing increasing demands for services. While struggling with Information explosion, intense expectations of users, development of great microcomputers, decrease in library budget, secluded location of libraries and quick changes in telecommunication systems are forcing the modern libraries to establish and participate in information networking and resource sharing. It is neither economically nor physically possible for any library to acquire all the required documents particularly expensive journals needed for its users.

Author's Affiliation: *Assistant Librarian, Karnataka State Open University, Manasagangotri, Mysore, Karnataka 570006.
**Librarian, Govt Fistgrade Degree College, Kuvempunagar, Mysore, Karnataka.

Reprint's Request: V. Sheela, Assistant Librarian, Karnataka State Open University, Manasagangotri, Mysore, Karnataka 570006.
E-mail: she579@gmail.com

Collaboration among institutions for sharing their library resources has been adopted. In recent times the form of collaboration has been transformed with the mix of new information technology.

Resource sharing is implied as contract among member libraries wherein each member is willing to share its resource to other members and in turn is fortunate to share the resources of its associates as and when the need arises. Currently, because of the use of Information Technology, it became possible to create co-operative practical resource sharing library-network which is very significant condition at this point in time where the economic concern, information sudden increase and focused users needs are forcing the libraries to participate in to the co-operative tricks.

Resource sharing is nothing but sharing of resources by certain participating libraries among themselves on the basis of the principle of cooperation. It denotes a mode of a number of libraries.

The term resource applies to anything, person or action to which one turns for aid in time of need. The word 'Sharing' connotes apportioning, allotting or contributing something that is owned, to benefit others. Resource sharing in its most positive aspects entails reciprocity, implying a partnership in which each member has something useful to contribute to others and which, each is willing and able to make available when needed.

According to Miller, "It's a cooperative system established by libraries and information centers which are brought together by common subject, geographic proximity to share informational resources, human resources and all other elements essential for providing effective information service".

According to Allen Kent, 'Resource sharing is a mode of operations whereby functions are shared in common by a number of Libraries'.

Need for Resource Sharing

There is a tremendous source are available around the world, so it is not possible for the library to acquire or store all credentials that its users demand. Today no library can meet the expense of to acquire even half of all published material, both in expenditure and investment in space and human resources, time required to process and provides access to a rapidly increasing amount of information.

An interdisciplinary literary search necessitates dependence on other libraries. The restrictions of finances and space besides the lack of proper distribution channels for publications and lack of proper book selection tools handicap the procurement of published materials in the libraries. It is also noticed that most libraries have been duplicating the efforts and materials, which has led to adequate utilization of the overall resource materials and finances. There has been a great increase in the number of users as also their demands. The information being sought has become extremely diverse in the circumstances; the libraries are left grouping for ways of providing a wider range of services and collections.

Forms of Resource Sharing

Resource sharing can be found in the form of Inter Library Loan (ILL), Cooperative Acquisition, Cooperative storage, Cooperative Processing, Union catalogue, Exchange of personnel and training facilities, Technical processing and web based sharing etc.,

Inter Library Loan: It is a procedure by which, one library lends its resources to any user through another

library. At present ILL is made easier with the help of technologies like computer technologies, facsimile equipment, networks, photo copying etc.

Cooperative Acquisition: Libraries spend their valuable time, money and efforts on acquisition of materials. The procurement procedures are similar among all the libraries. When a cooperative acquisition is applied, libraries can be avoided.

Cooperative Storage: Would result in economy of space and money, avoids duplication.

Cooperative processing: In the cooperative processing of materials which includes classification and cataloguing, the manpower and the financial constraints can be shared.

Union catalogues: It is a collective catalogue of materials available in all the participating in a resource sharing programme. It is a useful location tool in an ILL programme. It serves as a major bibliography.

Cooperative Delivery of services: In this the user directly goes to the library actually having the volume required by him and borrows the material.

Exchange of Personnel and training facilities: Even the services of an expert from another library can be borrowed and training of in-house staff can be organized.

Technical process: with the advent of the computers and copying machine now it is feasible to have a centralized cataloguing and processing work.

Web based Resource sharing: Sharing of resources hosted in the net, which in turn reduces the communication gap, fastens the delivery services.

Advantages of Resource Sharing

- ☛ Improve services offered to the Users
- ☛ Enhance the library collections
- ☛ Overcome budgetary problems
- ☛ Shared catalogue service
- ☛ Increased user satisfaction
- ☛ Shared circulation and inter library loan services
- ☛ Optimum utilization of existing records.
- ☛ Save efforts and time by preventing duplication
- ☛ Enhance the image of the Library

Barriers of Resource Sharing

- ☛ Lack of technological sophistication
- ☛ Physical and economic barriers

- ☛ Politically acceptable efforts
- ☛ Sociological/ cultural / educational impact
- ☛ Information policies and plans
- ☛ Legal consideration
- ☛ Financial Implication's can hamper resource sharing
- ☛ Lack of awareness among users about the usefulness of resource sharing
- ☛ Language barriers.

Library Consortium

Library consortia are a model that facilitates the libraries to get the advantage of wider access to electronic resources at reasonable price and at the best terms of license. It is a group of two or more information agencies, which have properly agreed to organize, oblige or merge certain functions, to attain shared objectives. In the beginning consortia focused on Inter Library Loan and document delivery service based on union catalogues. Today emphasis is on buying scholarly publications patterns, research and development to improve content delivery and expanding access to specialized resources. Subscriptions of some journals and databases doesn't justify as it may not be utilized by users to the maximum, at this time its better to opt for the consortiums. Several library consortia around the country have been formed viz., FORSA, CSIR, HELINET, INDEST, UGC-INFONET e journals consortia etc.

Library Networks

Library network is the network of participating libraries, where all the members will be benefited from all the member libraries. It's an agreement among the libraries to provide the information and the services to the users of the participating libraries, which may be situated in different geographical area, but serves one another on the requirement of the users. In 1986 CALIBNET in Calcutta , 1988 DELNET in Delhi , 1992 PUNENET in Pune, 1993 ADINET in Ahmedabad, 1994 BONET in Mumbai, 1993 MALIBNET in Chennai, 1997 BALNET in Bangalore.

Susan Martin defines "The library network as a group of individuals / organizations that are interconnected, to achieve better sharing of resources. Resource consists of bibliographic information and of collections- better service to users".

Inflibnet

INFLIBNET is an autonomous Inter – University centre of the UGC located at Gujarat University

campus, Ahmedabad. It is a national network of libraries and information centers in universities, institutions of higher education /learning and Research and development Institutions in India, to support intellectual communication among academicians and researchers in India.

Objectives of Inflibnet

The key objective of INFLIBNET is to encourage resource sharing among libraries. This is done by developing a network of libraries and information centers in universities, colleges, and research and development institutions. The services can be offered by storing and disseminating information, offering computerized information services to users, and by coordinating efforts for suitable collection growth and sinking unnecessary repetition wherever possible. This in turn improves the Scholarship, learning, research and academic pursuits. Further a database of projects, institutions and specialists is created and online information will be provided. Standards and uniform guidelines in techniques, procedures, hardware, software and services will be evolved and it will be promoted for adoption.

Activities of Inflibnet

- ❖ Automation of university libraries: INFLIBNET through UGC has provided grants to the universities identified, provided grants to purchase computers, modem, printer, telephone, software's etc. It has created an IT conscious environment in the university library.
- ❖ SOUL software: This software has been developed to facilitate the automation functions of participating libraries. INFLIBNET is maintaining the service centers to support the services as well as to promote the SOUL software.
- ❖ Human resource development and consultancy: Special Training and workshop on information technology, network management, website designing, E resource management, etc will be conducted frequently to manpower working in the universities and colleges.
- ❖ Development of union databases: Databases will be developed and updated on regular basis viz., Books database, Thesis database, Serials holdings database, Current serials database, Experts database, Research projects.
- ❖ Bibliographic standards: The Document "INFLIBNET standards and guidelines for data capturing" is made available to all the libraries while developing the databases. Anglo American

cataloguing Rules 2 (AACR 2) and Library of congress subject headings are recommended to use.

Inflibnet Services

- ❖ Catalogue based services
- ❖ Database services
- ❖ Document supply services
- ❖ Collection development
- ❖ Communication based services

Inflibnet Major Projects

University Grants commission has initiated an ambitious project called UGC-INFONET for the University campuses with latest technology. INFLIBNET is managing and taking care of the entire project.

UGC-INFONET e-journals consortium is a programme for higher education, setting up a nation wide communication network. Under this programme the Information and communication Technology (ICT) and internet is used to transform the e-resources in multi dimensional form. Through this consortium, education material and journals will reach to the farthest areas users. Up to date information will be provided to the researchers and scholars. UGC-INFONET will establish a channel for globalization of education and facilitate the universities in marketing their services and developments also.

This programme will offer the best current and archival periodical literature, from all over the world, to the university community. UGC-INFONET forms a medium for collaboration among teachers and students, not only in the country but also all over the world. The e-journal consortium aims at covering all fields of learning of relevance to various universities including Arts and humanities, Social sciences, Physical and Chemical Sciences, Life Sciences, Computer Science, Mathematics, Statistics.

Ugc N-List Programme

The scheme "National Library and information services Infrastructure for scholarly Content (N-LIST)", being equally executed by the UGC-INFONET, INFLIBNET Centre and the INDEST-AICTE Consortium. The UGC N-LIST project consists of group of colleges that are recognized by UGC and it is funded by Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), provides access to e-resources

to students, researchers and faculty from colleges through the server installed at the INFLIBNET centre. Currently approved users access e-resources and if needed can download articles required directly from the publisher's website once they register for this program.

The college education system is text book oriented and it is one of the main reasons for most of the college libraries are not using the N-LIST service. The library and information professionals must take responsibility to popularize electronic resources and importance of the N-LIST service. The college libraries in India need to educate their users in accessing the electronic resources provided by N-LIST. In India as majority of the college libraries are facing financial crunch, they can register with N-LIST service for accessing quality electronic resources to get over the resource hunger and financial crunch. This N-LIST helps the students and faculty in acquiring e-resources to get the desired and relevant information. Since most of the students and faculty acquired the skills necessary to exploit the electronic resources via trail and error or through guidance from others, raising the question of the effectiveness of these skills is more needed through the service like N-LIST will help in improve their academics and research capabilities. As colleges impart textbook oriented education, the N-LIST can be integrated with e-textbooks.

College performs an important function in the educational process. College Libraries should actively participate in the consortium. So that the users will be provided with quality service updating the latest available information world wide. Consortium concept is very useful in the present knowledge based society. In the present context people are not strain to get information in any field. Beneficiary colleges, registered for the N-LIST programme, can access more than 3,717 electronic journals, 74,138 electronic books.

Conclusion

Nowadays users demand for the right information at the right time, in this era of rapid growth of information. The information professionals should adopt all the technologies and tools available to provide better service. The inter library loan undergoes improvements in this era of information and communication technology world. The information professionals should have all the skills to meet the requirements of the talented research scholars, faculty, graduates and undergraduate

students. If the professionals plan properly resource sharing will play a major role in transforming the libraries in to a world class information centers.

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- ❖ Library cooperation
- ❖ Library network

❖ Consortia.

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