

# An Emerging Issue and Challenge for Judicial Libraries: Electronic Legal Information Sources

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## Abstract

Judicial Libraries have traditionally played a central role in collecting and organizing legal material and giving wide access to culture and knowledge. The utilisation of electronic resources and legal information in Indian court libraries is examined in the present paper. The study's primary goal is to identify the accessibility and utilisation of electronic resources, services, and facilities in judicial libraries as well as new problems and obstacles associated with the digital age. The goal of the current study was to assess the usefulness of print and electronic legal resources as well as the frequency and purposes of using electronic information resources in judicial libraries. It emphasises the resources or tools used to provide the services, as well as the difficulties faced while providing those services to library customers and potential solutions.

**Keywords:** Judicial Libraries; ICT; Information Sources; Court; Electronic resources.

## INTRODUCTION

The information and communication technology has enabled legal users in Judiciary to create, grasp and share the information explosion worldwide in electronic formats. Electronic information forms an integral part of judicial libraries assisting the users in learning, teaching and

research. So it's the responsibility of library to keep pace with technological developments and cope up with the legal users demand for legal e-information resources. legal information resources could be referred to as legal literature such as law books, law reports, legislation and statutes, legal periodicals, government publications, reference materials and other inter related non-legal books, e-resources, unpublished works of law, for example conference papers, theses on law, and so on. Legal literature is an indispensable tool of legal education. The legal practitioner requires access to it electronically. Any legal users such as lawyers, lectures, law students, judicial officers to be current today cannot function without legal information resources.

The ascent of electronic information resources has greatly changed information access and use and the creation and sharing of information similarly as defending in insightful libraries. Its organization

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implies a creating group of issues, tasks, cycles and practices related sincerely, appraisal, getting, affiliation, security and upkeep and give taught induction to electronic resources according to their grant terms".

Anderson (2004) zeroed in on that organization of electronic resources can be seen as devices, which are used to gauge, orchestrate legitimate metadata, for instance, grant terms, merchant arrangements and use.<sup>1</sup>

### Definition

Legal E-resources are those law related electronic resources, which deliver a collection of data, it may be e-journals, image collection, and multimedia products and numerical, graphical or time based. It may be have an aim to provide access as a commercially or noncommercial (open access) available till that has been published with an aim to being marketed.

Electronic Legal information" includes enabling automated discovery and organization of law related information in electronic format, fostering interdisciplinary research respecting such information, and enabling law librarians to specify the basis of their professional expertise and to limit the scope of their collections and service.<sup>2</sup>

E-Resources can be disseminate to the library user community as part of the library service in many way which includes; E-Databases, E-Journals, E-Magazines, E-Books/Wiki Books/E-Audios/ E-Music's, E-News, E-Images, Data/GIS, Digital Library Projects, Electronic Exhibitions, E-Subject Guides, E-Newsletter, E-White Papers, E-Conference Proceedings, E-Reports, E-Studies, E-Interesting Development, E-Directories, Web Search Tools on a choice of topic of the users interest.

## **CONCEPT OF JUDICIAL LIBRARIES**

Anaeme (2015) described judicial libraries as the libraries usually found within the court premises. In other words, they are often referred to as court libraries.<sup>3</sup> They are established to serve the judicial arm of government. They serve the judges, magistrates and practicing lawyers in the preparation of cases and dispensation of justice. They include the Supreme Court Library, 25 High Court of Libraries and 672 District court Libraries and including Family Court, civil court, criminal Court Law Libraries, and Gram Nayalaya, Subordinate court Libraries, JMFC court libraries.<sup>4</sup>

The basic function of the libraries is to acquire and provide basic law materials in print and non-print formats for research, and to enhance quick and efficient justice administration by the courts. These libraries should be stocked with basic materials such as are listed under library holdings.

### Utility of legitimate electronic information resources

Recognizing the fact that the use of ICT opens new avenues for better services in new found digital environment, the libraries in higher education are adapting to new technologies. E-Resources represent an in caressingly important component of the collection building activities of libraries. "Electronic resources" refer to those materials that require computer access, whether through a personal computer, mainframe or handheld mobile device.<sup>5</sup>

### The myths about Electronic Information resources especially e-journals (Hazel Wood Word, 1997) are:

- E-journals provide better access to journal articles.
- Academics & researchers read journals at their office desks.
- Readers want e-journals.
- E-journals are quick & convenient to access.
- Readers know & care who publishes a journal.
- Readers want page integrity.
- E-journals will bypass libraries & make them redundant.
- E- Journals will save libraries money.
- Storage & dissemination of e-journals is inexpensive or free.
- Publishers care about readers.
- E-journals will save papers.
- E-journals will save publisher's money.
- E-journals will make subscription agents redundant.
- Only recent issues of e-journals are required.
- All scholarly journals will be available electronically in a few years.
- E-journals are always more current than their print counter parts.
- E-journals provide all graphic materials of

their print counter parts.

- E-journals are always accessible.
- All readers have equal access to required computer at any time.

### Develop of Electronic Information Sources collection

The various issues involved in developing a good Electronic collection are as follows:

1. **How access can best be provided:** Providing access to the latest electronic resources is the key to a good electronic environment, this may be due to ownership or from some remote source. The important factors to provide effective access are:
2. **Infrastructure:** Not only the availability of computers in libraries for the users to access e-journals but also their configuration is important. Timings of the library, staff assistance, as also the speed of Internet, download facility and option to copy the information on CD or take print outs etc. make the purpose of electronic resources.
3. **Technical infrastructure:** In a digital information service system, infrastructure such as software, hardware, internet facilities and other physical equipments are required to provide easier, faster and complete access to information. Therefore, libraries in the digital age need to enhance and upgrade current technical infrastructure, which is essentially required to provide access to e-resources to the user community of the library.
4. **Inadequate library fund:** Most of the libraries have inadequate fund for the procurement of e-resources. In these cases, access to e-resources through library consortia will reduce the financial burden among the library in acquiring the electronic resources.
5. **Cost analysis:** The main advantage of having e-resources is that there can be savings from storage costs, and some e-resources are available more quickly than print. In this transition period selectors need to consider carefully what is gained and what is given up with print and electronic version of the same title. Form purpose and source of access will vary considerably among the categories of full text. Decision should be made on title-to-title basis depending upon the needs of each library's users. Funds must go to "access, just-in time collection building, document

delivery, and online publishing ventures.

6. **Developing selection criteria:** There are various ways of providing access to the users. Every library has to make its individual choice depending upon the budget available, content of the source and also the requirement of its users. Some of the ways of providing access are:

**Publishers:** Many journal publishers' provide access to their titles as a package.

**Aggregators:** Many libraries have cut costs by replacing some print subscriptions with electronic full-text databases of journals supplied by aggregators. Aggregators of electronic collections and services may include document delivery services as well as integration of full text electronic documents into a common interface. Examples of aggregator databases are JSTOR, Pro Quest, EBSCO etc.

7. **Preservation:** Though the e-resources are enabling information to be created, manipulated, disseminated and located with increasing ease, preserving access to this information poses a great challenge. Unless, preservation of digital information is actively taken, the information will become inaccessible due to changing technology platform and media instability.
8. **Lack of professional skills:** inefficiency among the library professionals in handling the e-resources will result in reduce in usage and dissemination of information to the end user. Electronic information handling require both professional and computer technical skills to handle the information in digital format. Library professionals must be abreast with the latest technological developments and skills which are require for working in today's rapidly changing digital environment.
9. **Lack of cooperation of staff members:** There is a need of proper co-ordination among the computer professionals and library professionals to provide effective service in a digital environment. Computer professional's helps in troubleshooting the problems associated with the computer hardware and software.<sup>6</sup> As such, the library staff must have proper coordination among the computer experts and must be technically competent in troubleshooting the user queries in accessing the e-resources with a user friendly approach.

## CONCLUSION

Information & communication Technology has dramatically changed the nature of Librarian's work and the various services offered by the libraries. With the rapid advancement in computer technology along with information technology, libraries and information centers have been blessed with electronic materials and therefore libraries are gradually changing from traditional library to electronic libraries by procuring and providing access electronic information resources. Libraries nowadays require updating with latest computer hardware and software's infrastructure, which are essentially required to provide access to the e-resources both in offline and online mode. It is becoming increasingly obvious that providing relevant information services to the legal practitioners regularly will to alarge extent help them to be more active and perform better in their profession.

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