



BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGING E-JOURNAL CONSORTIA IN 21ST CENTURY ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT:

Library consortium is one of the solutions to overcome this problem. However due to ever increasing prices of journals, vender dominated market, lack of competition and for other reasons. This paper discusses need for consortia, types, advantages of consortium.

Libraries have experienced many transformations along with time. Scenario has further changed with the information explosion and advent of internet and telecommunication technologies. Information seeking has become much more complex due to ever increasing amount of data, in both print and electronic forms, and no single library is self sufficient to purchase all the books/ e-books , journals/ e- journals and other library documents within their library budgets.

Keywords: *e-journals, Consortia, IT, ICT, J-Gate and FORSA, etc.*

INTRODUCTION:

The word consortium has been derived from Latin meaning association or partnership. An e-journal consortium means the collaborative acquisition of access rights to electronic databases and journals. The aim of consortia is to achieve what the members the group cannot achieve individually. All types of libraries and Information centers are not in a position to subscribe all the information resources required by their users. Not even a single library can meet the thrust of knowledge required by all the readers from its stock of information to the full extent.

To solve this, libraries have started library cooperation i.e. interlibrary loan (ILL), resource sharing and library consortium etc. Basic purpose of consortia is sharing of resources, money and manpower. In the digital context, it is the access to information rather than holding information.

Access to the e-resources and the subscription amount is shared among the participating libraries. Significant price reduction can be achieved through consortium and individual libraries in the consortium will have collaborative acquisition of access rights to databases and e-journals.

LIBRARY CONSORTIA: CONCEPT AND MEANING:

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary describes consortium as a group of people, countries, and companies etc. who are working together on a particular subject. A library consortium is a group of libraries that agree to share their resources to satisfy the needs of users. Library consortium is a group of community of value creating entities, generating value through an aggregation of library units within and across organizations. The value creation could be enhanced through resource sharing processes, products and service offerings of the participating library units in a consortium.

IMPORTANCE OF CONSORTIA:

Information is a national resource and it is necessary for national development. As information becomes a necessary resource and commodity in the digital era, providing information services is more important to all types of organizations. In academic libraries librarians are faced with the challenge of providing better services with decreased budgets. E-publishing has brought a revolution in journals publication, subscription and access and delivery mechanism. The ability to access journals online has led to a new and still evolving, form a cooperation among libraries and information centers, every individual library now subscribes to a smaller number of journals, usually those most relevant to their organization, and the libraries then come together to share their journal electronically through a consortium.

NEED FOR BUILDING LIBRARY CONSORTIA:

1. The exponential growth of knowledge

2. The development in scientific publishing and price policies posed new challenges and opportunities for academic libraries in purchasing and managing the serials within their restricted budget.
3. To reduce the cost of member library operations.
4. The rapid technological developments have resulted in a constant pressure for new hardware and education and training of library staff.

REASONS FOR INFORMATION OF CONSORTIA:

Potter (1997) identifying the following reasons for information of consortia.

1. Better sharing for existing resources and jointly acquiring new resources at great savings.
2. Providing enhanced library services with an emphasis on access to new electronic resources including databases and services offered through the internet and www.
3. Expediting interlibrary borrowing, which has evolved in to providing as many electronic resources as possible at the lowest cost to consortia members?

Allen and Hirson (1998) indicated that new library consortia developed primarily for three reasons.

1. To leverage resources by sharing existing collections on resources through virtual union catalogues and material delivery services that provides reciprocal access from member library holdings.
2. To reduce the cost of member library operations by obtaining coup purchase price for information products and
3. To bring pressures to bear on information providers to reduce the rate of rise in the cost of purchasing information.

TYPES OF CONSORTIUM:

- **Open consortium:** In this type, libraries are free to join and leave as and when they please. Member libraries are usually homogeneous in nature

and require cross sharing of the resources in a specific subject area for example, INDEST consortium of MHRD, Government of India.

- **Closed consortium:** This type of consortium is formed by coalition, affiliation and collaboration among exclusive member libraries. For example CSIR, DAE and IIM consortia.
- **Centrally funded:** In this type, a parent body or the coordinating agency will have the financial responsibility for running the consortium. For example CSIR, INDEST, ICMR consortia etc.
- **Shared Budget:** In this type management of funds and other aspects are handled individually by the member libraries. For example IIM and Forum for resource sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics (FORSA)
- **Publishers Initiative:** Certain publishers are also encouraging consortium formation by giving a deep discount in prices to the member libraries. For example Emeralds publishing group.
- **National consortium:** This is a model perceived at national level which includes member libraries from one country.
- **International consortium:** The end of this model is international level.

CONSORTIA INITIATIVES: INDIAN SCENARIO:

1. UGC- INFONET:

UGC-Infonet E journals consortium has been set up by the chairman, UGC to promote the use of electronic databases and full text access to journals by the research and academic community in the country. The faculty research scholars' and students of universities covered under UGC are the primary beneficiaries; however this scheme will be extended to colleges very soon. The scheme likely to be open to other institutions such as ICAR and other institutions offer signing MoU with UGC/ INFLIBNET.

2. INDEST:

The Ministry of Human Resource Development has set up the Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology. (INDEST) Consortium is the most ambitious initiative of its type so far in India. It would not only benefit 38 major technological institutions in the country including

(IITs, IISc, NITs, RECs and others), being an open ended propositions, it also invites all AICTE accredited and UGC affiliated institutions to join hands with the leading engineering and technological institutions in the country.

3. J- GATE:

J- Gate is an e-journal service initiative in India. J- Gate is an e-journal portal and access gateway. It provides means of access to global literature in scholarly and research journal. It aim to help users in-

1. Browsing table of contents (TOC) of 8000+ e-journals.
2. Searching a well indexed bibliographic database of journal articles from these journals.
3. Subscribed titles will be maintained.
4. The most important feature is that the members are not burdened with subscribing to peripheral and less important journals, which is a standard feature of building together by publishers.

4. FORSA:

The Forum for resource sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics is a consortium of Raman Research Institute. In this consortium, subscription for both print and electronic format is paid by the supplier. Each member maintains its own print subscription and by paying an additional twelve percent of its print subscriptions can access the journals subscribed by other libraries electronically.

5. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR):

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has also formed a Consortium for which National Institute of Science, Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR), a constituent establishment of CSIR formed with the merger of INSDOC and NISCOM, has been identified as the nodal agency. To augment CSIR research and development activities, NISCAIR implemented an agency for the process of providing access to globally available electronic journals to the entire S&T staff of CSIR. On behalf of CSIR, it has entered into an agreement with Elsevier science to access its odd 1,500 e-journals and intends to strengthen further its information resources base by subscribing access to more journals published globally. CSIR consortium

extended its access by creating appropriate on consortium basis with the other providers of e-journals.

Besides these, many consortia are being run successfully by different organization, these are-

- IIM LIBRARY Consortia, [<http://www.iimb.erner.in/>]
- ICICI Knowledge Park, [<http://www.iciciknowledgepark.com>]
- DAE Library Consortium, [<http://www.rifr.res.in/~libws/>]
- ICMR Library Consortia, [<http://www.jccc-icmr.informindia.co.in/about/about.sap>]
- HELINET (Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka) [<http://www.rguhs.ac.in/hn/newhell.htm>]

CONCLUSIONS:

Many initiatives have been initiated in India for the formation of library consortia. Many library consortia in India are doing well and many libraries are benefited but at the same time library consortia are not free from problems. Various issues related to consortia like uninterrupted online access, perpetual access to back issues, pricing, licensing, copyright and archival solutions etc are pinpointed and need to be strategically tackled and well addressed to get the best out of the consortia.

Library consortia are at the doorsteps to prove cooperation locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. It is an encouraging sign with number of consortia efforts are undergoing in India. But consortia efforts are time consuming, frustrating and difficult to build and maintained by groups of interested institutions in India. Hence, it is suggested that the issues can be taken at central Government level and form a national level consortia covering all the educational and research libraries irrespective of ministry, departments and states in India. This will provide good opportunities for exploiting the consortia resources effectively and efficiently in use.

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