



CONSORTIA: AS A TOOL TO ACCESS E-RESOURCES IN HEALTH SCIENCE LIBRARY USERS

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Abstract:

The idea of consortium is not new. There were instances of several libraries coming together voluntarily for the mutual benefit of respective health science library users just like cooperatives, it was the earliest stage of library cooperation. In the second stage, computerized networks come into vogue for sharing of resources. Till this period, the library resources were mainly in traditional printed format. The networks created their bibliographical databases. The users of the participating libraries could get the required documents from other libraries through consortia. With the advent of e-resources, the concept of consortia has been mooted mainly for acquisition of e-journals e-books and e-newspapers. As the resources that are procured today through the consortium are mainly e-resources, it has become possible for the health science library users to access and download the required materials without even going through the elaborate process of inter-library lending. Though library consortia have been created with narrow purpose, these can be turned into efficient instruments for sharing all types of health science library resource.

Key words: E-resources, Consortia, User study, Resources sharing, Health Science Libraries.

Introduction:

Libraries, especially health science libraries have long formed consortia for the purpose of sharing existing physical resources--principally books and journals held by member libraries. Library consortia, does not have any remarkable history but the consortia arrangements started with the concept of resource sharing since long back. In 1990's, new types of library consortia began to flourish that exploited the advances in information technology. The global development of OCLC in USA is a prime example.

In India, major initiatives are regarding consortium is J-GATE form In formatics India, IITS-BARC-TIFR Co-

operation, TIFR Libraries Consortium, ISI Library consortia, SNTD consortia of LISA, STI Network, FORSA consortia, INDSET and INFLIBNET consortium under UGC. Specially for health science library NML, MeDLine, MeDPub, these are the examples.

Definitions of Consortia:

A Consortium could be described as a group of organizations who come together to fulfill a combined objective that usefully requires co-operation and the sharing of resources. And need to have a clear mutual goal in order to ensure their success. The aim should be to deliver "more than the sum of the individual

parts”. A library Consortium formation can be local, regional, state, national and inter institutional level.

Need of Consortium:

Access to resources is now considered more important than the collection building. The consortium facilitates the libraries to get the benefit of wider access to electronic resources at affordable cost and at the best terms of licenses. A consortium, with the collective strength of resources of various institutions available to it, is in a better position to resolve the problems of managing, organizing and archiving the electronic resources. Some of the major issues that address the need for consortium are:

- Indian Universities are finding it hard to maintain the subscriptions even for core journals due to ever increasing cost of the journal subscriptions and also a shrinking budget.
- Academic and research users can now hope to have access to their learned journal articles in electronic form.
- The average number of subscriptions to international journals by Indian universities is very less than the western countries.
- There should be an increase in the availability of information in electronic form with more and more literature published in e-form

Consortia Models:

Various types of consortia models are as follows:

• **Open Consortia:**

This type of consortia is open ended and provides facility for the libraries to join and leave as they please. In this case, publishers define a minimum number of libraries for the consortium to take-off, at a specific rate per product. This type of

consortia are generally driven by small homogeneous groups who have a need to cross-share the resources in a specific subject area. INDEST Consortium run by the Ministry of HRD, GOI, is an example to this. Disclosed Group Consortia the closed group consortium stays exclusive with in a defined group. This type of consortia emerges either by coalition, affiliation and collaboration among them (CSIR, DAE, IIM Consortium). Here the information and operation of the consortia guidelines and its administration are fairly simple and easy.

• **Centrally Funded Model:**

In this model, the very existence of the consortium will solely depend on the central funding agency. The strength of this model is that the financial responsibility of running the consortium is shouldered by the parent body. INDEST, UGC INFONET, CSIR, ICMR Consortia etc. are examples of this model.

• **Shared-Budget Model:**

In this model the participating libraries take the lead and form the consortium. IIM and FORSA are examples of this model. The operational aspects of the consortium especially the management of funds etc. are individually handled. Entering into an MoU for a better and strong footing is always recommended for this of this model.

• **National Consortium:**

This is a conceptual model or a framework as far as India is concerned, which is not being seriously attempted by any of the ongoing consortia in the country. There are some isolated efforts from UGC Infonet and INDEST in this regard, but they are yet to make any significant strides. National level licensing of information products could be achieved towards this end.

• **Publisher Initiatives:**

In addition to the above, India has seen publisher initiated consortia models

too, coming up in the recent years. The Emerald Full-Text Library published by the Emerald Publishing Group (formerly MCB University Press) is an example to this. Here, the publisher offered a deep discounted consortium price to the participating libraries on a national level. The pre-condition was that there should not be any drop in their print subscriptions.

Advantages of Library Consortia:

- Library consortia enrich the educational, intellectual, informational and social aspirations of users through the co-operative provision of superior quality library resources and services made available to the users. Many electronic products, normally out of reach for a single institution, are made available to them.
- Formation of library consortia allows gaining competitive advantage by pooling resources, mutual interests and complementary skills which develop as a result of consortia, bring with them better solutions and help in bridging the gap between information and resource deficient libraries. A major priority of libraries is cooperative collection development, which aims to increase the scope of information resources available locally to faculty and students of the institutions participating in the consortia.
- Consortia link libraries into an effective network of cooperative entities that benefit the users. Every library is liable to send their respective holdings to other libraries under a resource sharing program. The main purpose is to improve the ability of libraries to serve their users through interlibrary cooperation. Consortia are ambitious network of

both electronic and non-electronic resources and services.

- Enable libraries to procure more resources with less finance and ultimately help them to create library beyond four walls

Consortia Licensing:

- Consortia licensing is a legal process of acquiring usage rights of the intellectual property governed by the copyright laws for a community of members. License should address following:
 - Publishers and consortium sign license agreement which is binding for both. The standard license agreement addresses following clauses:
 - Authorized users
 - Restriction of commercial use
 - Course packs
 - Electronic reserves
 - Fees, Members, secure network, subscription period, usage rights, ILL and other terms and conditions etc.

Simultaneous Users:

There should be no limit on number of simultaneous user on any of the resources subscribed by the Consortium. Any number of users can access e-resources including e-journals and bibliographic databases at any given time.

Walk-In Users:

Walk-in users, physically present at the subscribing institute should also be allowed to use the resources

Inclusion of Additional Titles:

The Licensor should provide access to new journal titles that are added during the contract period at no additional cost.

Electronic Link:

Licensors should use suitable technology to establish electronic links to all the articles of licensed materials.

Print Copy of Journal:

A print copy of the digital content should be kept as a backup of journals subscribed under the consortium

Perpetual Access and Archival Rights:

In case of termination of the agreement or on the expiry of the agreement, licensor should extend perpetual access to e-resources for the paid period of subscription along with their back files offered during the subscription period

Print-Independent Subscription:

Subscription to e-resources should be print-independent. Discontinuation of print subscription which is available through consortium should not be binding to member Institutes. Protection on Increase of Price:

There should be no annual increase of the price. Annual increment of the price should be below 5%.

Inter Library Loan:

Licensee should be allowed to fulfil ILL requests from non-authorized users using (Ariel software) electronic copy of article downloaded from the licensor's Web site

Conclusion:

The consortium, with its collective strength of participating institutions, has attracted highly discounted rates of subscription with most favorable terms of agreement. Consortia are tools, which will aid in exploiting the features of the e-journals, e-books as well as in effecting savings.

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