Some Issues in Framing Information Sharing Consortium

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ABSTRACT: *In recent years, smartphones have surpassed the importance of one's shadow. When an individual is functioning without a smartphone, he feels uneasy, as if something is missing or frightened of losing contact with friends and family. The study showed how UG and PG Library and Information Science students at Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University used intelligent devices. The study's objectives were met through the use of an online questionnaire. The results reveal that every respondent has a smartphone, and the most popular app among students is WhatsApp. According to the findings, respondents believe that they have difficulty solving study-related problems if Internet connectivity is unavailable. In addition, some respondents think that mobile phones distract them and impact their health. The findings of this study show that while mobile devices are beneficial for studying these days, they should be used with parental supervision.*

1. Introduction

In this era of information and communication technology, the nature of information access activities of the end-users has changed considerably, and the primary focus and access are shifted from library-based to internet-based. There is a paradigm shift in the way information is organized and accessed. Libraries are moving from conventional printed resources to subscribed online content and integrating open information with the subscribed resources. As the subscription cost of these information sources is increasing. Every year, there is a need for ensuring optimum access to information economically. Libraries worldwide manage the price increase by co-operative procurement of online resources and providing full access. Many research and development organizations in India have initiated the formation of library consortia to provide better access to more information at an affordable cost.

The networking of libraries and information centers and modern communication technologies played a dominant role in establishing resource-sharing systems and consortia. It can be through many, including the below-specified ones: Use of computer and communication network for resource sharing;

Use of National, International databases through communication networks, and full-text online Systems through Article Delivery over Networked Information System.

2. Concept behind Library Consortium
The word 'Consortia' was originated from Latin in the early 19th Century in the sense of partnership. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary describes consortium as a group of people, countries, companies, etc., working together on a particular project'. A library consortium is a group of libraries that agree to share their resources to satisfy users' needs. A library consortium is a community of value-creating entities, generating value through aggregating 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.

A library consortium is a "community (a co-operative) of two or more information agencies which are formally agreed to coordinate, co-operate or consolidate certain functions to achieve mutual objectives and benefits. Consortia may be formed on a local, regional, national, or international basis, on a functional or format basis, or on a subject basis. The meaning of consortia is just coming together of libraries having common interests and needs to achieve a common goal beyond what an individual library could achieve on its own. An e-journal consortium means the collaborative acquisition of access rights to electronic databases and journals. Consortia aim to achieve what the group members cannot achieve individually. From the above views, it is clear that the consortium is an association of two or more individuals, companies, organizations, or governments (or any combination of these entities) to participate in the everyday activity or pool their resources for achieving a common goal.

3. Consortiums: Perspectives

In the current work, we intend to address a few issues about the consortium, which may enable understanding the consortium concept and its requirements.

• Cost-effective subscription and management of common online resources for its libraries. The journals have increased tremendously in the last few decades, increasing the prices of academic journals. The problem is inflationary journal prices.

• Implementation of a standard search engine for online resources across its member libraries. Many sources are scattered in various platforms, which are typically heterogeneous, making it difficult to do an integrated search. Hence, to bring a standard search interface, the union of these sources is required.

• Creation of a shared Institutional Repository for internally generated information. At the same time, it is essential to create a shared knowledge repository of sources is imperative to bring a united search.

• Creation of required IT infrastructure to provide information anytime from anywhere for its members. The integration of dispersed sources is possible only when inflicting information technology in information processing and management.

• Better rates and terms for the purchase of electronic journals. The concept of the consortium has to bring down the cost of online journals.

• To avoid duplication of subscription of Journals and E-resources and promote the rational use of funds by the consortia members. Implementing this concept will help to eliminate duplicate or redundant acquisition.

• To provide access to consortium holdings recorded in the consortium union catalog to know the information location. When specific groups are identified, the consortiums can locate the correct source.

4. Scope of the Consortiums
• The consortiums have a significant role in strengthening the library resources and services and ensuring cooperation and communication among the member institutions.

• They enable strengthening the pooling, sharing, and electronically accessing the information resources; otherwise, they will go the less-used ones.

● They further ensure access to worldwide literature to different kinds of users.

● To nucleate the culture of electronic access resulting in the evolution of digital libraries. It is possible because of the infusion of digital resources in the information access pattern of end-users.

● Even the interlibrary loan system between the member Institutions is a traditional kind of activity; it helps to lay down the essential practice of sharing the resources by resorting to various transfer methods.

Why do we resort to Library Consortiums?
Due to the development of the Internet, the World Wide Web, and the information revolution, information is provided on the users' desktops. Electronic publishing of scholarly journals willingness of publishers for consortia has given new opportunities for libraries to provide quick access to information. Libraries need to form consortiums due to the following reasons:

Overloaded Budgets: The price for documents continuously increases, and there is always a lack of funding for academic libraries for medical journals. Libraries are spending a more significant portion of their budgetary allocations to procure or subscribe electronic resources. A consortium provided the facilities to the member libraries to benefit from broader access to electronic resources at affordable cost and the best terms of licenses.

➢ Information Explosion: The rapid growth in the production of information/knowledge has made it impossible for the individual library to acquire all the relevant information. The libraries have become more and more dependent on mutual lending to meet the requirements of their users. A consortium can resolve the problems of managing, organizing, and archiving electronic resources.

➢ Self-Sufficiency: The speedy technological developments have pressured libraries to have new hardware, software, and library staff education and training. With the explosion of information in many forms, it is difficult for every library to be entirely sufficient to provide the information needs of its user. Financial constraints, space, human resources inadequacies are also the need for the libraries to opt for the consortia approach.

➢ **Publisher's Interest:** This approach has helped get attractive discounted rates. Most publishes responded positively to the call of consortia and are enthusiastic about giving the best possible offers. Another reason for the eagerness of publishers to enter the Indian market, which holds very high future potential.

➢ **User Demands:** The technology has changed expectations of researchers, their patience, and their willingness to accept services that are available on demand. Web-based electronic resources are an apt answer to the expectations of users. Library users want access to that material as quickly as possible, and many of them want information on their computer screens.

➢ **Speedy Access:** The technology provides more incredible speed and the economy in delivering information. The application of new technologies, i.e., WWW, has helped the users deliver fast information about their needs.

➢ **Quality of Research:** The research productivity of all institutions is expected to improve with increased access to international e-databases and full-text resources, so libraries are willing to add electronic resources to their collection and opt for consortia approach.

➢ **Changing role of Librarians:** This concept has a tremendous influence on the consortia initiatives. The changing role of the librarian as a conservator to a navigator/disseminator of information has enhanced the value of library consortia.

➢ **For the up-dated Developments:** Consortia help to have a watchful eye on coming latest technological changes in the publishing industry and associated legislation which can affect the libraries directly or indirectly.

Consortium benefits
The institution of consortiums leads to the sharing of numerous benefits to the participating institutions.

➢ Consortia-based subscription to electronic resources provides access to a broader number of electronic resources at a substantially lower cost. It provides each institution with the ability to share resources without affecting the participating institutions.

➤ The collections of the Consortium libraries enable each member library to support scholarly research for its users; optimum utilization of funds and ensure more comprehensive access

➤ Facilities to build up digital libraries with distributed repositories and remote access.

➤ The functioning ultimately helps provide better information-based services like CAS and SDI.

➤ Electronic Journals demand neither library space nor shelling costs, nor can they be stolen from the library.

➤ The consortium has been offered better terms of licenses for use, archival access, and preservation of subscribed electronic resources.

➤ With the less economic expansion, staff development and interaction enhance the quality of service; the overall cost such as acquisition, maintenance, archiving, and other associated activities is achieved by forming a consortium.

➤ The end-users can reap the benefits of more resources than would be available through one library. The consortium acts as a means for all member libraries and negotiates a lower purchase price than that available to the individual institution.

➤ Consortiums provide better library services with access to new electronic resources, including online databases and Internet and World Wide Web services.

Consortium Shortcomings

Some of the critical shortcomings of the library consortium are described in the current section.

➤ Non-existence of a printed copy of Journals. Still, many users are opted to access print resources that are denied in the digital mode.

➤ Require training in handling digital resources, including technology, by the members.

➤ Consortia require investments in licensees and information and communication technology.

➤ Copyright problems exist as many publishers challenge the over-use or non-permitted use legally

➤ Unreliable telecommunication links, Internet Access, and insufficient bandwidth cause issues-particularly in the remote physical location

➤ Lack of archiving and back files availability. Many subscriptions, once discontinued, will lead to the non-availability

➤ Users' interest in accepting or not accepting of electronic format, e-journals

How to Implement?:

There are many essential elements that a library needs to consider in adopting a consortium approach. Before implementing this approach, the host library should have taken the following decisions:

➤ First, find out the area of interest and group other institutions/libraries working on the same domain or working on similar disciplines. A list of institutes/libraries needs to be prepared electronically to allow dynamic updating.

➤ Find common areas of interest for setting the goals and developing the minimum everyday tasks.

➤ To reach the goals, formulate a draft set of rules and regulations (i.e., member institution/library responsibilities, financial contribution, hardware, software, etc.).

➤ Select the e-resource providers and develop criteria for selection in the shared pool, including coverage, scope, format, discount, limitation, access method (abstract/full text), renewal, output options, search functionalities, post-retrieval facilities,

and user interface.

➢ A web interface (with login password-based access to resources from member libraries) needs to develop with the facility for a discovery search interface to support single-window access to all procured e-resources;

➢ An ERMS is required to manage to license of journals and payment to publishers;

➢ All expenditure may be managed centrally, or it may be funded cooperatively.

➢ Formulate a committee and select the decisions making body for the consortia. The findings given the above-stated issues may be finalized at the meeting. The problems (including finding a suitable name for the consortium) related to the consortium's development may also be discussed in length in the said meeting.

5. Conclusion

Currently, consortia-based services are very much effective for users. Most users are less interested in going to the library physically within a specific time. They are very much interested in searching the documents over the internet. On the other side, it is impossible to meet the users' demands. Therefore, the consortia-based approach can fulfill the gap. The government has been spending a sufficient amount of money to provide access to e-resources to Indian libraries through the consortia-based system for their users. So, every user must be oriented from the latest technologies to use e-resources in minimum efforts. The RSS feeds, e-mail alerts and Google Reader are very effective tools that provide the latest desired scholarly information, frequently saving users' time. The techniques described in this paper for the effective use of e-resources are easy and valuable for users, especially academicians and researchers.

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