

Library Consortia: An Overview

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Abstract: The present paper briefly discusses the concept, need, factors, advantages and disadvantages of library consortia. No library is island on the other hand there is a lot of literature published every year. It becomes very difficult for the libraries to procure all the information/document which is required to its users. The Phenomenon of consortia or group of libraries maintaining information resources together has become very common these days The solution to this problem is library consortia.

Keywords: Library Consortia, Information explosion.

1)Introduction: It is not possible for one library or information centers to hold the full stock of information resources or to procure all information, which may be in demand by its clientele. Even not a single library or information center can meet the thrust of knowledge of all the readers from its holdings. To solve this problem, library cooperation started long ago, such as interlibrary loan, document delivery, library networks, etc. At present, the more accepted system of resource sharing is called library consortia Information explosion and inadequate library fund forced libraries to adopt new technology to reduce the cost of information. Consortia are commonly formed to increase the purchasing capacity of the collaborating institutions. Consortia may be formed at a local, regional, national or international level, on a functional or format basis, or on subject basis. The basic premise of consortia is that its members can collectively

achieve more than what they can achieve as individual institutions.

2)Definitions of library consortia: Library consortia is a network for buying and accessing e-information in a cooperative arrangement among a group of libraries in providing instant access to greater resources for the users of the individual libraries. One of the libraries or agencies of the consortia works as coordinator for identification of libraries for each publisher, negotiation, legal matters, etc. Library consortia may vary from being decentralized to highly centralize in nature. The degree of centralization of consortium is the primary factor affecting not only how member institutions interact with one another, but also maintain relationship with external party (publisher/vendor). More decentralized the consortium, the greater the degree of autonomy each member retains.

Consortia could be described as "an association of independent libraries and /library systems established by formal agreement, usually for the purpose of

resource sharing". According to American Heritage Dictionary a consortium is "a cooperative arrangement among groups or institution," or "an association or society". According to Oxford English

3) Need of Library Consortia: Is there need of library consortia of course the answer is yes. 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.

There are several factors forced libraries to adapt new technology that is library consortia.

A) Information Explosion : Library material , which have gone exponentially in many forms and formats like books, periodicals, research papers and non-book materials have made it beyond the control of a library to acquire all the materials which are being produced

B) Diversity of users need: the need of users is also different for example Students need text books for their study but the professors may require some reference books for the reference purpose. To fulfill all the requirement by library is not possible.

C) Financial Problem: Finance is very important for an any institutions. The cost of books and subscription are increasing year by year. It is becoming very difficult to purchase new books and to maintain journal's subscription to single library.

D) Impossibility of self-sufficiency: Single library or information center can meet the thrust of knowledge of all the readers from its holdings.

E) 4) Advantages of Library Consortia: A consortium is able to speak with one voice to vendors, policymakers and funders. Shared resources and jointly planned activities enable member libraries to provide more services, more effectively.

Through smart negotiations and joint purchasing agreements, library consortia can significantly reduce the costs of commercial e-resources and

achieve better terms and conditions of use, thereby maximizing value for money.

Participating Libraries will get the following advantage.

i) Reduced Information Cost: Many libraries currently subscribe only to those journals that they can afford. Though interested in other journals yet they cannot afford to provide access to them. Consortia approach helps them to provide the access.

ii) Access to More Resources than the Capabilities: A number of publishers offer consortia. If the library's purchase power is big enough they provide access to their whole range of journals – that is, every member of the consortium gets electronic access not only to the journals currently subscribed to but also to all the journals published in the field.

ii) Promoting the Rational Use of Funds: By forming consortia the purchasing power of the collaborating institutions can expand the resource availability and offer automated services.

iii) Ensuring Continuous Subscription: The continuous subscription to the periodicals subscribed is ensuring in library consortia.

iv) Document Delivery Services: Inter-libraries loan services will grow and it is interlinked with the search of the union catalogues which will build effective DDS. Delivery of documents will be fast, either electronically through Xeroxing, fax, courier or e-mail.

5) Disadvantages of Library Consortia: Following are some of the probable drawback of the consortia:

- a) It requires training for library staff.
- b) User prefers printed copy than e-version.
- d) Copyright problem.
- e) Internet is necessary for accessing the e-journals.

d) Development of Library Consortia in India: Library consortia has become quite popular in India and many institutions some of which are furnish below has made use of it.

- i) Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) e-Journals Consortium <http://124.124.221.7>
- ii) The Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy & Astrophysics (FORSA) <http://www.iip.res.in/library/forsa.html>
- iii) Health Sciences Library & Information Network (HELINET) <http://www.rguhs.ac.in/hn/newhell.htm>
- iv) Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI) Knowledge Park <http://www.iciciknowledgepark.com/>
- v) The Indian Institute of Management (IIM)'s Library Consortia.
- vi) Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology (INDEST) Consortium <http://paniit.iitd.ac.in/indest/>
- vii) UGC-DAE Consortium for Scientific Research <http://www.tifr.res.in/libws/>
- viii) UGC- INFONET <http://web.inflibnet.ac.in/info/ugcinfonet/ugcinfonet.jsp>
- ix) ISRO Library Consortium, ICMR Library Consortium, etc.

6) Types of Consortia: The types of consortia identified are generally based on various models evolved in India in variety of forms depending upon participations' affiliation and funding sources.

a) Open Consortia: This type of consortia is very flexible and it is the wish of members of consortia to join and leave at any time when they please. INDEST Consortium is an example to this.

b) Closed Consortia: It is within defined group either by affiliation and collaboration, among them like CSIR, DAE, IIM Consortium and the formation and operation of the consortia guidelines and its administration are fairly simple and easy.

c) Centrally Funded Model: In this model, consortium will solely depend on the parent body. A few examples are INFONET by UGC, ICMR, and CSIR by DSIR.

d) Publishers Initiatives: The Emerald Full-Text Library published by the Emerald Publishing Group (formerly MCB University Press) is recent example. Here, consortium members will get deep discount price to the participating libraries.

e) National Consortium: The end of this model is national level licensing of products, like INDEST, UGC INFONET.

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