

**FREELY AVAILABLE ONLINE INFORMATION SOURCES AND
THEIR IMPACT ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES**

By

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ABSTRACT

Since past few years free online information sources like e-journals, e-books, e-data-bases have increased considerably. The traditional library systems are going to transform into digital library systems and different projects like Gutenberg e-book project, Virginia Tech. Digital Library Project, University of California Digital Library project etc. have been undertaken. The author has started to compile the links of such freely available online information sources on the Internet at URL: http://www.geocities.com/ghosh_tbd and described the same in this paper. The paper also describes the impact on collection development, budget and technical processing etc. of the Library and Information centre.

Keywords: Information Sources, Free Information Sources –Internet, Digital Library, Virtual Library

0. INTRODUCTION

Libraries are important resources for individual as well as for communities and organizations. For centuries Libraries have been regarded as depository of books, manuscripts, journals, newspapers and other forms of the printed materials. Gradually the process of recording the information has changed and is reflected in the growth and variety of sources. The electronic revolution, specifically, Internet is narrowing the information gap. The power of web technology is enabling the generator of information to disseminate their creativity at low cost and high speed.

Internet is the gateway for libraries and information centers to enter the Electronic Information Era and is providing the information, generated by different organizations, institutions, research centers and individuals all over the world.

1. ONLINE ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SOURCES

Due to emergence of Web technology, individuals, organizations and institutions are publishing their scholarly papers and publications on the Internet and the publishers are also changing their publication mode from print version to online electronic version.

Vast resources are available on Internet which we can access in our library and information centers and provide the information to our users. Some of the important resources available on the Internet include Electronic Books, Electronic journals, Dictionaries, Directories, Reports, Patents, Standards, Library Catalogue, Newspapers, Magazines, Databases, Homepage of companies, Institutions, Organizations, Associations, individuals etc.

2. PROBLEMS OF LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES TO ACCESS

Though the Internet provides an open global networked environment for seamless publishing and access to information, yet, it is very difficult for small and medium sized libraries in India to procure and access these online sources, like, online e-journals, e-books, e-databases etc. due to their financial

crunch. Moreover, some of the university libraries in India are not having sufficient fund to subscribe the core journals which are urgently necessary for research activities. In this situation the Library and Information professionals should take their own initiative to exploit the Internet for free available online resources.

The place for exploitation of Internet by the Library and Information Centres are unlimited and endless. Internet provides a wealth of information to Library and Information Centres. It also provides free access to variety of information sources such as online e-books, e- Journals both full text, abstracts and contents depending on the publisher's policy, e- news letters and so on.

3. INITIATIVE

The present Era of 21st Century are the days of Electronic Era. Information is moving in the air around us. We have to catch it and make available to our users. It can only be through Internet. Every Library and Information Centre in our country should be attached with Internet and should create a homepage. While performing the day to day work and meeting information needs of the different types of users the author has observed that plenty of online electronic journals, electronic books online databases etc. are available free of charge and the author has started to compile these important sites at the URL http://www.geocities.com/ghosh_tbd under the heading "Virtual Library" for the use of the public. This site includes link with e- books, e-journals and magazines, Engineering Institutions and Organization, Libraries- Virtual Libraries-Digital Libraries, databases, Online reference sources, Online document delivery, Publisher's link and Earthquake information etc.

4. FREE ONLINE INFORMATION SOURCES

Online information sources are referred to be free when access to the sources is not dependent on a subscription or membership in an organization or a publisher. Among the freely available online information sources which are identified by the author and compiled at the above mentioned URL, following are the important ones.

4.1 Electronic Books ([http://www .geocities.com/ghosh_tbd/inf3.html](http://www.geocities.com/ghosh_tbd/inf3.html))

This section provides link of some organizations and universities who have taken initiatives to provide free access to thousands of online e-books free of charges.

4.1.1 Gutenberg Project on electronic books online

([http://www .promo.net/pg](http://www.promo.net/pg))

Thousands of e-books are available in this site free of charge. The site is having browsing facility by Author, and by Title. It also provides advanced search facility by Author or by Title (words). Author wise list of e-books is available at [http://www.promo.net/pg/ authors .zip](http://www.promo.net/pg/authors.zip) and Title wise list of e-books is available at [http : //www .promo. net/pg/titles .zip](http://www.promo.net/pg/titles.zip) and current list of e-books is' available as GUTINDEXALL at the FTP site at the University of North Carolina <ftp://ibiblio.org/pub/docs/books/gutenberg/GUTINDEXALL>

4.1.2 The Online Books Page (<http://digital.library.unenn.edu/books/>)

The Online Books Page is a website that facilitates access to books that are freely readable over the Internet. This site include the different sections like Books Online, News, Features, Archives. The Online Books Page was founded and is edited, by John Mark Ockerbloom. He

is a digital library planner and researcher at the University of Pennsylvania. The online books listed on this page have been authored, placed online and hosted by a wide variety of individuals and groups throughout the world. The local index of this page includes more than 15,000 English works in various formats. All are free for personal, non commercial use. Users can search:

- Listing by Author and Title.
- Browse new listings
- Browse by Author
- Browse by Title
- Browse by subject
- Browse Serial Archives

4.1.3 Banned Books Online (<http://di2ital.unenn.edu/books/banned-books.html>)

This special exhibit of books have been the objects of censorship or censorship attempts. The books featured here ranging from *Ulysses* to *Little Red Riding Hood*, have been selected from the index of The Online Books Page.

4.1.4 University of Virginia's E-Book Library

(<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/ebooks/ebooklist.html>)

In this site 1,600 e-books are publicly available online. It includes British and American fiction, major authors, children's literature, the Bible, Shakespeare, American history, African-American documents and much more.

4.2 Online Electronic Free Journals

(http://www.geocities.com/ghosh_tbd/jnl.html)

Near about 624 online electronic journals are identified and linked in the above mentioned URL. Out of 624 journals 351 journals are available in full text. Subject wise freely available journals in full text are as under. It is mentioned here that the compilation work is under process hence the following statistics is not exhaustive.

Subjects	No. of Journals (Full Text)
Agriculture and Food Science	1
Mathematics	28
Business and Marketing	13
Education	16
Engineering	25
Environment	7
History	2
Information Technology & Internet	41
Law	5
Library & Information Science	45
Life Science	5
Medical & Pharmacy	149
Religion	1
Sociology and Social studies	13
Total	351

In addition to 351 full text journal, Abstracts of 273 journals are also available free of charges.

4.3 Databases (http://www.geocities.com/ghos_tbd/dbase.html)

Near about 29 databases are available free of charge. Out of which following are the most important ones.

4.3.1 AGRICOLA (Agriculture Online Access) <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ag98>

It is maintained by the National Agricultural Library (NAL). It contains two parts i.e.

(1) Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) for Books and (2) Journal articles, book chapters, short reports and reprints selected primarily from the resources described in books etc. There are three ways of searching i.e. (1) Search and browse (2) Keyword search (3) Advanced keyword search.

4.3.2 Earthquake Engineering Abstracts (<http://www.eerc.berkeley.edu>)

This database is maintained by the National Information Service for Earthquake Engineering (NISEE), University of California, Berkeley. This database contains 96,000 abstracts. A maximum of 200 records will be displayed on any individual search.

4.3.3 Un Cover Database (<http://uncweb.carl.org>)

The Un Cover service has now been integrated to Ingenta' s <http://www.ingenta.co> full text delivery service. The contents and abstracts are available free of charges. It contains 12,087,668 articles and 26,529 publications and covers following subject areas:

Agriculture/food Science	Chemistry	Economics & Business	Medicine	Physics/Astronomy
Arts and Humanities	Computer and Information Science	Engineering/Technology	Nursing	Psychology/psychiatry
Biology/ Life science	Earth/ Environmental Science	Mathematics & Statistics	Philosophy & Linguistics	Social sciences

4.3.4 US Patent Full-Text and Full-Page Image Database (<http://uspto.gov/patft>)

This database contains two parts i.e. (1) Patent Grants Database and (2) Patent Applications Database. Patent Grants Database includes full-text since 1976 and full- images since 1790. Patent Application Database is being published since 15th March 2001. The databases are having following searching facilities:

- Quick search
- Advanced Search
- Patent number search (In case of Patent Grant Database)
- Application Number Search (In case of Patent application Database)

4.3.5 ERIC Database (<http://ericir.sys.edu/Eric>)

This database is produced with Public funding by the U.S. Department of Education. Citations found in the database are, therefore, public domain and may be freely copied and redistributed. This includes posting citations on Web sites created by individuals or agencies. The Document citations represent papers, reports, government documents and other materials published outside the journal environment. The database provides both Simple and Advanced Search facilities.

4.3.6 National Library of Medicine Gateway (<http://gateway.nlm.gov/gw/cmd>)

The NLM Gateway allows users to search in multiple retrieval systems at the U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM). The current Gateway searches MEDLINE/Pubmed, OLDMEDLINE, LOCATOR plus, MEDLINE plus, DIRLINE, AIDS Meetings, Health Service research Meetings, Space Life sciences Meetings, and HSRProj.

4.4 Libraries-Virtual Libraries-Digital Libraries.

(http://www.geocities.com/ghosh_tbd/lib.html)

In this section reputed libraries all over the world, different digital libraries and virtual libraries are linked. Among all the libraries following are the most important ones.

4.4.1 World Libraries on the World Wide Web

(<http://www.123world.com/libraries/index.html#t>)

It provides ultimate source of authentic and reliable information about 137 of libraries of the world on the net. This list of libraries includes the link of public libraries, research libraries, state libraries, national archives, libraries of different educational institutions, agricultural and technical libraries, business libraries, science libraries, and IMF libraries all over the world. It is arranged in alphabetical order.

4.4.2 Digital Library of Virginia Tech (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University): (<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu>)

It provides (1) Scholarly Publishing services including E-journals, Electronic theses & dissertations, news, reports, survey database and Virginia Tech Publications and (2) Library Services and Archives including E-reserves, special collections, manuscripts, rare books, University archives and searching digital library and archives.

4.4.3 Digital Library: University of California: (<http://elib.cs.berkeley.edu>)

The University of California, Berkeley Digital Library Project is apart of Digital Libraries Initiative, sponsored by the National Science Foundation and many others. It provides quick access of the collection, overview of the collection, image retrieval by image content, document image analysis and distributed search.

4.4.4 Australian Virtual Engineering Library (<http://avel.edu.au>)

It provides Australian Digital Theses, ENGINE Database from IEAust, SciTech Library Newsletter and Full Text Papers on Biomedicine & Biotechnology, informatics, Nanotechnology, Robotics, Solar Energy, Sustainable Development, Chemical, Civil, Electrical, Environmental and Mechanical and Mining Engineering, Computer Science & I.T. and Engineering Education.

4.4.5 Virtual Libraries (<http://vlib.or~>)

This site contains the link of the virtual libraries on Agriculture, Business and Economics, computing, Communication and Media, Education, Engineering, Humanities, Information & Libraries, International Affairs, Law, Recreation, Regional Studies, Science and Society. It provides alphabetical listing and keyword search facilities.

4.5 Other Information Sources

This compilation work includes the links of other information sources like Online Reference Sources, Document Delivery, Publisher's Link, Earthquake Information etc.

5. IMPACT ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES

There is drastic impact of freely available online information sources on the library services and collection of the library and information centers.

Impact on Collection Development: Freely available e-books, e-journals, online database are the additional sources of collection development and it reduces the space requirement of the library.

Impact on Budget: It reduces the financial crunch of the library & information centers as there is no financial involvement to procure such freely available sources which resides in remote server, except the nominal cost of Internet connectivity and surfing. At the same time it reduces the cost of maintenance such as preservation and binding etc.

Impact on Technical processing and dissemination:

Once the links are created/compiled in the web page of the institution or in any particular site the technical processing of such huge documents like e-books, e-journals etc is not necessary. The users can access their required document and can download the same.

6. CONCLUSION

Mutual exchange of information and resource sharing will be the objective of our professional ethics and it has to be nourished in future for growth and healthy development of our library and information centers. In this situation of limited factors like space, money, manpower and materials etc. there is a need for Inter library cooperation and resource sharing. It is duty of the library and information professionals to find out, which of the sources are useful to their users and to integrate their resources and provide better service to the users. There is no doubt that this type of compilation of the website of freely available online information sources will be more relevant and effective to save the space, time money and manpower of any Library and Information Centre.

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