Consortium Approach to E-Resource Sharing - A Case Study

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Summery:

Increase in journals costs, depleting library budgets and drastic cuts in number of journals has lead to 'Journal Crisis'. As a result, library professionals are facing a big challenge to cope with this situation. The urgent need of the hour is that library professionals should come together for active resource sharing, and as a result of which consortium practice has emerged in the library arena. Various consortia models have emerged in India in variety of forms depending upon sources of funding and participants affiliations. The different models identified are Open Consortia; Closed Group Consortia; Institute Headquarters Funding; Centrally Funding; Shared Budgets and National Models.

In the Open Consortia model, a case study of FORSA is discussed.

Introduction:

- Due to Journals Crisis in the recent past, resource sharing has been the hallmark of libraries for cooperation, coordination, and collaboration in order to effectively use existing print/e-resources to the maximum extent.
- The consortium negotiations are for optimum payment facilitating e-access to more information.
- The recent changes in ICTs have necessitated library and information professionals to change their role of keeper of library documents to that of navigator of information and come closer for actively sharing e-resources.
- In India, library networks already exist between groups of libraries at different levels for resource sharing.
- Emergence of consortium formation was a natural extension to these networks.

Characteristics of successful consortium.

➢ Adequate funding; willingness to participate with open mind and trust.
➢ Have a clear-cut perception; vision, objectives, etc.
➢ Effective management structure at each Institute level.

Types of consortia models in India.

The number of consortia models have emerged in India based on funding sources and participants affiliation, viz.

➢ Open Consortia: FORSA; SNDT's LISA and INDEST;
➢ Closed Group Consortia: CSIR; DAE and IIMs;
➢ Inst.Hqrs Funded Consortia: TIFR; and its branch libraries;
➢ Centrally Funded Consortia: CSIR; INDEST; UGC – Infonet; ICMR;
➢ Shared Budget Models: FORSA; IIMs and HELINET;
➢ National Level Consortia: INDEST; UGC – Infonet and ICARNET (being developed).

Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics (FORSA)

➢ During 1980s, due to tremendous growth of literature, proliferation of information, librarians working in Astronomy institutes in India came together for sharing and organizing literature in the country.
➢ As a result, FORSA was informally launched on 29th July 1981, during a meeting held at Raman Research Institute, Bangalore with a mission and vision to share and exchange information and make best use of available resources in the country. At present there are 12 institutes in the forum, who participate in consortia formation.

FORSA Consortia:

- ➢ This is an open model having participant institutes affiliated to different government departments.
- ➢ This is a model where professionals willingly come forward and support consortia activities.
- ➢ FORSA has realized four consortia deals, viz.
  - **Indian Astrophysics Consortium for Physics /Astronomy journals of Springer online;**
  - **Nature Online Publications;**
  - **Scientific American Online Archive (EBSCO); and**
  - **Lecture Notes in Physics (Springer).**

1. Indian Astrophysics Consortium:

(For Springer-Kluwer Physics/Astronomy Journals deal)
Vendor: M/S. Informatics (India) Limited, Bangalore, India
Participants: 2002 – 2004: ARIES, IIAP, IUCAA, RRI and HRI;
2005–2007: ARIES, IIAP, PRL, RRI and SNBNCBS;

2. Nature Publications Online deal:

(Nature Publishing Group).
Vendor: Direct with the Publisher's Representative in India.
2.1 **Nature online**
Participants:
2002 – 2003: IIAP, IUCAA, NCRA, PRL, RRI and JNCASR;
2003 – 2004: Bose Inst., IIAP, IUCAA, NCRA, PRL, RRI, TIFR
and JNCASR;
2004 – 2005: ARIES, Bose Inst., IIAP, IUCAA, NCRA, PRL,
RRI, TIFR and JNCASR
2005 – 2006: ARIES, Bose Inst., IIAP, IUCAA, PRL, RRI, TIFR
and JNCASR.
2006 –2007 : ARIES, Bose Inst., IIAP, IUCAA, PRL, RRI, TIFR
and JNCASR.

2.2 Nature Physics Online
2007: RRI, JNCASR, Bose Inst., PRL and IIAP;
2.3 Nature Materials Online
2007: RRI, Bose Inst., JNCASR, IACS,
2.4 Nature Photonics Online
2007: RRI, Bose Inst., JNCASR,
2.5 Nature Nanotechnology Online
2007:JNCASR, Bose Inst.

3. Consortium for Scientific American Online Archive:
(Scientific American)
Vendor/Aggregator: EBSCO Research Databases
Participants: 2005-2006; 2006-2008: IIA, IUCAA, NCRA, NCBS, PRL, RRI, and JNCASR

4. Subscription to Lecture Notes in Physics (LNP):
(Springer)
Vendor: Informatics (India) Limited, Banaglore, India.
Participants: IIA, PRL, RRI, TIFR, SNBNCBS….

Consortium Terms and Conditions:

- ➢ License Agreement has to be signed by each participant;
- ➢ Perpetual access is provided for the content and the period subscribed;
- ➢ The back file access is provided form 1997+;
- ➢ The online access is through IP authentication and PW/ID is provided for those who requires;
- ➢ All are COUNTER compliant and Monthly Usage Statistics is provided to each participants;
- ➢ Negotiated for cross e-access for Springer journals with cross e-access fee and cap price for journals subscribed under the consortia;

Problems encountered:

➢ To begin with, consortium with Kluwer in 2002 was our maiden venture without having established guidelines to go into consortium formation.

➢ We have to believe in the middleman, who is expected to work on our behalf.

➢ While negotiating with publishers during 2006 for renewal for 2007, we encountered a problem with single title subscription, i.e. Nature. The publishers have checked downloads and detected one participant having maximum downloads much beyond expected FTEs, with a result, they charged more for the concerned institute. This is the case for dual pricing within the consortium.

➢ Publishers demand single payment at a time, where as it is not possible and to be paid individually.

Lessons Learnt from Consortium Approach:

➢ Selection of e-resources is vendor or publisher driven;

➢ Formal commitment from each consortium participant for a specified period is a must through MOU;

➢ There should be proper monitoring and evaluation of resources subscribed in order to access their continuance of subscriptions.

➢ Creating awareness among the user community about availability of various e-resources subscribed in this consortium.

➢ There should be set guidelines, standards, and procedures and every aspect has to be looked into thoroughly by the group concerned during negotiations.

Conclusions:

With the spurt in recent ICTs, ever changing information-handling activities with thrust on resource sharing, willingness to meet the challenges and working together, consortia formation holds a big promise.

- ➢ What could be our real needs and challenges? They are to provide - expected service to our readers; to build internal consensus among the group; demonstrate integrity and good will with publishers, and every endeavor should be effective negotiations;
- ➢ We live in a very turbulent period - if we can not make expected progress towards instant access to electronic resources - then the key decision makers will shop elsewhere to meet their information requirements;
- ➢ The trend is that e - resources have come to stay and *ipso facto* library consortia;
- ➢ Indian efforts are moving slowly in forming consortia, but the sporadic efforts are not yielding desired results. We need a government funded national consortium with National Site Licensing covering all R & D institutions working under various government departments;
- ➢ It is suggested that consortia with the same goals and e-resources should merge while other consortia with different resources may collaborate for similar products and services to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance purchasing power;
- ➢ The present endeavors are no doubt a step forward for future national level needs and expectations.