Resource sharing and networking of engineering college libraries

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Synopsis

- Need
- Some buzz words
- Inherent limitations
- Some facts & hurdles
- Cost, need & use
- Areas for resource sharing
- Cases
- ✓ ISRO libraries & e-journals
- ✓ User education – web resources
- Conclusion and suggestions

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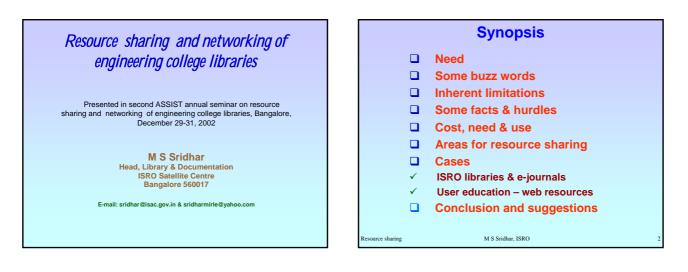## Why resource sharing?

1. **Need for enhanced access to information**
2. **Non uniform distribution of resource – wide disparity in availability of resources**
3. **Need for optimisation of under-used resources - measures of use, spare capacity, identification of less used resources & cost consideration become necessary**
4. **Diverse, inter-disciplinary and ever expanding requirements of users**
5. **Avoid** <u>unnecessary</u> **duplication of resources**
6. **Economy in cooperative common operations - divide up work and share results**
7. **New technologies open up new avenues**

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Some buzz words

A. **E-revolution related:**
- Paperless society & scholar's workstation
- Library as a window for access than a fortress; Shift emphasis from ownership to access; Pay for use of information
- Library without walls & the traditional library will not scale into the next decade

B. **Cooperation related:**
- Collective/ joint ownership of information resources
- Starve and die individually in the information drought (or hang together in the network !)
- Exchange of notes and rationalisation of acquisition
- Common borrower cards for libraries
- Consortia approach

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Inherent limitations

1. **Local non availability of item being shared (a) affects 'current approach' of primary users *(b) leads to loss of browsability and serendipitous value**
2. **Delayed document delivery is inevitable**
3. **Duplication of resources is inevitable**
4. **'Resource rape'**
5. **Difficult to measure use and identify less used material**
6. **Sharing shortens life through physical wear**
7. **Lack of up-to-date access tools**
8. **Not always cost efficient**
   Note: Digital collection can overcome some but pose its own limitations like DRM, format, user acceptance, etc.

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Resource sharing : facts & hurdles

A. Ownership related:
- Ownership paradigm - `Ownership' continued to be the most effective means of bringing user and information together
- `More is better' belief and self sufficiency goal i.e., the more information owned the better the chance of meeting needs of users
- The less important the subject the more likely to agree for relying on others i.e., inter library cooperation than inter library threat
- Mc Donald's mentality of wanting fast & immediately i.e., Urgency of user requirements

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Resource sharing : facts & hurdles (2)

B. Cooperation process related:
- ❑ **More talked** and **less acted area**
- ❑ **Psychological and egoistic barriers - passive resistance is more difficult to overcome than active opposition**
- ❑ **More the number of people involved in decision making, the more difficult it becomes to achieve agreement**
- ❑ **Social loafing & `Something for nothing' syndrome**
- ❑ **Abuse of potential for access i.e., power acquired through network resource & covert move for centralisation**
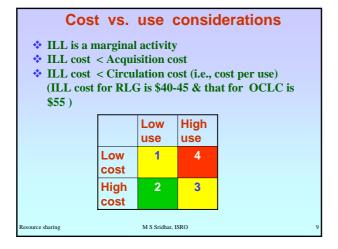
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Resource sharing : facts & hurdles (3)

- ❑ **Institutional competitiveness & size and status consciousness**
- ❑ **Fear of centralisation vs. Desire for autonomy**
- ❑ **External interference/ impositions often fails**
- ❑ **Difficulties of mutually agreeable collecting responsibilities**
- ❑ **Discouragement from past efforts**
- ❑ **Traditional bureaucratic/ procedural/ institutional**
- ❑ **Physical, geographical, political and legal**

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Cost vs. use considerations

- ❖ **ILL is a marginal activity**
- ❖ **ILL cost < Acquisition cost**
- ❖ **ILL cost < Circulation cost (i.e., cost per use) (ILL cost for RLG is $40-45 & that for OCLC is $55)**

	Low use	High use
Low cost	1	4
High cost	2	3

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Resources vs. need considerations

	Weak needs	Strong needs
Rich resources	1	4
Poor resources	2	3

Cost of networking libraries
vs.
Volume of resource sharing transactions

OCLC transactions
- ❖ **1146 m messages / year**
- ❖ **8.7 m online ILL transactions / day (96 /sec in peak)**
- ❖ **$7.2 m transferred as ILL fee management / year**
- ❖ **3.86 m total transactions / day**

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Areas for resource sharing

1. **Physical, bibliographic, full text & e-access**
2. **Lending (ILL) & document delivery**
3. **Reference, referral & literature search**
4. **Collection development** (case)
5. **Processes : data capturing/ entry for OPAC/ databases, processing**
6. **Abstracting, indexing & publications**
7. **Expertise, consultancy, continuing education**
8. **User education** (case)
9. **Storage/ archiving**

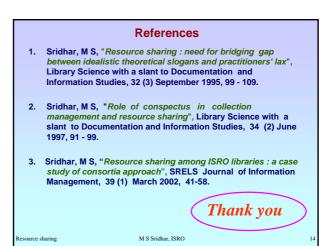Resource sharing   M S Sridhar, ISRO   11

Conclusions

1. **Healthy skepticism is better than cheap cynicism**
2. **Any effort is neither first nor final but evaluation & consolidation of past efforts necessary for incremental growth**
3. **Bibliographic access alone is not enough, access to full texts/ documents, 'courtesy visitation rights' & handling access restrictions necessary**
4. **Cooperative collection development and 'conspectus' are *proactive* whereas elimination of duplication (rationalisation) is *post-mortem* & just exchanging 'profiles' will not serve the purpose**
5. **Every participating library must have infrastructure**
6. **Need an ILL Management which can create, send & handle ILL requests, manage fee, monitor document delivery, etc.**
7. **Need common 'courier service' for quick document delivery**

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Some suggestions

o **Networking of minds is more important than technology**
o **Segregate large part of not-to-be shared resources like textbooks**
o **Concentrate on process cooperation like development of databases (textbooks, project reports, etc.), TOC service, user orientation module, harnessing web resources**
o **Let some one not make decision for you**
o **What is not used in print is unlikely to be used in e-version except reference tools, databases and the likes**
o **Do not get carried away by large chunk of irrelevant made available in 'bundles'**

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3. **Sridhar, M S,** "*Resource sharing among ISRO libraries : a case study of consortia approach*", **SRELS Journal of Information Management, 39 (1) March 2002, 41-58.**

Thank you

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About the Author

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