Role of Consortium in Academic Libraries: a case study of IISERs

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Abstract
With the information revolution brought about by the development of the World Wide Web, libraries at every level have graduated from their traditional role as store houses of information to vigorous disseminators of information. This is necessary given the changing information seeking habits and spiraling expectations of users. Online periodicals have also encroached upon acquisitions budgets. Any library consortia often focuses on the benefits a member library expects to receive in return for its paid membership in a consortium. This paper discusses the need and role of consortia specially in academic libraries with special reference to Indian Institute of Science Education and Research established by MHRD to promote basic science education in India.

Keywords: Consortia, INDEST-AICTE, IISER, IISER Bhopal, academic, e-resources

Introduction

The information needs of the society are growing continuously at tremendous speed, hence the production of information. Only answer to manage this new information scenario is the resource sharing. The ever growing information needs of the modern age can be satisfied by the resource sharing among the library and information centers.

The word 'Consortium' has been originated from the Latin in early 19th Century in the sense of partnership. Honrby, A.S. in Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary depicts consortium as 'a Group of people, countries, companies, etc. who are working together on a particular project' [1]. A library consortium is a network of Libraries/Information Centres that agree for resource sharing in order to satisfy the information needs of users on the basis of library cooperation.

Potter (1997) identified the following reasons for formation of Consortia [2]:

- Better sharing of existing resources and jointly acquiring new resources at great savings
- Providing enhanced library services with an emphasis on access to new electronic resources including databases and services offered through the internet and the WWW.
- Expediting inter library borrowing, which has evolved into providing as many electronic resources as possible at the lowest cost to consortia members.

Indian Institutes of Sciences, Education and Research

Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) were created in 2006 through a proclamation of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, to promote quality education and

research in basic sciences. Soon after the announcement, two of these Institutes at Pune and Kolkata, respectively, were started in 2006. This was followed by an Institute at Mohali (2007) and at Bhopal and Trivandrum in 2008. Each IISER is a degree granting autonomous institution with a prime focus to integrate science education and research, with a motive of attracting bright students and world class faculty.

Library Consortium

Electronic resources represent a significant and growing part of the academic library's offerings. The paradigm is shifting from ownership of countable print resources to providing access for electronic resources available in bulk. A library consortium is a group of libraries who partner to coordinate activities, share resources, and combine expertise. The International Coalition of Library Consortia is an informal discussion group of such consortia. Library consortia offer significant advantages to increasingly strapped libraries. The sharing of resources, and collaboration on shared goals often enable libraries to de- liver higher quality services than they would be able to deliver on their own.

Following factors justifies the need of consortia development for the management of electronic resources:
a) **Overloaded Budgets:** The libraries with their diminishing or at best static financial allocations have to consider new ways to consolidate globally accessible electronic resources.
b) **Information explosion:** A consortium, with the collective strength of resources of various institutions available to it, is in a better position to address and resolve the problems of managing, organizing and archiving the electronic resources.
c) **Impossibility of self-sufficiency:** Financial constrains, space curb, human resources inadequacy also stress upon the need for the libraries to opt for the consortia approach.
d) **Willingness of publishers :** This approach has helped to get attractive discounted rates and most of publishers responded positively to the call of consortia and are enthusiastic to give the best possible offers.
e) **Diversity of user needs:** The Web-based electronic resources are an apt answer to the expectations of users.
f) **Quick Access:** Academic and Research users can now hope to have access to their learned journals articles in electronic form as the electronic access is comparatively cheaper.
g) **Improving quality standard 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 opting for consortia approach.
h) **Professionalism of Library Science:** The changing role of librarian as a conservator to a curator/navigator/disseminator of information has enhanced the value of library consortia.
i) **Future developments:** Consortia help to have a watchful eye on coming latest technological changes in publishing industry and associated legislations which can affect the libraries directly or indirectly.

INDEST-AICTE Library Consortium

The idea of the creation of the library consortia, took shape at the "National Seminar on Knowledge Networking in Engineering & Technology Education and Research" held at IIT Delhi in December 2000 under the aegis of Ministry of Human Resource Development. The seminar was coordinated by Dr. Jagdish Arora and it was attended by more than 150 participants from engineering and technological institutions from all over the country. Based on the feedback, ministry decided to set-up the expert group in April 2002 for the consortia–based subscription to electronic resources for Technical Education System in India under

the chairmanship of Prof. N. Balakrishnan from IISc, Bangalore.

The "Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology (INDEST) Consortium" was set up in 2003 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) on the recommendation of an Expert Group appointed by the Ministry. The IIT Delhi has been designated as the Consortium Headquarters to coordinate its activities. The Consortium was re-named as INDEST-AICTE Consortium in December 2005 with the AICTE playing a pivotal role in enrolling its approved engineering colleges and institutions as members of the Consortium for selected e-resources at much lower rates of subscription.

Assessment has been a key area of focus for academic libraries and their respective institutions for more than a decade. Stakeholders of all kinds demand that higher education be accountable and that it implement assessment strategies to monitor and improve performance related to student learning and accessibility, community engagement and service, and research productivity.

The INDEST-AICTE Consortium is the most ambitious initiative taken so far in the country. It is the biggest Consortium in terms of number of member institutions in Asia. The Consortium attracts the best possible price and terms of agreement from the publishers on the basis of strength of its present and prospective member institutions. The Consortium subscribes to over 12,000 electronic journals from a number of publishers and aggregators. The consortium website at http://paniit.iitd.ac.in/indest hosts searchable databases of journals and member institutions to locate journals subscribed by the Consortium, their URLs and details of member institutions.

The INDEST-AICTE Consortium has three types of members based on funding.

Type I: Core members supported by MHRD

Type II: AICTE supported members

Type III: Self-supported members

e-ShodhSindhu
Based on the recommendation of an Expert Committee, the MHRD has formed e-ShodhSindhu merging three consortia initiatives, namely UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, NLIST and INDEST-AICTE Consortium.The e-ShodhSindhu will continue to provide current as well as archival access to more than 15,000 core and peer-reviewed journals and a number of bibliographic, citation and factual databases in different disciplines from a large number of publishers and aggregators to its member institutions including centrally-funded technical institutions, universities and colleges that are covered under 12(B) and 2(f) Sections of the UGC Act.

The major aims and objectives of the e-Shodh Sindhu are as follows:

- Setting-up e-ShodhSindu: Consortia for Higher Education E-Resources by augmenting and strengthening activities and services offered by three MHRD-funded Consortia;
- Develop a formidable collection of e-journals, e-journal archives and e-books on perpetual access basis;
- Monitor and promote usage of e-resources in member universities, colleges and technical institutions in India through awareness and training programmes;
- Provide access to subscription-based scholarly information (e-books and e-journals) to all educational institutions;
- Provide access to scholarly content available in open access through subject portals and subject gateways;
- Bridge digital divide and move towards an information-rich society;
- Provide access to selected e-resources to additional institutions including open universities and MHRD-funded institutions that are not covered under existing consortia;
- Take-up additional activities and services that require collaborative platform and are not being performed by existing Consortia; and
- Moving towards developing a National Electronic Library with electronic journals and electronic books as its major building blocks.

Iisers Library Consortium

Basic sciences academic institutes IISERs came into existence in the year 2006. Being MHRD funded institutes, IISERs libraries got support from the INDEST-AICTE consortium, but still for other basic sciences requirement IISERs were struggling at individual level. The need for strategic partnership and collection among the five IISERs Libraries was highlighted by the Directors in their meet held at IISER Mohali, Chandigarh on May 08, 2010 and have a mandate to form "IISERs Library Consortium" to share available permissible resources among IISER's and to make collective efforts to subscribe electronic resources to maximize benefits in terms of better negotiated subscription prices. In view of this, it is proposed to form "IISERs LIBRARY CONSORTIUM" with one person from each IISER as an office bearer. Then, in the year 2010, first IISERs librarians meet held on 17th spt.'2010 at IISER Bhopal.

IISERs Library Consortium has nothing to do with the INDEST Consortium. This is simply a group of Institutions of basic sciences and perhaps, having the subjects for teaching and research , almost similar in nature. In fact, the IISERs are the core member of INDEST CONSORTIUM, and the E-resources/databases available with INDEST should also be made available to all the IISER's, but it is not done, may be due to various reasons. The subject group and the requirements of IISERs are bit different from that of the IITs, therefore, it was felt that the E-resources/databases not covered by the INDEST Consortium but essential for IISERs as their basic requirements may be negotiated at single platform with the publishers and/or their representatives in India at highly discounted prices.

Objectives

- To subscribe electronic resources for IISERs which are not covered under INDEST-AICTE and INFLIBNET Consortium at highly discounted prices and at the best terms and conditions.
- Enriching collection development in subject areas, identified as relatively stronger in each IISER Library.
- Strengthening ILL, including online, document delivery services(DDS)among 5 IISERs libraries.
- To have better understanding among IISER library and information science professionals.

- To find more avenues of cooperation among libraries and interaction among IISERs library professionals.

Achievements of IISER Library Consortium in brief

- **1st meet of IISER Consortium was held on September 17, 2010 at IISER Bhopal**. This was a preliminary meeting and a guide line was prepared for IISER Consortium and requirements for the IISERs were recorded apart from what we are getting and suppose to get from the INDEST.
- **2nd meet of IISER Consortium was held on December 02, 2010 at IISER Pune**. During this meet few important negotiations were made for e-resources/ databases which are not covered under INDEST but essential for IISERS based on the recommendations from each IISER.

  <u>**Comparative chart of proposals considered for finalization:**</u>

Sr.No.	Resource	List Price	Negotiated Price	Discount in %
1	Oxford Journals (Life Science, Mathematics, & Physics Package) 59 Journals	£ 31024.13	£4515.00	85.44%
2	Cell Press Journals (14 Journals)	$ 20,011.00	$12440.00	37.83%
3	Wiley–Blackwell	Not finalized	Negotiation failed	
4	Project Euclid (31 titles)	$ 2575.00	$1545.00	40.00%
5	Royal Society (8 titles)	£ 17363.00	£2305.20	86.73%
6	World Scientific (11 Journals)	$22359.00	$7300.00	67.35%
7	Thieme Journals (2 Journals +1 Database)	Rs.327,700.00	Rs.2,21,780.00	32.23%
8	Thieme Back Files	Rs.595000.00	Rs.3,57,000.00	40.00%
9	Annual Reviews Archives(INDEST pricing)	$ 6000	$4800	20 %

Looking at the above table , each IISER has saved approx. Rs 44.00 lacs, which comes apprx. Rs 2.20 core for all IISERs.

Apart from these, during the meet, International Subscription Agency, submitted a proposal, if the order for Wiley-Blackwell titles routed through them, they will provide free access to **"Project Euclid"** to all IISERS pricing **$ 1545.009($1288.00 for 2012)**(this database is being subscribed by all the IISERs) plus **"International Press"** journals titles pricing **$2487.00($2562.00 for 2012).** Since some of the IISERs were not subscribing this database, they were given offer to choose some other database, as per their requirements equivalent to this amount. Accordingly, each IISER has further saved approx**. Rs 2.00 lacs each**.

- **3rd IISER Consortium Meet was held on June 13, 2011 at IISER Trivandrum**.

During the meet no major pricing negotiations were made except for the Institute of Physics journals back-files(archives) and Cambridge University Press e-books.

The IOP Archival pricing were negotiated At GBP 30,000.00 as against GBP 36,655.00 as one time payment coverage from 1874 to 2008. Here also each IISER saved around GBP 6,655.00(approx. Rs 5,32,400).

Negotiations for RSC Archival is also done on August 24, 2011. List Price for RSC Archival(1841 – 2007) for GBP 30,740 while negotiated Price, onetime payment for GBP 22,500 (includes onetime maintenance cost for four IISERs only) Saving comes to GBP 8240 (Apprx. Rs 6,59,200)

e-Resources	Base Price	Negotiated Price	Savings
IOP Archival (1874 to 2008)	GBP 36,655.00	GBP 30,000.00	GBP 6,655.00 Apprx. Rs. 5,32,400.00 Per IISER
RSC Archives(1841 to 2007)	GBP 30,740.00	GBP 22,500.00	GBP 8240.00 Apprx.Rs. 6,59,200.00 Per IISER

- **4th IISER Meet was held at IISER Kolkata during 23rd & 24th November, 2011**

The meeting was basically based on subscription for the back-files(archives). Based on recommendations, it was decided by all the IISERs, the current e-resources being subscribed by all the IISERs, should go for purchase of back file also either individually or collectively through IISER Consortia with onetime payment . However, print version will also be subscribed by the individual IISER based on their requirements. Normally, INDEST Consortium do not negotiate for back files(Archives). Accordingly, this Kolkata Meet, basically was based for back files(Archives) negotiations.

The below table shows the out-come of the meet in term of savings:

'Summary of negotiated e-resources'

Sl No.	Product	List Price	Negotiated Price	Saving per IISER	Discount %
1	**Scientific American Archives 1845-2011**	**£ 14432**	**£ 10666**	**£ 3767**	**26.1**
2	**Nature Archives 1869-2007**	**£ 42623**	**£ 37444**	**£ 5179**	**12.16**
3	**Archives of 20 Nature subtitles (INDEST)**	**£ 104879**	**£ 73415**	**£ 31464**	**30 ***
4	**Archives of 7 Nature subtitles (Non-INDEST)**		**Based on recommendations**		**30***
5	**Springer: Biomedical and Life Sciences Archives**	**€ 188,505**	**€ 31,414**	**€ 157100**	**83.34**
6	**Springer: Chemistry and Material**	**€ 66,335**	**€ 11,054**	**€**	**83.34**

	Sciences Archives			55281	
7	Springer: Mathematics and Statistics Archives	€ 84,565	€ 22,500	€ 62065	73.4
8	Springer: Physics and Astronomy Archives	€ 79,585	€ 22,500	€ 57085	71.73
9	Oxford Science Digital Archive	£69980	£8000	£61980	88.57
10	Faculty of 1000	£3725	£2025	£1700	45.64
11	Cambridge University Press e-Books		Based on recommendations		30 %
Total Savings per IISER in Rupees 3.29 CRORE					

*For the orders worth over **£40000, **F**or the orders worth over **£20000**

ACS Negotiation Table for the year 2012

ACS Web Edition Price for IISERs	Publisher's Price for 2012	Final Negotiated Price
IISER Mohali	$ 32,072	$ 18,750
IISER Thiruvanathapuram	$ 32,072	$ 18,750
IISER Pune	$ 46,937	$ 31,850
IISER Bhopal	$ 56,185	$ 31,850
IISER Kolkata	$ 56,185	$ 42,700

- **5th IISER Consortium meeting held during 20th and 21st July 2012 at IISER Mohali**

During the meeting, IISER Consortium members discussed in detail about requirements of IISER libraries and the subscription of e-resources through IISER consortium. Based on the user recommendations at the respective IISERs, detailed discussions were held on the proposals received from the different publishers like **Taylor and Francis, ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis**' full-text database, iGroup Infotech Pvt. Ltd. Proposals for **SIAM eBooks & Plagiarism checking web tools** 'Turnitin' and 'iThenticate'. Publisher representatives of '**Nature Publishing Group'** were called for the meeting to discuss about anomalies in their license agreement of archives. Publisher has agreed to rectify the anomalies to suit the needs of IISERs.

- **6th IISER Library Consortium meeting held during Dec 13-14, 2012 at IISER Bhopal**
- **7th IISER Library Consortium meeting held during Nov 21-22, 2013 at IISER Pune**

Every year IISERs library consortium meetings are held and each IISER is getting benefit out of it. Out of this research experience it is clear that consortium are really a boon for newly established institutes to provide best services to their community. The above glimpses of IISERs consortium meeting negotiations indicates the benefits of coming on the same platform and getting united to deal with the publishers to get best out of lower rates.

Advantages & Dis-advantages of Consortium

The implementation of library consortium always increases your library budget. Because once you convert your print subscriptions into electronic subscriptions through consortium approach, publisher take base price as a cost of current print subscriptions and then charges cross-access fee on per site basis on existing cost. However the increase of 10-15% is reasonable because library gets more online resources. The following are the advantages & dis-advantages of library consortia:

➢ Consortium approach provides full package of electronic resources, so that library gets extra subscription, which is not required by R&D institutions (special library). However , consortium approach is best for academic libraries.

➢ It provides back file access along with the current subscription without paying extra fee.

➢ Helpful to provide better library services like inclusion of RSS fields, individual profile creation on publisher's website, ILL through email or direct through web portal, unlimited downloading, searching, browsing and printing facility.

➢ As the service is activated from Publisher's side, so always get online access on-time, no delay of missing issues, no needs to binding and worried on stolen of resources.

➢ Optimum utilization of funds. E-resources can be accessed anytime, anywhere, so that users can utilize maximum time beyond officer hrs. As well as e-resources can be read by multiple users at a time.

➢ Requirement of sufficient and latest infrastructure to access online contents, sometimes library is not capable to procure.

The experiences of consortia managers and others engaged in the collaborative process indicate that policymakers and planners need to address the following:

➢ conflict between institutional autonomy and interdependence at a time when state regulatory agencies advocate greater accountability in the deployment of resources;

➢ need for incremental long-range planning rather than grandiose or large-scale schemes;

➢ central role of the full-time librarian or staff in administering consortia projects;

➢ need to distinguish between consortia, partnerships, networks, and other inter- institutional alliances; and

➢ importance of cooperating in areas of strength rather than weakness and in addressing the fundamental differences between government-sponsored and independent institutions.

Conclusion

IISERs library Consortium has brought economy, efficiency and equality in information availability and use among all the IISERs. IISER Consortium is playing its' role at most sincerely and honestly in building collection of IISERs libraries to facilitate their Faculty members and research scholars so that their teaching and research is not affected. This initiative is expected to trigger remarkable development of the IISERs libraries in future with the same pace.

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