



E-RESOURCES: TYPES AND UTILITY IN LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the various aspects of e-resources. Digital technology has made it more easy and speedy to access information in remote areas. Electronic resources solve storage problems and control the flood of information. Digitization of print resources is becoming more and more important for the academic libraries. Digital technology has made the libraries to add new things to its collection and the most prominent among them is the e-resources. This paper presents an overview of e-resources describing its features, need/purpose, types and utility for libraries and also some suggestions for its effective use.

Keywords: E-Resources, Characteristics of e-resources, Need of e-resources, Types and utility of e-resources.

INTRODUCTION

Library and information services are changing very rapidly in the 21st century. In earlier times, information resources were mainly presented in paper form. At present information is generated at an exponential rate and the need to make such information readily available and accessible to all is becoming a major issue among library professionals. To overcome this problem, alternative media for storing and disseminating vast amount of information are emerging now-a-days. Paper form of books and journals are replaced by electronic media. The users expect more relevant, up to date and timely information from library professionals. Electronic resources available in a library play a prominent role in facilitating access to required information to the users in an easy and expeditious manner. The e-resources like CD-ROM databases, e-journals, e-books, OPAC and the Internet are slowly replacing the importance and usage of print media.

Definitions

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AACR-2, 2005 update defined e-resources as "a material (data/program) encoded for manipulation by computerized devices. Thus material may require the use of peripheral directly connected to a computerized device (e.g. CD-ROM) or a connection to a computer network (e.g. the Internet)".

According to IFLA/FAIFE (2007) these are "materials that are computer controlled, including materials that required the use of a peripheral (a CD-ROM player) attached to a computer; the items may or may not be used in the interactive mode".

According to Library and Information Technology Glossary, "Term used to describe all of the information products that a library provides through a computer network".

Characteristics of E-Resources

"The nature of e-resources is to serve as a supplement to the print collection. It strives to satisfy the information needs of the user with greater speed, accuracy and efficiency" (Ramana, 2000).

The scope of e-resources includes the following characteristics:

E-resources can be used anywhere by the user even without knowing where it is located geographically.

- E-resources can be used by many users at the same time simultaneously.
- E-resources can be published more quickly than paper publications.
- E-resources can include multimedia and graphics.
- E-resources enable its uses to interact with each other for exchange of ideas online.
- E-resources can be searched easily and quickly by the user.
- These resources can be stored in huge amount.
- The users can be guided to the document by the providing a link.

Need/Purpose of E-Resources

Main purpose of electronic resources is providing current and up-to-date information to the users required for research. Through electronic resources users are able to access latest information. Electronic resources are much more needed by the users as compared to printed form of resources because of the following reasons:

- E-resources save the time of the users as well as the library staff.



- E-resources can be downloaded instantly by the different users at the same time.
- Users can read an e-resource anytime.
- Due to portability, e-resources can be taken anywhere on portable computer.
- Some e-resources are interactive, having animations and background music.
- Persons with disability can hear audible e-resources.
- E-resources save human resource requirement in the libraries as there is no need for shelving and rectification. Users can not misplace e-books.

Types of E-Resources

E-resources can be categorised on the basis of classification used for print media which is the most popular method of categorization.

1. Primary e-resources
2. Secondary e-resources

1. Primary e-resources: These are of following types:

- a. E-journals
- b. E-books
- c. E-databases
- d. E-magazines/serials
- e. E-dissertations and theses
- f. E-newspapers
- g. E-patents
- h. E-standards

2. Secondary e- resources: These e- resources are of following types:

- a. E-course material
- b. Indexing and abstracting databases
- c. E-reference databases

There are other three types of e-resources available to cater scholarly information needs of the users.

1. Bibliographical e-resources
2. Full-text e-resources
3. Portals products

1. Bibliographical e-resources: These are resources which provide bibliographical information only about title, author, name of the journal, volume and issue number, name of



publisher, date of publication and also abstract of the entry. These resources mainly contain information on single subject.

2. Full text e-resources: These e-resources provide full text of the document along with its bibliographical information. Examples of full text e-resources are EBSCO Database, Elsevier's Science Direct, Emerald Full-text INSIGHT etc.

3. Portals products: Portals provide a single interface to search various databases, e.g. UGC-INFONET e-journal consortium, INDEST Consortium, CSIR e-journal Consortium etc.

Utility of E-Resources in Libraries

Print media is now being digitized in the libraries which increases the availability of books and journals in the electronic format. E-resources are useful to a large extent for libraries as well as its users as they help

- To solve space problem of libraries as the space required in an e-resource library can be reduced several times.
- To retrieve the required information more easily and quickly
- To fulfill ever growing requirements of users to get the latest information at the least cost.
- To ease the maintenance and management of library resources.
- To provide an access to very large amount of information resources.
- To integrate with other libraries and make use of their e-resources also.
- To provide anytime access to the users from home, campus or library.

Suggestions for Effective Use of E-Resources

For improving the facilities and services of a library the staff members must ensure an effective use of its e-resources by the users. The following suggestions can be made in this concern.

- The Libraries must provide user training for the better use of electronic resources by the users.
- The library should identify the non users of electronic resources and all possible efforts must be made to convert them into potential users of the resources.
- The libraries must provide an adequate number of terminals, printers and other IT infrastructure for the users to get the required information.
- The electronic document delivery should also be introduced into the library for the ease of the users.



- A user study program must be conducted by the libraries to know more about electronic resource needs of the users.

CONCLUSION

E-resources in a library prove accurate both the fourth and fifth law of library science by Dr. S.R. Ranganathan i.e. Save the Time of the Reader and Library is a Growing Organism. With the help of e-resources the libraries can ensure exhaustive and pinpointed information to its users which save a lot of precious time of the users. Using e-resources also enable the library to save space of the library. Library operations and services have been changed due to advent of information and communication technology. The internet and e-resources have changed the way people communicate, interact, acquire and share knowledge. Libraries have to provide ICT infrastructure to its users adequately in order to make e-resources accessible to all the users.

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