



E-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

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Abstract

With the publication of first electronic journal 'Electronic Resources' came into existence. It comprises of e-book, E-journals, e-databases, digital knowledge archives and internet resources. These are mines of information explored through modern ICT devices, stored in cyber space and accessible without boundaries of time space. Steps of managing electronic resources e.g. requirement access, introducing with vendors, acquisition and negotiation of site licensing, updating library website, providing user support training, monitoring usage pattern, cancellation criteria, licensing agreement etc. E-resource management tools and techniques are library website/ portal, library software, OP AC, A-Z services from EBESCO, JCCC, web feat, 360 Resource managers etc. The aforesaid features of E-resources and its prompt and efficient management techniques are significant aspects of the paper.

Keywords: *E-resources, E-resources tools & techniques, E-resource management*



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1. Introduction

Management is basically concerned with organizational process consisting of diverse activities like deliberate planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordination, reporting, budgeting, and managing financial, human resources etc. to achieve aims and objectives of any organization, in terms of measurable results. It helps to efficiently and effectively accomplish a work through others. Management of electronic resources includes various activities like selection, evaluation, trial, acquisitions, licensing, access, promotional activities etc. All activities are interrelated. A library requires trained staff, excellent guidance and legal consultancy to perform aforesaid activities. Since long, most of the library and information professionals are playing vital role in collection and services management. Due to innovation

of internet, electronic publishing, shrinking budgetary allocation, inflation cost, and diverse user information needs etc. paradigm to redefine the role of library process and library professionals have changed. At present, a library professional serves as custodian, facilitator, navigator, computer specialist, educator for information access and retrieval.

2. Electronic Resources: A Conceptual Framework

The documents that are in electronic form are said to be electronic resources. The term electronic resources came into usage in late 1980's when first electronic journal came into being. The electronic resources are not single entities. It includes various types of resources such as eBooks', e-journals, e-databases, digital/knowledge archives and internet resources. Electronic resources are regard ecstas the mines of information that are explored through modem ICT devices, refined, redesigned and more often stored in the cyber space in most concrete and compact form and can be accessed simultaneously from infinite points by large number of audience. The phrase 'electronic resources', has broadly been defined as, information accessed by a computer, may be useful as bibliographic guides to potential sources but, as of yet, they infrequently appear as cited references in their own right (Graham, 2003). Moreover, e-resources refer to that kind of documents in digital formats which are made available to library users through a computer based information retrieval system. The electronic resources is defined by AACR-2 as "Electronic Resources: Material encoded for manipulation by computer, including texts, sounds, images, numeric data, computer programs etc. alone or in combination, as well as materials that require the use of peripheral devices directly connected to a computer e.g. CD-ROM drive or player or hat require a connection to a computer network e.g. the Internet."

3. Type of E-resources

- **E-books:** E-books comprise of contents in electronic format (text, graphics, audio, video) with additional features of searching, linking, highlighting, customization, cross-referencing etc. having facility to be delivered through CD-ROM or DVD or internet.
- **E-journals:** e-journal is an serial publication available in electronic format with additional features of searching, browsing, liking etc, accessible through compact disc or online. E-databases: Database is a computer based data/information handling system having organized collection of data/information/records accessible to multiple users through intranet or internet, and standalone system.

- **Digital /Institutional Repository:** It is a digital archive of intellectual products of the institution accessible to institution/outside members. Preprint or post print of the articles, conference papers, research reports, theses, dissertations, seminar presentations, working papers and other scholarly items etc. are stored in digital format.
- **Internet/web Resources:** Internet has various types of information resources which is accessible through internet. These resources include various documents like e-books, e-newspaper, e-articles, websites, e-databases, patent, etc.

4. Steps of managing Electronic resources

Various facets involved in the management of electronic resources are requirement assessment, interacting with vendors, acquisition and negotiation of site licensing, updating the institutional/library website, providing training and user support, monitoring usage, cancellation criteria etc. Detailed descriptions of aforesaid significant aspects are as following:

4.1. Selection of Electronic Resources

The electronic resources can be located from sources like indent form library members, recommendation from librarian, an advertisement; resource list from vendors/ suppliers/ publishers etc. and further details can be had from the internet resources. The selection of e-resources depends on the various criteria like users needs, subscription cost, vendor support, accuracy, currency, comprehensiveness, relevance, coverage and user statistics etc. It is observed from the literature that majority of libraries are using users' need, subscription cost, comprehensiveness, coverage and usage as a selection criteria for the selection of electronic resource. The following steps are followed for the selection of e-resources:

4.2. Conduction of trial

The libraries opt trial of electronic resources before placing purchase order because trial gives the opportunities for the evaluation to support of the e-resources. The librarian has to request to the publisher for trial access of e-resources to the library before the final purchase of e-resources. E-resources have to be tested by few or all of the library users and staff, as any final decision for subscription has to take care of their feedback. During the trial, library staff should evaluate the feasibility, compatibility, usability, interface and technical infrastructure support. After completion of the trial, the librarian should be able to justify the subscription decision.

4.3. Negotiation with publisher/vendor

Apart from the above satisfaction Librarian has to negotiate with publishers/aggregators/vendors for electronic resources as there is ample scope for rebate/discount etc. The negotiation process commences which depends on the feedback and decision of library authorities, availability and compatibility with the existing infrastructure, user needs, and availability of resources to multiple users, coverage of subjects, pricing models, packages etc and technical requirements of library as well as e-resources. It is suggested that if a single institution wants to subscribe e-resources, they should joint hand with the any e-resource consortia like INDEST, INFONET, ETC.

4.4. License Agreement

After ensuring technical feasibility of the product, and getting permission, negotiate with the trade parties, and to proceed for further action we should ask for negotiated license and making necessary amendments before its final acceptance. It will be pertinent to consult legal expert while going through license agreement etc. Language of the agreement should be clear, precise and weir-defined. After going through aforesaid formalities, final purchase order can be placed.

4.5. Access of E-resources

If final purchase order is served just before the end of trail period, trade parties have to be asked for maintaining persistent access of e-resources under trial otherwise, after the culmination of the trial, final purchase order along with a request to provide access should be made. Once final access is provided by the trade parties, users should be informed about the availability of e-resources, at the same time, they should also be informed about various aspects of licensing issues. E-resource access is possible through the authentication systems like use name passwords, IP addresses, URIs and local proxy server. Access to e-resources involves assuring location and easy access of available e-resources through various mediums like library website, OPAC, A to Z list and other publisher/aggregator products.

4.6. User Support and promotional activities

Library should organize orientation programme dealing with product information, user education, usage training, license/lease agreement, providing contact details of the library staff on websites. Feedback from the patrons regarding the product during the training programme should also be taken seriously and incorporated in the library activities. Demo of the products supplied by the trade parties can also be incorporated in the orientation programmes. User

guide, manual, brochure of the product etc. should also be circulated among users. It is also suggested that the library should involve regressed promotional activities like sending targeted e-mail, chouse notifications, campus circular, developing library brochures and leaflets etc. There should be products offering a single search interface to all the procured e-resources. Foe optimum utilization of resources the user help desk should tender 24 hours troubleshooting facility for the library users.

4.7. Monitoring the usage of E-resources

Any alteration or change in the usage pattern made by the trade parties, at their convenience, should be keenly monitored along with popularity of the product among professional colleagues. Usage report provided by the trade parties should also be minutely scrutinized.

4.8. Renewal / cancellation

As subscription to e-resources is time bound and with the expiry of the license period, the library has to renew or cancel any subscription as per accumulated information e.g. usage, reliability of interface, convenience, and providers' response. In case a subscription is cancelled, the library should have the perpetual access or archival right to the e-resources during subscription period. If usage of the products drop considerably because of access problems or inferior quality, and product is available in some other preferable format at marginal rates - we should rethink of some other options. If the product cost outgrows its benefits, its circulation is stopped by the vendor or collection policies and vendor support gets altered, we have to go for the cancellation of the product. In case services of the product are highly satisfactory, well received by the users and have reasonable cost, we can proceed for the renewal.

4.9. Internal Digital Resource management

Institutions and universities involved in academic and research activities generate information which is to be stored, organized, retrieved and disseminated among students, research scholars and faculty members of the institution. Librarian has to take up the management of archiving, preservation and perpetual access of the digital information with the help software's like greenstone, D-Space, E-print and other vendor, software's providing powerful indexing, searching, and file management functionalities.

5. E-resource Management Tools and Techniques

5.1. Library website/Portal:

Majority of libraries delivering E-resources through their website/ portal. The library professional are creating list of the Journal Titles with URLs and organizing e-resources according to alphabetical and/or subject wise for easy access. It is considered trouble-free tools for the library professionals and users. The aforesaid tool and technique has few limitations like searching of information, customization, etc.

5.2. Library OPAC :

This is a tool which offers a single platform /gateway for the access of all the library resources. The users can access information regarding all the print as well as electronic resources through the OPAC. Few libraries also develop a database related to article indexing, and it can also be accessed through OPAC.

5.3. Library management software :

It is observed that the various software available in the market for the e-resource management like ERMSS, LIBSYS, etc. These software facilitate to management all kind of information related the e-resources.

5.4. JCCC (Journal Custom Content consortia) :

It is a product which is developed on your requirement for the bibliographical access of your subscribed product with some special services. The product offer Bibliographical search facility and full text link. The drawback of the product is that it is not offering full text searching of all the subscribe products.

5.5. A-Z service From EBESCO :

A to Z service are offered by EBESCO. It is "complete Web-based tool for organizing and providing links to all of your library's e-resources, including e-journals, titles in full-text databases and e-journal packages, and e-books. It offers users a "one-stop" search of your library's e-collection, with easy navigation to full-text content".

5.6. Web Feat :

Web Feat is a federated search product, however it is no longer available. The Web Feat was combined with 360 search to create the most powerful, feature-rich federated search.

5.7. 360 Resource Manager :

It is "e-resource management service offered by serial solution to effectively track and control your resources to streamline library workflows and optimize collections, it offers

complete solution for managing the e-resource lifecycle. It also consolidates all information at one place for ease of management which reduce workloads, streamline workflows, and reduce costs. It also help in Streamlining acquisition and licensing workflows" After realization of the above, we can say that it is "A complete management system enables you to gain control over the selection, acquisition, and usage of your electronic resources."

6. Conclusion

E-resource management comprises of various activities e.g. selection, evaluation, licensing, negotiation, and conducting trail, maintains link, authentication, troubleshooting, storing licensing document in digital format and protecting the legal use of e-resources, etc. Various initiatives regarding management of e-resources have been undertaken in the country. Library operates with the utilization of tools and techniques at managing electronic resources. Well managed infrastructure enhances the optimum utilization of the resources. Studied literature illustrated global usage of e-resources and evaluated its importance in research and serving as essential media of information dissemination. It also pointes that majority of users are face problems in access and utilization of e-resources.

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