Chapter 5  Networking of Libraries in India

Introduction

Accessibility to information has crossed all the geographical boundaries. The access to the library resources has also transformed from “physical access”, to “online access”. Networking has integrated all the library activities e-mail, support reference service through search of databases, exploiting the catalogue of other institutions, participation in inter-library loan(ILL), ordering of books and journals, services by establishing home page, etc. Under these circumstances resource sharing and cooperative functioning of the libraries through internet has become vital. Utilization of these facilities depend largely on availability of internet connection and exploiting its services and resources for better access to global information. Therefore this present chapter focuses on the Networking related services provided by Management Libraries in University of Pune as well as IIM Libraries.

The National commission on Libraries and Information Science’s National Program for the year 1975 defines a Network as “Two or more libraries or other organizations engaged in a common pattern of information exchange through communication for some functional purpose. A network usually consists of a formal arrangement whereby materials, information and services provided by a variety of libraries and other organizations are available to all potential users. Libraries may be different jurisdictions but must agree to serve one another on the same basis as each serves its own constituents. Computers and telecommunication may be among tools for facilitating communication among them.”

5.1 Internet and Libraries

The basic purpose of any library is to provide the right information to the right reader at the right time. To meet this goal, libraries have to provide access to information regardless of location of the information stored. Networking plays a key role in providing such library services. The Internet is defined as an interconnected system of networks that connects computers around the world via the TCP/IP protocol. With the emergence of Internet, connectivity to the computers at a global level and the worldwide access to information has
become possible. The user friendly tools such as Gopher, e-mail, Telnet, FTP, and World Wide Web (WWW) are used for processing and accessing the information. The WWW is integrating all other access tools and providing a very convenient mechanism for publishing and accessing multimedia, hypertext-linked documents stored in computers spread across the world. Once the information is available on the web, the accessibility from any part of the world becomes possible. Libraries and information centers are taking advantage of Internet developments to provide accessibility to the library resources/information through web.

5.2 Sharing of resources through Library Networking: Indian scenario

Resource sharing is basically sharing of resources of participating libraries on the basis of the agreement of cooperation for the purpose of sharing the resources of each other’s materials. This entails not only to share the document resources but also facilitates services, equipments and even the manpower among the participating libraries. The Libraries have started using the computers in large number and have automated their functions and services. After the introduction of internet in Libraries, the concept of on-line resources was introduced and the libraries started subscribing e-journals regularly. The traditional sources of information i.e. books, journals, magazines are supplemented by electronic forms of documents e-books, e-journals, e-newspaper etc. The automated libraries get connected to one or the other networks. A computer network allows the user of one computer to use the resources of another computer which may be space, database, programs or printer. The traditional libraries were facing barriers for interlibrary loan such as indifferences of lending library, conservative attitude, distance, language, cost time etc. The recent developments in Information science, Computer and Telecommunication technologies have changed these perceptions on account of multidimensional growth of published documents. The modern libraries with the advanced technology are forming library consortium for sharing electronic resources.

5.3 Purpose of library network

The purpose of library network is to promote resource sharing among member libraries by coordinate efforts for suitable collection development and reduce
unnecessary duplication wherever possible. The purpose of the library network is to provide network based services to Users, document Delivery Services, bibliographic Information Services, and human Resource Development.

5.4 Major Library Networks in India

**INFLIBNET Centre**

Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) \(^1\) Centre is an Autonomous Inter-University Centre (IUC) of University Grants Commission (UGC) involved in creating infrastructure for sharing of library and information resources and services among Academic and Research Institutions. INFLIBNET works collaboratively with University Libraries in India to shape the future of the academic libraries in the evolving information environment. It promotes automation of libraries, develops standards, creates union catalogue of serials, thesis, books, monographs, and non book materials, provides access to bibliographic information sources, creates database of projects, institutions, specialists

**DELNET**

DELNET (Delhi Library Network) was started as a project of the India International centre in 1988 with initial financial support of National Information System in Science and Technology (NISSAT) and later officially registered as a society in June 1992\(^2\). presently the DELNET activities are supported by the National Informatics centre (NIC) of the Planning commission, Government of India. The main objective of DELNET is to promote sharing of resources among the libraries located in Delhi and beyond. This is done by developing a network of libraries, by storing and disseminating information, offering computerized information services to users and by coordinating efforts for suitable collection development and reducing unnecessary duplication wherever possible. DELNET gives membership to various libraries including universities, colleges, government departments and provides technical assistance to them for creating and maintaining the bibliographic databases, serials control, union catalogue preparations, abstracting services, inter library loan, document transfer/ copying facilities and for
accessing local, national and international databases. It has also created library software such as DELSEARCH, DEL-DOS etc for library networking database creation and database access using different platforms.

**MANLIBNET**

To promote, nurture and enhance the profession of management librarianship in the country through networking, conferences, workshops, seminars, research, consulting, mentoring and publishing-Management Libraries Network (MANLIBNET) was born in the year 2000 which is in operation for the past four years as a registered Society in Delhi under Societies Regulation Act of 1860. The network is not an on-line network like DELNET, INFLIBNET and so on. Its basic objective of the network is to provide a forum for all the management libraries to share information and ideas for development of libraries and business librarianship. The network organizes annual conventions and publication of a quarterly newsletter.

It is indeed a matter of great pride and satisfaction for the researcher to personally witness (since 1998, the year its establishment) and be part of Management Libraries Network's (MANLIBNET) as a life member of the network.

**ADINET**

ADINET is a network of libraries in and around Ahmedabad. ADINET was registered as a Society in October 1994. It was initially sponsored by National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT), Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India.

ADINET aims to bring about cooperative mode of working amongst the libraries and information centers in and around Ahmedabad. The main objective of ADINET is to promote sharing of resources and disseminate information among member libraries by networking them and creating a centralized Union catalogue of their holdings. It plans to coordinate efforts for suitable collection development and reduce unnecessary duplication wherever possible. ADINET will not only help library users but will be of help to individuals who practice different professions in getting specialized information of their interest.
A centralized database of periodicals and databases available in libraries of Ahmedabad is being created by ADINET. Records collected from participating libraries are being suitably formatted and merged to generate Union Catalogue of Ahmedabad libraries. With cooperation of participating libraries, these databases are being regularly updated. At present this database includes only the present/ current holdings of libraries.

**Other Networks in India**

Various other national as well as library networks have also been developed including NICNET(National Informatics Centers Network), INDONET, ERNET(Education and research Network), CALIBNET(Calcutta Library Network),etc. A number of educational institutions are the members of such networks. These networks are engaged in various activities towards sharing the resources by compiling union catalogues creating various database of experts, providing training to the staff, IIL, assistance in retrospective conversion etc.

Due to the financial crunch and the rising cost of the journals, many Indian University and college libraries cannot subscribe to all the required journals and databases. To overcome this problem, libraries are forming consortia.

5.5 **Library consortia: present concept for resource sharing**

The concept of consortia is based on the basic principle of cooperation as it is a “cooperative arrangement among group or institutions”. The consortia enable libraries to meet the spiraling costs of printed journals and of online resources. The concept of sharing of resources was started with Inter Library Loan(ILL), Document Delivery system (DDS), Library Networking (via, LAN, WAN), etc. At present the more accepted system of resource sharing is Library consortia.

A library consortia can be considered as a formal association of libraries, not under the same institutional control, but usually restricted to a geographical area, number of libraries, types of materials, or subject interests, which is established to develop and implement resource sharing among members. The objective of Library consortia is:

- To control and reduce information costs,
To improve resource sharing, to develop a network information environment (via campus systems, campus networks, and the Internet.

To share licensing issues with each other.  

The basic premise of consortia is that its members can collectively achieve more than what they can achieve as individual institutions. It is an association of group of Libraries having formally agreed norms to coordinate cooperate or consolidate certain functions to achieve, mutually, the common objective.

In Indian scenario the concept of establishing digital libraries is coming up. The modern computerized libraries where all library operations are being carried out by the specialized library application software and suitable hardware for creating and using library databases. These libraries are also having traditional collections but they are procuring digital resources in the form of e-journal subscriptions, bibliographical and Full Text Databases in CD-ROM/ DVD-ROM format, Online databases of specialized subjects. Theses e-resources can be accessed over the Internet on IP based identification of users.

Due to the financial crunch and the rising cost of the journals, many Indian University and college libraries cannot subscribe to all the required journals and databases. To overcome this problem, libraries are forming consortia. The consortia phenomenon is based on the concept of buying e-information together which has become very important in these days. The purpose is to share the resources in better manner, to reduce the information costs, speedy delivery of documents, to keep abreast of new developments.

5.6 Efforts of Library consortia in India

INDEST Consortium: an open ended consortium

The ministry of human resource development(MHRD) has set-up the “Indian National Digital library in Engineering sciences and Technology (INDEST) Consortium” on the recommendation made by the Expert group appointed by the ministry under the chairmanship of Prof. N. Balaskrishnan. The ministry provides funds required for subscription to electronic resources for 38 institutions including IIScs, IIT’s, NITs, IIMs and a few other centrally funded government institutions through the consortium headquarters set up at IIT
Delhi. Besides, 44 Government or Government aided engineering colleges and technical departments in universities have joined the consortium with financial support from AICTE. The benefit of consortia-based subscription to electronic resources is not confined to 38 major technological institutions in the country but is also extended to all AICTE-accredited and UGC- affiliated institutions.

The IIM (Indian Institutes of Management) Consortium

All IIMs developed a consortium to subscribe e-journals centrally. The objective was to ensure among the IIMs, optimum utilization and enhancement of the resources, and to minimize the expenditure by consortia based subscriptions to the commonly subscribed databases and journals. The idea was to approach publishers of Electronic journals and CD-ROM Databases to begin with, as a consortium for better pricing and services. A pilot study conducted during 1999 revealed that more than 60% of IIM’s electronic resources were overlapping. The additional burden while accessing all the electronic titles across the IIMs for the individual print subscriptions at each of the institutes was shared equally by working out the license charges for the Enhanced Access License(EAL). Over 1050 E-journals are directly sourced from publishers and over 12500 E-journals aggregated full text the IIMs are able to get online access across all the institutes by paying a nominal additional amount.

FORSA Consortia

FORSA stands for Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics, which was established in 1982, for sharing the resources in astronomy libraries in the country. In 2004, this group has extended its membership to Physics and Mathematics libraries in the country who have common interests. Currently FORSA has twelve members. FORSA member libraries have automated their collection, give access to electronic journals, Inter-Library Loan for resource sharing among the member libraries, and provide document delivery services either by speed post, fax or telephone.

CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research ) Consortium

(http://www.niscair.res.in/activitiesandservices/major projects/majorproj.htm )
CSIR has also formed a consortium for which National Institute of Science, Communication and Information Resources (NISCSIR), a constituent establishment of CSIR formed with the merger of INSDOC and NISCOM, has been identified as nodal agency. To augment CSIR research and development activities, NISCAIR implemented an agency for the process of providing access to globally available electronic journals to the entire S & T staff of CSIR. On behalf of CSIR, it has entered into an agreement with Elsevier science to access its odd 1,500 e-journals and intends to strengthen further its information resources base by subscribing access to more journals published globally. CSIR consortium extended its access by creating appropriate on consortium basis with the other providers of e-journals.

**UGC -INFONET**

This consortium is launched by University Grants Commission (UGC), India. It is a consortium of e-journals for its member universities to provide access to journals through its nationwide communication network, UGC-INFONET. It is overlaid on Education and Research Network(ERNET) infrastructure to provide assured quality service and optimal utilization of Bandwidth resources. On behalf of UGC, the INFLIBNET is executing the UGC-INFONET project in collaboration with the ERNET. The consortium aims to promote the use of electronic database and full text access to journals by research and academic community in the country. Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre, is the nodal agency for coordination of the UGC-INFONET. It facilitates linkage between UGC, ERNET and universities and coordinates the program. It is also administering the entire program including monitoring of bandwidth utilization and releasing the annual recurring cost of 149 universities. This consortium subscribes to journals published by American Chemical Society, American Institute of Physics, Institute of Physics etc. the program helps in mitigating the severe shortage of periodicals faced by university libraries due to the ever widening gap between the growing demand for literature and the shortage of available resources.

**UGC Infonet 2.0** : UGC-Infonet Network is being switched to BSNL backbone w.e.f 1st April 2010 and renamed as **UGC Infonet 2.0**. ON the new scheme 10
Mbps(1:1) Leased line is being established in 180 plus universities preferably by using Fiber to provide Internet Services. INFLIBNET is responsible for executing and monitoring the entire project. The UGC-INFONET mainly provides Internet bandwidth, a pre-requisite for delivery of scholarly content subscribed through the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium. The scheme has now been extended to 200 Universities and 6 Inter-University Centers of the UGC.

To sum up, the networking of libraries is a crucial factor in today’s ICT era. It has extended the mutual cooperation, fast retrieval of information and efficient service among the libraries. In the present study the respondent libraries were asked to indicate their membership with consortium, library networks and with other libraries and studied the nature of network related services in these libraries. The detailed analysis of the data is given in the next chapter.

5.7 References:
