

RESOURCE SHARING: A LIBRARY PERCEPTIVE

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ABSTRACT

In the recent past, Resource sharing concept has become prime factor and playing vital role in libraries because of innovative developments in Information, Communication and Technology (ICT). ICT has made easy to establish networks among libraries and share their information resources quickly and instantly. Resource sharing has become prime reason for establishing cooperation between libraries without any geographical barriers. The various reasons for resource sharing are might be cost benefits, non-availability of resources, insufficient library funds, lack of skills etc. In this paper, the attempt has been made to understand the various aspects of resource sharing in modern library technological environment.

Key words: Resource Sharing, Library Networks

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1. INTRODUCTION

In these days the essence of information seeking has been increased very steeply. The information requirements of user community may not be met by a single library as the requirement keeps growing. Hence, a single library may not be able to meet the requirements due to many reasons like funds, space, man power...etc. These reasons have led to establish cooperation between libraries and subsequently the concept of resource sharing has been evolved. This has made libraries to enter into the arrangement of give and take policy environment (mutual co-operation).

The similar kind of efforts were even made in the initial days of library movement. But there were many constraints to share the information like the distance, place, language, time. Also the conservative nature of libraries added a hurdle to this operation. But in the present scenario most of the libraries are computerized and the communication became ease for all. The advent of technological developments helped a lot to save the time, money and space as well.

2. MEANING OF RESOURCE SHARING

The word ‘Resource’ not only represent the books or documents, also the information in any kind of format. Further, it includes the space, services and even man power. All together it has termed as ‘resource sharing’ with respect to libraries. The Sharing means either lending or borrowing. In application to libraries sharing means lending and borrowing of resources.

3. WHY RESOURCE SHARING?

The famous information scientist Allen Kent said that “the success and survival of big libraries will depend on how much and to what extent libraries co-operative with each other in future”

A single library cannot offer and meet the requirements of users due to many constraints such as resources, funds, space, man power etc. Hence, resource sharing play a vital role to overcome from these constraints. For instance, a library may have a book which is needed for the user of other library and this case can be a visa-versa. The sharing of resources is prime factor due to limited library budget and will reduce the operational cost of libraries. Another way this could help us to ensure the optimum level of utilization of resources with minimal cost without any duplication and easy access to resources in any format as well.

The necessity of resource sharing is mentioned as below;

- ❖ For better use of Library Resources in low prices.
- ❖ Faster cooperation and Communication among the member libraries.
- ❖ For the pooling, sharing and electronically accessing the library resources.
- ❖ To provide High level literature/resources for its users of College Libraries.
- ❖ To optimize the best usage of available library resources.
- ❖ The colleges can subscribe to a particular journals or e-journals and get the benefits of membership.

The same way the other pool member can subscribe for some other journal and share them.

The following factors are caused for establishing resource sharing among libraries.

- Information explosion and various methods of information and publications.
- Limited funding.
- Verity needs of students.
- Increase in number of users.
- Steep increase in literature, growth of publications and also the cost of publications.
- Raise of new subjects and specialization.
- In earlier days only printed resources were available, but in present world digital resources are available in variety of electronic forms and can easy to access and share.

4. TECHNOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND RESOURCE SHARING

The innovative developments in information technology have pushed libraries to use technological applications in its day today operation. Also the availability of electronic resources in variety of formats made easy access to resources and created many technical issues that need to be considered to ensure resources are compatible with existing library hardware and software. As the libraries are non-profit oriented, it is necessary to balance and provide effective access to resources on cost effective basis. Therefore, the evaluation must be carried out in consultation with the appropriate technical staff and need to be considered the following:

4.1. Method of Access

Access to remote hosts via Web is often preferable because it provides additional benefits such as faster updating, optimum access, reduced burden in terms of storage, preservation and maintenance.

4.2. Authentication

Access via IP filtering is usually preferable because it typically provides simultaneous access for multiple users. IP-address recognition also provides access to users via a proxy server allowing authorized library users to access content from outside the physical confines of the library. In such circumstances a commercial database “sees” and recognizes the library IP address, not the user’s home or any other IP addresses, and grants this user access. It should however be noted that access via proxy server must be predetermined in the license agreement.

Access via login and a password is less preferred as it presents a number of challenges around dissemination and control of passwords, particularly when a library serves a large user base. If a vendor insists on password-based access, a disclaimer in the license agreement must be made about the library’s inability to control distribution of this password to non-affiliates.

4.3. Compatibility

The resource should be compatible across a range of platforms and where local installation and maintenance are required, should be compatible with existing hardware and software supported by the library.

4.4. Browsers

The issue of web browsers is very important. Occasionally, libraries might have older versions of browsers installed on public PCs, while the databases are designed for the newer versions. Also the selector has to negotiate with the technical systems/IT people.

4.5. Content format

HTML, SGML, XML, PDF, etc. and media formats such as JPEG, MPEG etc. Each of these formats has positive and negative features. Some of the publications are in PDF format. It takes a long time to download large files. In addition users must have the Adobe Acrobat reader installed on their PCs. Databases of AV contents require different players or programs installed and should allow plug-ins and active controls as well.

5. COPYRIGHT ISSUES

Unlike print publications, electronic resources are not purchased outright and usually require a license agreement to be in place. The license should be reviewed to inform and support the evaluation process, and to ensure that it reflects the selector's expectations prior to purchase in line with information gathered and assessed to date. It is preferable to obtain where possible, a standard model license agreement that describes the rights of the library in easy-to-understand and explicit language.

6. ADVANTAGES OF RESOURCE SHARING

Following are the benefits and advantages of resources sharing network;

- Satisfies the large number of users
- Very cost effective and saves lot of library space
- Will set a standard among the pool library members in classification of resources
- Provides greater level of information’s for research students
- Avoids duplication
- Ensures the quality of resources available among the libraries
- It resolve the end users’ needs searching across bundle of libraries

- More professional approach to the resources

7. DISADVANTAGES/DRAW BACKS OF RESOURCE SHARING

There might be some possible disadvantages from resource sharing which are as follows;

- The dependency on other libraries may impact on the main purpose of collection development.
- The bigger libraries may have to share more and get less from small libraries.
- Possibility of Copyright violation
- Some libraries may not willing to share some resources
- Lack of technological tools/awareness to access resources
- Cost evolved in setting up the computer network for faster communication

8. CONCLUSION

Though there are some disadvantage with regard to resource sharing such as copyright issues, non-willingness to share etc., but still the new technological developments helped in developing networks among libraries to share information resources in rapid manner. In the current ICT world, libraries are gradually establishing resource sharing networks to reduce their financial burden, time etc. and meet the requirements of user demands. Also ICT has helped to remove the geographical barriers across the globe and made possible for instantaneous access to the resources and services. It also reduced the problems related to space, efficient staff, and new technological challenges that has been existed in the system.

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