E-publishing and India’s higher educational system

Suresh K Chauhan, Dr
Editorial .................................................................................. 1

Digital reading – how it has evolved and the future .................. 4
> Karthik Subramanian

Digital publishing – the new avatar of E-publishing ................. 6
> A Elangovan

Digitally yours! ........................................................................ 12
> Catherine Gilon

E-publishing and India's higher educational system ................ 16
> Suresh K Chauhan

The Ec(h)o of E-books ................................................................. 20
> N Balasubramaniam

Get smart now! ......................................................................... 24
With inputs from Pressmart

The debate on digital rights management ............................... 28
> N Ganga Vidya

Uploading now ......................................................................... 32

Firms offering E-publishing services ...................................... 34

DEPARTMENTS

Industry Updates .................................................................... 38

Events
> RIND Seminar .................................................................. 43
> Press day 2010 ................................................................. 46
> WAN-IFRA India 2010 Conference .................................. 48

News ..................................................................................... 54

Calendar ................................................................................ 59
Internet opens many new ways of information communication, including a vibrant era of E-publishing which incorporates e-books, e-journals, e-magazines and other e-resources. Various threats imposed on paper publishing have been tackled by E-publishing industry. Moreover, information needs of users are getting expanded rapidly, which has enforced publishing industry to bring many new changes through modes of e-publications as it neither involves big costs nor requires huge infrastructure. Most journals are now available online as well as in print and also many electronic-only journals have been launched. E-Publishing aids users who prefer browsing, searching and downloading of information as it gives them all benefits. Some of the many benefits of E-publishing are listed below:

1. After publication, the information can reach the end user within a minute time lag.
2. Multimedia aids or e-learning objects can be attached and accessed to have real-time experience.
3. In case of storage, e-resources need less space as compared to print.
4. E-resources can be accessed simultaneously by many users.
5. E-resources offer exhaustive information search, browse and download facilities.

Information can be transferred to the end user or for further academic use within the terms of copyright and so on.

E-publishing not only gives access benefits to end users but many exciting subscription models are also being offered by publishers around the world. The most suitable economic and productive model is consortia-based subscription. In India, we have few consortia at national level, which are actively participating in growth of the nation by providing means of online access of scholarly literature to Indian academia.

Impact of E-publishing on Indian Academics

Indian higher educational system comprises nearly 500 universities, 2,200 colleges, and approximately 13 millions users (5.5 lakhs teachers and around 120 lakhs students) which make it one of the largest
educational systems in the world. All users need scholarly literature in pursuits of learning, teaching and carry out research works to compete at International level. Publishers and libraries are playing a key role in bridging the gap between core research output and end users. Escalating cost of print publications (especially in case of scholarly journals) and dwindling budgets of libraries enforced the libraries to look for digital and electronic form of information. Publishers also sensed the upcoming gap being created by print documents and unfulfilled information demands of users. They opted e-publishing of their documents to address diversified needs of users as well as that of the libraries. In the year 2003, INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad had conducted a study and found that on average basis, Indian Universities were subscribing to only 250 journals (National and International). Some of them were not even subscribing to any of the International journals. Study also revealed that almost all the universities were subscribing to same National or International journals independently. This means 100 copies of the same journal required by 100 universities (one copy by each university) were costing crores of rupees. This had created a havoc in the educational system which has been producing around 18 – 20 thousands PhDs every year. A prolific bunch of academicians recommended UGC to serve the Indian Higher Educational System with the help of electronic publishing which offers various benefits to the end users as well as to policy makers for taking productive decision with respect to usage and need of particular e-resource. Finally, UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium comes into existence.

**UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium**

UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium was formally launched on December 28, 2003 and access to subscribed e-resources were given free of cost to 50 universities who were having infrastructure to access the resources. This phase was called Phase I of the programme. UGC-INFONET Infrastructural programme establishes the infrastructure within the universities and once universities came up with needed infrastructure, they were added subsequently under the programme under Phases II and III. The programme is wholly funded by UGC and it is being executed by INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad. The beneficiary university needs to have infrastructure (Internet networking) ready with static range of Internet Protocols.

For the last couple of years, a sea change has been observed in terms of quantity and quality of research output of Indian Universities. As of now, consortium offers access to more than 5500 peer reviewed electronic journals and eleven prominent bibliographic databases to 160 universities. Therefore, we would hereby briefly discuss about economy of the consortium which has been enormously helped by e-publishing industry.

**Economy of UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium**

INFLIBNET Centre does not only manage subscription to these scholarly databases on discounted price but also observes cost effectiveness of subscribed resources by cost recovery factor in terms of average cost of article per download.

The Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP) surveyed that 78% of publishers offer pay-per-view or individual article purchase options. In a pay-per-view model, the cost of articles varies from publisher to publisher and average cost is $30 per article. In absence of online availability of articles, one article would have cost $15 according to a study conducted by the American Research Libraries. In 2009, after spending around Rs 41 crores, consortium recovered Rs 457 crores which ended with enormous cost recovery. Average cost per download is also being calculated by dividing subscription cost of a resource by the number of articles downloaded. In 2009, under cost recovery factor we observed every article has cost at the calculated price of $1.4 where as it was noticed to be $15 - $30 in United States. Savings under UGC-INFONET is calculated in terms of difference between cost paid by the consortium for member institutions for e-resources and cost payable by individual universities in case the resources were subscribed by them on their own. The Consortium during 2004 – 2009, saved around Rs 1680 crores by subscribing products of
Rs 1860 crores for just Rs 174 crores for all member universities.

After spending such an ample amount of money to enrich institutions of higher learning, we need to evaluate the impact of subscribing scholarly literature on research output of Indian academics in terms of article and paper publishing. In the initial study of INFLIBNET, it has been revealed that research output of Indian universities has increased to 42 percent during 2004-2008 which is quite higher as compare to previous years.

**N-LIST programme of INFLIBNET**

To enhance the quality of research, it has been noticed to provide some e-resources to students at college level, so that they can get the feel of e-resources with respect to availability, browsing and searching information from e-resources. The benefit of consortia-based subscription of e-resources was also extended to the colleges through the project entitled ‘National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Contents (N-LIST)’, jointly executed by the UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium, INFLIBNET Centre and the INDEST-AICTE Consortium, IIT Delhi which is directly funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The INFLIBNET Centre was awarded ‘Jury Choice Aware e-India 2010’ in the category ‘Digital Learning: ICT Enabled University/Higher Education Institute of the Year’ for the Year 2010. It was formally launched by Honourable Union Minister of Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal on May 4, 2010 at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi. To begin with, in N-LIST around 6,000 Govt. / Govt.-aided colleges covered under section 2(f)/12(B) of the UGC Act, 1956 can now access selected electronic resources including electronic journals, electronic books and bibliographic databases. These resources include more than 2100 e-journals and 51,000 e-books.

As on August 5, 2010, a total number of 1296 colleges have registered themselves with the N-LIST programme including 783 Govt. / Govt.-aided colleges covered under the 12(f)/12(B) Act of the UGC. Log-in ID and password for accessing e-resources has been sent to these 783 colleges. Remaining colleges are being advised to join the initiative as N-LIST associates. All e-resources subscribed for colleges under the N-LIST project are now accessible to these colleges through the N-LIST website.

Cost avoidance is calculated in terms of difference in cost paid by the N-LIST programme for colleges and list price of subscribed e-resources including e-journals and e-books. It has been found that there is a notional savings of Rs 5376.17 crores considering the fact that the same sets of resources on list price would have cost Rs 5388.41 crores as against Rs 12.24 crores spent under the N-LIST programme for the year 2010. Furthermore, average cost of per journal for each college has also calculated, which comes to Rs 10.37 in the year 2010, Rs 5.74 in the 2011 and Rs 5.41 in the year 2012. Overall average cost of the journal per college is Rs 17.92. The same way, average cost of subscribing each book for each college is costing around Rs 0.18 only.

**Conclusion**

E-Publishing has revolutionised research and development activities. It has also offered the provision for two-way communication which was quite difficult earlier. Now user of information can interact with generator of information and also make comments on any piece of information to share research experience and exposure on similar subject areas. Indian academicians have been accessing the information resources which are being used by the academicians in the developed world. This has become possible due to e-publications. Now it is being expected that after getting scholarly literature from all over the world, Indian research output would be more qualitative and would surely be recognised at global level. As the quality of research output of any nation is known as wealth of that country and status of growth can be judged from academic and research output of that country, let us hope that the wave of E-publishing will take us to new heights.

**References:**

**INFLIBNET Annual and other reports.**

With inputs from
Dr Jagdish Arora
Director
Information and Library Network Centre &

Prof (Dr) Preeti Mahajan
Professor
Punjab University