

Network Resource Sharing In Libraries and Information Centers: A Need of Time

Deepak Aggarwal

Abstract

The term 'resources' applies to anything, person or action to which one turns for aid in the time of need.

The word 'sharing' entails opportunity, allotting or contributing something that is owned to benefit others.

Keywords: Sharing, Reciprocity, Language, Literature etc

1. Introduction

Resources sharing' entails:

1. **Reciprocity**, implying a partnership, in which each member has something useful to contribute to others.
2. Each member should be willing and able to make resources available when needed
3. They should have a plan for accomplishing resource sharing.

'**Library Resource Sharing**'¹ means- sharing of various activities and processes concerned with organization of library material such as acquisition, Classification, Cataloguing, Storage and retrieval of library material besides sharing of the library collection and library services.

Need of Resources Sharing

No library or information centre can claim to be self-sufficient in fulfilling the information needs of its own members due to various reasons. They are in search of various alternatives and one them is library resource sharing with the following four reasons:-

1. **Literature Growth**
2. **Increasing Cost**
3. **More demand for reading**
4. **Language problem**

1. **Literature Growth:** - Due to information explosion the rate of publication growth is so fast that the literature is doubling in every ten years. Thus no library can even possess the entire literature of its own interest.
2. **Increasing Cost:** - Increasing cost of books and journals of scientific and technical subjects put a further constraint in acquiring the reading material. Library budgets are shrinking and are not able to cope-up the increasing cost of books and journals. The cost is a limiting factor not only in the acquisitions of reading material but in its technical processing, its storing, retrieving, maintenance and in hiring the staff to perform these functions.
3. **More demand for reading:** - Inter disciplinary and multidisciplinary teaching and research put together strain on a library's resources. Readers or researchers may need the literature on allied subjects beside their main subjects. Therefore, it is quite **difficult** for a library **to** visualize all the future needs of its clientele and procure the literature in advance and wait for the potential users or till then block the grants/budget's use.
4. **Language Problem-**The scientific and technical literature in language other than English is growing very fast. About 50% such literature is being published in English and remaining 50% literature is in other language which cannot be ignored.

Objectives of Resource Sharing

For a successful resource sharing program, following objectives are needed²

1. To meet the library user information needs.
2. To save the time of library users.
3. To assist member libraries in selection of materials.
4. To make the optimum use of limited funds.
5. To purchase catalogue and process library materials.
6. To contribute co-operative acquisitions, inter library loans and reproduction of materials by member libraries.
7. To promote program for increased use of libraries.
8. To stimulate improvement of library facilities.
9. To Co-operative in development of library staff.
10. To provide the materials beyond the reach of individual libraries.
11. To achieve economics in the use of resources human and material.

Desirable Conditions

The objectives of a successful resource sharing cannot be achieved until and unless the desirable conditions are adopted and followed and these are:-

1. An intense desire and will for mutual benefit among participating libraries.
2. Adequate reproduction facilities.
3. Efficient communication facilities.
4. Adequate bibliographical control over the resources available in participating libraries in network.
5. To share the currently owned materials.
6. Agreement on acquisition policies for the consistent development of holding and avoiding the duplication and to avoid the acquisitions of unproductive material.
7. Last but not the least, adoption of latest network technology.

Network Technology and Resource Sharing

With the use of computers in libraries, the concept of library networking has gained wide popularity among library and information centers. Although the network concept is not a new one in the library. Dr. Ranganathan gave the momentum to library networking concept. Through the concept of networking already existed. However the application of computer and communication technologies made it easy to transmit the required information to any part of the world almost instantaneously at a very less cost without any difficulty and that also without parting with documents physically. It is for these reasons that computerized networking continues to attract the attention of libraries and information system.

We can define the computer network as 'a system in which many computer points and terminals stretching over a room or building or linked with each other for information communication.' Thus the term network refers to inter linked libraries or a system in which main library points stretched across a locality i.e. city, state, region, nation or world are linked with each other for information communication.

Need and Utility

In 1984, a working group of planning commission headed by Dr. N. Sheshagiri emphasized the need of interlinking of library and information centers.³ this paved the way for computerized library networking among libraries in India.

Why the computerized library networks of library and information centers are needed and what is their utility is being discussed below.

1. To ensure economy

On the one hand the financial resources of libraries are shrinking and on the other hand the cost of books and periodicals are touching sky heights, forcing to the libraries to enter into resource sharing through computerized networking and to have access the resources of each other through computer and communication technology. Thus ensuring the economic factor.

2. To Encounter the Pressure of Knowledge Explosion

Due to knowledge explosion resulting to massive information flow, no library can think of being self-sufficient even in dream. Therefore, it is the need of time that the group of libraries should co-operate, and coordinate in collection development and sharing the collection to each other.⁴

Due to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach in education the users of a library are not satisfied with the specialized collection of his library. They have to depend on the other libraries resources.

3. Information Transfer

Information transfer and sharing is another major advantage of network. Through network, information available on computer can be accessed transferred, stored and printed at a place in no time all over the world

4. E-Document Delivery

With the introduction of the network technology, the lending library is not required to part with the document if it is available in digital form. Though OPAC, the catalogues and CD-Databases may be accessed and if the full text is available in digital form, it may be sent through fax or E-mail service.⁵

5. Optimum Utilization of Hardware/Software

Hardware/Software and computer peripherals are costly prices to buy and maintain. In case of networking, in one main computer/processor, desired software can be connected and then many terminals will work efficiently. There will be not need to install main computer server in many places and install the software in each of them. This saves a loss of money.

6. **Time Saver** The network technology in libraries saves a lot of time of library users as the collection/resources of the participating libraries of the network may be accessed, retrieved by the users from their own libraries terminals without any hassles and postal delay or traveling to the libraries located in other places/cities etc. Manual searching of databases, indexes, abstracts takes a lot of times of users but the network technologies have made it quite easy. Thus the precious time of user is saved.

Conclusion

From the above mentioned details, it is obvious that the network the technology is a boon for libraries and their and

their users. It is perfectly matching the objectives of resource sharing. It saves the time of users, it is economical, and it solves the space problem, make possible to ensure the optimum use of their budgets. It facilitates the readers with the right information at the right time at the right way.

Thus resource sharing through network fulfills the dream of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan about his 'Five Laws of Library Sciences'.

References

1. Chandel, A.S. and Saraf, Veena. Planning in resource sharing. Lucknow: Printer House, 1987.
2. Rab, Syed Fazle. Changing frontiers of library and information science. New Delhi: Commonwealth Publication, 1994.
3. Kaul, H.K. Library Networks; an Indian experience. New Delhi: Virgo, 1992
4. Sharma, Pandey S.K. Fundamentals of library automation. New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 1995.
5. Sornarayana, P.S. and Mudhol, Mahes V. Communication technology; its impact on library and information science. New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 2000.