



Original Article

E-Resources and its Importance for User of Libraries

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The very purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of qualitative and quantitative analysis of the usage of e-resources in libraries. E-resources help us in storing the relevant information electronically which can be accessible through electronic system and networking at any time instantly. Instant access is quite possible with e-resources within a fraction of second. The paper focuses on the various aspects of e-resources. Digital technology has made it more easy and speedy to access information in remote areas subject to availability of network. Electronic resources solves storage problems, and control the flood of information. Digitization of print resources is becoming more and more important for the libraries. Digital technology has made the libraries to add new things to its collection and the most prominent among them is the e-resources. This paper presents an overview of e-resources describing its features, need/purpose, types and utility for libraries and also some suggestions for its effective use.

Keywords: e-Resources, Characteristics of e-resources, Need of e-resources, Types and utility of e-resources, Advantages and disadvantages of e-resources.

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Introduction

Library and information services are changing very rapidly in the 21st century. In earlier times, information resources were mainly presented in paper form. At present information is generated at an exponential rate and the need to make such information readily available and accessible to all is becoming a major issue among library professionals. To overcome this problem, alternative media for storing and disseminating vast amount of information are emerging now-a-days. Paper form of books and journals. are replaced by electronic media. The users expect more relevant, up to date and timely information from library professionals. Electronic resources available in a library play an important role in facilitating access to required information to the users in an easy and expeditious manner. The e-resources like CD-ROM databases, e-journals, e-books, OPAC and the Internet are slowly replacing the importance and usage of print media. Electronic resources, or e-resources, refer to digital information and materials accessed and utilized through various devices, such as computers, smartphones, tablets, and e-readers. These resources include e-books, e-journals, online databases, multimedia materials, and other forms of digital content. The increasing popularity of electronic resources can be attributed to their accessibility, cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and eco- friendliness. Electronic resources have revolutionized how information is accessed and shared, impacting various domains such as education, research, healthcare, and business. As technology continues to evolve, electronic resources will play a vital role in the digital age, transforming how we access and utilize information.



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E-Resources

In this modern age of computer, the use of electronic resources is increasing day by day. The electronic journals, multimedia products, graphical, numerical, *etc.* as commercially available title which has been published for the purpose of achieving the aim of marketing, and these may be delivered in the form of CD-ROM. Nowadays several techniques have been developed in this field, and documents are allowed and distributed electronically. Therefore, to cope with the present situation, each and every Librarians turned towards e-resources available for the development of Libraries. The e-resources on magnetic and optical media have a vast impact on the collections of Libraries.

Definition

According to IFLA/FAIFE (2007) these are “materials that are computer controlled, including materials that required the use of a peripheral (a CD- ROM player) attached to a computer; the items may or may not be used in the interactive mode”. According to Library and Information Technology Glossary, “Term used to describe all of the information products that a library provides through a computer network”. Collections in which complete contents of documents are created or converted into machines readable form for offline/online access.

Need and Purpose of e-Resources

The Electronic resources have great potential and bright future to attract users. Such resources combine all the benefits of the multimedia, digital coding and interne. Main purpose of electronic resources is providing current and up-to-date information to the users required from time to time for various purpose. Through electronic resources users are able to access latest information quickly. Electronic resources are much more needed by the users as compared to print form of resources because of the following reasons:

The electronic resources is providing current information before it has to be published in print form.

To provide update information as and when required for user.

1. Users can able to access latest information.
2. To solve the space problem in library.
3. It is easy to use and disseminate.
4. Saves valuable time of the users as well as the library staff.
5. E-resources can be downloaded instantly by the different users at the same time.
6. User can read an E-resource anytime.
7. Due to portability e-resources can be taken anywhere on portable computer.
8. Some e-resources are interactive, having animations and background music.
9. Persons with disability can hear audible e-resources.
10. E-resources save human resource requirement in the libraries as there is no need for shelving and rectification.
11. Users can not misplace e-books.
12. The E-resources is to analyze dependency of the users, and solve various types of their problems while using e-resources.
13. To know different types of electronic resources, and the services available for user.
14. To locate the difficulties and impediments of the user while using e-resources.

Selection of e-Resources

Nowadays the selection of e-resources is not a new term to Librarian and staff as they have been doing it since long back. Before this, the libraries were acquiring printed material. However, libraries are now focusing to adopt e-resources information technology. In fact, the emergence of Internet, particularly, the www (World Wide Web) has a triggered proliferation of web based full text online resources as a new media of information delivery. The Librarians are trying to meet the needs of the user and identify new resources, such as online databases, web-based resources, collections in digital library, e-books, e-journals *etc.* The selection process of e-resources depends upon the choice and demands of the users. Apart from this, it is **necessary to take into consideration the following steps:**

1. to identify library needs;
2. to identify content and scope of the e-resources;
3. to evaluate quality of that particular resource and search capabilities;
4. to estimate the cost;
5. to check either subscription based or web based when acquiring;
6. to evaluate the systems and technical support;



7. to review licensing agreements;
8. to evaluate application software and installation, updated sporadically or in regular schedule; and
9. to check the facilities for educational support and training.

Types of e-Resources

E-resources can be categorized on the basis of classification used for print media which is the most popular method of categorization.

1. **Primary e-resources**
2. **Secondary e-resources**

1. Primary e-resources

These are of following types:

1. E-journals
2. E-books
3. E-databases
4. E-magazines/serials
5. E-dissertations and theses
6. E-newspapers
7. E-patents
8. E-standards

2. Secondary e-resources

These e- resources are of following types:

E-course material

Indexing and abstracting databases

E-reference databases

Advantages of e-Resources

The following are the added advantages of e-resources over the print media.

1. **Multi-access:** A networked product can provide multiple points of access (in the campus) at multiple points in this (24X7X365) and to multiple simultaneous users.
2. **Speed retrieval:** An e-resources is lot quicker to browse, to extract, and to integrate the information into other material and to cross refer between various publications.
3. **Functional aspects:** E-resources will allow the users to approach the publication in order to analyze its content in various new ways and techniques by click of the mouse on search button.
4. **Content analysis:** The E-resources contain a vast amount of information, but more important in a mixed format mode *i.e.* image, video, audio and animation which could not be replicated in print.

Consortia mode: The E-resources can be subscribed in a consortia format too thus cutting down the cost but reaping the sane benefits. *e.g.* INDEST Consortia for Engineering

5. College Libraries

Interactivity: Articles/issues/chapters can be read, commented by the readers, amended quickly and greater feedback can be given through the web.

Hypertext: format can be used and links to related articles, of other web sites, and URLs for individual articles and email alerts when latest issue/edition is uploaded can be got.

Virtual reality: Advantage taken on the web is to add value by using animation, virtual reality and interactive physical and mathematical charts.

Added Value: Advantages taken on the web is to add value by using animation, virtual reality and interactive mathematical charts.

Flexibility: E-journals evolved quickly. They are not tied to a format, printer, and distribution network.

Disadvantages of e-Resources

1. Difficulty in reading computer screens.
2. Limitations of computer monitor.
3. The readers need to have access to Internet in order to read electronic resources.
4. If a library cancels or stops subscription to an e-journal, it is not certain that the library will get access to back issues of that journal. Whereas, library having printed material certainly has back issues of that journal in its possession. In



case of e-books too, if a library stops subscription to e-books, it is denied access to the e- book. Whereas the physical copy once bought always remains in the possession of the library.

5. Use of e- resources entails reading on screen which is tedious and harmful too.
6. Format that a large proportion of e-journal use.
7. Unavailability of internet facility, or in low-speed internet facility.
8. Limitations of e-Resources
9. Libraries require sophisticated infrastructure with sufficient amount of computer peripherals and supporting software to provide uninterrupted access to electronic resources.
10. Further, issues relating to digital rights and copyright issues are the prominent areas to be taken proper measures while dealing with electronic resources.
11. There is a need for static IP configurations to get access to such resources to prevent any kind of misuse by an unauthorized user.
12. Users have to purchase their own system or smart device for accessing the information through a remote location if the library desires to give remote accessing facility to its resources.
13. If the access is provided through individual login credentials, there is a chance of sharing the same to an unauthorized user.
14. Hence library has to keep an eye on its access history and download statistics.
15. Another issue pertaining to e-resource access is it's systematic downloading in an unethical way.

There is a difficulty in continuously using data on a digital screen compared to print format.

Another major issue pertaining to the electronic resource is its access licensing such as perpetual access rights, contractual agreements, subscription policies, irregular publishing *etc.*

There is a need to provide sensitization and orientation program to the users on a regular basis to make them equip with the advance usage.

Characteristics of e-Resources

“The nature of e-resources is to serve as a supplement to the print collection. It strives to satisfy the information needs of the user with greater speed, accuracy and efficiency” The **scope of e-resources includes the following characteristics:**

1. Anyone can use E-resources anywhere even without knowing where it is located geographically.
2. resources can be used by many users simultaneously.
3. resources can be published more quickly than paper publications.
4. resources can include multimedia and graphics.
5. There is no need to visit at library or bookstall.
6. resources enable its uses to interact with each other for exchange of thoughts and ideas online.
7. resources can be searched easily and quickly by the user.
8. There is no risk of damage or loss.
9. Type, size, font *etc.* can be adjusted.
10. The users can be guided to the document by providing a link.

11. Special Features of e-Resources

E-resources have some distant features which differentiate them from traditional resources. E-resources on the Internet are further distinct by the nature of the information on the net itself. The features of 21st century information and media are (Satija, 2003):

High compact storage.

Ease of reproduction, multiplication and manipulation and transmutation;

Contents can be very easily detaches from its media or container,

Ease of migration of contents from one medium to another,

Ease of transmission, communication and storage;

Hypertext and multimedia;

Seamless integration of print and electronic resources;

Sophisticated and multipronged searches through keywords, free text, Boolean operators, lass numbers and natural languages processing.



Conclusion

All of us knows very well that, E-resources in a library proved accurate both the fourth and fifth law of library science by Dr. S.R. Ranganathan *i.e.* Save the Time of the Reader and Library is a Growing Organism. With the help of e-resources the libraries can ensure exhaustive and pinpointed information to its users which save a lot of precious valuable time of the users as we always says that Time is Money. Using e-resources also enable the library to save space of the library. Library operations and services have been changed due to advent of information and communication technology. The internet and e-resources have changed the way people communicate, interact, acquire and share knowledge. Libraries have to provide ICT infrastructure to its users adequately in order to make e-resources accessible to all the users as and when required.

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