

From Physical to web-enabled delivery: *The odyssey of document delivery service*

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Abstract:

The libraries share their resources with other libraries to meet users' demand, as every library cannot acquire everything required and 'just in case' demand of the library user. The practice of library cooperation among libraries started way back in 1940s with Farmington plan. Later it became a convention of resource sharing. It is probably the library fraternity that have an unequalled and unstinted practice of sharing resources and is continuing relentlessly to the present web-era. The extent of Inter Library Loans (ILL), one of the best practices of resource sharing, has reached million transactions per annum by OCLC service. The sharing manifests into books, articles, book chapters of reports and all forms of documents and so on. ILL manifested also as, article alert, document delivery, reprography and document back-up service. Its by-product is the creating of new information product called Union Catalogue, served as a referral tool to find the required resource. The service has such a magnitude, that national lending services were instituted, namely the British Library Document Supply Centre, and that shows the importance of this service. The paper has delineated the perspective transformation of this one facet of resource sharing service as practiced by the libraries, information centres and systems, including the Online and Internet-based services.

Keywords: Library Cooperation, Resource Sharing, Inter Library Loan, Document Delivery

1. Introduction

The first three Laws of Library Science, enunciated by Ranganathan (2006, Reprint), propose the books and readers should be brought together by whatever means and services devised and rendered by libraries in fulfilling the needs of their clientele. It is presumably true that every library cannot acquire everything that is published, obviously by limitations of finance, space the rules of the procedure. It is with this sense that library cooperation came into being in the fascinating resource sharing practice commencing with the Farmington plan in 1940s. The Libraries were delivering documents on Inter Library Loan (ILL) in the absence of Photocopying. The Microform evolved “Reprographic Services” on Libraries with several formats. This had been practiced internationally, by National Technical Information Service (NTIS)¹ for Report Literature, British Library Document Supply Service (BLDSC)² for all primary sources of information and the then University Microfilms International, (UMI)³ for Dissertations and Theses on Microfilms and on CD-ROM. The OCLC⁴ to handle large volume of ILL has software ILLiad. IFLA-UAP is another global example. An in-depth exploration of DDS would give more fascinating practices worldwide.

The simple rules of sharing resources either through inter library loan (ILL) or through document delivery service (DDS) stand as benchmarks today. The emergence of online information retrieval systems, the WebOPAC added new dimensions to resource sharing and inter-library lending. The magnitude of inter library loan service rendered by OCLC is so large that it has a separate software, ILLD to manage the ILL transactions. The web transformed the physical delivery to virtual access and has metamorphosed in the process. The advent of Internet and WWW the services of ILL and DDS have much easier now as the libraries use e-mail, social networks and now the WhatsApp facilities to post their demands.

The then Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC)⁵ played a key role in DDS for the libraries throughout India. The *lisforum* operating in India and subscribed to many librarians has at least 100 postings every day requesting for the supply of full text articles. The libraries in India devised their own mechanism to inter-lending and borrowing books among the libraries. The paper focuses on the practices in India as a case study.

2. Inter Library Loan:

The humble Inter Library Loan Service has reached a huge magnitude of transactions among the cooperating libraries. The OCLC it is reported that 9.7 million⁶ Inter library Loans were performed from 7/2005 to 6/2006. That means 0.14% of world population has been benefitted with this service in one year.

The ILL services were very much practiced among local libraries in India. Ranganathan has considered it as one of the factors of cooperation and coordination among the libraries. He stated, the objectives of Second and Third Law of Library Science, can be fulfilled “ by a judicious pooling of the resources of the community by a carefully articulated scheme of library cooperation and coordination”... (Ranganathan, 2006 Reprint, 271) The libraries in metropolitans Exchanged Borrowers tickets among them. It was practiced then between libraries of Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and the Bangalore University, Bangalore. In another practice, the cost of delivery of hard copies of whole documents like the books, by surface mail, was shared by the two libraries.

The lending library would bear the cost of onward delivery and the receiving library would bear the cost of return of the borrowed document.

There were no rigid protocols for borrowing. It was just a simple formal agreement of consent through correspondence and exchange of letters of requests from the borrowing and lending libraries. The rules of lending formulated by each library for their own stakeholders would also apply to the borrowing libraries, such as to compensate the loss or damage to the borrowed materials, the period of lending, the fines for overdue materials and so on. However it is found that Ranganathan and the national professional bodies like IASLIC drafted an Inter Library Code for Libraries (Mittal, 1984, 472). But there is serious gap in the preparation of Union Catalogue of Books in India, and as commented by Agrawal (1992, 35), "But no national Union Catalogue on books like the National Union Catalogue of the USA exists in India. In recent years with the application of ICT in libraries and development of national Library Networks, like INFLIBNET and DELNET, the computerised Union Catalogue of Books, like the IndCat of INFLIBNET.

3. Document Delivery Service – Off-Line:

The document back-up service or Document Delivery Service (DDS) has evolved into an indispensable service to the users. When the Online Information Retrieval Services emerged in 1980s, the Online vendors like, DIALOG, SCIMATE and others extended the searching the bibliographic reference databases to supply the full-text of the papers on demand, as no full-text databases were available then.

The Document Delivery Service (DDS) has more visibility, exactness and pinpointed relevance and was widely scattered than the ILL. In its infancy termed as Document Supply Service (DSS) and for this purpose national documentation centres were established in most of the developing countries then, with the assistance from UNESCO to help the information access and exchange among the information haves and information have not's. The importance of DSS or DDS has been well articulated by Joseph and others (1975) as "a research worker is likely to come across literature of relevance which are not available in the information centre (or library), say A, to which he has access. Naturally enough, when the barrier between subject disciplines are crumbling, the total number of documents which may be of potential use at a given time is so large that no institution (Library or Information Centre) can hope to acquire more than a mere fraction".

It is because many countries in the developed world had built huge document collection to provide document back up service to the needy user within and outside the host country. The best example is the British Library Document Supply Centre (BLDSC) (earlier BLLD) which is serving world information seekers even today. The BLDSC was the outcome of reorganisation of British Library, in the mid 1970s, formed out of merging the National Lending Library for Science and Technology with National Central Library and National Reference Library. This was formed exclusively to provide Document Supply Service worldwide to scientific publications, and has stocked as many as 70,000 serials titles.

In India the INSDOC established in 1962 was one of the earliest Documentation Centre to be established in a developing country had been performing DSS to help the information seekers from libraries in India, but it was not of the size and magnitude of BLDSC. The INSDOC now with National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR) was created exclusively to supply publications to the users across India. It was

responsible to create the National Union Catalogue of Scientific Serials (NUCCSI) a huge database of Scientific Serials available in as many as 565 libraries, comprising University, Research Institutions and R and D Laboratory Libraries. The NUCSSI has developed a mechanism to locate a serial supply documents to the library users all over the country and today its Online version, has facilitated with an automated mechanism to contact the nearest resource library to supply the full text of papers on demand. The full details on NUCSSI⁷, its genesis and service are available at <http://nucssi.niscair.res.in/> (Accessed on 3/6/15).

The INSDOC was providing microfilm copies of the required documents (in the absence of Photocopying technology) to the libraries and had established a Reprographic facility for this purpose. It had overcome the copyright issue by printing on each reproduced document a prescribed note “SINGLE COPY FOR PERSONAL USE” and probably this complies with the “fair-use” concept of today. Joseph and others (1975) have enlisted as many as 14 locations outside India, from where the documents from foreign countries were procured and made available to the users in India. They have also prepared a check list of requirements for an effective DSS/DDS which would be true even in the present Internet era.

The National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT) was constituted in the year 1975. It established three tier information centres, at national, branch and local levels. The base of this system was Local Information Unit (LIU) and the user demands for documents was made to LIU and the Branch and National Centres was required to meet these demands of users. If the Branch Information Centres failed to meet the demands the request of the users would be transferred to the national information centres (Joseph and other, 1975).

The advent of Online Information Retrieval Systems and Services like DIALOG, during the decade of 1980s made a new beginning for the global information access and delivery system. The Informatics India⁸ a private information industry establishment, introduced the Online Information Retrieval Systems like DIALOG in India. It also procured CD-ROM Databases and services from Silver Platter, ADONIS and other and was handling the DDS from BLDSC and Article alert service from DIALOG, ISI.

Another organisation, the National Centre for Science Information (NCSI) (in the premises of Indian Institute of Science) Bangalore, was established by University Grants Commission, India (UGC) as a information service provider for scientific community in the country. Beside information search and access to CD-ROM Databases of several scientific disciplines was also providing the DDS (Photocopies) from various sources available at the Indian Institute of Science Library, Bangalore and from overseas agencies like BLDSC, and Laser print copies of articles from full text CD-ROMs of ADONIS, EXTRAMED, INSPEC Physics, MathSci and many more.

The National Informatics Centre, a Government of India establishment for information systems, established the MEDLARS as Indian Medlars Centre and was also providing DDS to the medical professional fraternity on biomedical and health science disciplines.

The British Council Library and Information Network in India was also providing the DDS – International Photocopy Service and International Loan Service, from Serials, Reports and Conference Proceedings and also “rapid access to books” which are not available locally (India). These services were made available through the BLDSC. The BLDSC would also provide the translation of documents as one of the DDS.

4. Document Delivery Service – Online

The Internet and the World Wide Web ushered in new challenges and opportunities for the document delivery (full-text) online and on demand download service (but at fee). In India, the NICNET (National Information Centre Network), ERNET (Education and Research Network) and the VSNL (Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited), then Government of India establishment, provided local and global access through GPSS (Global Packet Switching Service) to resources via Internet.

The DDS via Internet was introduced by NCSI, Informatics India and the NICNET

The establishment of Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET)⁹ has set a new era of DDS in India and so the journey of ILL and DDS also provides an exciting itinerary. The INFLIBNET introduced the OCLC's First Search Service in India. It aimed to supplement the existing information service in the country in a cost effective manner started subscribing to OCLC FirstSearch Service. The service offered full text, document delivery, library holding and Inter Library Loan. The project was then started on experimental basis.

Now that, INFLIBNET has built bibliographic databases of Books, Periodicals, Theses and Dissertations of Universities and Research and Academic Institutions in India. The IndCat is a by-product of consolidated resource database of universities in India. With this base of bibliographic information and also locations of resources, the INFLIBNET has been fostering Document Delivery Services to users in Universities, Colleges and research and academic institutions. The INFLIBNET is also managing the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium of e- Resources and is subscribed by most of the Universities. The N-LIST project an off-shoot of UGC – INFONET has been extended to the users in Colleges all over India. The scenario with these developments sees a growth of DDS among the Universities, Institutions and Colleges in the country. As already mentioned, the lisforum is used as a link to seek the books, articles and other primary information resources from other libraries.

Another national library network operating in India, the DELNET has also been extending the DDS to the member libraries to promote the use of e-resources and p-resources particularly among the professional institutions and colleges.

5. Conclusion

The library cooperation, resource sharing, the umbrella terms comprising, Inter Library Loan, Document Supply Service, Document Delivery Service, Reprography and so on. These services have a perpetual standing and has stabilized over the years and have been fulfilling the aims and objectives of the laws of library science. The technological advances have not reduced their demand, only the mode of delivery might have changed, and content-wise would be quite specific and tailor-made. The paper presents a scenario of ILL and DDS in India.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank the Document Delivery and Resource Sharing Section of IFLA 2015 Congress Committee for accepting our proposal and also giving us an opportunity to present the Indian perspective of the subject DDRS.

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3. Mittal, R.L. (1984). Library Administration: Theory and practice. New Delhi, Ess Ess: p.271.
4. Ranganathan, S.R. (2006) Five Laws of Library Science. Reprint Edition. Bangalore, SRELS, New Delhi, Ess Ess Publishers. p.271. Notes : The Three Laws are: Books are for Use, Every Reader His/Her Book, Every Book its Reader.

The Authors have used several personal resources of documents available with them to make some of the claims and supporting information on the practices followed in ILL and DDS.

URL (Accessed on 22 March 2015 on 31st May 2015)

1. www.ntis.gov/
2. www.bl.uk › *Help for researchers Home* › *Online or by post*
3. dissexpress.umi.com/
4. <https://www.oclc.org/illiad.en.html>
5. www.niscair.res.in/
6. Source: *OCLC Annual Report 2005/2006*. :
<http://www.oclc.org/oclc/menu/home1.htm>).
7. nucssi.niscair.res.in/
8. www.informindia.co.in/
9. www.inflibnet.ac.in/