

Editorial

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One of the major issues that have been daunting every academic institution across the world is the ever increasing cost of access to journals and scholarly communication. While the academic community anticipated a large relief from the advances in electronic publishing and open source, but the reality was different. One way by which several countries have attempted to overcome this is by forming consortia of users. The first consortia in India were created by the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) which took care of the information needs of technical institutions such as IITs, NITs and IISc. This consortium known as INDSET ensured that MHRD institutions had uninterrupted and equitable access to journals and scholarly communication. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and University Grants Commission (UGC) also formed their respective consortia. In this issue, the experiences and the offerings of the UGC led INFLIBNET Consortium which has much larger outreach and is described by Dr Bhatt.

India is one of the countries in the world that has rich traditions, cultures and variety in diversity. The cultural heritage of the country dates back to five thousand years, which is to be preserved, archived and simultaneously made accessible to the civil society. Of late,

with many societies in a state of turmoil and with ever diminishing funds for preservation, newer techniques need to be developed for the preservation of our heritage. Digital preservation has found world wide acceptability and had been immensely successful in many older civilizations in Asia. The Indian experience of constructing the meta data for digitized images is described in a paper by Dr Lalitha Poluru. Dr Polluru has suggested the use of DSpace digital library software and the Dublin Core Metadata standards so that it can become compatible with the other resources such as manuscripts and printed texts.

With the ever decreasing cost of communication and its ever increasing reach, the information seeking behaviour of the library users has changed dramatically. It is filled with less and less visits to the brick and mortar buildings earlier known as 'Library'. This has called for the increase in resources that are electronically available or access to such resources hosted elsewhere either free of charge or for a price. Such users, who access information from anywhere and at anytime, often need access to information, from hotspots available in public places and cybercafés. Fagbami, Akintola and Pelemo have studied the use of cybercafés by the research scientists in agricultural research

institutes in Nigeria. This is a very good example of the information needs and access pattern of those from developing countries.

The world wide diffusion of IR (Institutional Repositories) led to a growing demand for Aggregative Digital Library Systems (ADLS). The authors Artini, Candela, Castelli and others describe various features and principles underlying the DRIVER Infrastructure, whose environment supports sustainable construction and maintenance of multiple ADLSs. This system provides research organizations with end-user applications over an extensive information space of metadata records, collected and aggregated from a pool of potentially heterogeneous repositories.

The authors Vijayakumar and Kannappanavar conducted a survey on the use of library services by the researchers at Kuvempu University in Karnatakan, India. Their findings are presented in a paper in this issue.

There have been very many significant strides that are being made in India. Significant among them is the work of the universities in India to create one stop portal for education. This work was motivated by the success of the MHRD in creating course contents through NPTEL. This on line portal can be seen at <<http://www.ignouonline.ac.in/sakshat/>>. This along with the Knowledge Network spearheaded by Dr R Chidambaram

and the ministries of HRD and IT will make available network bandwidths and reach so far unheard of in India. The Digital Library of India, an initiative of the Ministry of IT in collaboration with Professor Raj Reddy of Carnegie Mellon University and with countries such as China, Egypt, Qatar and Australia has already put more than one million books on the web, of which nearly 400 000 are from India. The Department of Science and Technology has began an initiative that would help in high resolution preserving of not just the images but large structures such as temples and monuments. The untiring efforts of Dr Subbiah Arunachalam and the Indian National Science Academy to make Open Access a great reality in India are another significant work that will have much wider and greater impact in India. Together, these initiatives of the country would change the sheer definition of Library and the way we perceive information and its access. It will also throw many technological and software challenges. This will give an opportunity for library professionals for the first time to think of new and innovative ideas that have never been tried elsewhere. I am sure that the library professionals across the world would rise to this challenge and use this journal as an organ for communicating and disseminating their work to the rest of the world.