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e-Journal Portals: A Web Retrieval Tool for Scholarly Communication in Digital Era

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Information Communication Technology (ICT) and its offshoots technologies such as Internet, Intranet, www, Web directories, Web portals, and E-portals, etc. have played a significant role in the libraries and information centres. The new emerging technology like E-journals portals have played a marvelous role in acquisition and dissemination of full-text information to libraries at a minimal cost. The present paper discusses the various facets and issues of E-portal journals in detail.

0 INTRODUCTION

The evolution and revolution of digital library is a landmark in the LIS profession of 21st century which is promising delivery of complete information to user's desktop in a seamless manner from any corner of the Globe. The present century is the century of information society and various technological developments in IT sector such as Internet, web portal, e-journals, digital libraries, subject gateways, etc. The e-portal and e-journals gradually and slowly are marching towards to becoming an acceptable, affordable and necessary tools techniques for retrieving scholarly information stored in e-Journals to anybody, anytime and anywhere. The e-portal technology is more reliable and capable to fulfill the dreams of librarians and information managers for providing seamless access to information, which is a focal attraction of today. The availability of e-journal portal over Internet is emerging as a modern tool for retrieving and delivering the contents more quickly, efficiently and effectively. In order to make the optimum use of e-journals, the e-portal are the best options to the librarians as well as users for retrieving the contents in the most convenient form. Today, almost 90 percent of journals existing worldwide are individually available on Internet. But the thousands of e-journals are available through a single window of e-journal portal for serving to the libraries and information centers. Therefore, the importance of e-journal portal in providing information service is, very significant in today's context.

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1 E-JOURNALS VS E-JOURNAL PORTALS

e-journals are called by various names such as e-journal, electronic journals, Internet based serials, online journals, e-serials, and electronic serials. But the term e-journals has become a standard name for calling the electronic journals. JONES (W) in 1998 defined e-journals as "they are available electronically via a computer or a computer network, that they may or may not be published in some other (physical) medium, but that they are not CD-ROMs or diskettes."¹

Lancaster (FW) in 1995, opined that 'an electronic journal is created for the electronic medium and is available only in this medium' in general the e-journal can be defined as 'a journal that is available in electronic form through online host called e-journal.'

1.1 E-JOURNAL PORTAL

e-portal a mechanism that filters the overwhelming amount of information and provides a fast, easy and consistent way to get relevant information on a cost effective way to disseminate critical information to users in a right time.⁶ e-journal portal, integrates, captures and manages various e-journals published through various publishers at various places at a single web portal. In other words, e-journal portal is a single shop/gateway for subscribing all kinds of e-Journals published worldwide.

2 FEATURES OF E-JOURNALS AND E-JOURNAL PORTALS

The salient features of e-journals as described by Fecko (MB)³ in 1997 are as:

- They can be delivered to the desktop
- More than one person can read them at a time.
- The entire text can be searched.
- They can include multimedia and graphics, in colour, at marginal cost.
- They can publish more quickly than paper publications.
- They can be interactive; they can foster an online exchange of ideas by e-mail.
- They can make use of hyperlinks, both internally and to other publications.
- Articles can be retrieved directly through links from abstracting and indexing databases.
- The content can be reproduced, forwarded and modified.

21 E-JOURNAL PORTAL

- e-journal portals are the data warehouse of full text and bibliographic records of e-journals
- e-journal portals enhance the personalized selection of e-journals and their contents.
- They provide access to integrated set of users.
- They facilitate an intuitive access method for retrieving relevant information.
- They enable users to access any required information without having to know its location, format, or access methods.
- They provide reliable, up-to-date, and relevant information at affordable cost.
- They provide Internet options for further extending access of e-journals within organization.
- They provide an opportunity to users to hyperlink other e-journals freely available on internet.
- They provide quick and easy access to a myriad of data and systems.
- Retrieve only the content needed for specific requirement.

3 ACCESS TO E-JOURNALS

In order to make the maximum use of e-journals and access options, one has to be very careful in subscribing the e-journals about various IT issues and formats availability such as (HTML, PDF, SGML) because they require specific application programme for reading, retrieving, and downloading the contents. Access to e-journals is provided either by publishers themselves or through e-journal portals. The libraries and information centers cater the information and reference needs to a variety of users in different discipline.³ Which indeed is tedious and problematic task to subscribe to all e-journals in all field of knowledge for libraries. Therefore, to avoid the inconvenience subscribing the e-journals through various publisher, e-journal portals are the best options for subscribing unlimited numbers of e-journals published through various publishers at a single gateway. There are many e-journal portals, providing access to various different e-journals ranging from bibliographic data to full text retrieval. The following are the some popular e-journal portals:

31 EMERALD <www.emeraldinsight.com>

An acronym of the Electronic Management Research Library Database and launched in 1996 from UK.

Emerald publishes the world's widest range of about 100 world class e-journals on management, accounting, economics, corporate governance, disaster management, business strategies, policy, marketing, quality management training and education, human resource management, material science and technology and 24 world class outstanding e-journals of library and information science such as:

Aslib Proceeding: New Information Perspectus <www.emeraldinsight.com/ap.htm>; The Electronic Library <www.emeraldinsight.com/el/htm>; Forthcoming International Scientific and Technical Conferences <www.emeraldinsight.com/fistc.htm>; Information Management and Computer Security <www.emeraldinsight.com/imcs.htm>; Journal of Docomentation www.emeraldinsight.com/jd.htm; Internet Research <www.meraldinsight.com/intr.htm>; Library Hi-tech <www.emeraldinsight.com/lht.html>; Library Hi-tech News>; <www.emeraldinsight.com/lhtn.htm>; Library Management <www.emeraldinsight.com/lm.htm>; Library Review <www.emeraldinsight.com/lr.htm>; New Library world: Charting New Development <www.emeraldinsight.com/nlw.htm>; Online Information Review: The International Journal of Digital Information Research and Use <www.emeraldinsight.com/oir.htm>; OCLC Systems and Services <www.emeraldinsight.com/oclc.htm>; Program: Electronic Library and Information Systems <www.emeraldinsight.com/program.htm>; and VINE: The Journal of Knowledge and Information Management Systems <www.emeraldinsight.com/vine.htm>

311 MAJOR FEATURES OF EMERALD E-JOURNAL PORTAL

- Journals can be browsed by title, subject, publisher, and issue number.
- Provides archive of current and past volume of full text articles and abstracts.
- Contents can be browsed through keywords, author, subject and Boolean Operators.
- Provides institution wide-license, offers unrestricted, concurrent multi-user access, on campus and remotely.
- Provides key reading related articles chosen by journal editor, selected to provide readers with current awareness of interesting articles from other publications in the field.
- Provides e-mail alert service keeping up-to-date informed of new technological development and contents, by providing table of contents, weekly digest alert, new addition of e-journals.
- Provides reference linking to abstracts of the most influential articles cited wherever possible, this link is to the full text of the articles.
- Full text articles is available in PDF; and word, HTML.

32 SCIENCE DIRECT <www.sciencedirect.com>

Science Direct portal designed and developed by renowned publisher Elsevier Science, The Netherlands, launched in 1995 aim to cater the information research needs of corporate and educational institutions by offering a comprehensive coverage of contents of scientific and technical knowledge. At present Science Direct offers access to 18,00 world class scientific and technical e-journals and about 20 well world known databases in the field of biological sciences, agricultural sciences, business and management sciences, chemistry, physics, health sciences, material sciences, mathematics and computer sciences, pharmacology, toxicology, biotechnology, bio-informatics and engineering.

321 FOLLOWING ARE THE SALIENT FEATURES OF SCIENCE DIRECT

- Journal titles can be searched by title, publisher, or issue number.
- Users can browse the contents pages and abstracts of all licensed e-journals free of costs but in full text only those titled for which library has made agreement for subscription.
- Full text articles are available in PDF (Portable Document Format) and HTML (Hypertext Mark-Up language)
- SCIENCE DIRECT portal provides two most convenient search options: Basic search options for the Novice and advanced search options (a Proximity and Boolean search) for the expert searcher.
- It provides contents to hyper linking of articles in three different formats: Summary Plus, Full Text + Link in (HTML) and PDF.
- It provides cross-database search facilities of the top S&T databases with the top scientific research such as Ei-compindex, INSPEC, BIOSIS Previews, MEDLINE, PSYCHINFO, World textiles, Ocean-Base, GEOBASE, FLUIDEX, EMBASE, Elsevier BIOBASE, BIOTECHNOBASE, BEILSTEIN Abstracts and Science Direct Navigator.
- Provides my alerts and my profile users for quickly and easily add, remove, and modify save alerts.
- Summary Plus is a special feature to the users, which allows them to determine easily about the relevant article of their research needs.

33 J-GATE <<http://www.j-gate.informindia.co.in>>

A marvelous and wonderful e-journal portal designed and developed by Informatics India Pvt Ltd, Bangalore, India. A pioneer in the information business in India launched in 2001. A very useful e-journal portal for Indian universities and scientific institutions such as IITs, IISc, NIT, IIMs and corporate

organizations. This wonderful portal offers access to 11,000 e-journals including 1,400 free e-journals, links to 1,00,100 articles of e-journals and 600 e-journals that are only available online mode published from the World famous publishers such as Kluwar, Springer Verlag, Academic Press, IEEE, IEE, and IP etc. This portal also provides an index to online e-journals from 3,000 publishers of the world.

331 FOLLOWING ARE THE SALIENT FEATURES OF J-GATE

- As the company claims that J-GATE is a low-cost affordable e-portal database for bibliographic and full text alternative to Indian libraries in the vexing and critical period when the budget allocations of libraries are shrinking and the prices of the journals are escalating
- Users can browse e-journals through titles, author, publisher and issue number.
- J-Gate portal offers three customized products options for libraries such as JET (J-Gate Engineering and Technology for Engineering Colleges), JCC (J-Gate Custom Content) and JLCC (J-Gate Custom Content for Consortia)
- Contents of the research articles can be retrieved through title, key word, author and subject.
- Full text contents of e-journals article available in two common formats PDF and HTML
- Link to Union Catalogues for finding availability of e-journals
- Provides author address and e-mail where available.
- J-Gate Portal site is updated every week, ensuring the freshness and reliability of content

34 IDEAL <<http://www.ideallibrary.com>>

An acronym to the International Digital Electronic Access Library a well known e-journal portal from Academic Press, UK. The portal offers about 300 scholarly scientific e-journals in the field of science, technology, and medicine.

341 SALIENT FEATURES OF IDEAL

- Journals can be browsed by title in alphabetical order, by subject and publisher.
- Contents of the e-journal articles can be browsed through various search options such as free-text, field-oriented queries and Boolean operators.
- It provides the full details information of a e-journal such as author's information, editorial board
- Full text articles is available in PDF and HTML
- Contents can be browsed through keywords, author, subject .

4 CONCLUSION

The emerging technology of e-portal journals undoubtedly in coming days will provide a significant move in achieving the realistic and reliable, affordable and acceptable, effective and efficient tool for retrieving and downloading the scholarly knowledge to the scientists, technocrats, researchers, and policy makers around the Globe. Moreover, with the use of e-portal technology, it has become possible to users to access any information object (i.e., text, animation, chart, picture, voice etc.) without having to know, its location, format or access methods and similarly libraries may share the information across the attached organization/institution with automated delivery systems. The author hopes that his study certainly be helpful to the librarians and information professional in providing customized current services through a single window that allows users to search out contents as well as full text e-journals, analyze and share latest knowledge from any e-journals faster and more conveniently than ever before. However, the search interfaces provided by e-journal portals vary from e-portal to e-portal which is very significant in retrieving the contents pin-pointedly and exhaustively. Thus users need to learn the various search skills of search interfaces to make optimum use of e-journal portals.

READINGS

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14 [Http://www.jgate.information.co.in](http://www.jgate.information.co.in).

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