

E-journals and library consortia with special reference to agricultural education

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ABSTRACT

Journals are vital source of information for scientific research & development. The 21st century is witnessing revolutionary impact on publishing and information delivery systems due to emergence of internet with particularly the WWW as new medium of information storage and delivery. The agricultural libraries with their diminishing or static financial allocations have to consider new ways to consolidate global resources. This article discuss in detail about CeRA , Consortium for E-resources in Agriculture which is proving boon to the scientist and research community. It covers scope and various facilities provided under CeRA both for administrator and user.

Keywords : Library consortium, CeRA, E-journals, E-resources, E-resource sharing

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1. INTRODUCTION

Information is considered as a vital resource for communication/dissemination of knowledge. The rapid progress of ICT now tries to satisfy the information needs of the human being in diverse manner. The 21st century is witnessing revolutionary impact on publishing and information delivery systems due to emergence of internet with particularly the WWW as new medium of information storage and delivery. Library cooperation is a traditional activity among the libraries for many decades. The introduction of electronic journals has made many libraries to re-orient their structure and mechanism to adapt to new technology driven medium. Today the information needs of the user have increased so much that no single library on its own can meet their demands. The libraries with their diminishing or static financial allocations have to consider new ways to consolidate global resources. The mode of cooperation has under gone a transformation with the infusion of ICT. This has resulted in the development of "Shared subscription or Consortia based subscription" to the journals everywhere in the world. Thus library consortia have become the latest strategic front for accessing wide range of electronic journals at affordable cost.

2. LIBRARY CONSORTIA

2.1. Meaning

Consortium is a generic term to indicate any group of people, countries, companies etc that are working together towards a common goal that is beyond what an individual could achieve on its own. The word "consortia" was originated in early 19th century in the sense of paternity.

According to oxford English dictionary Consortium means temporary cooperation of a no. of powers, companies etc for a common purpose. It is an association of similar type of organization/institutions who are engaged in providing services for a specific group of people. Library consortium is the association of a group of libraries to achieve mutually the joint benefits. Under consortium participating libraries agree to share their resources. In other words library consortium is a community of value creating entities through resource sharing process, products and services.

3. LIBRARY CONSORTIA AND E-JOURNALS

Journals are vital source of information for scientific research & development. Libraries attached to institutions involved in R & D activities rely mainly on journals for information pertaining to their research projects. Journals are increasing three folds every 15 years and costs are growing at the rate of 2.5 times every ten years. No single library can afford to procure all the journals even in single discipline. With the emergence and application of information technology there has been a major shift from print to electronic journals.

e-Journals offer a range of potential advantages to libraries and end users like easy , fast searching ability, anywhere-anytime (24X7x365) accessibility, multiple sharing ability, hyperlinks to related text, cost effectiveness and solving problem of storage as encountered in case of print counterpart. Homogenous institutions having common focus are coming together to establish consortium for accessing online content. Nowadays no. of consortia has come up at international, national and local level.

3.1. At International Level

Galilio, Ohiolink, CALIS, Texshare etc. are some of the example working at global level.

3.2. Indian Scenario

Several consortia have come up in the past years .

INDEST, UGC-Infonet, FORSA, CSIR, IIM library consortia, HELINET, Delcon, DRDO e-journal consortium etc are working successfully to fulfill the needs and demands of their users. In the galaxy of library e-consortia, one new name CeRA (Consortium for eResources in Agriculture) has been added covering the field of agriculture and allied subjects.

4. CeRA: AN ELECTRONIC LIBRARY CONSORTIUM

CeRA stands for Consortium for e-resources in Agriculture(Table 1). National Agricultural Innovation Project (**NAIP**) has funded for establishing CeRA at Indian Agricultural research Institute (**IARI**), New

Delhi in November 2007 to facilitate accessibility of scientific journals . The aim of CeRA consortium is to maximize access to large no. journals by the scientists, research students and teachers of the member institutions. Sufficient infrastructure facilities like software, hardware, networking facilities, bandwidth etc is prerequisite for any consortium. These facilities are already provided to all the member institutes by ICAR in 1st phase of world bank project NATP (1998-2005).

4.1. CeRA at a glance

4.1.1. Table 1

CeRA consortium [http:// www.cera.iccc.in](http://www.cera.iccc.in)

About CeRA CeRA has been set up by ICAR and was launched successfully on 30th April 2008 at its headquarters at IARI with financial support of ICAR.

Beneficiary Faculty, scientists, Research scholars, students and project assistants of the Institutions covering 38 SAUs, 05 Deemed universities of ICAR, 03 ICAR Headquarters , 42 ICAR Institutes, 05 National bureaus, 09 Project directorate under National Agricultural Research System.

Funding and sponsoring agency The ICAR at its HQ at Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi is an apex body Agency considered to form e-consortium under NAIP(National Agriculture innovation project) for providing e-journal access.

Subject coverage Covering all the subjects like agricultural and biological science, Engineering, management, Social Sciences, Basic Sciences, biomedical sciences etc. Further in agriculture and allied subjects including veterinary sciences , horticulture, fisheries, animal sciences , Dairying, Biotechnology, agronomy, soil sciences etc.

List of Journals/ Databases It provides access to more than 2900 journals. User can have access to full text journals either by directly visiting the publishers site or through static J-gate link.

4.2. Objective and scope of CeRA consortium

- To upscale the existing R & D information resource base of ICAR Institutions/Universities
- To promote better and more cost effective way of providing information resources particularly the electronic journals to the member institutions
 - To avoid duplication of subscription and promote the rational use of funds

- To ensure continuous subscription of e-journals and availability of these to the member institutions
- Availability of larger spectrum of journals
- To strengthen library resources, services, cooperation and communication amongst the member libraries.
- To promote electronic access culture among the scientists/teachers in ICAR institutes/Agricultural universities.
- To assess the impact of CeRA on the level of research publications
- Efficient interlibrary loan system between the member libraries

4. 3. E-resources subscribed in CeRA consortium

At present the CeRA subscribes approximately more than **2900⁺** journals abstract or full text journals from various publishers mentioned in Table 2. These e-resources are accessible to the CeRA member institutions only.

4.3.1. Table 2

S. No.	Publisher	No. of Journals
1.	Springer Link	1358
2.	Science Direct(Elsevier)	300 ⁺
3	T & F	1079
4.	American Soc. Of Agronomy	08
5.	CSIRO Australia	08
6.	Annual Reviews	22
7.	Oxford University Press	30
8.	Indianjournals.com	131

4.4 Subject Coverage

CeRA consortium covers all the areas of learning like Agricultural and biological sciences, Biomedical sciences, basic sciences, Engineering and Technology, Management, Social Sciences and

Humanities. The main focus is on agriculture and allied subjects (Graph 1). There is an overlapping of journals in the fields like Agricultural and biological sciences, biomedical sciences, due to interdisciplinary nature.

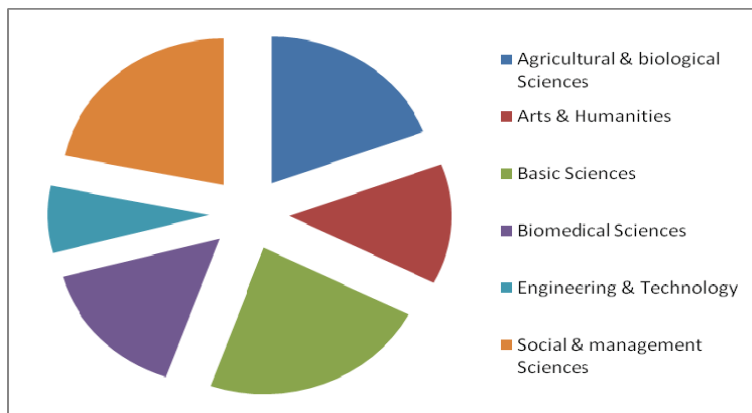


Figure 1. Subject wise distribution of journals

4.5 Distinctive features of CeRA



Figure 2. Screenshot of CeRA

- (a) *J-Gate Portal* : Table of contents – covers for more than 29,000⁺ eJournals database , comprehensive searchable database adding more than 4000 articles every day. It provides access to more than 8000 journals focusing on agriculture, biological and basic sciences through it.
- (b) *J-Gate custom content of consortium (JCCC)* : The JCCC service of informatics covers more than 7000⁺ journals for all the member libraries is available as value added service . This service covers journals from consortia , subscribed journals of member libraries and also open access journals of open Jgate.
- (c) *Document delivery request (DDR)* : CeRA provide document (micro document) delivery service for the article within the member libraries. Request for particular article with bibliographic details like author name, Title etc. is received from the user of member library

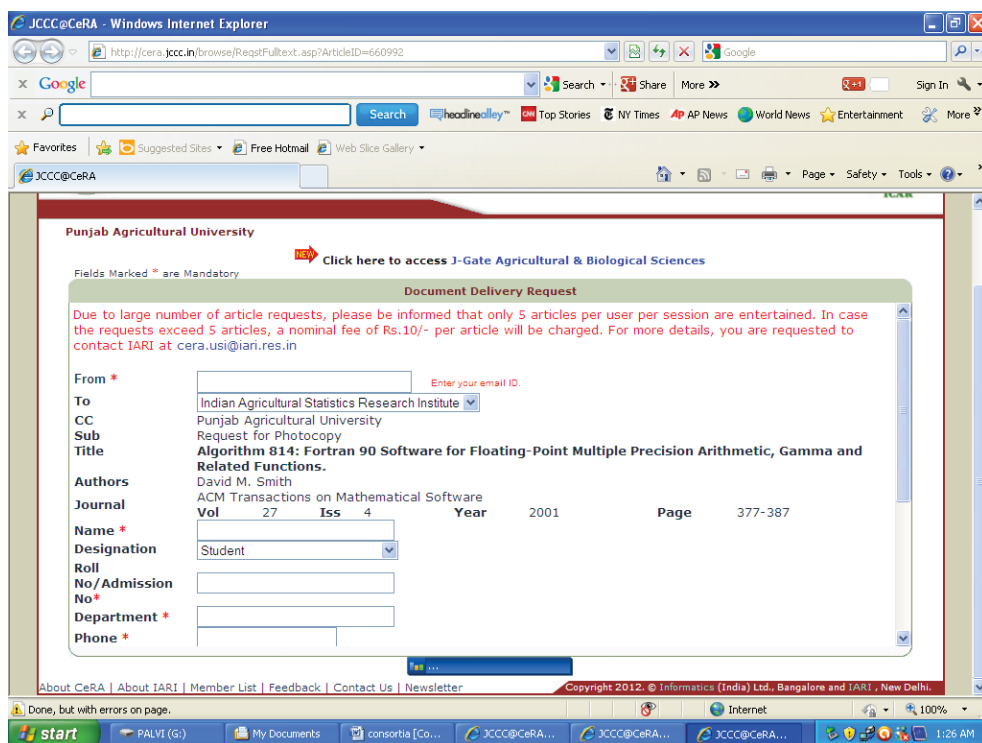


Figure 3. Screenshot for document delivery request

and send request to the those member libraries subscribing to that particular journal . Photocopy of the article in demand is send by that library. CeRA administrator keeps track for supply of article.

4.6 Facilities and Benefits of CeRA

4.6.1 For Administrator

Administrator be it consortia or institute administrator play key role in overall and smooth functioning of CeRA. Consortia administrator can create new members, can edit details of members, view Document Delivery Reports (DDR), view and fulfill DDR, get the usage statistics. The institute administrator view statistics of DDR received , view and fulfill the DDR received and DDR sent, get the usage statistics. (Figure 2)

4.6.2.1 For Administrator and user community

- ✓ *Quick search* : search through Author, title, keyword in all the peer review, professional or open access journals
- ✓ *Advanced Search* : Advanced search is done by using Boolean operators . More than two searchable fields can be selected and user gets the refined results. It will search through all the peer reviewed and or professional and trade journals.
- ✓ *Browse Journals* : User can browse the journal either by title, publisher, subject in alphabetical order.
- ✓ *My journals* : This is the current awareness service provided to keep the user well informed about the latest material being published in the area of his/her research .

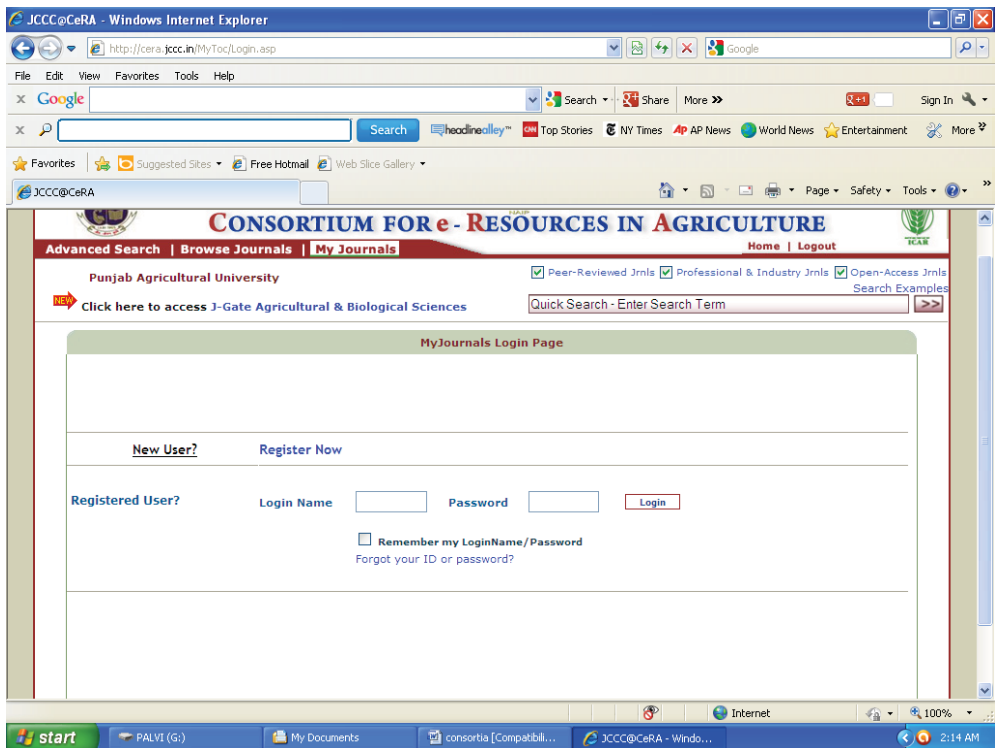


Figure 4 : Screenshot showing Myjournal (Alert service) of CeRA

User can register by entering the required details and select the journals of his/her choice under profile name. Once the journals are selected user will get the periodic alerts through mail at registered email entered at the time of registration as when new article is published. User can edit the profile details as per requirements (Figure 4)

✓ Live Help: User can get online help in case of any problem experience during use of consortium. Online chat is available so that user can directly get the solution without much wastage of time.

5. CONCLUSION

CeRA has remarkably done well in developing e-access culture and has further strengthened the research and development activities of ICAR institutes/State Agricultural Universities. Scientists and research faculty engaged in research activities are extensively using this facility. Agricultural libraries have really understood that consortia based subscription is cost effective and also avoids redundant expenditure. Tireless efforts of people behind CeRA , cooperation of member libraries and continuum support of ICAR has brought paradigm shift in agricultural education. Libraries are now shifting from owning model to access model. So consortia approach expands the information base which is necessary for growth and development of country.

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