

Guest Editorial

Advent of Internet made the world a global village. Advancement in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) had a multiplier effect on the exponential growth of information and its availability at the click of a mouse. ICT opened cost-effective opportunities to share information. Ever decreasing cost of personal computers, multiplicity of networks and other related technologies opened the way for policy makers to share the resources more meaningfully and to the maximum benefit of the users.

Libraries all over the world have not been able to completely subscribe their collections due to resource crunch. Providing the users the desired information motivated the libraries to form consortia. The idea of library cooperation was first mooted by Melvil Dewey in an issue of the *Library Journal* in 1886-87 followed by EA Mac who presented his views on Cooperation vs Competition in 1988 in the same journal. RD Downs presented a futuristic view of library cooperation in his paper, One for All: a Historical Sketch of Library Cooperation 1930-1970 during a symposium organised by the American Library Association in 1939. During 1970, System Development Corporation (commissioned by the US Office of Education), carried out a nationwide study of academic library consortia to “develop a fund of descriptive and prospective information about the activities of academic library consortia and provide guidance to the libraries that were planning to form a consortia. The study came out with two publications, Directory of Academic Library Consortia, and Guidelines for Library Cooperation: Development of Academic Library Consortia. By that time, 125 academic library consortia were already in existence in the United States.

Calcutta Library Network (CALIBNET, 1986), Delhi Library Network (DELNET, 1988), and Madras Library Network (MALIBNET) were some of the networks which formally came into existence in India. Information Library Network (INFLIBNET) by University Grants Commission (UGC) in 1988 gave a real boost to the library automation activities of academic libraries in the country. Since then, a number of premier scientific and technical organisations like CSIR, ICMR, DRDO, and ICAR have followed suit.

This issue of the *DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology* has highlighted some of the consortia of these S&T organisations. I hope that the papers by the learned authors will help in enhancing the benefits of these consortia and encourage more institutions to follow the path.

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