

## Notable Features of MALIBNET

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### ABSTRACT

This paper gives a detailed account of the objectives, structure, products, services of MALIBNET, its linkages with INSDOC and the users of the Network. MALIBNET is claimed to be a model network which has become operational in a short span of four months after it is registered as a society and that too without government support except that of INSDOC.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The need for interconnecting libraries in Madras was visualised by Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC) in 1991. The centre undertook a feasibility study, which was partially funded by NISSAT. The study was completed in March 1992. No major funding was available from government sources for realising the network. However, the Heads of some major academic and research institutions, universities and industries in and around Madras and many others extended overwhelming support to the concept of MALIBNET—the synonym standing for Madras Library Network.

Based on this support, and their cooperation, MALIBNET was registered as a society in February 1993 and the Network became operational in June 1993.

INSDOC, the CSIR laboratory engaged in the field of information management and services, is the executing agency for the MALIBNET project. Through an Memorandum of Understanding, INSDOC has been assigned the responsibility of setting up the network, developing information products and offering basic information services on MALIBNET.

### 2. OBJECTIVES

A Library Network is formally defined as "a set of inter-related information systems associated with communication facilities which adhere to more or less formal agreements and institutional agreements, in order to jointly implement information handling operations, with a view to pooling the resources and serving the users better".

MALIBNET has been established with the following objectives:

- ⊕ Bring about cooperative working amongst the libraries and information centres in the city of Madras in particular, and in the state of Tamil Nadu in general;

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- ⊕ Evolve network of libraries and information centres in and around Madras region initially, and in other parts of the state later;
- ⊕ Facilitate sharing of resources among the libraries and information centres and promote information dissemination;
- ⊕ Establish appropriate linkages with other regional, national and international libraries, information and documentation centres and networks of such libraries and centres;
- ⊕ Organise conferences, lectures, workshops and seminars in the fields of interest.

### 3. NEED FOR RESOURCE SHARING

Cooperation is a vital social activity characterising the human civilisation. The aim of any cooperative endeavour is to achieve what the members of the group cannot achieve individually. Resource sharing amongst libraries aims at extending access to all the resources and services of the member libraries to a wider category of users in the region. The libraries would then cease to function as isolated units.

The obvious advantages of resource sharing among the geographically adjacent libraries are many, they are:

- ⊕ avoiding unnecessary duplication of information materials and efforts
- ⊕ possibility of developing specialised activities, specifically concentrating on some particular functions, and
- ⊕ maximum accessibility to information without losing the individuality of libraries.

### 3.1 Resource Libraries

Madras has about 60 important libraries besides information centres like INSDOC. About 15 of these libraries have holdings of over 1,00,000 documents. A total investment of about ten crores is being made on acquisitions every year. An estimate shows that nearly 40 percent of the information acquired is redundant. Table-I brings out the level of redundancy in current journals being subscribed in a set of 50 libraries in Madras. With the libraries networked and resource sharing implemented, each user on the network can access to a very vast amount of literature and redundancy can be brought down significantly, diverting the investment saved to other productive and developmental activities.

### 3.2 Management

MALIBNET is governed by a Governing Board comprising of President, Vice President, Executive Director, Secretary, Treasurer and members. The Society has several eminent personalities as members on the Governing Board. Currently, Dr BB Sundaresan, Member of the State Planning Commission, Tamil Nadu is the President, Dr M Anandakrishnan, Vice Chancellor, Anna University, Madras is the Vice President, Prof T Viswanathan, Director, INSDOC, New Delhi is the Executive Director and other members are drawn from the Heads of Institutions such as Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, Central Leather Research Institute, University of Madras, Tamilnadu Veterinary & Animal Sciences University, Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, Kalpakkam and distinguished scientists such as Dr MS Swaminathan Annexure. The Governing Board meets once in four months to review the activities of MALIBNET.

**Table 1. Resource libraries of MALIBNET**

S. No	Name of the Library	No of titles	Unique titles	% Redundancy
1	Anna Institute of Management	17	3	82
2	Cancer Institute	63	22	65
3	Central Institute of Plastics and Engineering Technology	33	18	45
4	Central Leather Institute	151	79	47
5	Central Library, University of Madras	217	172	20
6	Centre for Advanced Study in Botany	23	16	30
7	College of Engineering	113	15	86
8	Connemara Public Library	546	319	41
9	Crescent Engineering College	37	6	83
10	CSIR Madras Complex	79	18	77
11	Devenaya Pavanar District Central Library	3	0	100
12	Entomology Research Institution	11	7	36
13	Ethiraj College	17	1	94
14	Geological Survey of India	21	10	52
15	Government Ophthalmic Hospital	5	4	20
16	Guindy Campus Library	75	26	65
17	Guru Nanak College	16	3	81
18	Highways Research Station	70	32	54
19	Indian Institute of Technology	736	349	52
20	Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research	598	286	52
21	Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed Women's College (formerly SIET)	16	3	81
22	Kilpauk Medical College	32	5	84
23	King Institute of Preventive Medicine	18	6	66
24	Loyola College	165	49	70
25	M.S. Swaminathan Research Institute	50	27	46
26	Madras Christian College	39	17	56
27	Madras Institute of Technology	179	35	80
28	Madras Medical College	126	55	56
29	Matscience-Institute of Mathematical Sciences	282	152	46
30	Office of the Director of Fisheries	18	14	22
31	Pondicherry Engineering College	191	18	90
32	Post Graduate Institute of Basic Medical Sciences	80	30	62
33	Presidency College	76	20	73
34	Quaid-E-Millet Govt College for Women	9	0	100
35	Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College	43	6	86
36	School of Architecture and Planning	24	12	50
37	Sri Amm Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre	7	3	57
38	SPIC Madras	74	38	48
39	SRM Engineering College	98	16	83
40	Stanley Medical College	86	27	68
41	Structural Engineering Research Centre	88	24	72
42	Tamilnadu Dr MGR Medical University Library	104	48	53
43	Tamilnadu Forensic Science Laboratory	27	15	44
44	Tamilnadu University of Veterinary and Animal Science	212	145	31
45	Tanstia-FNF Service Centre	12	6	50
46	Technical Information Centre	60	9	85
47	Technical Teachers Training Institute	61	22	63
48	Tuberculosis Research Centre	124	41	66
49	United States Information Service	138	91	34
50	Zoological Survey of India	41	32	21

### 3.3 Members

There are ten institutional members and five associate institutional members in MALIBNET presently, in addition to nineteen founder members of the society. The member institutions of MALIBNET are given in Annexure 1.

All the member institutions are acting as resource centres for MALIBNET. Any user from these institutions can do online search of all the databases on the MALIBNET host system and also avail the services such as electronic mail, contents abstracts & photocopying service (CAPS), document procurement services, etc.

#### 3.3.1 Benefits

- ⊕ Access to a large volume of literature through resource sharing at low cost.
- ⊕ Facility for providing innovative information services—an unique and distinct feature of MALIBNET for member institutions to promote their own information products/ services.
- ⊕ E-mail facility for fast communication and information exchange.

- ⊕ Facility for achieving better utilisation of limited library budget by having access to a large number of specialised information sources, as sought by users.

#### 3.3.2 Membership and Subscription

MALIBNET was founded as an institution/society and it has been functioning with cooperative support from member institutions. Each member institution pays an initial contribution to the society at the time of joining and also an annual subscription. Different categories of membership exist as enumerated in the following table:

Membership category	Initial contribution (Rs.)	Annual subscription (Rs.)
Patron	5 Lakhs	—
Institutional (Academic)	2 Lakhs	10,000
Institutional (Industrial)	3 Lakhs	15,000
Associate Institutional	10,000	5,000
Individual Member	5,000	1,000

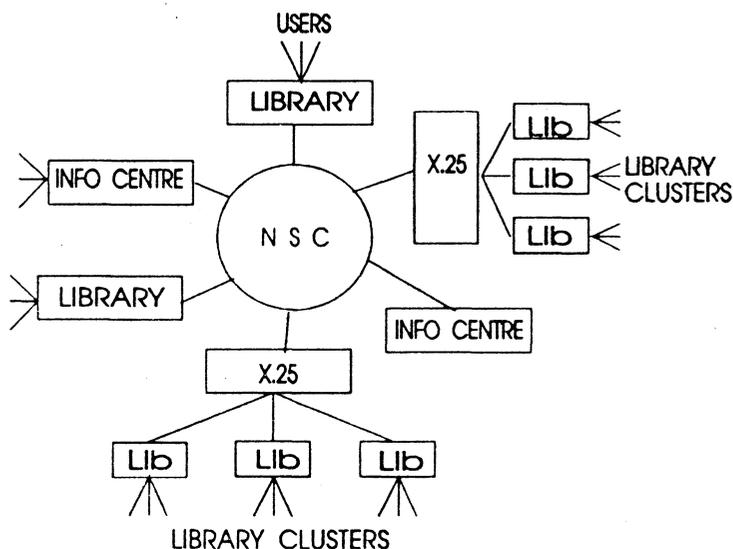


Fig.1. MALIBNET Architecture

## 4. NETWORK ARCHITECTURE

MALIBNET became operational from June 1993, in less than six months from the date of its inception. It has a central network service centre (NSC) installed at INSDOC Regional Centre, CSIR Complex, Madras. All the member institutions are linked with the MALIBNET host system through telephone links. The network structure of MALIBNET is shown in Fig 1. A library or information centre may be directly connected to NSC through telephone lines or may be clustered and connected through X.25 data communication interfaces. Within an institution, a library may be connected on local area network (LAN) to facilitate the LAN users to access MALIBNET.

## 5. DATABASES

At present four databases are being supported on MALIBNET from its own resources. In addition, a number of databases from INSDOC are also made available on MALIBNET.

### 5.1 Directory Database of Current Serials

Starting from the year 1993, MALIBNET has created a Directory Database of Current Serials in Madras (DDCSM). This database is updated every year. A Union List of Current Serials is brought out in hard copy form and also as a publication in four disciplines.

#### Features

- ⊕ DDCSM contains details of about 5200 serials currently subscribed by 50 libraries in Madras.
- ⊕ Covers journals of basic sciences, applied sciences and technology, medical sciences, life sciences and social sciences.

- ⊕ Available online and on diskette. This can be searched by title, subject and library options.
- ⊕ Supported by a user-friendly retrieval software developed on SYBASE RDBMS.
- ⊕ The database is also distributed in diskettes with searchable DOS-based retrieval software. This database can be loaded on any DOS-based system.

### 5.2 Contents Database of Current Journals

This database is being updated every year, starting from 1993. For the year 1995, contents information of nearly 500 journals from member libraries is available online. The Contents Database for 1995 contains 1,00,000 records.

### 5.3 Holdings Database

National Union Catalogue of Scientific Serials in India—Madras Region (NUCSSI) covers holding information of journals of 60 libraries in Madras. Each record in the database contains details like author(s), title of the journal, title of the article, volume, issue number and the page numbers. This database is available online for access and can be searched by all the members of MALIBNET. The other features of NUCSSI are as follows.

- ⊕ Journal holding information of member libraries of MALIBNET has been updated to the current status.
- ⊕ Search options include - title, subject, library.
- ⊕ Holdings data for individual libraries is supplied on diskettes, if required.
- ⊕ Extremely useful for locating the availability of journals in Madras.
- ⊕ Helpful as a resource sharing tool for cooperative acquisition of costly serials.

## 5.4 Automotive Engineering Database

This database has been created by MALIBNET as a specialised database pertaining to the requirements of institutional members (industry) of MALIBNET. The salient features are:

- ⊕ Specialised database covering journals in the Automobile Engineering.
- ⊕ Useful for research professionals and industrialists.
- ⊕ Covers 20 valuable national and international journals.
- ⊕ Nearly 4500 records, updated at regular intervals.
- ⊕ Search options by journal name, keyword, and author.
- ⊕ Available online and on diskette with retrieval software.

## 5.5 INSDOC Databases

The following databases have been created and updated by INSDOC. These databases have been ported on MALIBNET host system and are available for online access by members.

### 5.5.1 Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Abstracts (MAPA)

The database was started in the year 1990 and covers nearly 600 journals and is updated regularly.

### 5.5.2 Polymer Science Abstracts

This database covers 33 National and International journals and holds nearly 4,500 records. Started in the year 1990, it is updated at regular intervals and provides search options through list of journals, name of journal, author, keyword, title, and organisation.

### 5.5.3 NUCSSI for Madras & Bangalore Region

Number of libraries covered in Madras region—61.

Number of libraries covered in Bangalore region—50.

### 5.5.4 Indian Serials Contents on Multimedia (ISCOMM)

The database contains serials information of around 600 journals from 1991 onwards. There are around 38,000 records in the database.

### 5.5.5 Indian Patents Database

This database will be ported on the MALIBNET system shortly. This database contains information on Indian patents. It can be searched on patent number, inventor, title of the patent, etc.

## 6. INFORMATION SERVICES

The services of MALIBNET are open to all categories of professionals namely, academics, research scholars, practising professionals, consultants and also industrialists. The services can be availed by members as well as non-members at nominal tariff. Certain basic services are offered free of cost to members. The services of MALIBNET are enumerated below.

### 6.1 Electronic Mail

MALIBNET offers electronic mail (e-mail) connectivity to all member institutions with the host system at NSC, INSDOC, Madras and also with other member institutions such as, Indian Institute of Technology, Tamil Nadu Veterinary & Animal Sciences University, Anna University, Central Leather Research Institute, Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, Kalpakkam, Pondicherry Engineering College, etc. E-mail facility is

useful for sending information requests as well as for inter-library exchange of information. Information services from MALIBNET are also availed via e-mail. E-mail service is free to all the members.

## 6.2 MALIBNET Card

MALIBNET issues MALIBNET cards free to all the members and at specified price to other users. This is extremely useful to the user community in this region for accessing all the resource libraries of MALIBNET.

This scheme will permit the card holder to visit the member libraries for consultation. The libraries such as Indian Institute of Technology, Tamilnadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Anna University, Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, Central Leather Research Institute and University of Madras can be consulted. The idea is to promote free access to MALIBNET resources for better utilisation. This facility is enjoyed by all member institutions and is found to be extremely useful for professors, students, research scholars, and other users.

## 6.3 Content Abstracts and Photocopy Service (CAPS)

MALIBNET operates a monthly service known as CAPS for the benefit of the professional community which comprise the following:

- ⊕ Periodical despatch of contents information of journals selected from about 500 important journals.
- ⊕ Each subscription covers 20 journals of users' choice.
- ⊕ Contents data is supplied through e-mail or on diskettes alongwith retrieval software or in hard copy form as required by the user.

- ⊕ 12 despatches are made under one subscription for selected journals.
- ⊕ Contents of upto 50/20 journals offered free to institutional/associate members of MALIBNET through e-mail.
- ⊕ Abstracts and full text of articles from journals are supplied either on standing order or demand basis.
- ⊕ Photocopies of journal articles from member libraries are supplied on request.

## 6.4 Express Document Procurement and Delivery

MALIBNET provides journal articles from member libraries within 48 hours of request. The documents which are not available in MALIBNET member libraries are being supplied through INSDOC at prescribed rates.

## 6.5 INSDOC services through MALIBNET

### 6.5.1 On-line Search of Information Sources

As INSDOC has access to nearly 1000 international databases, current or latest bibliographic information on any research topic, product technology or market information on any industry can be supplied by MALIBNET.

### 6.5.2 Patent Watch Service

This service is specifically designed to meet the requirements of corporate sector. This service is based on constant monitoring of world-wide patents databases.

### 6.5.3 Internet Information Services

Internet access facilities available at INSDOC are used by MALIBNET to offer internet services at very moderate rates. This includes accessing internet sources,

transferring messages/files from a remote system to a local system.

#### **6.5.4 Network Connectivity: E-mail**

INSDOC provides e-mail connectivity to users through SIRNET which is the computer communication network of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research. SIRNET is connected to internet, and other international networks via ERNET (The Education & Research Network) set up by the Department of Education (DOE). The services are open to public.

#### **6.5.5 Contents Abstracts and Photocopy Service (CAPS)**

Under this service, on an yearly subscription, one can get the contents of 30 journals selected by the user from about 5000 core Indian and foreign periodicals pertaining to different disciplines on a medium of the user's choice. On browsing the contents, one can order for the abstracts and/or photocopies of full articles of his interest at an extra cost.

#### **6.5.6 Document Copy Supply**

Copies of the articles, papers, etc. are supplied by MALIBNET through INSDOC from S&T journals available in India and abroad.

#### **6.5.7 Specialised Database Creation**

MALIBNET undertakes the responsibility of creating specialised databases for industries and others. The databases can be made available on MALIBNET.

#### **6.5.8 Training Courses & Consultancy**

MALIBNET organises short term training courses through INSDOC on information technology topics, such as computer networking, e-mail services, online search and information retrieval, CDS-ISIS, etc. MALIBNET, also undertakes consultancy projects for setting up of modern information service centres.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

MALIBNET has reached to operational stage from the concept stage in a short span of time. Four factors have contributed to this: An overwhelming institutional support at Madras; the specialised services of INSDOC made available through a strong and clearly defined linkage between MALIBNET and INSDOC; the flexible and quick decision making process of the society; and the highly simplified procedural formalities. With more support from institutions and industries MALIBNET can provide more useful services which can reach a much wider spectrum of user community. In the absence of any Government funding, MALIBNET is undoubtedly a model to be emulated by other cities in India for evolving their library networks.

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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### Malibnet Member Institutions

- ⊕ Anna University
- ⊕ Central Leather Research Institute
- ⊕ Indian Institute of Technology
- ⊕ Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research, Kalpakkam.
- ⊕ Institute of Mathematical Sciences
- ⊕ Tamil Nadu Veterinary & Animal Sciences University
- ⊕ University of Madras
- ⊕ District Public Library
- ⊕ Pondicherry Engineering College
- ⊕ Rane (Madras) Pvt. Ltd.,
- ⊕ SRM Engineering College
- ⊕ Tamil Nadu Small & Tiny Industries Association
- ⊕ University of Madras (Guindy Campus Library)
- ⊕ University of Madras (Post graduate Institute of Basic Medical Research)
- ⊕ Crescent Engineering College