Chapter 10
Modes of Acquisition and Models of Licensing:
The Electronic Sources of Information

Nazir Ahmad Bhat

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, India

ABSTRACT

The advent of electronic sources of information (ESIs), e-resources, or electronic information resources (EIRs) has brought a revolution in the information landscape during 21st century. This has led to a paradigm shift not only in the modes and mechanism of storage, access, and delivery, but the acquisition of information has also witnessed a prominent change. This chapter is a theoretical overview of some newly emerging and popular modes of acquisition currently available for libraries to acquire and subscribe electronic information resources. Due to a visible change in the nature of information storage, access, and delivery, publishers have brought about certain changes in the policies governing the sale of their products in electronic form. As such, new license models have emerged, of which some popular ones have been enlisted for the benefit of libraries. The basic criteria needed to be set in force for prompt assessment of e-resources have also been highlighted at the end of this chapter.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of "Electronic Sources of Information (ESIs)", "e-Resources" or "Electronic Information Resources (EIRs)" has brought a revolution in the information landscape during 21st century. This has lead to a paradigm shift particularly in the mode and mechanism of access, delivery and acquisition of information, as against the scenario experienced during print era. The information is now said to be on the finger tips of a user, as he/she can't only search it at an unimaginably fast speed and accuracy but also can have access to e-resources on anytime anywhere basis. The changed scenario of information landscape has also made it easy, fast and economical to deliver the right information to a right person at a right time if the job is undertaken by the real experts with an eye on global boundaries of knowledge. Modes and mechanism of acquisition have also witnessed a prominent change. The paper based informa-

tion society is heading fast towards in real sense a paperless society-a concept propounded by Frederick Wilfrid Lancaster way back in 1978. This chapter is an attempt to canvas a picture about the current status of modes of acquisition facilitated by publishers of electronic information products and availed by the subscribing libraries of digital era. An effort is also made of record a consolidated account on the state of license models which have been emerging in line with the changes taking place in continuously evolving nature and construct of information.

Acquiring an abstract level document, book, journal, thesis in print form was easy in the sense that a tangible entity was being acquired against an authentic cost. It was thus easy and convenient for librarians to make understand the funding agencies about the handsome investment made on collection development in libraries and satisfy them to best possible extent. However, things have now become difficult to enter into heavy transactions related to acquisition of non-tangible and virtual entities i.e. e-databases, e-books, e-journals, in other words the electronic information products. Owing to this fact a variety of new modes of acquisition have emerged which need to be highlighted for the benefit of practical librarians in order to make it easy for them to choose the most economical and appropriate ones under the circumstances at their hand.

Moreover, due to revolutionary changes in the information landscape the library users need not to come physically to library buildings to have or use the information sources of their interest. There is a drastic cut in the library visits or user foot falls, recorded presently at an average in libraries as compared to print era. This emphasizes the librarians to be proactive for ensuring their presence in this metaphysical mode of information transaction and at the same time justify and exhibit their role in this academically sensitive endeavour.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are as under:

1. To identify and explain newly emerging means of acquiring the electronic information resources (EIRs);
2. To enlist and different licensing models used for acquisition of EIRs; and
3. To consolidate a minimal assessment framework with regard to acquisition of EIRs.

BACKGROUND

The electronic information resources or e-resources originated rather gained momentum by 1970's, when the optical storage devices i.e. CDROMs were devised and used for storage of audio, visual, textual and multimedia content or information. Experts in the field and concerned agencies started to carve out definition for this new format of information resources and a few definitions among the same are given as under:

Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR (2005) stated that an electronic resource is the "material (data and/or program(s)) encoded for manipulation by a computerized device. This material may require the use of a peripheral directly connected to a computerized device (e.g., CD-ROM drive) or a connection to a computer network (e.g., the Internet)."

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