

Workshop on UGC – Infonet Digital Library Consortium – a report

A workshop on UGC Infonet Digital Library Consortium sponsored by INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad was organized by Madras University Library on 29th and 30th September 2008. The workshop was organized in two different campuses of University of Madras, mainly due to bifurcation of subjects and convenience of the users. On the 29th it was organized in the Main campus i.e. Chepauk Campus which houses departments in Humanities and Social Sciences and on the 30th it was organized at Guindy Campus for the participants in Life Sciences (Guindy Campus) and in Basic Medical Sciences (Taramani Campus). There were 321 participants which includes Head of Department from Psychology, Management Studies in Chepauk Campus and from Genetics and Pathology in Guindy Campus. Out of 321 participants, 121 research scholars, 49 M Phil, 85 Post Graduate students, 25 faculty and 41 library professionals participated in the workshop.

Dr. R. Ambuja, Librarian i/c, Madras University Library and Convener of the workshop welcomed the gathering and highlighted the objectives of the workshop. She further added that relevant technologies that are available must be planned for optimum utilization for larger beneficiary which require intense awareness and WILL for implementation from institutions, failing which it will place the institutions behind schedule. She also mentioned that any ignorance and non utilization of such services would deprive the future scholars to gain access to modern technology.

Dr. Jagdish Arora, Director, INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad in his Presidential address stated that the Central Government would soon introduce a National Knowledge Network at a cost of Rs.100 crore to enable all universities and colleges to access e-resources for their academic and research activity. He also mentioned that since a lot of knowledge resources were available on the net, the task of research work had become easier. The benefit of subscription to e-resources would also be extended to the colleges he added.

Professor A. Amudhavalli, Head, Department of Information Science in her felicitation stated that Infonet Digital Library Consortium commenced in the year 2004 provides access to more than 4500 core and peer-reviewed journals and nine bibliographic databases from 23 publishers in all subjects. She added that it would enable universities to overcome serial crisis which has resulted due to rise in cost of journals much faster than the rate of inflation, increase in number of journals and the paucity of funds available to the libraries.

In his inaugural address, Professor S. Ramachandran, Vice Chancellor of University of Madras, emphasized the advancement made in the Madras University Library by way of digitizing more than thousand doctoral dissertations which would enable researchers to access the resources rapidly. He further stated that bandwidth of the University network would be enhanced to 10 mbps to enable effective use of e-resources by the researchers and academia. The Madras University hostels would soon be provided with internet facility he added.

Mr.S.Ganesan, Assistant Librarian, Madras University Library, thanked the authorities for permitting the Library to organize the workshop and the INFLIBNET Centre for having sponsored the workshop. He thanked every one who had come for the inaugural function.

After the inauguration of the workshop, Dr.Jagdish Arora, in his presentation highlighted the role played by INFLIBNET Centre and stressed the importance of Infonet Digital Library Consortium in providing e-resources to the participating universities. He mentioned the current status of accessing e-resources by the participating universities and said that University of Madras is in the tenth position. He further added that Infonet will be a resource for researchers and scholars for retrieving latest information and will also form a medium for collaboration among the teachers and students not only within the country but all over the world.

All participants of the workshop were informed that only on receipt of feedback; “Participation Certificate” would be issued to them and the best feed back form submitted will be given a prize. In addition, based on the participants feedback “Best Product Presentation” would be given to the representative of the Publisher.

Later representatives from various Publishers / Aggregators were invited to do their product presentation with a request to confine to the disciplines / subjects that were dealt with in the respective campuses since the workshop was held in two different campuses.

Mr.Bhanuprakash from Infomatics, Bangalore presented JCCC – a joint initiative of INFLIBNET and Infomatics. JCCC@UGC-INFONET serves as a Gateway to India’s academic and research community. He highlighted the benefits of the same like having customized access, single point search, sharing of resources and how to receive auto-alerts for choice of journals.

Other publishers who presented the products include Springer – Mr.Sivamy Bhattacharya, Taylor & Francis – Mr. S.Sivasankaran, Mr.DT Edwin represented Global Information Systems Technology (GIST), Mr.Vikas Arora from Globe Publications, Mr.S R Varun from Cambridge University Press, Mr.Agam Bhardwaj from Balani Infoteck and Mr.Anand Singh presented Scifinder Scholar. All the presentations were highly interactive. Several questions were raised by members of the academia, researchers and also library professionals. Questions repeated in both campuses were:

1. Do I need to register my name even when we log through the University network?
2. Network speed must be increased
3. How to save and retrieve the searches made?
4. Why does J-Stor download give one page in a file rather than the entire article in a file as in other journals?

Ms.V.Archana, Researcher, Department of English was selected for the Best feedback submitted among the student participants. Mr.Bhanuprakash from Informatics, Bangalore was selected as the Best Product Presenter ***BY THE PARTICIPANTS***.

Dr.P.T Srinivasan, Professor & Head, Department of Management Studies, University of Madras, congratulated the Library for organizing such an informative workshop and has requested UGC-Infonet to add EBSCO in the Digital Library Consortium (copy of his letter is enclosed for necessary action).

The valediction of the workshop was held at Chemical Sciences Auditorium, Guindy campus on the 30th September 2008. Dr. R.Ambuja gave a summary of the workshop and informed the participants from Taramani campus that Scifinder Scholar will be made available to them at the earliest.

Prof.M.Arumugam, Convenor, Syndicate Library Committee in his felicitation appreciated the initiative taken by the INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad in providing such valuable resources at the desktop of academia and researchers which enable them to access the latest information in their disciplines. He also praised the product presenters for their wonderful presentation which would help the users to conduct search in an effective manner.

Professor.M.Ranganatham, Registrar i/c of the University of Madras was the Chief Guest. In his valedictory address said that such awareness programme would enhance the usage of e-resources provided by the Infonet. He admitted that usage of such e-resources is more in the science campus rather than the humanities mainly because of the delay in networking. He also added that the bandwidth of internet connectivity would be increased at the earliest. He congratulated the Library for having organized such useful workshop for it could bring about a qualitative change in the academic infrastructure, especially for higher education.

Dr. K. Kaliaperumal, Deputy Librarian, Guindy Campus Library thanked the INFLIBNET Centre for having sponsored the workshop and the product presenters for giving a highly interactive presentation. He also thanked all the participants of the programme and the staff of the Library.