

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF FORSA: A NEW PARADIGM IN RESOURCE SHARING AND CONSORTIA ACTIVITIES

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INTRODUCTION

There was tremendous growth and proliferation of literature during 1970s and 1980s particularly in the field of astronomy and astrophysics. It was difficult to manage literature demand within an organization. Most of the Indian astronomy libraries were in the formative years with limited budget and resources at their disposal. In order to share and cooperate amongst the astronomy community libraries in the country, the library professionals felt the need to come together and exchange information on continuous basis. This necessitated forming the Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics (FORSA), which saw its on 29th July 1981 with a mission and vision to participate actively in library cooperation, information exchange and sharing resources held in each library.

During the last quarter century, FORSA has been acting as a catalytic agent in resource sharing and meets periodically to identify the strategic points and try to cope with ever changing information handling activities in the field of astronomy. At present there are 11 institutes participate in the Forum.

THE OBJECTIVES OF FORSA

Keeping in view recent developments in information handling activities, the objectives were redefined as mentioned below (Patil, Y.M., 2004):

- Collection Development in IT environment;
- Facilitate e - access to journals and books;
- Actively participate in resource sharing, interlibrary loan and document delivery;
- To facilitate access to each library websites;
- Database merging of libraries holdings (books/journals) and facilitate access to merged databases;
- Digitization of archival materials of the institutes and making the same accessible through Internet;
- Participate actively in consortia formation for sharing e - journals; e - books and other databases with various publishers and academic societies;
- To come forward and support Open Access and develop Institutional Repositories.

FORSA INITIATIVES

FORSA took a lead during initial period to prepare some reference tools, which could be of interest to all members (Bawdekar, N, 2003). The major tools prepared were: Union Catalogue of Serials; Reference tools; books ordering information; Union Catalogue of Theses; physical facilities available in each institute library and Directory of FORSA Libraries, etc.

RESOURCE SHARING ACTIVITIES

The FORSA group has been extending library cooperation to the maximum extent on day-to-day basis covering ILL, access to more journals through consortia; exchange of ideas and expertise; extending assistance to university academics where astronomy is one of the teaching subjects and document delivery of journals articles.

CONSORTIA MODELS

Keeping in view recent increases in costs of journals and proliferation of electronics resources, the FORSA members thought to come together and subscribe journals of common interest and cross e - access all subscribed journals through consortium formation, (Patil, Y.M., 2004, 2006).

There are several consortia models that have emerged in India during last 5-6 years (Sathyanarayana, N.V., et al, 2004) based on participants affiliations and funding sources. The various models available in India are: Open Consortia; Closed Group Consortia; Institute Headquarters Funded Consortia; Centrally Funded Consortia; Shared Budget Models and National Level Consortia, etc.

FORSA CONSORTIUM

FORSA is an open consortium having eleven participants affiliated to different government departments and has realized five consortia, viz. Indian Astrophysics Consortium (Springer-Kluwer); Nature Online; Scientific American Archive Online (EBSCO); Lecture Notes in Physics (Springer) and FORSA - UCP - IOP Consortium.

FORSA CONSORTIUM CHARACTERISTICS

Keeping in view, FORSA as an open consortium, the following are the common characteristics.

- Individual payment has to be made through an agent and license has to be signed by all participants;
- Members are expected to maintain same level of subscription during the period of consortium deal;
- There will be fixed rate of increase in subscription as per negotiation done;
- There will be fixed rate of cross e-access fee for all subscribed journals in the consortium;
- A suitable clause in the license agreement has to be inserted for providing perpetual access in case of termination of subscription of any title for the subscribed period or publishers have to provide CDs or transfer to institute's information system;
- Should be COUNTER compliant and provide usage statistics on regular basis;
- Publishers found it convenient to negotiate with members through an agent or directly and raising individual invoices to all members and single payment to publishers by the agent.

The following are the five consortia established beginning from 2002 and details are described in various papers. (Patil, Y.M., 2002, 2003, 2004a,b, 2006, 2007) and only briefing of the same is provided below.

Indian Astrophysics Consortium

(For Springer-Kluwer Physics/Astronomy Journals deal)

Vendor: M/S. Informatics (India) Limited, Bangalore, India

Participants: 2002 – 2004: ARIES, IIA, IUCAA, RRI and HRI;

2005 – 2007: ARIES, IIA, PRL, RRI and SNBNCBS;

2008- 2010: ARIES, IIAP, PRL, RRI and SNBNCBS

During 2002, FORSA group entered subscription to astronomy journals of Kluwer through a vendor, for the period of three years.

Due to merger of Kluwer with Springer during 2005, the renewal for subscription was taken with fresh negotiations for another term of three years for astronomy and physics journals of Springer – Kluwer.

FORSA Consortium for Nature Publications

(Nature Publishing Group).

Vendor: Direct with the Publisher's Representative in India.

● Nature online

Participants:

2002 – 2003: IIA, IUCAA, NCRA, PRL, RRI and JNCASR*;

2003 – 2004: Bose Inst., IIA, IUCAA, NCRA, PRL, RRI, TIFR and JNCASR*;

2004 – 2005: ARIES, Bose Inst., IIA, IUCAA, NCRA, PRL, RRI, TIFR and JNCASR*

2005 – 2006: ARIES, Bose Inst., IIA, IUCAA, PRL, RRI, TIFR and JNCASR*.

2006 –2007: ARIES, Bose Inst., IIA, IUCAA, PRL, RRI, TIFR and JNCASR*

2007-2008: ARIES, Bose Inst., IIAP, IUCAA, PRL, RRI, TIFR and JNCASR*

(*Non-FORSA member wished to join the consortium).

- **Nature Physics Online:** 2007, 2008: RRI, JNCASR, Bose Inst., PRL and IIAP;

- **Nature Materials:** 2007, 2008: RRI, JNCASR, IACS,

- **Nature Photonics:** 2007, 2008: RRI, JNCASR,

- **Nature Nanotechnology:** 2007,2008:JNCASR

This consortium is formed direct with the publisher. In spite of availability of titles on - line earlier; they were not subscribed due to prohibitive costs. Print and online versions are separate entities and are to be subscribed separately.

To subscribe collectively, FORSA members joined the consortium and negotiated the cost and subscribed the single title since 2002 and few titles were added from 2007. Negotiations are done on year-to-year basis and 2007-2008 is the fourth year of subscription. There is maximum number of participants in this consortium.

Negotiations are done on year-to-year basis direct with publishers and no intermediary was involved. It was a win-win situation for all. Perhaps this was the **first Indian consortium** for Nature Publishing.

Consortium for Scientific American Online Archive

(Scientific American)

Vendor/Aggregator: EBSCO Research Databases

Participants: IIA, IUCAA, NCRA, NCBS*, PRL, RRI, and JNCASR*

(*Non-FORSA members wished to join the consortium).

We entered subscription from 2005 with seven participants Print and electronic versions are separate entities and one can subscribe print separately if required. There is an Indian edition also available since 2005.

Subscription to Lecture Notes in Physics (LNP)

(Springer)

Vendor: Informatics (India) Limited, Banaglore, India.

Participants: IIA, PRL, RRI, SNBNCBS....

With implementation of Indian Astrophysics Consortium, Springer proposed Open Consortium subscription to Lecture Notes in Physics from 2006 at a reduced rate. Any participant, who is interested, can enter into subscription with set terms and conditions.

FORSA Consortium for AAS Journals with UCP & IOP

(American Astronomical Society journals published by University of Chicago Press and Institute of Physics Publishing).

Vendor: Globe Publications, New Delhi

Participants: 2007

- For Online: RRI and TIFR
- For Print + Online: ARIES, HCRI, IIAP, IUCAA, NCRA and PRL 2008: For online: RI and TIFR
- For Print and online: ARIES, HCRI, IIAP, IUCAA, NCRA and PRL

The journals covered in this consortium are: The Astrophysical Journal, The Astrophysical Journal Supplement Series and Astronomical Journal, which are core journals to all participants in the consortium.

With experience and expertise gained with formation of few consortia, the group decided to go into formation of the consortium. The publisher also showed keen interest and supported in forming the consortium. In this case, choosing online, two institutions could save over 50% and choosing print + online, the other six institutes could save over 30% as compared to normal subscription rates.

LESSONS LEARNT

The present scenario has made a visible impact resulting in many institutions coming willingly and joining hands in forming consortia. At this juncture, what we need is a collective venture with standard set guidelines and procedures to realize national level site licensing and forming subject/discipline oriented consortia formation. (Birdie, Christina, 2002). FORSA has been in consortia business over five years and trying to cope with ever changing scenario in resource sharing. Every participant monitors effective usage and renewals are taken based on review at each Institute and any addition/deletion is done before confirming to participate in the consortium.

CONCLUSIONS

With emergence of FORSA twenty-five years ago, it has facilitated resource sharing during 1980s and 1990s and trying to cope with ever changing scenario in information handling activities by way of forming consortia for online access to more number of journals and initiating need based services which are of interest to all participants in the Group. It has proved itself as one of the leading groups in the country as a model for active cooperation, coordination and collaboration in realizing many needs of astronomy libraries in general and astronomers in particular.

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