

Best Digital Libraries Shortlisted At A Global Meet Indicate Changing Face Of Research

# These IDLs are food for the brain

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**T**his IDLI isn't fluffy but is wholesome and informative. It's an acronym for Indian Digital Libraries Initiatives. Digital libraries are the best platform for research and a developing country like India should encourage the concept to provide better access to scholarly literature, say experts. At the 15th International Conference of Asia-Pacific Digital Libraries (ICADL-2013) held recently in Bangalore, seven IDLs were shortlisted for innovation and uniqueness. All are open source repositories. TOI takes a look at some of them.

## TIMES VIEW

The seamless blending of content and technology to create digital libraries is one of internet's biggest contributions. With the thrust becoming more vocal on freeing knowledge and opening sources, there is hope that public-funded research will become accessible to all. By digitalising and archiving their vast research output, these institutions have made a welcome beginning. Digital libraries address many of the challenges in education by cutting barriers in dissemination of knowledge, making access to past research easier and quicker and offering opportunities to a wider audience.

## Digital libraries: The future

In digital libraries, content is organized and structured unlike open search engines where retrieval of data is often difficult. Google is one of the success stories of digital library research. One of the first six major projects funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), US, Google is a spin-off of the research projects at the Stanford University.

### Indian Academy of Sciences | Bangalore

A meta-repository, this online platform is the biggest in the country with the cream of Science experts' authored papers contained in it. A collative data of 1,000 Science Fellows from different disciplines (340 of them are deceased Fellows), the uniqueness of this digital library lies in its varied content. Started in 2010, this repository has at least one paper from each of the Fellows. "The current number stands at more than 91,500 publications," said Prakash N A, systems administrator at the Indian Academy of Sciences.



### Raman Research Institute | Bangalore

This repository has open access to material on and by the country's lone Nobel Laureate in Physics, C V Raman. Named after him, this institution has a user-friendly search option and a separate section with matter penned by retired professors of the institute. "It has archival value. We have a compilation of papers by 20 retired professors," said B M Meera, librarian at the Raman Research Institute. With audio, visuals, thesis and dissertations, research papers and newspaper clippings in abundance, such digital libraries are surely the future of modern libraries - minus the walls, brick and mortar. URL: [dspace.ri.res.in](http://dspace.ri.res.in)

### National Informatics Centre | New Delhi

To supplement available international medical papers, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) project was given to National Informatics Centre. Experts said Indian research is not adequately represented and more hype is created around international papers. "The uniqueness of this portal is that it is an aggregation of all medical journals and inter-linked with separate websites of individual medical journals. The full texts are available when one clicks on the links," said Sukhdev Singh, technical director and co-ordinator for this project. Organisers say it is one of the early in-house initiatives and deserves special mention in the IDLI category for the quality work put in.

### National Aerospace Laboratories | Bangalore

Having developed an in-house module Prakas (where scientists must submit all their research articles), permissible data is put up on this digital library platform. An open source tool, this repository is home to 5,600 records so far. "Our area of aerospace is very narrow, but with the institution making it mandatory for all to submit papers, the count has improved in the past few months," said Shivaram BS, senior technical officer, Information Centre for Aerospace Science and Technology. Till April 2013, it was voluntary submission but now it is updated with an approximate 30 new papers each month. URL: [nal-ir.nal.res.in](http://nal-ir.nal.res.in)

### University of Mysore

An institutional repository, this digital library gives open access to research and scholarly articles. "Our oldest publication in the repository is S Radhakrishnan's 'Philosophy of Rabindra Nath Tagore'. The full text of this publication, which dates back to 1919, is available online - this is our uniqueness," said I R N Goudar, visiting professor and library advisor

at University of Mysore. This six-month-old repository has 8,400 records.

The other two digital libraries shortlisted are the institutional repositories of IIT-Bombay and CFTRI, Mysore. "Open access is the best

way to get desired visibility. The above two are current repositories in terms of software and publications," said Francis Jayakanth, creator of JRD Tata Library, IISc and co-ordinator of IDLI at the conference. A three-member panel selects one winner from the seven and one person from the team will be sponsored to attend the next edition of the conference.

URL: [eprints.uni-mysore.ac.in](http://eprints.uni-mysore.ac.in)

