

# Rethinking Libraries and Librarianship

*Editors:*

Dr. Parveen Babbar  
Dr. Debal C Kar  
Dr P. K. Jain  
Geeta Paliwal



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E-mail: [bkwell@nde.vsnl.net.in](mailto:bkwell@nde.vsnl.net.in)

[bookwelldelhi@gmail.com](mailto:bookwelldelhi@gmail.com)

Website: [www.bookwellindia.com](http://www.bookwellindia.com)

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## A Pilot Project of Department of Biotechnology (DBT) for Establishing and Handling a National Biotechnology Consortium i.e. DeLCON Consortium by NBRC

D. D. LAL

DBT's Electronic Library Consortium (DeLCON Consortium)

Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Govt. of India.  
National Brain Research Centre, NH-08, Nainital Mode, Manesar,  
Gurgaon, Haryana. Pincode : 122050, India

### Abstract

*The growth of information technology, proliferation of information, increased demand of users, financial constraints, inflation in Indian Currency etc. makes it difficult for libraries to acquire all the information resources. This promotes library cooperation and further leads to the formation of consortia at national and international level. The paper discussed consortia in general with an emphasis on DeLCON consortium, which is an initiative of NBRC in the area of Life Sciences, Biotechnology and Bioinformatics.*

**Keywords:** Consortium, DeLCON, National Biotechnology Consortium

Now-a-days access to resources is gaining more importance than collection building. Library consortium is sharing of available resources among the member institution. With consortium, libraries get large access to electronic resources at reasonable cost. In consortium, two or more agencies under a formal agreement coordinate, cooperate and consolidate certain functions to achieve shared and common objectives. In modern digital age, library consortia provide a way of sharing of resources in electronic format such as e-journals, e-databases etc., with purposes like better resource sharing, reduce information costs, speedy delivery of documents etc. To be a part of a consortium, participating libraries should have sufficient technology that can support sharing and access of resources. The cooperative utilization of electronic resources allows provision of seamless access to electronic information resources with shared access cost.

### Meaning of Library Consortium

According to the Oxford English Dictionary consortia means "temporary cooperation of a number of powers, companies, or institutions etc. for a common purpose". The definition may be inferred as a collective activity of a group of libraries towards a common goal of sharing resources. In library consortium involves cooperative effort of two or more libraries which have formally agreed to coordinate, cooperate and consolidate certain functions to achieve the mutual objectives. Consortia may be formed at local, regional, national or international level. This cooperation may either be on a functional, formal or subject basis.

### Purpose of Library Consortium

The major aims and objective of library consortium are as follows:

- To provide speedy, reliable and cost effective access to controlled document collection.
- To provide document delivery service and to enhance information resources utilization.
- To implement computerization of operations and services in the libraries and information centres.
- To enable the users to have access to academic information around the globe.
- To address the issues related to managing, organizing and archiving the electronic resources.

### Major Library Consortium

The tremendous information revolution and proliferation have brought extreme changes in the functioning and service delivered by the libraries. Still many libraries are not in a position to afford all the desired resources. Thus, keeping in view its significance in Indian scenario few library consortium initiatives of India are discussed here:

UGC-INFONET is one of the biggest academic library consortiums in India with around 142 member universities. INDEST (Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology) was an initiative in science, engineering and technology stream. It was funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India. Similarly, Indian Institute of Management (IIMs) Consortium, Indian Institute of Science Education & Research (IISERs) Consortium were also funded by the MHRD, Government of India.

Presently, the latest and largest library consortium is 'e-Shodh Sindhu', which was shaped by the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD) by merging UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, NLIST, ISSERs, NITs, IISCs, IIMs and INDEST-AICTE Consortium. The 'e-Shodh Sindhu' is providing current as well as archival access to more than 15,000 core and peer-reviewed journals and a number of bibliographic, citation and factual databases in different disciplines from a large number of publishers and aggregators to its member institutions including centralized-funded technical institutions, universities

and colleges that are covered under 12(B) and 2(f) Sections of the UGC Act The 'eSS consortium' is currently providing access to current and archival 15,000 e-journals and databases and extending the benefit to 139 - State universities, 40 - central universities, 22 - deemed universities, 15 - law universities, 6 of IUCs of UGC, 72 - AICTE funded colleges, 4000 colleges and IITs, IIMs, IISc etc.

At present, there are many other library consortium working at national level like CSIR-NKRC (National Knowledge Resource Consortium), DAE (Department of Atomic Engineering) Consortium, DRDO Consortium, DeLCON Consortium, HELINET (Health Sciences Library and Information Network) Consortium, FORSA Consortium for the Astronomy & Astrophysics Library, MCIT (Ministry of Communication and Information Technology) Library Consortium, ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization) Consortium, IRMED Consortium, CeRA Consortium, Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences and the ICICI etc.).

A number of regionally focused (some as in metropolitan areas e.g. ADNET in Ahmedabad, and PUNENET in Pune) and city level consortia are also scheduled to occur, having been convinced of the success rates of the ongoing library consortia in the country.

### National Brain Research Centre (NBRC)

NBRC is the only institute in India dedicated to neuroscience research and education. Scientists and students of NBRC come from diverse academic backgrounds, including biological, computational, mathematical, physical, engineering and medical sciences, and use multidisciplinary approaches to understand the brain. Located in the foothills of the Aravalli range in Manesar, Haryana, NBRC is an autonomous institute funded by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, and is also a Deemed University.

The Centre was registered as an autonomous Society on 14th June 1999 on 38 acres of land acquired on lease at Manesar, Gurgaon district, 40 km from Delhi. Prof. P. N. Tandon is the founder Chairman of the NBRC Society and the founder director was Prof. Vijaylakshmi Ravindranath. The institute at Manesar was formally dedicated to the nation by the Honorable President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam on 16th December, 2003.



Figure 1: NBRC

The mandate of National Brain Research Centre (NBRC) is to be a Centre of Excellence in Brain Research with State-of-art facilities, to evolve the centre through a networking approach and generate highly trained human resource

### NBRC Efforts Towards DeLCON

Prior to the DeLCON consortium, the NBRC was subscribing to 311 online journals and approximately 77 print journals. The NBRC had taken the major task and responsibility to constitute the DeLCON consortium in the year 2008 and with the hard efforts the DeLCON consortium started functioning w.e.f. January 2009.

The concept of DeLCON (DBT Electronic Library Consortium) was originated in a 'DBT Director's Meeting' held at Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (RGCGB), Thiruvananthapuram during 'January 2008'. The Senior Advisors, Financial Advisor and other officials of the DBT participated in the meeting along with the existing Secretary DBT. The existing director of NBRC volunteered offered to coordinate this project along with Officer-in-Charge, Library, NBRC. The NBRC approached to the Directors of all DBT institutions for their inputs on list of journals subscribed currently and also required additional journals.

All the DBT institution (at that time 9 DBT institution) had provided the inputs regarding their subscribed journals and their additional journals requirement Based on the inputs of subscribed journals and desired journals, NBRC (Nodal Centre) had compiled a 'Union Catalogues' and 'shorted' it on 'publishers wise' and then asked the publishers for their proposals.

The 'International Centre for Genetics and Engineering Biotechnology (ICGEB)' also approached the DBT for their interest in 'Biotech Consortium'. With the recommendations of the DBT, currently there are ten-member institutes of Biotech Consortium along with ICGEB.

Regarding the financial matters, DBT constituted a committee to review and re-negotiate the price with the publishers. The committee discussed the pattern of fund sharing by the institutions for the consortium and recommended that the institutions shall share the expenditure in proportionate to their annual budget allocation by the DBT. The budget was discussed and approved by the DBT in the Year 2008.

### Overview of Delcon Consortium

Libraries of DBT institutions in India were facing challenges due to crisis of budget, insufficient library staff, depreciation of Indian currency, abrupt hike in conversion rates of foreign currencies, and boom in the fee of publication. Because of these factors, the DBT libraries were finding it difficult to subscribe to scholarly scientific journals and databases for their users. Such a situation has adverse impact on the research and development programmes. Realizing the requirement for scholarly scientific journals in academic and research activities, the DBT has launched 'DBT's Electronic Library Consortium' in the year 2009, which is now widely known as a 'National Consortium for Biotechnology' i.e. 'DeLCON consortium'. Under this DeLCON consortium, e-resources coming under Life Sciences i.e. Biotechnology, Biochemistry, Biology, Bioinformatics, Immunology, Neuroscience, etc. are subscribed.

To meet the increasing R&D information needs of the DBT institutes, the DBT's Electronic Library Consortium (DeLCON), a big National Project of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) to bring qualitative alteration in its research institutions was hosted in

the January 2009. It is a national inspiration for providing access to scholarly electronic resources including full-text and bibliographic databases in all the life science subject disciplines to DBT organizations in the country to improve teaching, learning and research activities.

The access to all major e-resources was given to 10 DBT institutions in the commencement of the year 2009. It was prolonged to 17 more DBT institutions in the 2nd phase during the year 2010 and another 7 members were included in the 3rd phase in the year 2011.

The DeLCON consortium offers integrated library services and enable other cooperative projects that yield outstanding quality and value to its members. The DeLCON consortium is making regular efforts to bring new technologies, new services, and new resources to its member libraries to enabling them to serve their users and help them to achieve their economic, educational, and cultural goals. The DeLCON consortium currently comprises of following 34 member institutes:

- National Brain Research Centre (NBRC), Manesar
- Department of Biotechnology (DBT), New Delhi
- National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR) - New Delhi
- National Institute of Immunology (NII) - New Delhi
- National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS) - Pune
- Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) - Bhubaneswar
- Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (ISBD) - Imphal
- Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics (CDFD) - Hyderabad
- Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (RGCGB) - Thiruvananthapuram
- International Centre for Genetics and Engineering Biotechnology (ICGEB), New Delhi
- National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB), Hyderabad
- Dibrugarh University (DU), Assam
- Assam University (AU), Silchar
- North Eastern Regional Institute of Science & Technology (NERIST), Arunachal Pradesh
- North East Institute of Science & Technology (NEIST), Assam
- Mizoram University (Mizo Univ), Mizoram
- D. M. College of Science (DMC), Manipur
- Sikkim University (SU), Gangtok

- College of Veterinary Science, Assam Agricultural University (CVSAAU), Guwahati
- St. Anthony's College (SAC), Meghalaya
- Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Program (BIRAP), New Delhi
- Gauhati University (GU), Assam
- Manipur University (Mani Univ), Imphal
- College of Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry Central Agricultural University (CVSAHCAU), Mizoram
- Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU), Arunachal Pradesh
- Nagaland University (NU), Nagaland
- North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong
- Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG), Guwahati, Assam
- National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI), Mohali, Punjab
- National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBHG), Kalyani, Kolkata
- Regional Centre for Biotechnology (RCB), Gurgaon
- Tezpur University (TU), Tezpur, Sonitpur, Assam
- Transnational Health Science & Technology Institute (IHSTI), Gurgaon
- Sikkim State Council of Science and Technology (SSCST), Gangtok, Sikkim

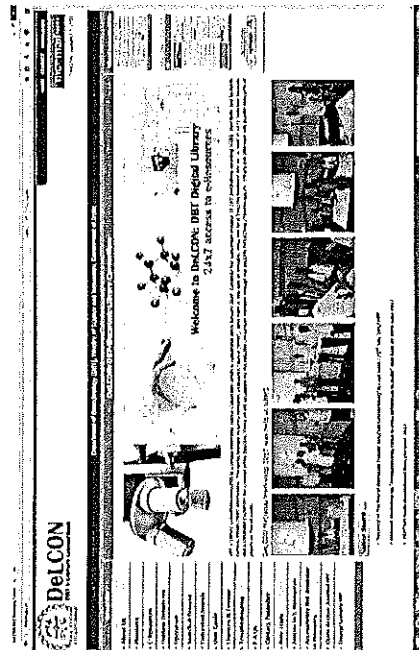


Figure 2: DeLCON Website

**e-RESOURCES COVERAGE OF DeLCON CONSORTIUM**

The DeLCON consortium subscribes to e-resources relevant to Life Science & Biotechnology subject discipline being taught in the DBT research institutions, Universities and Colleges. It includes extensive variety of materials like e-journals, bibliographic databases, reviews published by scholarly societies, university presses, institutional and commercial publishers. The DeLCON consortium subscribes to 1171+ full textual content e-resources with 21 renowned international foreign publishers. The institutional members are provided with differential access to these e-journals based on their desires and activity profile as per the recommendation of the DeLCON Steering Committee.

Table 1: List of Full-text Resources (e-Journals) and Bibliographic Databases subscribed under the DeLCON consortium

SL	Name of Publishers / Journals	Hyperlink of the publishers	No. of Journals
1	American Association for Advancement of Science (AAAS)	<a href="http://www.sciencemag.org">http://www.sciencemag.org</a>	(3 Journals)
2	American Association for Cancer Research (AACR)	<a href="http://www.aacr.org">http://www.aacr.org</a>	(9 Journals)
3	American Chemical Society (ACS)	<a href="http://pubs.acs.org">http://pubs.acs.org</a>	(47 Journals)
4	Annual Reviews (AR)	<a href="http://www.annualreviews.org">http://www.annualreviews.org</a>	(23 Journals)
5	American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB)	<a href="http://www.jbc.org">http://www.jbc.org</a>	(2 Journals)
6	American Society For Microbiology (ASM)	<a href="http://www.asm.org/">http://www.asm.org/</a>	(17 Journals)
7	Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press (CSHL)	<a href="http://www.csh.edu">http://www.csh.edu</a>	(4 Journals)
8	Informa Healthcare / (INFORMA HC)	<a href="http://www.informaworld.com">http://www.informaworld.com</a>	(40 Journals)
9	Lippincott William & Wilkins/ Wolter Kluwer / OVID	<a href="http://ovidsp.ovid.com">http://ovidsp.ovid.com</a>	(11 Journals)
10	Marry ANN Liebert (MAL)	<a href="http://www.liebertonline.com">http://www.liebertonline.com</a>	(92 Journals)
11	Nature Publications	<a href="http://www.nature.com">http://www.nature.com</a>	(36 Journals)
12	Oxford University Press (OUP)	<a href="http://www.oxfordjournals.org">http://www.oxfordjournals.org</a>	(22 Journals)
13	Springer India	<a href="http://www.springerlink.com">http://www.springerlink.com</a>	(339 Journals)
14	Society for General Microbiology (SGM)	<a href="http://mic.sgmjournals.org">http://mic.sgmjournals.org</a>	(3 Journals)
15	American Society for Hematology (ASH)	<a href="http://bloodjournals.hematologylibrary.org">http://bloodjournals.hematologylibrary.org</a>	(1 Journal)
16	Wiley-Blackwell	<a href="http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/home">http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/home</a>	(84 Journals)
17	Elsevier Science (ScienceDirect)	<a href="http://www.sciencedirect.com">http://www.sciencedirect.com</a>	(432 Journals)

Sl.	Name of Publishers / Journals	Hyperlink of the publishers	No. of Journals
18	American Society of Plant Biologist	<a href="http://www.aspb.org/">http://www.aspb.org/</a>	(2 Journals)
19	American Association of Immunologist	<a href="http://www.aai.org/">http://www.aai.org/</a>	(1 Journals)
20	Scopus Database	<a href="http://www.scopus.com">http://www.scopus.com</a>	(1 Database)
21	The New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)	<a href="http://www.nejm.org">http://www.nejm.org</a>	(1 Journal)
22	Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)	<a href="http://www.pnas.org">http://www.pnas.org</a>	(1 Journal)

**Operational Functionality of DeLCON Consortium**

The DeLCON is fully funded by DBT. DeLCON Steering Committee takes policy decision like inclusion of member institutions, e-resources, etc., and the Negotiation Committee is accountable to negotiate the subscription rates with publishers. Once e-resources and members of DeLCON are finalized, the DeLCON places order for subscription to e-resources to the publishers as per the purchase rules. The DeLCON is also accountable for signing license agreement on behalf of the number of DBT institutions covered under the DeLCON. The DeLCON supports the organizational management of consortium from 'National Brain Research Centre', Manesar. The whole programme has been administered, monitored and maintained by 'DeLCON Nodal Centre (NBRC)' and 'DeLCON National Steering Committee'.

**Conclusion**

With its sincere and regular efforts, DeLCON consortium is serving the users with its ever-expanding services and resources. Because of this, it is presently turned out to be the most popular national consortium in the territory, which is serving in the field of biotechnology and life sciences.

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