

E-Journals: An Overview

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Abstract: The emerging role of ICT has impacted the scenario of e- publication at the global level. In other words we can say that WWW have facilitated creation of alternative forms of the traditional paper journals. Therefore the E-publishing has brought a drastic change in journal's publication, subscription, and access and delivery mechanism. Today, libraries are providing electronic access to a wide variety of resources, including indexes, full-text articles and complete journals. There are two types of E-journals and both have their own merits and demerits. The present research paper highlights an overview of E-Journals in the present scenario.

Keywords: E-Journal, Publications, Access, WWW, ICT, Libraries, Users.

Introduction: Today E-Journals are regarded as the most popular term in academic field. After the invention of information technology, a drastic change has occurred in various disciplines. The Peer review process and archiving of research results for long term availability have helped the scholarly journal to attain a firm position and due to digital publishing technologies and Internet, the scholarly journals have underwent many changes. Likewise the digital technology has given birth to the electronic form of Journal or E-journal. Apart from publishers, the availability of electronic versions of journals on the WWW, led to the emergence of new and modern E-journal service providers. From bibliographic to full text articles and the citation linking across journals has been another landmark. The digital publication has also curtailed time lag between article submission and its publication. A journal can be called as E-journal, if its contents are produced and stored in electronic form

What is E- Journal?

The fact is that an e-journal closely resembles a print journal in structure: there is a table of contents which lists the articles, and many electronic journals still use a volume/issue model, although some titles now publish on a continuous basis. Online journal articles are a specialized form of electronic document: they have the purpose of providing material for academic research and study, and they are formatted approximately like journal articles in traditional printed journals. Often a journal article will be available for download in two formats - as a PDF and in HTML format, although other electronic file types are often supported for supplementary material. Articles are indexed in bibliographic databases, as well as by search engines. E-journals allow new types on content to be included in journals, for example video material, or the data sets on which research has been based.

According to Encyclopaedia of Librarianship and information Science:” A term used to described that journal that is published in digital form to be displayed on a computer screen and often scholarly, that is made accessible in a computerized format.”

A History of E-Journals: It is said that first effort for E- Journal was made in the decade of 1990 and it was in ASCII text format and made available by e-mail as well as in diskette. In 1991, the commercial publishers, Elsevier started the TULIP project in collaboration with several academic institutions. It is the first E- Journals to include graphics and project adopted the WWW as a distribution mechanism- which later on came to be known as “ECO”. It developed specialized viewing software .It can be viewed in graphical and ASCII text. By 1994, the WWW has gained strong hold and now mostly E- journals are now delivered through WWW. It was observed that growth of online E- Journals the number of electronic journals gradually increased since 1990 and reached maximum in 2008. The 1989-90 Ulrich’s listed 2131 serials in online format and 1998 editions contained 8,762. Again in the year 2000 Ulrich listed 14,757 exclusive Online journals that rose to 39,900 in the year 2004, in 2007-08 the number of online periodicals touched to 56,329

Basic Features of E-Journals: Actually due to development of the internet, there has been a growth in the number of new journals, especially in those that exist as digital publications only. A subset of these journals exist as Open Access titles, meaning that they are free to access for all, and have Creative Commons licenses which permit the reproduction of content in different ways. High quality open access journals are listed in Directory of Open Access Journals. Most however continue to exist as subscription journals, for which libraries, organizations and individuals purchase access. Consequently, Electronic journals have undergone a dramatic transformation in style and format since their initial appearance in early 1990. It is said that layout and presentation of E-Journals have greatly improved, and access has been facilitated by the web and online archives users still may prefer print hard copies of selected issues and article to reading from a computer screen. Some of the basic features of E- Journals have been categorized as follows.

First Generation E-Journals: Some of the basic features of these Journals are:

- Disseminated through e-mail thus making check –in easy.
- Copyright restrictions waived by the publishers.
- Based on ASCII text files and used a simple file structure.
- Because of “small file size, ASII text format, and lack of access restrictions” local library storage cost relatively little in file space and staff time.

Second Generation E-Journals: These electronic journals are more likely to have the following features:

- Have more complex file structures.
- Be fee-based rather than free and thus concerned with copyright.

- Be difficult to check-in due to links to other sources on the internet.
- Be published by universities press or commercial published rather than individuals or groups of scholars.
- Be based on HTML or “Specially formatted files” for distribution on the WWW rather than on ASCII text.
- Require more storage space.

Types of E- journals: There are mainly two types of E- journals. The first is offline CD-ROM Journals and the second is the online or internet based Journals.

A. Offline CD-ROM Journals: CD-Rom stands for compact Disc Read only Memory, and represents a way of digitally storing a large document of information in way that is easy to search and retrieve. It is portable and has ability to store graphic data. The most important advantage of a CD-Rom is that if the CDs are on network then the same CD/ Database on the CD can be shared by an unlimited number of users, sitting at far off places and at their door step.

B. Online or Internet based Journals: It is said that it can be used simultaneously by more than one user. It provides timely access. E-Journals support different searching capabilities and saves physical storage. Though on the surface, these two types appear alike there are several points of considerable difference that one could take note of. Clearly this is not exclusive to online publications, but such an information service presupposes that the receipt is online and therefore seems to carry more weight if the publication is also online. Cost of updating online journals are much less, since the files are simply added or simply replayed on the specific server. Hence users can be made more frequent than CD-ROM version, which can out with more or less the same frequently as the print versions.

Benefits of E-Journals: There are so many benefits of E- Journals both for libraries and users as under:

- Easily available for users.
- Free of any space and time.
- Saves user's time.
- Easy to search in the formats unavailable in print format.
- Helpful to accelerate the publication work.
- Customisation of the research material and services.
- Easily available for multiple users at the same time and anywhere.
- Superior resource delivery mechanism.
- Improvement of library services.
- Cost and space saving for library services.
- Helpful to reduce shelving, binding, maintenance and claiming.

- Public relation opportunities for library profession.
- Satisfaction of users towards libraries services.

Demerits of E- Journals: Most of the Scholars assume the fact that there are two major issues archiving and site licenses in the area of E-Journals. It is said that there are some draw backs of E- Journals as under:

- **Authentication issues.**
- Lack of full coverage
- Archival issues.
- Difficult to preserve for a long time.
- Lack of full control.
- Lack of ICT knowledge for users.
- Technical problems in networks.
- Lack of skilled manpower.

Conclusion: Thus, E- Journals have become a popular term in libraries and information science. Due to development in information technology, a drastic change in publishing has been occurred in recent years. The proliferation of electronic resources, networking technology, computer technology and web technology has facilitated the development change in publishing sector. Today a large number of E-Journals are growing rapidly and they are very useful for both users and Libraries.

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