

Panel Discussion
A Click of the Mouse - Myth or Reality:
Leveraging the best of the Internet & Libraries

45 minutes

Background:

In India large libraries like the National Medical Library and small ones like those in hospitals collectively spend large amounts for journal subscriptions. Increasing costs are a cause for concern. Through the Internet many articles are available online. Some are free, some are not free. Costs vary. Many are available through various worldwide services like International libraries and document delivery providers.

Libraries started computerization / automation in the 1990s. On one hand, there are networks like ERMED (NML Delhi), and HELINET (Karnataka). On the other hand majority of medical libraries do not yet have an electronic catalog leave alone an Internet-based catalog

An important issue that keeps looming up is the Copyright law for using information resources. Early this year the Mumbai police busted a racket where six people were arrested for copying major medical books and selling them across the country. The offenders are not only those who did this, but those who buy such products. In reality we face a burning issue - how easy is it to get accurate guidance about what is and is not permitted under copyright law.

With this brief background,

The panel discussion will have two components. A vote on some questions and answers to some short questions. Panelists will also be invited to add some generic comments on issues under discussion. The matter for discussion will be broadly on awareness of various information resources, getting articles, copyright issues, barriers in the use of the Internet as well as libraries.

Questions and discussions will be mainly addressed to panellists and health professionals; however any of our well wishers present here are welcome to ask a question or offer comments.

Vote questions:

a) If you need an article from a library (not your own), how often do you get it within your expected time frame? (Very often / Often / Rarely)

Very often (3); Very rarely (1)

b) The Internet is supposed to make everything available online. How often do you get an article that you need, from the Internet - either free or at an affordable cost?

Very often (1); Don't know(1); No (1)

Discussion:

a) How easy do you (librarian) find it to get an article from outside your library

*If you know the tools and ways it is easy to get. The only hitch being the time lags.
It is easy to get from within the city
It is also necessary to build connections with vendors, libraries etc.
References not listed in any site/source are difficult to get.
With Internet things have changed. Time lags have reduced.*

*We get articles through friends worldwide.
Searching has become easy after PubMed training by QMed.
Time is an issue. Many doctors do not have time to search and get articles.*

2. Contributing to / barriers for the use / development of the library

Vote questions:

a) Do you feel that the library's resources serve at least 3/4 of your information needs?

Yes (All)

b) (Users) - Does your institution have an online library catalog - through an Intranet or Internet

No (All)

c) How quickly are you able to trace an item online and then on the shelf (quantify)

Quite easily (All)

Discussion:

a) What do you feel is the topmost priority for a library to offer its user today

-Availability of latest books.

-Better online access.

-Availability of different categories of documents (Dictionaries, Encyclopaedias, Handbooks etc.). Should satisfy information needs at different phases

-Access to latest articles, databases, Cochrane reviews etc.

-Focus on user satisfaction.

-We have plans to develop a National Database on Reproductive Health Information

b) What are the barriers for development of your / any medical library (librarians first; then users)

-Organizational / institutional constraints

-Resource constraints – Financial and Human resources (qualified librarians)

-Space constraints

-There should be a collective request for better librarians

3. Copyright (compliance)

Vote / survey questions:

a) How many of you have felt (at least once in your professional lifetime) that copyright laws are for others

-All

b) Do you know that when you sign a photocopy request form you are actually doing it for the library to ensure copyright compliance?

-All

c) Are you aware that if someone from the Industry (Pharma / Medical equipment company) wants an article from your library, you have to pay the necessary copyright fee and charge them the same, to provide this article?

-Yes (2)

Discussion:

How do we begin to work at ensuring copyright compliance in libraries - ensuring that a right system is in place, every concerned person in the Institution is aware of rules, and their implementation

- Every article should be stamped that it is for personal use
- The format of the document should be a closed one that does not allow copying/editing
- Educating the users essential

4. Awareness of databases / PubMed

Vote / survey questions:

a) Is the Cochrane library available free online in India

- Yes (4)
- Not sure (3)

b) Who can benefit from ERMED

- Not sure (All)

c) Do you know that NIC has an archive - OpenMed - where you can deposit a copy of any article that you are submitting for publication (subject to certain terms of the publisher)

- Yes (3)
- No (4)

d) Are you aware that you can find out which journal is available in which library in India, through NIC's UNCAT

- Yes (2)
- No (4)

e) Do you know that you can upload your library holdings of journals in PubMed and restrict your search to articles available in your library

- Yes (2)
- No (4)

f) How many of you would like that for your library

- All

Discussion: We would like to work with institutions to spread our training programs. We also wish to plan for "train the trainer programs" so that we can spread our knowledge quickly across India. Can we have ideas on

a) How to implement this

- Impress upon those in charge of medical education
- Train the doctors who in turn can train others
- Need to spread awareness message emphasizing need for training programs
- Through short awareness lectures on need for training in literature searches should lead to full fledged training programs
- Training programs will lead to better utilization of resources (in house as well as external)
- Training in literature search as license for information professionals
- Refresher programs in literature search
- Make CMEs compulsory

b) How to fund such an initiative

-Pharma sponsorships

-ICMR sponsorships

-Infosys funding