IMPACT OF E-PUBLISHING ON SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

The use of technology in publishing world has paved a new way to the scholarly communication which has brought a significant change in the global information process. This paradigm shift in e-publishing which is in a full bloom has transformed the nature of scholarly communication. In e-publishing, information dissemination is possible electronically which is cost effective, fast and time saving. Such qualities of e-publishing industry are attracting scholar communities to adopt information technology in their writings. The prompt communication of manuscripts is possible in ICT era. For publishing in scholar journals, manuscripts are peer reviewed at different stages and publisher notifies the author at each stage of reviewing as per the suggestions of the review committee. This process otherwise takes months in conventional methods of publishing.

Keywords: Scholarly communication, scholar community, e-book, e-media.

INTRODUCTION:

The use of technology in publishing world has paved a new way to the scholarly communication. Gone are the days when scholar communities had to wait for months to communicate their nascent ideas as well as the results of their research. If their work had to go through peer reviewed process, more time was required. Now the whole publishing world is in transition phase. E-books have entered in e-publishing and have become so important that we are talking on the same. Scholar journals are of utmost importance for scholarly communication. Most of the print journals are also available in e-format. Some journals are coming only in e-format. Online scholarly journals are also in e-market and these are considered "as a commodity to an academic institution. Users prefer electronic form of journals to the print one" (Dhingra & Mahajan,

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2007). E-publishing is not replacing the print one, but it complements print industry which is very useful for scholarly community as it simplifies and expedites activities related with their publishing work. E-manuscripts can be submitted online to different publishers in different ways. Moreover, scholars can easily track the progress of their work in question. Revision as well as maintaining quality of work is now an easy job in e-environment.

The emergence of ICT has changed the ways of communicating, storing, disseminating and preserving the information in the publishing world. With web interface, manuscripts can be sent directly to publishers. An optical diskette may also be used for the same purpose. Lancaster defined electronic publishing as a "publishing process where the manuscripts are submitted in e-format, edited, printed and even distributed to users in electronic format by computer and communication technology". Grolier Electronic Publishing Encyclopedia (2005) defines as the term e-publishing refers more precisely to the storage and retrieval of information through electronic communication media. It can employ a variety of formats and technologies, some already in widespread use by businesses and general consumers and others still being developed. Although the advancements in information technology have opened a new gateway for scholar communities, yet it has also imposed certain responsibilities as well as challenges on them.

E-publishing has revolutionized the format of recorded knowledge, switching to new means of publishing using electronic media. This has brought a significant change in the global information process. The paradigm shift in e-publishing which is in a full bloom has transformed the nature of scholarly communication. "The next chapter in the history of publishing is being written and published electronically"(Pedek, 1994). Ever since the first electronic book was published in 1985 in Germany there has been a steady growth in the number of electronic publication. More and more publishers of scholarly, academic and reference works from almost all fields of human knowledge are entering into the field of electronic publishing.

E-MEDIA IN SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION:

- **Electronic book:** E-book is a boon for the scholar community. This can either be born digital or can convert the print form into digital one.

This type of book published in computer file format can contain audio, video with the availability of hyperlinks. Many hand-held devices are available in the market to read e-books.

- **Electronic journals:** Electronic Journals are recognized as a major link in scholarly communication. According to ALA Glossary, a journal is a periodical especially one containing scholarly article and/or disseminating current information on research and development in a particular subject field. "E-journals are available electronically via a computer network that they may or may not be published in some other physical medium, but that are not CDROM's" (Jones, 1998). A significant change in electronic delivery of journals has resulted in better storage options, low cost, easy dissemination and comfort in publishing information.

- **Blog:** In scholarly communication blog alerts the readers about the recent advances in their field and adds value to the resources. "There is an increase both in terms of researchers reading blogs and researchers blogging" (Selg, 2008). Scholarly communication is motivated by the fact that researchers, in their search for new knowledge, want to legitimate their results by having them vetted by other researchers in their discipline (Becher & Trowler, 2001) e.g. PEA Soup, is a blog that focuses on philosophy, ethics and academia (http://peasoup.typepad.com/); scienceblogs.com; http://radar.oreilly.com.

- **Discussion forums:** These are forums where scholars communicate their thoughts, opinions, ideas and engage in a conversation about the recent trends, news alert e.g Google Groups or subject specific group like LIS Forum.

FEATURES OF E-PUBLISHING:

In e-publishing, information dissemination is possible electronically which is cost effective, fast and time saving. Such qualities of e-publishing industry are attracting scholar communities to adopt information technology in their writings. Some of the key features of it are as follows:

- **COMMUNICATION:** The prompt communication of manuscripts is

possible in ICT era. For publishing in scholar journals, manuscripts are peer reviewed at different stages and publisher notifies the author at each stage of reviewing as per the suggestions of the review committee. He further communicates with author either for revision or for appreciation of his/her work. This process otherwise takes months in conventional methods of publishing.

- **ACCESSIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY:** The electronic information is accessible anytime i.e. 24x7 as well as anywhere. It is not restricted to one man's hands; rather any number of users can access it irrespective of geographical barriers. It is readily available at the desktop and is just a click away. The electronic publishing has made possible the end of 'out of print' era.

- **MULTIMEDIA:** Multimedia has made possible to elaborate and present the information graphically with high resolution, animations and has made the information a virtual reality. The navigational aids like hyperlinks have made the scanning of various pages instantly.

- **STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE:** Storage of e-documents is not a big issue now. Fears of loss, damage, tear of pages are obsolete problems.

- **CUSTOMIZATION:** The e-information can easily be customized depending upon customer's needs. One can change font type as well as size, colour setting etc. at one's will, which has simplified further use of information.

- **ECO-FRIENDLY:** As no paper is involved physically, thus it is economically and environmentally safe.

OPEN ACCESS MODEL FOR SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION:

Open Access model provides free access to digital scholarly communication without any restrictions of taking permission from the authors and publishers. According to The Budapest Open Access Initiative "by 'open access' to … literature, we mean its free availability on the public Internet, permitting any user to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use

them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the Internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited".

According to the Bethesda statement –

In open access publication "the author(s) and copyright holder(s) grant(s) to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship as well as the right to make small numbers of printed copies for their personal use".

Open access model includes open access journals, institutional repositories in digital form i.e. intellectual output by the scholars of the institution in a digital format and open access forums, blogs. e.g. The Documentation Research & Training Centre, Bangalore and the University of Arizona maintain open access digital repositories of e-prints in LIS.

Open Access Resources:

- Directory of Open Access Journals (http://www.doaj.org/)
- Directory of Open Access Repositories (http://www.opendoar.org/) e.g. arXiv is a repository covering physics and related disciplines **(http://arxiv.org).**
- ROAR—Registry of Open Access Repositories, formerly called Tim Brody's Institutional Archives.
- Open access Forums (eg American Scientist Open Access Forum).
- Blogs (http://catalogablog.blogspot.com; http://radar.oreilly.com; http://techcrunch.com.)

ISSUES CONCERNING E-PUBLISHING ON SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

The main aim of any research is to communicate its findings which are considered its crucial part. In traditional model of scholarly communication,

scholar community is not satisfied due to lack of prompt communication of information as it is considered its source of instant power. The drawbacks with traditional publishing of books, journals, etc. urged for using ICT in this field which has amused everyone with the emergence of e-book, e-journal, etc.

Factors responsible for this dissatisfaction include:

- Decrease in number of scholarly journals in libraries due to escalating price of paper publishing known as serial crisis.
- Time lag between publishing and dissemination.
- Restrictions on what can be published.

Apart from this, they face some problems dealing with e-media too, such as

- Lack of universal common format for submission of articles such as Portable Document Format (PDF), Digital Object Identifier (DOI), etc.
- Lack of uniformity in online submission pattern of different scholarly journals.
- The fast flow of information has made the quality check difficult.

CONCLUSION:

The advent of ICT offers many advantages for scholarly communication. Access and exchange of information is so convenient and so cost effective now that it has attracted the attention of scholarly communities. It has revolutionized the format of recorded knowledge. E-publishing has brought changes in publishing industries to keep pace with the changes in communities and their information seeking behavior. E-publishing has resulted in a meaningful and substantive change in library, its collection, services and offers many advantages including ease of search; value added features and universal accessibility. It has become a powerful channel/tool for knowledge dissemination in today's electronic enrich environment. Its low cost, open access to all, wider dissemination of knowledge has opened new vistas for scholar community. However, in e-publishing, consistent uniformity and simplicity is required.

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