

Online Knowledge Sources and Services that are Revolutionizing Education and Research: An Overview

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Abstract: The paper discusses different fast emerging knowledge sources available on world wide web . The idea is to sensitize both library professionals and users about the significance and utility of these sources. The beauty of these sources and services are that they all are open access and as such great boon for the users world over especially of third world countries where access to quality knowledge sources is sparse. Open access is going to be main stay of knowledge sources in times ahead and therefore topic in hand should help stakeholders in understanding these sources and services.

Keywords: Online Knowledge Sources, Services, Open Access, Education, Research

1. Introduction

Though, in last two centuries we have made great strides in imparting knowledge to ordinary people of the society, yet a lot needs to be done given the huge population and geographical dispersion of the same . It is still not possible for aspirants to take admission in the renowned institutions . The limited infrastructure again come into the way and don't allow us to welcome all into our academic institutions . Off late in this milieu information technology has come to our rescue and has helped us to reach to places and impart knowledge around the globe . Now aspiring students can listen to the lectures of renowned teachers and scientists via World Wide Web services . Teachers delivering lectures in some of the prime institutions like Harvard, Oxford, MIT can be now watched on different online video sharing sites in real-time mode and students can ask questions from distant

Due to information technology, whole range of beneficial knowledge is now available in open access mode i.e. free, immediate, online availability of research articles combined with the rights to use these articles fully in the digital environment . Open access can be applied to all forms of published literature, including peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed academic journal articles, conference papers, theses, book chapters, and monographs .

There are more 8500 academic journals (DOAJ, 2016) available online now in diverse streams of knowledge in open access mode that can be utilized by researchers and students from world over without spending a single penny .

3. Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs)

On same analogy hundreds of thousands of theses and dissertations are available online in electronic mode for free access and



NDLTD

places . This was unimaginable few decades back . This is surely setting new horizons in knowledge sharing and development . The diverse online services and resources have facilitated our journey for emancipation of mankind by dissemination of free flow of knowledge . Some of the well-known initiatives and services are discussed below .

2. Open Access

download .

The Shodhganga (2016) electronic theses repository provides a platform for research students to deposit their Ph.D. theses and make it available to the entire scholarly community in open access. The repository has the ability to capture, index, store, disseminate and preserve ETDs submitted by the researchers and currently it offers access to more than 1,00,000 electronic theses pertaining to varied facets of knowledge (Shodhganga, 2016). This movement is not restricted to India alone other countries are also have made great strides in this field and Network of Digital library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD, 2015) is one such platform that coordinates national ETD efforts of different countries under one interface for ease of access and efficient retrieval of relevant pieces of research.

4. Open Access Books

Since early times people are fond to read books and have become first choice for most of literate people to brush up their skills and update knowledge. As such conscious people around the globe started their efforts in this direction from 1970s. Disseminating free eBooks to all endeavor made its beginning under name Project Gutenberg (2016) by Michael S Hurt is that has now become big movement and other players have also joined in. the project was offering access to books in electronic form that have already crossed the mandatory copyright period.



This online portal offers access to more than 75,000 eBooks. Besides, new Open Access books are also now reality and these books are usually published by authors which don't restrict their use under copyright laws and as such make them free to use and reproduce provided the same is not done for commercial purposes. Currently Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB, 2016) provides access to 8569 Academic peer-reviewed books and chapters from 224 publishers. This is a big stride forward and is definitely helping knowledge seekers to benefit from such endeavours.

5. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are free online courses available for anyone to enroll. MOOCs provide an affordable and flexible way to learn new skills and deliver

quality educational experiences. These are online courses aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials such as filmed lectures, readings, and problem sets, many MOOCs provide interactive user forums to support community interactions among students and teachers. All leading universities and other higher education institutions globally have started their own MOOCs and has become part and parcel of their

MOOC



education activities.

In India SWAYAM (2016) programme of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, Professors of centrally funded institutions like IITs, IIMs, central universities offer online courses to citizens of India. In the first phase, IIT Bombay, IIT Madras, IIT Kanpur, IIT Guwahati, University of Delhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, IGNOU, IIM Bangalore, IIM Calcutta, Banaras Hindu University, alone as well as with the help of faculty from foreign universities are offering courses in areas of engineering education, social science, energy, management, basic sciences. This augurs well for the country like India with more than a billion population and sparse physical infrastructure in higher education institution. This mode can be the game changer for improving Gross enrolment ratio (GER) in years to come.

6. Conclusion

Hence information technology has thereby proved boon for the dissemination of knowledge to the remote corners of the globe and to those who could not get access to quality knowledge resources and distinguished teachers and scientists in their own backyard. Therefore, it would be in the fitness of things to sensitize people associated with education sector locally with these novel resources and services available online free of cost and in a form easily availed and understood by great majority. This if done have the potential to transform our education sector with unprecedented growth and development.

7. References

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