

## Dynamics of Managing Electronic Resources: Electronic Resource Management System (ERMS) Initiatives

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### ABSTRACT

Even after two decades of digital presence in libraries and proliferation of electronic resources (e-resources) in terms of production, acquisition and usage the management of e-resources remains a cumbersome process. The process involved in the management of e-resources has often overwhelmed the library personnel. The life cycle of e-resources, especially in the academic institutions begin with the discovery and identification of the resource and moves on to the trial access, selecting the specific resource from the gamut of other resources followed by acquisition of the specific resource into the library realm and then facilitating access to the users and then the follow-up of studying the usage of the resource for further continuation of those resources. In between these processes there is the cumbersome chore of going through the licensing agreements and keeping the records correct. All these processes are time consuming and involve a lot of work. These relentless arrays of work have made librarians to look for systems which can save their time and energy and provide efficient management of e-resources. This paper looks at the origin of the ERMS (E-resource Management Systems) and the available ERMS in the library digital landscape.

**Keywords:** ERMS, electronic resource management systems, digital libraries, collection management

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Almost two centuries after the invention of movable printing press by Guttenberg the first printed peer-reviewed periodical appeared in 1665<sup>1</sup>. From then on it took another three centuries for the electronic version (e-version) of the scholarly publication to be made available for scholars and researchers. Currently the e-resources have become an inseparable part of libraries and researchers. They are often described as resources which are published through the e-media and accessed through e-media. They may be broadly defined as any peer-reviewed publications that are digitally created and stored in e-form either as a standalone or in a database for the purpose of delivery and retrieval electronically through various communication media for either networked access (through the Internet) or offline access through the CD-ROM or floppy disk etc) in various formats like HTML, PDF, text,

Postscript, etc. Skaggs<sup>2</sup> observes that e-resource is a simple and generic term that can include 'anything from a PDF of a government report to an aggregated database, and the research on the topic is as varied as the types of e-resources that can be discussed'. With its myriad formats and types and with the successful adaptation and acceptance of these formats amongst the academia there is no doubt that the e-resources are here to stay. The main reason for the acceptance of e-resources as part of the mainstream channel of scholarly communication is the nature of these e-resources.

The e-resources provide an enviable comfort which its print counterpart failed to provide. The advent of e-journals and databases provided the users with an array of advantages which prompted them to accept the e-media as the prime channel of scholarly communication. The e-resources allowed users to cross search the entire database with keywords and free text search to narrow down their