

Chapter 57

Towards Innovative Library Services: A Case Study of Indira Gandhi National Open University, India

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses emerging innovative technologies and examines how Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Library is increasingly benefited by its new and future services. It discusses the National Open Distance Learners' Library and Information Network (NODLINET), a project of IGNOU Library created for distance learning libraries for sharing collections, e-resources, and services on a common platform. The chapter discusses how IGNOU Library is moving towards innovative Library Services by providing its users with updated contents and constantly strengthening service capability in network information environment. It also explains in detail the component of Remote Access to E-resources, which is a quick, easy, and convenient service to gain off-campus access to all IGNOU Library subscribed databases and other online resources. It also enumerates the copyright restrictions and licensing restrictions through Remote Access Service. There is also a discussion in detail on various other innovative initiatives taken by IGNOU Library like Cloud Computing, Course Reserves, Institutional Repository, Discovery, and AtoZ Services.

INTRODUCTION

Education aims to impart knowledge and makes good citizens. Libraries are the repositories of knowledge and form an integral part of education. They are the important setups for storing and spreading specific information sources and for providing services and education. Academic Libraries have always been offering an environment for high-quality information service and knowledge access through their bibliographic systems, trans-platform search and acquisition of distributive resources and virtual reference consultation. They are considered to be the nerve centres of academic institutions, and must support

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teaching, research, and other academic programmes (Mahajan, 2005). Tao Xingzhi, a well-known Chinese educator, said: “A vigorous, stable, harmonious, healthy, and upbeat environment and atmosphere has an extensive educating effect”. The University Library needs to provide healthy education environment and makes meticulous transformation to support education from its original and new facilities and services.

University libraries have always been important setups for storing and spreading information resources, and for providing support services. On the same lines IGNOU Library envisages to provide an environment for high-quality information service and knowledge access through its bibliographic systems, subject navigation, trans-platform search and acquisition of distributive resources, literature transfer network, long-distance study, and virtual reference consultation. IGNOU Library is focusing to be a distributing center with its reliable search portals of high-quality academic information for its users.

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was established by an Act of Parliament in 1985, and since then has continuously striven to build an inclusive knowledge society through inclusive education. It has been a source of increasing the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) by offering high-quality teaching through the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode. The University started with two academic programmes in 1987, i.e., Diploma in Management and Diploma in Distance Education, with a strength of 4,528 students and at present it serves the educational aspirations of over 4 million students in India and 36 other countries through 21 Schools of Studies and a network of 67 regional centres, around 3,000 learner support centres and 67 overseas centres. The University is now offering about 490 certificate, diploma, degree and doctoral programmes, with strength of nearly 420 faculty members and academic staff at the headquarters and regional centres and about 36,000 academic counselors from conventional institutions of higher learning, professional organisations, and industry among others. (IGNOU – Profile, 2012).

The National Open University mandate is to provide access to higher education to all segments of the society and offer high-quality, innovative and need-based programmes at different levels, to all those who require them. The university is committed to reach out to the disadvantaged by offering programmes in all parts of the country at affordable costs; and promote, coordinate and regulate the standards of education offered through open and distance learning in the country. For achieving all this the University is widening access for all sections of society and providing continual professional development and training to all sectors of the economy, the University uses a variety of media and latest technology in imparting education. The formulated vision of IGNOU, keeping its objectives in focus, is to be the National Resource Centre for Open and Distance Learning, with international recognition and presence, and provide seamless access to sustainable and learner-centric quality education, skill upgradation and training to all by using innovative technologies and methodologies and ensuring convergence of existing systems for large-scale human resource development, required for promoting integrated national development and global understanding (IGNOU – Profile, 2012).

IGNOU Library and Documentation Division

The IGNOU library is the most resourceful information centre in the country in the field of Distance Education. The library has the largest collection of books, journals and other related materials in the field

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