

Online Bibliographic Search Services offer access to a wide range of online databases and other sources.

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- become aware of the nature of online search services;
- appreciate the wide range of different online search services and know when such services might be useful;
- know of criteria for the evaluation of an online search service and its databases;
- understand the nature of an online search;
- familiarise yourself with some of the important bibliographic databases available on CD-ROMs and internet; and
- know the different roles of intermediaries.

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## **12.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The word 'Bibliography' originates from two Greek words, viz., 'Biblion' which means 'Book' and 'graphien' which means 'to write'. The original meaning of 'bibliography' was 'writing of books'. Nowadays bibliography means listing of

books/documents irrespective of the fact that whether they are available in a library or not. The importance of bibliography reflects best from the following points, bibliography helps in :

- literature selection work to be done easily and efficiently;
- knowing the literary output of a particular country, in a particular language and on a particular subject; and
- promoting fruitful search by saving the time of the researcher.

Earlier, when the frontiers of knowledge and literature were limited, scholars/researchers used to read all the best and new documents by themselves. But, the march of time has witnessed a spectacular growth of knowledge and literature. In each country, ordinary books, reference works, periodicals, monographs, pamphlets and other varieties of literary expositions are being written on different subjects in different languages. Since the modern age is an age of knowledge explosion, no single individual can read the entire literature. An ordinary reader or research scholar would fail in finding out his required documents from among the vast multitude of literature. Bibliography serves the useful purpose of helping the reader select the required information by saving his time. Bibliography is thus an organized approach to human records and is the answer to the problem of access to publications. The following are some of the functions which a bibliography should perform:

- to make it possible for the intellectual workers learn about the publications regarding the developments in the subject of interest not only in their own countries but also in other countries;
- to characterize and evaluate the sources of information which it lists in order to narrow down the search for material;
- to help in getting the right information to the right reader at the right time; and
- to have a comprehensive coverage of literature where needed, and selectiveness when required.

## 12.2 NEED FOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC SERVICES

Every year, the amount of printed material increases at an alarming rate. Nowadays, the quantity of new information being generated is such that no individual can hope to keep pace with even a small fraction of it, and the problem to be faced is that of ensuring the individuals who need information can obtain it with the minimum cost both in terms of time and money and without being overwhelmed by large amounts of irrelevant matter. Knowledge is of two types: we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information about it. The first type is fast becoming difficult, and the second impossible due to magnitude and growth. The growth of knowledge naturally results in an enormous growth of literature, which sometimes becomes difficult to control. The need for bibliographical organization arises from the size, growth and complexity of records of human communication. The enormous progress of knowledge, particularly in the fields of science and technology in recent years has led to the awareness of unifying this rapid advances of knowledge and utilizing the latest research activities of different countries for further international and national development in different disciplines.

The enormous growth of recorded material on print and non-print media presents a formidable problem in their organizations and control for effective use. The bibliographic organizations, thus, serve as a pattern of effective arrangement which results from the systematic listing of the records of human communication.

The rapid rise in the literature - both macro and micro- has thus necessitated and augmented the use of various bibliographical tools by the academic community in their literary and scientific pursuits. To organize the growing recorded knowledge, the librarians and documentalists have developed various types of bibliographical services for the easy location and retrieval of the material.

## 12.3 TYPES OF BIBLIOGRAPHIES

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- i) **Library Catalogues:** List of books or a collection of a library or group of libraries are generally referred to as library catalogues. The purpose of the catalogue is to help both the library staff and the reader to find out whether the library contains books by a given author, whether a certain book on a given subject is available in the library, if the library has a book bearing a certain title, of certain series, by a editor or by a translator etc. The library catalogue serves both the inventory and retrieval functions.
- ii) **Subject Bibliographies:** A subject bibliography is a list of books and other reading material pertaining to a given subject. This may be international in character and scope, as it includes everything on the subject appearing in all languages and in all countries.
- iii) **Trade Bibliographies:** Trade bibliography attempts at recording the documents brought out by agencies engaged in book trade, e.g., publishers, book-sellers etc. It is compiled with the primary motive of facilitating the sale and purchase of books. A trade bibliography may be usually national in scope and records of books and pamphlets passing through the book trade. Examples of trade bibliographies are:
  - a) Publishers Weekly: New York, R.R. Bowker
  - b) Books in Print: New York, K.R. Bowker
  - c) British Books in Print: London, Whitaker
  - d) Indian Books in Print, Delhi, IBB
- iv) **National Bibliographies:** National bibliography is the list of books and other reading materials published within one country and does not have the limitations of subject or language. The importance of a national bibliography lies in the fact that it is an assemblage of the country's literary production at one place, it is a book selection tool, a cataloguing and classification guide. The aim is to provide a complete listing of recorded knowledge on a national basis. According to Dr. S.R. Ranganathan a current national bibliography should serve cultural, economic and educational purposes. Examples are:
  - British National Bibliography, London
  - Indian National Bibliography, Calcutta