Genesis of *World Digital Libraries: An International Journal*

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During the International Conferences on Digital Libraries, several experts felt the need for a primary research journal in the field of digital libraries which will not only cover the knowledge network of global digital library experts, but also project Indian research on digital libraries, technologies and case studies. Thus, the journal *World Digital Libraries* (*WDL*) started in 2008. This paper describes the genesis of the *WDL*, coverage in terms of themes, contribution of authors, subscription and future projections of *WDL*.

Keywords: Journals; *World Digital Libraries*; LIS journals

Introduction

During the last few years, digital library activities have expanded very rapidly in many forms and ways. India also initiated Digital Library of India programme and have made significant contributions to content creation in digital form, storage mechanism and launch of Digital Library of India (DLI) portal by the then President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Despite the advances in digital libraries, most Indian libraries continue to work in an environment of non-trained (IT) staff, inadequate infrastructure (computers) and limited funding. There also exists a knowledge gap among Indian LIS professionals on the recent developments in the area of digital libraries. Bridging the knowledge gap, therefore, requires altogether a different approach where practical knowledge of digital library developments get accessible to one and all. Although, organizing conferences on digital libraries can be seen as a step forward, a scholarly journal with special reference to Indian case studies and digital library provides firm base for DL users to share their experiences.

During 2004 and 2006 ICDL conferences, several Indian and international experts felt the need for a top quality peer reviewed publication which will focus on different digital library issues. In fact, a quick analysis of Indian library and information science journals showed that out of 84 regular publications in 2006 hardly a handful of journals were covering specialized subjects (Table 1).

Moreover, excepting a few, most of these journals carry articles from Indian authors, which quite often went unnoticed by the foreign digital library experts. Therefore, a publication void existed and a quality scholarly DL journal was need of the hour, where both international and Indian authors will receive equal opportunity. TERI accepted this challenge to bring out an international DL journal from India and thus *World Digital Libraries* was born.

Development of *WDL* was never easy. TERI being a pioneering energy and environment research institute, had several journals in these areas and publishing a primary journal in the field of library science was unconventional for the Institute. Further to this, it is a unwritten rule in TERI Press that any journal published by TERI should achieve break-even within first four years of its publication. Massive success of first two ICDLs had given us enough confidence that a specialized journal in the field of digital library may

Table 1—Categories of regular LIS journals

Category of Journal	Nos
General	57
Information Technology	9
Library Management	8
Special Library	2
Knowledge Management	4
Library Networking and Consortia	1
Digital Library	3

be well accepted in India as well as abroad, particularly so, since several external experts told us repeatedly that TERI library should take the initiative to bring out a journal on digital library issues.

Before bringing out the *WDL* first issue, we did a thorough cost benefit analysis considering multiple business scenarios. In every case, it was seen that TERI will gain huge visibility if such a journal is published but this journal can achieve break-even only after 5 years of publication. A detailed report was prepared which convinced TERI's top management as well as TERI Press and we got a favourable response regarding publication of this journal. The first issue of *WDL* was published in June 2008.

WDL Scope and Coverage

World Digital Libraries: An International Journal focuses on all components of digital library including e-publishing, e-learning contents, electronic libraries, etc. The journal seeks to include original and meaningful articles on government initiatives, policy and standards framing, other digital library activities by professionals in and around India, Indian case studies, accessories, equipment, tools and software for digital library and also section of current developments.

It is important to note that during the past seven years, *WDL* has published almost equal numbers of foreign (36) and Indian articles (39).

Contribution to *WDL* is dynamic with respect to articles submitted by the authors, ranging from SAARC countries to South East Asia, Australia, UK, USA, Africa and Europe. A detailed analysis has revealed that *WDL* journal issues have carried DL research from over 18 countries across the globe (Figure 2). It is to be noted that the Editorial Board of *WDL* has representation from many countries. Besides, present *WDL* Editor-in-Chief is from Germany, who contributes to the overall content conceptualization of the journal.

Journal management

The *WDL* journal is being managed through coordinated efforts of Editorial Team, Editorial Board members and Marketing team of TERI. While content selection and organization are primarily done by the editorial team with suggestions from editorial board members; marketing and outreach activities are controlled by the TERI marketing team. However, there is a seamless coordination between the editor and the marketing team for successful outreach and follow-up actions.
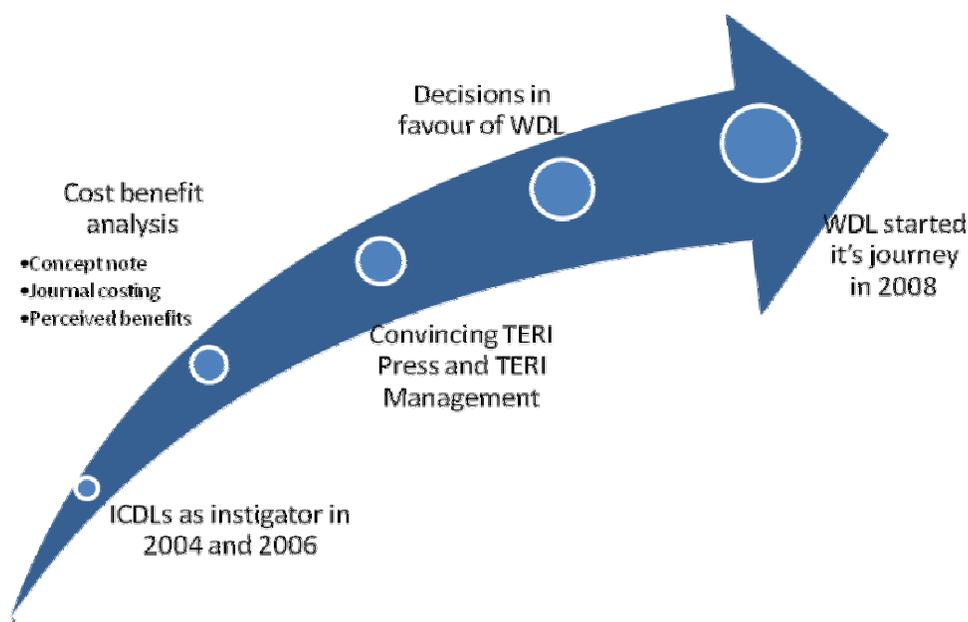

Fig. 1—Schematics diagram showing Genesis of *World Digital Libraries* (*WDL*)
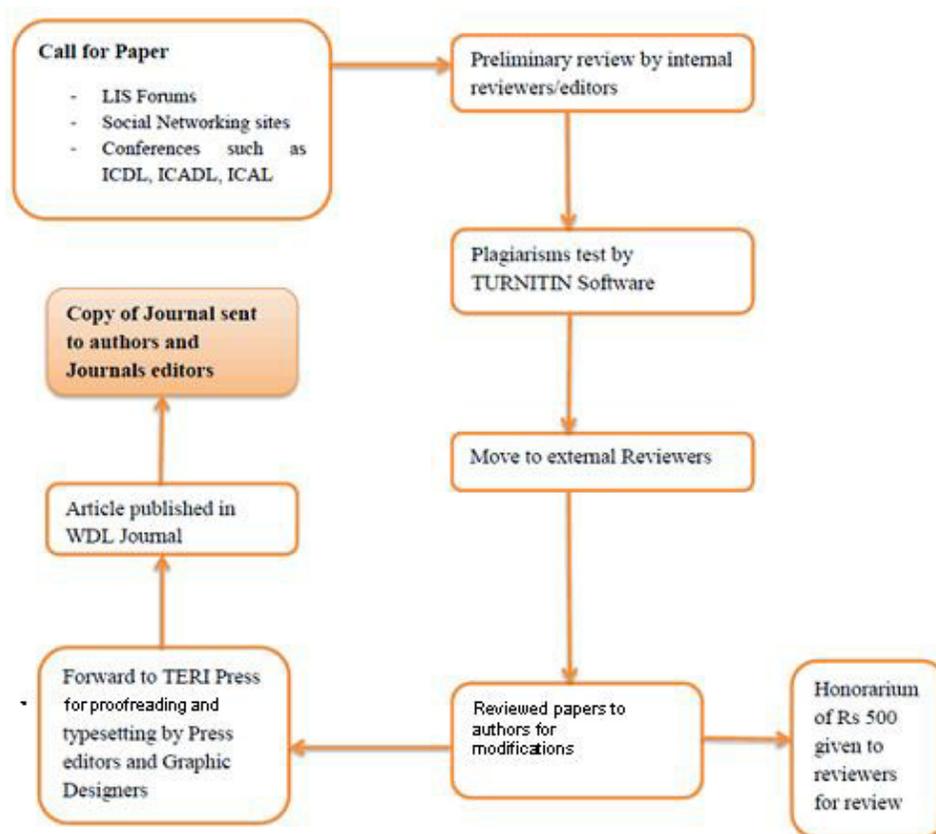
Fig. 2—Authors contribution across the globe in *WDL*

Fig. 3—Steps involved in publishing the articles in *WDL*

The entire publication is divided into four sections including the editorial, research papers, news and global events.

The articles are at present managed and processed manually (Figure 3). The editorial team maintains an MS-Excel sheet containing details of the articles

submitted. Each article is codified, and complete record is created including date of receiving, title, authors communication address, reviewer details, correspondence details, status of the articles etc. This sheet is created when work starts for each *WDL* issue.

The *WDL* has a double layer of review policy. At first round of the screening, the editors look into the manuscripts considering its scope, recency, innovativeness and worth of the research carried out by the author(s). On an average, only 30% of the articles pass the preliminary screening process and are considered fit for review. Thereafter, the same article is passed through the *Turnitin*, a plagiarism software. Articles with 15-20% percentage of duplication is considered fit for publication as per the policy framed by the editorial board members. Then it is sent to the editor of the journal who suggests some more modification to it by authors. Afterward, it is forwarded to the external reviewers for review which usually takes about 4-6 weeks. The reviews provide detailed comments about the suitability of the article in *WDL* considering relevancy, recency, quality, writing and presentation.

If the work is found suitable by the reviewers, the same is included in the next issue of the journal, after incorporation of inputs from the authors. The article will then be proofread and copy-edited and scheduled for printing.

Themes of *WDL* issues

The theme included in *WDL* is based upon the current research work carried out in different domain of the digital libraries to the open access. Broadly all the papers were classified under eight (8) categories so far (Table 2).

While we have noticed that most articles are published in digital library services and allied areas, however, increasing trends are found in semantic web and digitization processes. *WDL* also published quite

Table 2—Articles categorized as per themes in *WDL*
(Contributed from 2008-2014)

Themes	No. of Papers
Digital Library and allied areas	15
Digital Library Services	21
Semantic Web, Ontology and Standards	11
Case Study and Best Practices	12
Digitization	8

a number of interesting case studies from India and abroad.

Role of editorial team & editorial board

The editorial team sources contents in collaboration with the editorial board and managing editor from different sources such as

a. Various knowledge professionals through correspondence;

b. Indian cast studies/articles received in various conferences such as ICDL, ICADL, ICAL and other national and international events; and

c. Current developments sourced from government, special / public libraries, other organizations.

Journal policies

In order to manage journal publication process efficiently and meaningfully, *WDL* editors have framed several policies so as to meet the objective of the journal and also to seek assistance in carrying out future milestones.

These policies include article invitation form; author guidelines for submission of papers, policy for sourcing original articles, paper review policies; copyright transfer agreement and journal marketing and outreach policies. The *WDL* editorial team reviews these policies periodically based on the technology changes and feedback received from the authors, readers and editorial board members.

Subscription

A look at *WDL* subscribers reveals that academic institutions such as universities, colleges and research institutes constitute 78%, government institutions (14%) and the rest by industries (8%).

While in the past 3 years, India has seen mushrooming of LIS journals (a total of 84 journals), not all journals are following a sustainable path. Many a times quality of the journal articles are also compromised in order to publish journal issues. In this regard, *WDL* with support from a professional marketing team of TERI has gone from strength to strength. Figure 4 shows the growth of *WDL* subscribers in last six years. Recent enhancement is primarily due to increased number of foreign subscribers across the globe.
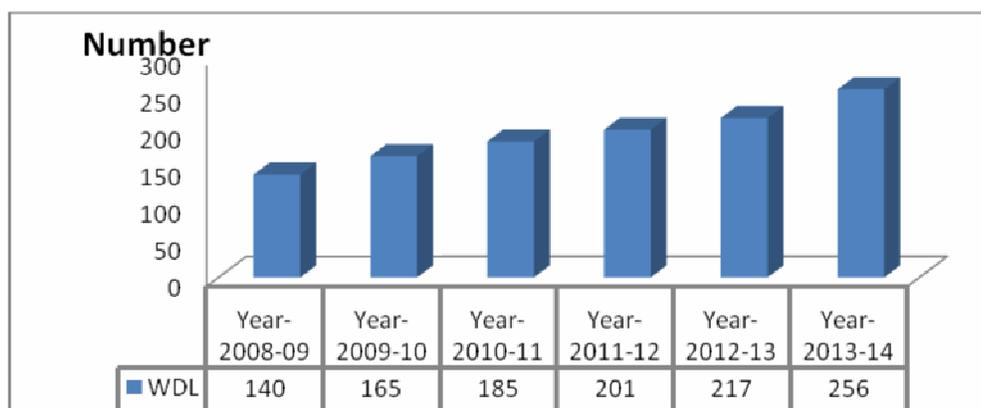
Number

	Year-2008-09	Year-2009-10	Year-2010-11	Year-2011-12	Year-2012-13	Year-2013-14
WDL	140	165	185	201	217	256

Fig. 4—Growth of *WDL* subscribers

Future Prospects

World Digital Libraries in true sense served the purpose for which it was brought out. It encompasses the knowledge network of the digital library in the form of publication on latest developments on digital library and its architecture, taxonomy, digital services, digital copyrights issues, case studies and best practices.

Realizing the present need and sustainability potential in the competitive market, the editorial team has decided to enhance the quality of the journal by adopting the various international standards ranging from indexing in renowned citation database; including digital object identifier (DOI) to article; adopting the hybrid model; and making editorial process automated. Besides, it has been decided that *WDL* past issues will be made available in open access format so that more readers can access these articles. Such initiatives not only increase the visibility of the journal but also highlight the work by the authors and increase impact factor of the journal. The journal has already been indexed in several national and international indexes and is gaining more popularity globally.