
Open Athens for e-resources management and seamless access: An experience of Dr. Tulsi Das Library, PGIMER, Chandigarh

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Abstract

This paper discusses the implementation of OpenAthens at Dr. Tulsi Das Library, PGIMER, Chandigarh, to improve remote access to electronic resources. Initially dependent on a proxy-based system, the library faced security and user experience challenges. The transition to OpenAthens provided a federated access management solution, simplifying authentication, enhancing data security, and streamlining resource access. This case study outlines the technical setup, user training, and observed resource usage and user satisfaction improvements. The findings demonstrate OpenAthens' value in modern academic libraries.

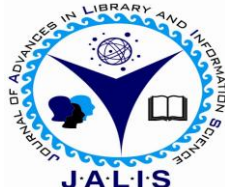
Keywords

Remote Access, Authentication Systems, open Athens, Transition PGIMER, Dr.Tulsi Das Library

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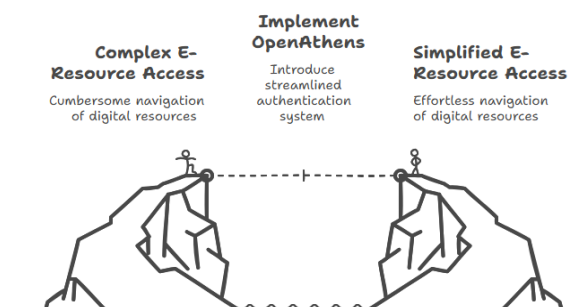


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1. Introduction

With growing digital information, seamless access and efficient management of these electronic resources have become necessary for every academic and research institution.(Tenopir & King, 2004) Dr. Tulsi Das Library is integral to its parent medical and research Institution. The institute offers MD, DM, MS, MCh, Doctoral, Postgraduate Course, and graduate courses in the field of medical sciences. To help in patient care, education, research, and teaching, Dr. Tulsi Das's library maintains a robust collection of e-resources. To provide access to these e-resources, the library has recognised the necessity for an e-platform and implemented OpenAthens, a strong authentication system designed to streamline access to the extensive library's e-resources. OpenAthens not only ensures that readers can effortlessly navigate e-resources, but it also fosters an environment conducive to research and learning. As this essay will demonstrate, the integration of OpenAthens at PGIMER represents a transformative step toward modernising resource management and access in academic libraries(Mohan Teja et al., 2025).

Streamlining E-Resource Access with OpenAthens

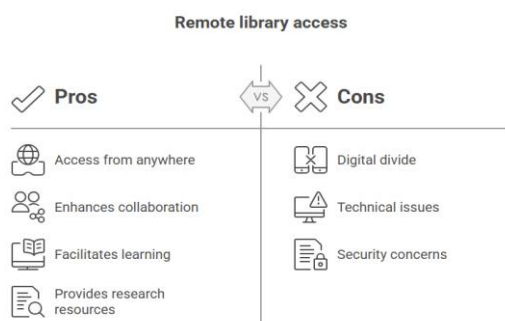


2. Background

It is not easy to oversee digital resource access across several organisations. For libraries catering to various academic communities, OpenAthens has become a potent alternative, especially when more conventional proxy systems are insufficient. We have witnessed impressive implementations at numerous institutions that oversee resources for 130,000 enrolled students in more than 70 countries. Many institutions used to rely on EZproxy systems, but they encountered increasing difficulties with reporting, maintenance, and security(Erturk & Iles, 2015). As a result, they started large-scale OpenAthens implementation initiatives. The libraries benefited greatly from these solutions, which included improved single sign-on access, detailed usage records, and helpful

information for negotiating lower prices for online resources.

This paper will examine actual OpenAthens implementations at academic and medical libraries, looking at the technical setup procedure, the reasons behind the switch, and key takeaways. We will also review how OpenAthens admin features make management easier and how appropriate OpenAthens support guarantees seamless transitions without interfering with staff, researchers, and students' access to vital library services. E-resource access is becoming increasingly popular, particularly in academic and research settings, since it allows individuals to access information and scholarly content from anywhere (Bharati & Margam, 2023). It enhances collaboration, facilitates learning, and provides research resources for users who may not have physical access to them. The services were provided to patrons in traditional libraries, but now, in the digital age, they are different. One of the essential services in the digital age is remote access to library resources.



4. The Reasons Behind Medical Libraries' Transition to OpenAthens

Medical practitioners need dependable, barrier-free access to critical clinical data. OpenAthens has emerged as the preferred authentication system for health science libraries across the globe, providing particular benefits that tackle specific issues in the healthcare setting (Moruf & Dangani, 2020). The main reason for the move to OpenAthens is its smooth access management feature. Instead of being a resource in and of itself, OpenAthens is the "key" that allows healthcare professionals to access reliable, high-quality, evidence-based information at any point in their careers.

Security is still crucial in medical settings. Operating under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and upholding ISO 27001 information security accreditation, OpenAthens takes this obligation very seriously (Addis & Kutar, 2018). These guidelines guarantee that the strictest international guidelines protect research and patient data.

5. Objective of the study:

- To learn more about platforms for remote access, i.e., Open Athens
- To determine the cutting-edge features that Open Athens platforms provide.
- To promote the use of platforms (Open Athens) for remote access in Research Libraries

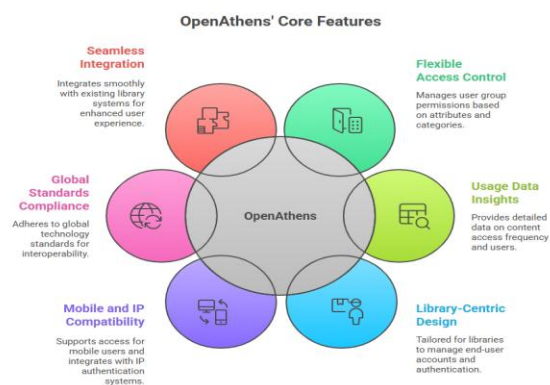
5.1 Overview of management of e-resources in OpenAthens

With a subscription to a vast array of e-resources, the question of managing and providing seamless access to these arises in the mind of every research services coordinator. Likewise, Dr. Tulsi Das Library at PGIMER, Chandigarh, needs a platform that facilitates seamless access to electronic resources for its readers. After careful deliberation, a platform internationally used by approx. 2600 institutions in over 65 countries, i.e., the Open Athens platform of EBSCO Int., was chosen. OpenAthens is a federated access management solution. It utilises a secure single sign-on (SSO) system and SAML-based authentication to ensure smooth access to resources, allowing the Libraries to enable and monitor access to subscribed electronic resources on and off campus (Arsenault et al., 2020). By employing federated authentication, OpenAthens will enable users to conveniently access various e-resources without the burden of multiple logins, thereby enhancing user experience and streamlining resource management (Chen et al., 2022). This system acts as a bridge between users and libraries. It supports the secure sharing of information while protecting intellectual property rights and facilitating safer and more dependable access to library resources. Dr. Tulsi Das Library, PGIMER, continues to expand its digital collection, and Open Athens provides equitable access to information without any barriers. Consequently, its integration into library systems emerges as a crucial step in modernising e-resources management, ultimately bolstering academic

productivity and resource utilisation within the scholarly community(Lippincott et al., 2021).

5.2. Key Features of the Open Athens Platform

1. Unified authentication. OpenAthens Lite creates a single username and password for accessing all online resources and tools, including digital materials. Users can authenticate once to reach the required content without access hurdles or hassles. Users can access information more easily using OpenAthens since it offers a single login credential for all web resources and apps.
 - 2.It provides flexible control over managing user groups' access permissions according to attributes and categories.
 3. In-depth usage data is offered to demonstrate the frequency and users of content access, providing insight into the worth of subscriptions.
 - 4.OpenAthens is made especially for libraries to handle end-user accounts and authentication.
 - 5.It enables access for users with mobile devices and interacts with organisations that still utilise IP authentication.
 - 6.OpenAthens adapts to technology and is based on global standards.
- It offers the most incredible user experience by seamlessly integrating with current library systems.



5.3 Technical Configuration and Personalisation for OpenAthens Library Settings

Before implementation, a comprehensive evaluation of the current library infrastructure is necessary to set up OpenAthens. An OpenAthens onboarding lead first assesses the library's existing workflows, authentication systems, and special site needs(Ruenz, 2022). The management of user groups, data components for statistical tracking, and integration

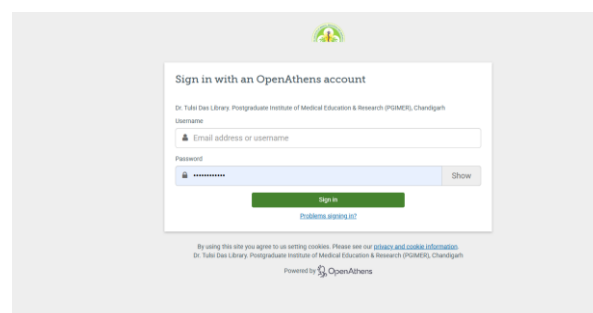
with regional library management systems are all included in this evaluation. IT management must be included in the process before any configuration is made.

Three adaptable solutions are available for OpenAthens account management:

1. Self-registration, which enables users to generate their passwords and credentials
2. The administrative interface allows administrators to load user lists in bulk.
3. Local directory connections allow automatic changes by connecting to pre-existing institutional directories.

5.4. Implementation of OpenAthens at Dr. Tulsi Das Library

Switching from a proxy server to a Single Sign (SSO) platform involves a shift in authentication methods, administrative workflows, and user access management. It also requires careful customisation and configuration to ensure a seamless authentication experience and uninterrupted resource(Leffler, 2023). Implementing OpenAthens at Dr. Tulsi Das Library significantly advances e-resources management and access, bolstering the library's service. This platform provides a rationalised system for seamless authentication and authorisation, enabling users to access many digital resources without needing multiple passwords or logins.



The user-friendly interface has enhanced the accessibility of the e-resources, catering to the diverse needs of researchers, students, and healthcare professionals at PGIMER, Chandigarh. By employing OpenAthens, the library has improved its operational efficiency and enriched the user experience, fostering an environment conducive to academic exploration and research. The transition to OpenAthens exemplifies a thoughtful approach to modern library management, aligning with current technological trends and demonstrating a commitment to

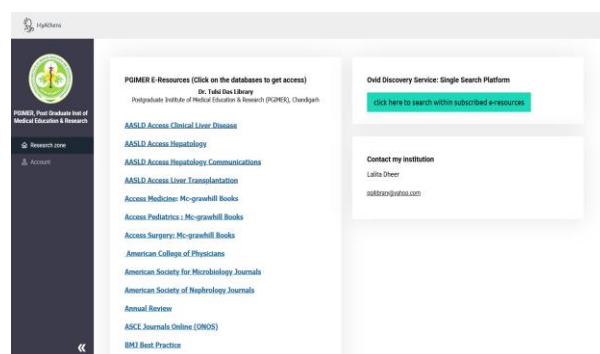
continuous improvement in e-resource delivery and user engagement(Ruenz, 2022).

5.5. Selection Procedure:

Dr. Tulsi Das Library has followed a thorough and organised approach to subscribe to OpenAthens for single sign-on authentication for accessing e-journals. This initiative began in March 2020, featuring several product demonstrations attended by the Professor In Charge, the Assistant Library and Information Officer, and Senior Library Professionals. Numerous sessions were held to clarify doubts, engage in Q&A discussions, and verify testimonials from other institutions to confirm the product's reliability and appropriateness. In October 2021, a trial was established, incorporating publishers of the OpenAthens federation. After reviewing and being pleased with the trial's usage reports, the subscription was officially confirmed. Dr. Tulsi Das Library has introduced OpenAthens, a cutting-edge single sign-on (SSO) solution to improve user access to various off-site resources. Implementing OpenAthens is a significant step toward this goal, as it streamlines access to e-journals, databases, and other digital resources(Roper, 2023).

5.6. Implementation Strategy

The implementation of OpenAthens at Dr. Tulsi Das Library involved a series of planned steps ensuring a smooth transition and increased visibility and accessibility of subscribed e-resources. Initially, the library system was evaluated for compatibility and gathering information on users' requirements and e-resources data. Later, a training program was organised for library staff to make them aware of the functionality of OpenAthens and enable them to help users efficiently. Concurrently, the publishers were contacted to seamlessly integrate their e-resources on OpenAthens and ensure uninterrupted access to OpenAthens. The User authentication processes were completed in a phased manner. Firstly, user authentication of faculty, residents, students, and staff was re-engineered to support single sign-on capabilities, allowing for a more streamlined experience. This was followed by a training session for the users to understand how to use this platform efficiently. Such a systematic approach enhanced user satisfaction and helped the library serve its academic users better.



6. Benefits of OpenAthens for Users

In today's digital age, providing seamless and secure access to online resources is paramount for Institutions engaged in education, learning, and research. OpenAthens is a robust solution to this need, providing a single sign-on (SSO) service that enhances user experience while ensuring data security(Romano & Huynh, 2021). Implementing OpenAthens at the Dr. Tulsi Das Library in PGIMER, Chandigarh, has significantly enhanced e-resources access, fostering a better environment for faculty, researchers, and students to access e-information. OpenAthens allows users access to a wide array of subscribed digital resources without having multiple logins, which often hinders research activities. This streamlined access saves time and encourages the exploration of diverse journals, databases, and multimedia resources, enhancing research output and academic performance(Li et al., 2022).

6.1 Simplified User Access: One of the paramount benefits is simplified user access to various subscribed resources. According to users' feedback, they can now use multiple resources without remembering multiple login credentials, significantly enhancing the user experience and increasing engagement and satisfaction(Keating, 2022).

6.2 Improved Security: Security is a fundamental aspect of any e-platform. Security. OpenAthens has advanced security authentication methods that allow only authorised users to access the subscribed resources. Further, the user's data is also well protected as it is regularly updated to maintain compliance with current cybersecurity standards.

6.3 Enhanced Resource Discovery: The OpenAthens interface can be customised per the institution's needs, making it more familiar and user-friendly. It

allows institutions to place all their subscribed resources, catalogue, and Library Management systems in one place, facilitating more straightforward navigation and searchability. This improves the user's ability to discover and utilise the resources.

6.4 Flexible Management for Administrators: Administering user access can be complex, particularly for large institutions. OpenAthens simplifies this process through its comprehensive management tools. The administrator can manage users' roles and access based on their needs. A valid usage report and access pattern can be monitored, aiding decision-making (Miranda, 2019).

6.5 Real-Time Access

Having a database or remote access tool with real-time access is very useful, as it will allow users to access a new document as soon as it is added to the database or remote access tool.

6.6 Mail Alert Service: In any field, marketing plays a vital role in engaging the end user, and the library is no different. Libraries can use the Open Athens mail alert service to send emails informing users of new materials uploaded to the remote access.

6.8 Advanced Search: We can search data by title, author, keywords, and other criteria using the "ADVANCED SEARCH" function included in Open Athens

6.9 Filter Option: It can be challenging to quickly locate pertinent data or information in the significant data era. In this instance, the filtering option aids in eliminating all noise and supplying only the essential and relevant facts. Users can filter documents by title, author, subject, publication source, year, and other criteria using Open Athens.

6.10 Indexing Facility: Open Athens offers the option to index subscribed content so users can search for it later. With the help of this feature, we may index the subscribed content in a remote access tool that users can search for later.

7. Analysis & Interpretation:

The following table depicts the usage of e-journals through Open Athens. The usage of E-Journals has increased day by day.

Table 1: Utilisation statistics of e-resources via Open Athens over the past year

Sr.No.	Name of Database	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
1.	Bentham Science Publisher (unique)	220	422	422	92	1156
2.	BMJ (Whole) Practice, learning, best practice, authentication via your institution	4,441	6,345	7,469	2,283	20,538
3.	Cambridge Core (Unique & all)	907	1,603	1,585	636	4731
4.	CBS Publications	1,017	1,039	923	339	3318
5.	EBSCO Information Service (Unique & all)	1,755	2,182	2,196	659	6792
6.	Elsevier (Unique & all)	32,616	62,595	81,412	35,970	212,593
7.	EndNote and Clarivate Analytics Integrity (all & Unique)	500	313	227	56	1096
8.	Lippincott Procedures (all Unique) AND Lippincott® Solutions (all) and (unique)	965	1,943	787	385	4080
9.	McGraw-Hill Medical (unique & all)	4306	4,803	2,494	914	12517
10.	Nature - Science and Education (unique) and (all)	2,370	4,662	5,421	2,195	14,648
11.	New England Journal of Medicine (whole)	3863	6,861	6,165	2,649	19,538
12.	OvidDS & Ovid Technologies, DS, Inc. (Unique & all-whole)	20,988	32,430	42,366	15,086	110,870
13.	Oxford University Press academic resources (unique & all)	2,111	5,203	7,817	3,935	19,066
14.	ProQuest, Alexander Street & Chadwyck-Healey databases (unique & all)	869	1,078	799	226	2972
15.	S. Karger AG (unique & all)	540	1,030	1120	475	3165
16.	Sage Journals	3,512	6,046	6703	2,216	123,837
17.	Springer Nature Link (unique & all)	9,124	17,560	24,473	8,813	59,970

18.	Taylor & Francis Online and Books(unique & all)	2,210	4,537	6,907	2,587	16,235
19.	The JAMA Network (unique & all)	2,106	4,586	4,456	1,729	12877
20.	Thieme Group (unique & all)	1,686	2,538	3,006	1,046	8276
21.	UpToDate (Unique & all)	2,027	2,167	2,438	952	7584
22.	Web of Science (unique & all)	2,068	2,665	2,930	1,212	8875
23.	Wiley Online Library(Unique & all)	12,327	22,620	25,149	8,825	68,921
24.	Wolters Kluwer Health Library (all & Unique)	4,570	9,664	13,172	5,549	32,955
	Wolters Kluwer OneID (unique & all)					

The table's data shows the annual usage trends of several academic and clinical research databases from 2022 to 2025. It indicates that major publishers like Elsevier and Wiley Online Library had the highest cumulative access counts during the four years, indicating significant engagement with these databases. With 212,593 accesses overall, Elsevier is in the lead, followed by Springer Nature (59,970), demonstrating their crucial role in providing academic materials. Most platforms show a general rising trend in 2023 and 2024, which may indicate a rise in institutional access or research activities during those years. Some databases, however, suggest a drop in 2025, which might be related to broader shifts to open-access platforms, shifting research priorities, or changing institutional subscriptions.

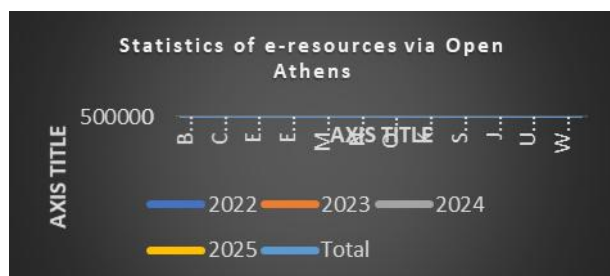


Table 2: Top 10 highly used e-journals through remote access during 2013-2016

Sr.no.	Name of E-resources
1.	Elsevier (Unique & all)
2.	OvidDS & Ovid Technologies, DS, Inc. (Unique & all-whole)
3.	Sage Journals
4.	UpToDate (Unique & all)
5.	Springer Nature Link (unique & all)
6.	Taylor & Francis Online (unique & all)
7.	The JAMA Network (unique and comprehensive)
8.	Wolters Kluwer Health Library (all & Unique) Wolters Kluwer OneID (unique & all)

9.	BMJ (Whole) Practice, learning, best practice, authentication via your institution
10.	New England Journal of Medicine (whole)

Table 2 lists the top 10 e-journal platforms most frequently accessed remotely between 2013 and 2016, illustrating user preferences and institutional dependence on particular academic content providers. Elsevier, renowned for its extensive scientific and medical literature collection, tops the list. Prominently included are platforms such as OvidDS, Sage Journals, UpToDate, and Springer Nature, demonstrating their vital role in assisting academic research, clinical decision-making, and research. Remote users' need for reliable, peer-reviewed medical and healthcare information is further highlighted by the inclusion of Taylor & Francis, The JAMA Network, Wolters Kluwer Health Library, and BMJ(Maloukou, 2023).

8. Conclusion

This study examined how OpenAthens changes digital resource management for medical libraries dealing with difficult access issues. In conclusion, implementing OpenAthens at Dr. Tulsi Das Library, PGIMER, Chandigarh, has significantly enhanced both the management and accessibility of e-resources, thereby transforming the research landscape for its users. The positive outcomes observed in terms of increased user engagement and satisfaction underscore the effectiveness of OpenAthens in addressing challenges commonly associated with e-resource accessibility in academic libraries. Moreover, as researchers demand comprehensive and immediate access to information, the library's commitment to employing advanced technologies like OpenAthens will be crucial in fostering an environment conducive to scholarship and innovation. Thus, the experience gained from this integration serves as a valuable template for other libraries aiming to enhance their e-resource management capabilities. OpenAthens provides many benefits that enhance user accessibility, ensure data security, promote resource discovery, streamline

management for administrators, and support remote access. As institutions increasingly rely on digital resources, adopting OpenAthens becomes not just a strategic advantage but a necessity. By simplifying the user experience and securing access to valuable resources, OpenAthens positions itself as a leading solution in digital resource management (OpenAthens). As we look to the future, embracing such technologies will shape a more connected and efficient digital landscape.

Medical libraries choose OpenAthens because it simplifies authentication procedures while meeting security requirements. As a result, healthcare workers can access vital materials more quickly and easily without overcoming numerous login requirements. Undoubtedly, the platform's GDPR compliance and ISO 27001 accreditation offer a strong security architecture required for medical settings. Technical implementation produces impressive benefits when done with appropriate stakeholder involvement, even though it requires meticulous planning (Addis & Kutar, 2018). Libraries can use directory connections, bulk uploads, or self-registration, depending on their requirements. Because of this adaptability, organisations may create authentication experiences that precisely match their institutional framework.

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