

Awareness and Use of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)/Web OPAC by University Students of University of Kelaniya

Wimalawansa, B.G.U.N., Jayawardana, M.C.N. and Sewwandi, H.K.I.

u.nayani90@gmail.com, chathurika.navodani@gmail.com, hkisharasewwandi@gmail.com

The Introduction of Information and Communication Technology in the field of Libraries and Information Centers has impacted on library services and library techniques such as retrieval and dissemination of information resources. It has also changed the ways of providing library services to user community. OPAC is one of the technologies which easy provide access to bibliographical information such as name of author, title, publisher, date of the publication. Although OPAC is identified as a easy and effective way to search information in the library, many users have not got relevant knowledge and skills to use OPAC. This study fulfill this gap.

Main objective of this study is to identify what are the problems faced by University students when they use OPAC/Web OPAC. Moreover, this study also aim to understand knowledge and skills that required to use OPAC effectively.

This study used a survey method as a research method. The population of this study consists of University students in Sri Lanka. The sample of this study represents students in the University of Kelaniya. This study used a quantitative data collection techniques. Questionnaires were distributed among the selected students in the University and 90% were responded. Descriptive statistics method (SPSS software) was used for data analysis of this study.

This study found that number (69.1%) of students used OPAC as a search tool for retrieving documents. Although they knew OPAC as a computer catalogue, they do not have wide awareness about OPAC. Many students do not use all features provided by OPAC such as advance search, reserve books, search from ISBN number. Also they do not know how to search bibliographical records. Even though, the University library has provided OPAC facilities, there were some limitations i.e. not allow to copy, print and edit bibliographical data, absences of regular updating on OPAC system, unable to search terms using Sinhala and Tamil languages and longer time for connecting to OPAC. Due to these limitations students were not satisfied with OPAC services provided by the University library.

Findings of this study highly useful for University library staff to provide effective OPAC facilities and thereby improve academics knowledge and skills to use OPAC effectively. For example library staff can organize qualitative instructional programs, can provide practical training on advanced searching methods and promote OPAC among University students.

Keywords: *OPAC, University students, Awareness, Use, Search*