

## Web OPAC: An effective Tool for Fulfilling Bibliographical Information Needs of the Undergraduates in Sri Lankan National Universities

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Web OPAC is a library catalogue on the Web or internet. Users can search for the required information by connecting to Uniform Resource Locator (URL). Web OPAC is available anytime during day and night and accessible anywhere in the world. Web OPAC terminals began to replace card catalogues in many libraries in the 1980s. Since mid-1990s, these systems have increasingly migrated to Web-based interfaces and OPAC is becoming a more popular information retrieval tool currently. Sri Lankan university library system entered automation scenario in 1986. UGC provided one microcomputer to university libraries for their automation activities. CDS/ISIS was used to create their bibliographical databases. Apart from CDS/ISIS, the university libraries gradually turned to other library software packages such as Purna, Libsys, Libsuite, Alice for windows and locally developed software using Koha, named ISURu (*Integrated Software of University of Ruhuna*) to automate their library functions.

OPAC can provide facilities like high quality bibliographic data, greater number of access points, interactive searching, online training, backup facilities, authority control files etc. The problem of this study was that most Sri Lankan university undergraduates do not use this facility as librarians wish.

Main objectives of this research were to identify bibliographical information needs of users, identify bibliographical information seeking behavior of users and identification user problems related to OPAC system.

Primary data was collected using questionnaires and personal interviews. The purposive sampling method was used to select the six university libraries, out of 15 university libraries in Sri Lanka.

Data collected in this research revealed that inadequate computer literacy and non-familiarity with OPAC as the major causes for the above problem. Inadequate knowledge regarding bibliographical data search strategies, problem related to library automation software were the other causes of the issue.

To overcome these problems, the users need to have a high level of computer literacy. They also must have a sufficient knowledge on the nature of the component of bibliographical databases. Selecting the suitable library automation software and promoting uniformity between university library automation activities are the other reform necessary in this connection.

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