

A Study on Machine Readable Cataloguing Standards for Library Automation in Selected University Libraries in Sri Lanka

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Machine Readable Catalogue (MARC) is not only a cataloguing function but, a method of cataloguing based on a computer or machine and it is a scientific format for creating and identifying bibliographical information in LMS. From 1965 to 1966, MARC I was published under the project named “Pilot Project” eventually MARC II in 1967. MARC 21 was published after IFLA - UNESCO conference in 1972. UNIMARC, CANMARC, UKMARC, INDOMARC are some of the MARC standards which were introduced later.

KOHA Open Source Library Management system was used twelve out of fifteen university libraries, three universities used Commercial Library Management systems for the library automation in Sri Lanka. Using MARC 21 bibliographic fields in OPACs of selected university libraries was different from each other and that was identified as a problem. Usage of MARC 21 fields are different from each other; it will be a problem to build a union or centralized catalogue among the university library management systems in the future. Investigating how the selected university libraries use MARC 21 fields for the library automation and gathering data about the knowledge of MARC 21 were the objectives of the research.

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this research. Five university libraries were selected using purposive sampling. Two structured questionnaires were distributed among selected library staff members. Four out of selected five university libraries have used MARC 21 fields in their automated library management systems which are LIBSYS and KOHA. Another library was used Alice for Windows to automate the library. MARC 21 standard had not been used normally in Alice for Windows. The 8 of MARC fields have been commonly used in their automated library management. Those MARC 21 fields were, LEADER (000), FIXED-LENGTH DATA ELEMENTS--GENERAL INFORMATION (008), LANGUAGE CODE (041), MAIN ENTRY--PERSONAL NAME (100), TITLE STATEMENT (245), PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION (300), PUBLICATION, DISTRIBUTION, (IMPRINT) (260) and BARCODE (952\$p).

They pointed out a major problem which was the creation of a union catalogue or a centralized catalogue among the university libraries. Difficulty of implementation of the corporate cataloguing, difficulty of interchanging bibliographical data among the university libraries, duplicating bibliographical data and authority controlling in a union catalogue will be difficult tasks, etc. They identified these as problems that they have to face in the future due to not having a common set of MARC 21 fields in their LMS.

As the solutions to overcome the above issues, training and awareness programs should be conducted for the library staff, to make them aware of the cataloguing practices. The majority of the library staff endorsed that a proper MARC standard system should be introduced for the university libraries.

Keywords: Standards, Library Standards, Library Cataloguing Standards, Machine Readable Cataloguing, Library Automation

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