

## Need of Library Automation

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### *Abstract*

*Library automation has developed in the industrialized world over the last 25 years and progress in developing countries cannot be separated from trends worldwide. However, there are different criteria for success in developing countries, which are brought out in this review. Open source has been hailed as a solution to the economic problems, but there are still organizational problems to be surmounted. There is also the possibility to develop one's own system. Internet bandwidth will improve in developing countries and open source may prove useful but economics may not improve and power supply problems are likely to remain.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Automating a library is the process, which restructures its functions and reinvents its services. By keeping a database as the basis, automation converge new technologies of information storage and retrieval with traditional housekeeping operations. An automated library can serve the teaching and learning community more effectively. A reduction in the time needed for routine operations can be utilized to give customized services to the users. The process of library automation has a short history in our country. It needs proper planning and active implementation.

### **DEFINITION OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION**

Library automation may be defined as the application of computers to perform traditional library housekeeping activities such as acquisition, circulation, cataloguing, and reference and serials control [1]. Automation is used to reduce the amount of staff time devoted to repetitive activities that must be done in any properly functioning library. It is to be remembering that, various library operations are automated, not the library as such.

### **HISTORY OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION**

Punched cards were invented by Hollerith in 1880 and used in tabulating the US census

data. The library at the University of Texas was perhaps the first to use punched cards in 1936 for circulation control. The Library of congress used the unit record machines for the production of catalogues in 1950. Many libraries in the US followed the system for automating their activities. Library automation entered into its second era in 1960s with the advent of computers. The notable ventures were MEDLARS, MARC, etc. Until the early 1990s, "automating the library" involved generally the same features as those in place since the advent of machine readable cataloguing record in the late 1960s. Libraries created integrated text based systems using micro/mini computers in which traditional library housekeeping operations were computerized using the library's database as the foundation.

In the last decade, library automation has undergone a transformation that reflects changing definitions of library service in general and access to resources in particular. The introduction of global networking such as internet, cheap availability of technology and new media technologies made information more accessible. Today's integrated library systems must not only provide modules which automate traditional library functions but also capable of connecting through the local systems into systems of other information or knowledge suppliers, databases and internet [2].

## NEED FOR LIBRARY AUTOMATION

- Provide new services not hitherto possible.
- Improve the management of their physical and financial resources.
- Facilitate wider access to information for their clients.
- Facilitate wider dissemination of their information products and services.
- Enable their participation in resource-sharing library networks.
- Enable rapid communication with other libraries.
- Obtain increased operational efficiencies.
- Relieve professional staff from clerical chores so that they are available for user-oriented services.
- Improve the quality, speed and effectiveness of services.
- Improve access to remote users and other stakeholders [3].

## OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the library automation are:

- To have an effective control over the entire operation.
- To improve the existing services.
- To share effectively the resources among various libraries in a region.
- To avoid duplication of work.
- To use the services of the existing staff effectively.

## AREA OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION

- Acquisition
- Cataloguing
- Indexing
- Circulation
- Stock Verification
- Serial control management
- Current awareness service
- Selective dissemination service.

## FUNCTIONAL MODULES

### Acquisition Module

- Automates the acquisition process - ordering, receiving, claiming materials from suppliers, returns and cancellations of orders.
- Used to maintain statistics, and in some cases manage accounting activities.

- Acquisition can be done online if system is linked to an external network [4].

### Cataloguing Module

- Used for the creation, storage, retrieval and management of bibliographic records or indexes.
- Defines the record format used in the database and provides for authority control author, subject headings, etc.
- Usually there are two different interfaces for search and retrieval of the electronic catalogues.
- For catalogers that allows them to maintain the library cataloguing database.
- For users that allows them to search and display the results—the Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC).

### Circulation Module

- Handles circulation activities such as: lending, return, renewal, and place on hold
- Manages library materials—circulation type, location and status; patron database - patron type, profiles, privileges; and other transactions such as computation and payment of overdue fines, lost books, etc.
- May have added value functions like: import, export, and backup and restore functions for the databases, inventory, report generation, and support for MARC, Z39.50, ILL standards [5].
- May support integration with security systems that complement the self-check-in and checkout features of the circulation module.

### Serial Control Module

- Manages placing, canceling, claiming of orders, returning defective, unwanted and unordered material, and accounting and statistical information
- Provides a system for recording issues and keeping track of undelivered issues by generating claim reports.
- May permit serial ordering online [6].

## TECHNOLOGY PLAN AND PROJECT PROPOSAL

In planning and implementing library automation, a thorough study of the library's existing system as well as the library's vision

is necessary to enable you to prepare a good technology plan and project proposal [6].

#### Steps

1. Vision
2. Present status
3. Requirement
4. Feasibility
5. Technology Plan
6. Project proposal

### ADVANTAGES OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION

- Improve the quality, speed and effectiveness of services
- Relieve professional staff from clerical work
- Improve access to remote users
- Facilitate wider dissemination of information products and services
- Resource-sharing among other library networks
- Enable rapid communication with other libraries.

### DISADVANTAGES OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION

- Initial and recurring expenses
- Continuous staff training
- Hardware and Software Obsolescence.

### CONCLUSION

Library automation is the process, which needs proper planning, timely implementation and periodical evaluation. The librarian with the administrators has to set the priorities after analyzing the current status and future requirements. Selection of the suitable integrated library management package according to the needs of the users and the

library is important. Retrospective conversion, OPAC, circulation and serials control, etc. should be conducted with care. Staff training and user education are keys to the success of the process. Library automation invites pragmatic approach. Here, those institutions which freed their visions from the traditional shackles of financial insecurities and fears of making proper decisions can only set the pace of journey to excellence.

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