

A JOURNEY OF CARD CATALOGUE TO WEB-OPAC

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ABSTRACT

The Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) changed the conventional card catalogue structure. In the latest structure, information can be entered in the computer and then the essential information can be searched directly by OPAC system in the standard format. Nowadays, user can search for information via OPAC and most recently, the internet. This paper explained about OPAC and Web OPACs tools in libraries and describes a lot of features and advantages of Web OPACs.

Keywords: Catalogue, OPAC, Web-OPAC, library

INTRODUCTION:

Library catalogue is a list of all bibliographical information found in a library or group of libraries at several locations. The card catalogue was a well-known sight to library users for the generations, but it has been effectively replaced by the online catalogue. Online cataloguing has greatly enhanced the usability of catalogues, Online catalogue does not need to be sorted statically the users can be access the online catalogue with the help of a computer system. Most of the online catalogue provides a search facility for any word of the title, author, keywords, subject etc.

CARD CATALOGUE:

Information plays an important role in every human being. Library fulfills all the information requirements of every human being. Every person is not able to purchase all types of reading materials. So, they are dependent on libraries/ information centers for fulfills their information needs. Library has organize many documents like books, thesis, manuscripts, periodicals, pamphlets, maps, motion pictures, tapes and other printed and non printed materials. We can well imagine as to what will happen if these documents are not prepared systematically. Even if they are organized on shelves properly, no person whether user or staff will be able to know and remember what documents are available in the library, if the person does not know the subject of the required documents. So, we need an information retrieval system that is able to reveal that what the library has and whether a particular document is available in the library. This system

should fulfill all the search approaches about the documents like author, title, publisher and call number etc. Such a retrieval system in the context of a library is called library catalogue. **According to Clark (2000)** “The library catalogue is an essential tool. It is an index or a key to the collection, containing an entry representing each item” The various types of library catalogue are used to find out the desired information of user community in the library. Traditionally, book catalogue and sheaf catalogue had been used in libraries for knowing about library collection. After these catalogues, the new system of card catalogue was adopted by the library and it worked very well for quite a long time during twentieth century. The card catalogue fulfills the various approaches of the users like author, title, subject and call number, etc. Card catalogue was quite useful tool of information retrieval system of the library. **According to Harrod** “The compilation of a list of documents or printed materials according to a set of rules so as to enable the consulter to know what items are available, and from the class number or other means of identification, where they may be found”

ONLINE PUBLIC ACCESS CATALOGUE (OPAC)

With the introduction of computers in libraries, various library activities started being automated. Catalogue is the earliest component of library to be computerized. Initially, computers were used by the library for preparation of catalogue entries and the same were then printed in the form of cards and thus, catalogue was generated using computers.

With the passage of time and increased reliability of computerized catalogue, the system was opened for users. The interface was made more users friendly so that a person with minimum exposure to computers could use it conveniently. This provision of making available bibliographic records of library holdings to the users for their search through different approaches is called Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). The library staff and the users can access it with the help of computers within the library or within campus wide intranet.

The OPAC has emerged recently in Indian libraries. Many libraries today are involved in the installation, training and use of OPAC system. OPACs are the keys to library's collection because they allow users to search out what documents are available in the collection. Online public access to a library catalogue has become an important part of library service over the last few years. The rapid retrieval and the interactive capacity with online system which allows the search to be modified dynamically as the session progresses through the standard online search capabilities such as keyword search, boolean combinations, truncations and limiting search results by date, publisher, language or material formats has made these systems quite popular. **According to Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science (ODLIS)** defines OPAC as, “An acronym for online public access catalog, a database composed of bibliographic records describing the books and other materials owned by a library or library system, accessible via public terminals or workstations usually concentrated near the reference desk to make it easy for users to request the assistance of a trained reference librarian. Most online catalogs are searchable by author, title, subject, and keywords and allow users to print, download, or export records to an e-mail account.” **According to SIRSI: Glossary of terms** defines OPAC as, “A computer workstation used to search a library's catalogue. OPAC can refer to either the actual workstation in the library, or to the interface provided by the library that is accessible from anywhere”

GENERATIONS OF OPAC

The Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs) were introduced in the U.K in early eighties. These have also been introduced in many Indian libraries.

According to Hildreth (1995), OPAC can be categorized into three generations on the basis of the evolutionary changes to incorporate novel features in data content, access point and user interface. OPACs were derived from circulation or from cataloguing systems and were categorized as being known item finding tools which provide a few access points like author, title, class number and subject headings. The search pattern was more or less same to that of traditional catalogue and provided title assistance to the users. In first generation OPAC, there is not an exact match. In this generation OPAC displayed these records which are nearest to the particular search.

Second generation OPACs are similar to information retrieval (IR) system and many features are borrowed from commercial bibliographical information systems. Second generations OPAC in the late 1980's showed major improvements. These OPACs were operated by a command language which is simplified for use of inexperienced user. In this generation we could use keyword searching with its use of Boolean operators and increasing the number of access points for searching. In second generation OPAC searches were of basically two types.

- Phrase searching or pre-coordinated subject headings.
- Keyword searches on indexing data in the bibliographic records.

The third generation of OPAC system has combined the important features of the first and second generations by providing both phrase searching and keyword searching. In third generation OPAC is converted to web-based OPAC system. The online catalogues are changing ever since, depending on the trends in information technology and its application in libraries. Each technology develops its own OPAC based on software they use, thus providing a new breed of services to retrieve bibliographic information of its collection and each system will be in operation for few years.

OPAC system has progressively more migrated to Web-based OPAC interface. In digital era Web-OPAC is the newest components of information retrieval system. OPAC is connected with only computer terminals while Web-OPAC is connected with Internet. We can search any document in a particular library through Web-based OPAC from anywhere with the help of internet connectivity.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CARD CATALOGUE AND OPAC

There are many differences among the Card Catalogue and OPAC. OPAC has more than search access points in the comparison to the card catalogue. Almost every single aspect of the bibliographic record is accessible by keyword searching; this facility helps users to find the data from the library database. OPACs always provide Author, Title, Subject, Call Numbers, ISBN, ISSN and Keywords, etc., access points. The use of Boolean operators OR, AND, and NOT in the OPACs can be limited the search results. They can also limit the search results by language, date of publication and type of document but these types of facilities are not available in card catalogue. In short, OPACs provide to users more searching and accessing facility in various

formats than the card catalogues. We can search the card catalogue only the premises of library buildings or after personally visit to the library only while OPAC can be search through a computer/campus wide intranet with the help of LAN.

WEB OPAC

There are many differences among the OPAC and Web-OPAC. Web-OPAC is the latest tool of OPAC. Web OPAC is an OPAC, which is available on the web and with the help of internet connection any person whether user or staff can access it from anywhere in the world and in any time. **According to Washington University in St. Louis**, "A Web OPAC interfaces, which uses the World Wide Web protocol to act as an OPAC." **According to ODLIS**, "An Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) that uses a graphical user interface (GUI) accessible via the World Wide Web, as opposed to a text based interface accessible via telnet." Web OPAC is a self-determining program intended separately from the library system. It is automatic to assist users to search the OPAC, during their personal search, for the ease of borrowing, in its place of searching through the card catalogue. In addition users can also appeal for the information with reference to borrowing, reservation, etc. connected to their own library profile, as well as to make automatic reservations. Sometimes Web-OPAC is called online Catalogue.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OPAC AND WEB OPAC

OPAC and Web OPAC are related to each other in a number of various aspects such as searching, accessing and browsing in both the cases provides pre-coordinated as well as post-coordinated phrases options. They differ from each other in some other aspects. The main variation in both the OPAC can be accessed in the campus or campus wide intranet only with the help of computer terminals while the Web-OPAC accessed anywhere in the world with the help of internet connection in any time.

OPAC usage is limited, only the persons in LAN/Intranet can use it while Web OPAC usage is worldwide web anyone can access it from anywhere in any time with the help of internet connection. Users have to follow the program of the particular OPAC software in that library while Web OPAC, html files are used which hyperlink to the subject areas or disciplines.

FEATURE OF WEB OPACS

The following significant features of Web OPACs are given as under:

- It is easy to get to through Internet.
- It is possible to search independently by "Author", by "Keyword" in title or "Year."
- Combination of search keys - as Author + Year, or Keyword + Year is possible.
- Displays whole bibliographic information details as appeared on reprints.
- The matching author get highlighted in all search results those are displayed
- To select search keys Author and Year drop-down list-box has been provided.
- Standardization of search key "Author" takes care to search all the related reference.
- Features of traditional OPACs such as storing bibliographic and sometimes full text databases; providing direct access to a library's bibliographic database by means of terminal or PC; search result in readily understandable form; sometimes remote access from the library's location; information about community events; links to circulation files,

reference help, etc.; search through a variety of access points such as author, title, keyword, subject, periodical title, class number, series, ISSN, ISBN, etc., are available.

- It has ability to use hypertext links to facilitate navigation through bibliographic records.
- A move towards emulation of the appearance and search features similar to those found in search engines is on.
- Linking to full text when available is there
- Ability to help bring a convergence in searching of all electronic information available through one interface. e.g., catalogues, CD-ROMS, internet sources, etc.
- Graphical user interface (GUI), which is typically thought of as a combination of windows with pull-down or drop-down menus, icons and a pointing device such as mouse or trackball to manipulate information is available.

ADVANTAGES OF WEB OPACS

The following are the advantages of the Web OPACs:

- It is accessible through worldwide web and in any the time.
- The position of every document may be known as the required documents issued or not, lost/transferred, etc. The condition of an acquisition order may be available at both staff and public terminals located throughout the library.
- It is possible for users to send reprint requests immediately by e-mail.
- Compilation of various lists of reprints becomes very easy.
- There is no limitation of space and time for searches of any documents. Any person can search a document of not only his/her library but also any networked library.

LIMITATIONS OF WEB-OPAC

Despite the increasing use of OPACs nowadays, there are many limitations of OPACs. These are listed below.

- Do not make available adequate help in the conversion of the inquiry terms into the terms used in the catalogue.
- Do not make available online vocabulary aids helpful for subject focusing/identifying vocabulary that broader or narrower than the idea of search.
- Do not automatically help the user by providing substitute formulation of the fails.
- Do not guide the search from successful free wording search terms (e.g. title words) to the related subject headings or call numbers assigned to a broader range or linked resources.
- Do not give adequate information in the retrieved bibliographic records (e.g. table of contents, abstracts and book reviews) to allow the user to judge the utility of the documents.
- Do not rating the retrieval sets in decreasing order of probable relevance to the user's search criteria.
- Does not present open-ended, explanatory browsing during pre-established linkages between records in the database to retrieve resources linked to those already found.

LIST OF WEB-OPACS IN INDIA

The following are some existing Web OPACs in India:

- Central Library, Indian Institute of Bombay
http://www.library.iitb.ac.in/newsearchbook/opac_s.php?m_memchk_flg=&m_summarN
- National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASDOC)
http://www.icssr.org/doc_main.htm
- JRD Tata Memorial Library, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.
<http://www.library.iisc.ernet.in/>
- American Centre Information Resource Centers in India
<http://americanlibrary.in.library.net/>
- British Council Libraries in India
<http://library.britishcouncil.org.in/simplecatsearch.asp>
- Cochin University of Science and Technology Library
<http://opac.cusat.ac.in/>
- Health Education Library for People
<http://www.healthlibrary.com/search.html>
- Indian Institute of Ahmadabad
<http://vslopac.iimahd.ernet.in/>
- Indian Institute of Delhi
<http://10.217.116.6:8080/webopac/sso>
- Indian Institute of Management Kolkata
<http://203.197.126.103/BCRoylibrary/catalog.asp>
- Indian Institute of Science Library, Bangalore
<http://anagha.library.iisc.ernet.in/>
- Indian Institute of Technology Library, Delhi
<http://www.iitd.ernet.in/search/index.html#site>
- Indian Institute of Technology Library, Kharagpur
<http://www.library.iitkgp.ernet.in/lsearch.html>
- Indian Institute of Technology Library, Mumbai
<http://www.library.iitb.ernet.in/pustak/Display5.jsp?common=&pcommon=HI&field=TITL&joinas=AND>
- Indian Statistical Institute Library, Delhi
http://www.isid.ac.in/~library/new_search_lib.html
- Indian Statistical Institute Library, Kolkata
<http://library.isical.ac.in/>
- Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research Library, Mumbai
<http://www.igidr.ac.in/lib/opac.htm>
- NAL Information Centre for Aerospace Science and Technology, Bangalore
<http://www.icast.org.in/opac.html>
- National Institute of Bank Management Library, Pune
<http://www.nibmindia.org/searchbooks.asp>
- National Law School Library, Bangalore
<http://www.nls.ac.in/lib/opac/index.html>
- National Science Library, New Delhi
http://www.niscair.res.in/InformationResou_rces/nsl/BookSearch.asp
- Nehru Library, CCSHAU, Hisar.

<http://192.168.0.1:8080/jopacv06/html/SearchForm>

- Panjab University, Library

<http://webopac.puchd.ac.in/>

- Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bangalore

<http://203.200.41.70/cgi-bin/lssearch.html>

- Tata Institute of Fundamental Research Library, Mumbai

<http://158.144.68.87/lssearch.html>

- Tata Institute of Social Sciences Library Mumbai

<http://202.141.154.107/slim/Default.php>

CONCLUSION:

OPAC is an interactive search module of an automated library management system. Any type of reading materials is searched directly from the managed database of the library or remotely through national and international networks. Therefore, finally we see that a lot of manual cataloguing work is reduced due to the availability of a variety of Web OPACs. Web OPACs get improve the quality, speed and performance of the services provided by the libraries. The inter-library loan becomes easier with the use of e-mail and web. Members can see the collection and issue status of each document of the information centre. They could reserve or request online for the document of their interest.

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