Library Automation: Overview

Dr. Heera N. Mortale *

*Librarian
Bapusaheb Patil Ekmbekar Mahavidyalay, Udgir, Maharashtra, India

QR Code

Abstract: - *Library Automation refers to the use of computers to serve the need of Library users. The paper covers the objectives and advantages of library automation, and lists the basic requirements of hardware and software.*

Keywords: Library Automation, Software

Library Automation

Traditional library work, consisting of acquisitions, technical processing, serials control, circulation and reference services all entail time consuming manual work. Though these activities are essential to proper functioning of a library, they consume professional staff time that might otherwise go towards user services and library development. Library computerization is now gaining importance necessitating the establishment of profession-wide standards. Comprehensive studies of library computer systems world over include discussions of machine, managed acquisitions, cataloguing, serials control, circulation and bibliographic service modules. The literature in this area highlights major aspects of computer's role in the library environment. Similar to several aspects of library management, the demand for more and faster information services and the decline in library resources are compelling librarians to appreciate the role of computers within their operations. In general, librarians are looking to maximize the benefits of automation by spreading computer use to as many aspects of library activities as possible by taking advantage of developments in computer hardware and software and telecommunications.

Objectives

1 To improve control over collection

2 Effective control over the entire operation.

3 To improve the existing services

4 To share effectively the resources among various libraries in a region.

5 To avoid duplication of work.

6 To use the services of existing staff effectively.

Advantages of Library Automation

1 Improve the quality, speed and effectiveness of services.

2 Relieve professional staff from clerical work

3 Improve access to remote users

4 Facilitate wider dissemination of information products and services

5 Resource-sharing among other library networks (Union Catalogues)

6 Enable rapid communication with other libraries

7 Improve the management of physical and financial

Necessary Requirements for the Library Automation

The essential things for the automation of library are.

i. *A good collection*: Computerization of the academic library collection and other library services is to the serve the users better and to provide access to information. For this purpose, first of all the collection of the academic library should be good and should aim at the good collection building first and computerize the library collection and its services next.

ii. *Budget:* Finance is the backbone of any venture. As the members of the library increase, cost of information materials, services and growth of information or information explosion increases, so the budget of the libraries should also also raised.

iii. *Suitable computer Hardware:* Selection and purchase of computer is a complex procedure. There are variety of computers and computer maker. An academic library would require a computer system. In computer systems there are LAN, MAN, WAN etc. An academic library would at least require a LAN with facilities for e-mail and Internet.

iv. *Software :* There are a number of library automation software but the selection of relevant software is an important step in the library automation process. One of the greatest challenges before the library managers is the selection of a good library automation soft packages which can cater to the needs of a particular library.

v. *Trained Staff :* The successful implementation of an automated library depends on many factors but an area that can never be over looked is staff training for the successful implementation and fully automation of library staff training programme is essential.

vi. *User Training :* Library needs the technology in the form of user friendly software for the automation. Staff may need a lot of training to properly operate the installed software for the automation the same way library users may need training to the use properly the resources available though the automation once the automation is completed users will get many benefits.

Vii. *Maintenance and Development:* When library automation is fully functional maintenance and development is required from time to time. This includes upgradation, support for the modules and annual maintenance in all respect. Upgrades of existing library equipment & systems installation and record conversion are available option.

Requirements for Library Automation

Automation requires planning, designing, and implementation. Planning involves identification of the activities to be automated, assessment of the volumes of information to be handled, selection of software, selection of compatible hardware systems, training and retraining of the library staff and educating users. Planning is a systematic process to create or development of any specific project. In the case of library automation planning a thorough study of the libraries existing system as well as library's vision is necessary to enable you to prepare a good technology plan and project proposed.

Hardware Requirements

Pentium, 64 GB RAM, 4 GB Hard disk, 150 GB cartridge tape drive, CD drive, USB cord or pin, BGA color monitor, 8 port intelligent I/D Card, Internal modem, Cables fiber optics coaxial and twisted pair, Scanner printer, Barcode scanner Sensor system & Telephone connection are the basic requirements.

Selection of Library Automation Software :

- ➢ *Multiple Platforms***:** The software package chosen should run on various computer platforms i.e. server, mainframe to simple PCs. The software should also be able to run in multiple platforms such as windows XP. Windows 2000, windows. N.T. etc.

- ➢ *Existing Standard***:** Software should support internationally known standard such as MARC 21, CCF, AACR2, LCSH and data export/ import in ISO 2709 (MARC/CCF) If possible, the software chosen should also comply with UNICODE.

- ➢ *Integrated:* The software should permit collaborative working and all modules should be integrated in nature.

- ➢ *Flexibility:* The software should make it easy to switch between the OPAC and writing station because there are times when one would want the public OPAC station to function as writing station and at other times when would like the writing station to function as OPAC. The software package chosen should also be so flexible as to handle the records of variable sizes.

- ➢ *Capacity:* The restriction in total number of database / information/ records in a database enable the software to be handled effectively.

- ➢ *Speed:* Speed of operation in different environment.

➤ *Standardized Data Format for Import and Export***:** The software should use standardized data format for importing and exporting of data from and to the software.

➤ *Customization and Expandability***:** The system should permit addition of new feature meet the local need and use.

References

1. Kawatra, P. (1980) . *Fundamental of Documentation*. New Delhi: Sterling Publication

2. Kumar, P. (2004). *Information Technology: Application (Theory and Practice)*. Delhi : B.R. Publication.

3. Kumar, P. (2003) Information Technology: Basic. Delhi: B.R.Publication

4. Sehgal R. (1998). User Education in computer Based Libraries. New Delhi: EssEss Publication.