

Significance of Library Automation

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Introduction:

Automation of libraries will give libraries altogether a new life. They become tremendously potential by computerizing. Computerized cataloging enormously enhances access to books and magazines. Automation of Library functioning streamlines the whole library functioning in favor of the reader. Networking of Libraries vastly widens the student access. They can read rare and precious books sitting at their own place. Internet offers access to thousands of e-Journals, e-textbooks and other valuable information simultaneously to lakhs of students.

Meaning of Automation :

According to Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science,“Automation is the technology concerned with the design and development of process and system that minimize the necessity of human intervention in operation”. (Kent, 1977)¹

Definition of Library Automation :

Library automation may be defined as the application of automatic and semiautomatic data processing machines (computers) to perform traditional library house keeping activities such as acquisition, circulation, cataloguing and reference and serials control. Today “Library Automation” is by far the most commonly used terms to describe the mechanization of library activities using the computer. (Uddin, 2009)².

Objectives of Library Automation :

The main objectives of library automation are as under;

1. To maintain bibliographical records of all the materials, in a computerized form.
2. To provide bibliographical details through a single enumerative access point of
3. holdings of a library.
4. To improve effective and efficient control over entire library operation.
5. Library collection can be improved and controlled.
6. To avoid duplication of repetitive work.
7. To share effectively the resource among various libraries at a local, regional and
8. national level.
9. To obtain the services of the existing staff effectively and efficiently.
10. To implement new IT processes to provide high quality information.

Need of Library Automation

1. For various reasons, the library automation is needed.
2. By automation new techniques are adopted.
3. To control over information explosion and growth of documents.
4. By automation accuracy and promptness in service is achieved.
5. Efficiency can be increased.
6. Large data can be handled with ease, great comfort and accuracy.
7. Information can be available in Machine readable form.
8. Problem of space can be solved.
9. Time of library staff and users can be saved.

10. Collection can be controlled.
11. Resources can be shared nationally and internationally by computers.
12. Duplication of work can be avoided.

Importance of Library Automation

1. Time can be saved for library users.
2. Librarians can enable to provide better services to the users.
3. Time can be saved of clerical and respective tasks.
4. Collection and streamline circulation can be consistently enhanced.
5. Library users can do more interfaces with information resources.
6. Better facilities for the users by collaborating with other automated libraries.
7. Ease of maintenance of statistics and over dues.
8. Ease in reporting to management.
9. Better access to library collection.
10. It allows easy sharing of resources with other libraries.

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.
6. (Union Catalogues).
7. Enable rapid communication with other libraries.
8. Improve the management of physical and financial resources.

Limitations of Library Automation

1. Initial and recurring expenses
2. Continuous staff training
3. Hardware and Software Obsolescence

Networking:

A network consists of two or more computers that are linked in order to share resources (such as printers and CDs), exchange files, or allow electronic communications. The computers on a network may be linked through cables, telephone lines, radio waves, satellites, or infrared light beams.

Types of Networks:

Presently, there are three types of computer networks:

- LAN
- MAN
- WAN

Local Area Network (LAN):

LAN networking is transmission system for linking computers over restricted geographical area like single rooms, rooms within a building or buildings on a particular site. LAN normally transmits data in digital form with typical transmission speeds upto several megabytes per second. It is a combination of cables/connectors, computers, processors and interfaces,

software's which interconnects computers and related devices. It regulates flow of information traffic among these devices. Usually the computers are within 300m of each other because they can be connected by a cable. A typical LAN connects computers located within half a mile of each other.

LAN is distinguished from other type of data network in that communication is usually confined to moderate size geographical area. This network is owned by a single organization. (Mandal, Datta & Podder, 1998).³

Metropolitan Area Network (MAN):

Attempts are being made to develop this type of network in metropolitan areas such Delhi, Calcutta, Bangalore, Madras, etc.

Wide Area Network (WAN):

A large-scale network, involving offices in different cities and countries is referred to as WAN, which is specially designed to interconnect data transmission devices over wide geographical areas.

A Library Network Definition:

A library network is broadly described as a group of libraries coming together with some agreement of understanding to help each other with a view to satisfying the information needs of their clientele.

Objectives of Library Network:

Potdar & Joshi (1997) has given the following main aims and objectives of a library network are:

1. To improve resources utilization and service levels to users at the individual libraries by providing automation facilities in acquisition, serial control, cataloguing, circulation, user's services and funds accounting.
2. To enhance resource sharing by providing individual libraries access to composite databases like union catalogues, CAS and SDI.
3. To provide efficient and reliable means of resource sharing in areas such as inter library user services, document delivery services, manpower training, access to national and international databases, and communication link through publication and inter personal communication and procurement of micro documents.
4. To facilitate exchange of duplicate publication.
5. To establish referral centers to monitor and to facilitate catalogue search and maintain a central online union catalogue of books, serials, non-book materials of all the participating libraries.
6. To implement computerized operation and electronic services in the libraries for fast communication of information.
7. To evolve standards and uniform guidelines in techniques, methods, procedures, hardware and software, services and promote their adoption in actual practice by all libraries in order to facilitate pooling, sharing and exchanging resources and facilities towards optimization.
8. To coordinate with other regional, national and international networks for exchange of information and documents for the use of libraries and users.

Categories of Networks:

Following are some categories of networks use in India .

NICNET:

Title: National Information Center Network

Sponsor: Planning Commission, Govt. of India.

Membership: Four national and regional nodes, 32 state and union territory nodes; seventy cities and towns

Services: Bulk file transfer; teleconferencing; full text and bibliographic retrieval services

Application: ICMRNIC Center; MEDLARS in India; Chemical Abstracts database

INDONET:

Title: INDONET data Network

Sponsor: CMC Ltd (1986) = Informatics India Ltd (1989)

Membership: Commercial computer network

Services: Database services such as DIALOG, COMPUSERVE; IP; SHARP

Applications: ACME; file transfer; international gateway

NET (VIKRAM):

Title: NET

Sponsor: Dept. of Telecommunications, Govt. of India

Connectivity: Packet switched public data network covering nine cities

Services: Information exchange through e-mail / FTP; Bibliographic databases

Here are some Specialized library Networks :

CALIBNET:

Title: Calcutta Libraries Network

Sponsor: NISSAT - Govt. of India

Applications: Cataloging; serials control; acquisitions; circulation

Services: CAS; SDI; union catalog; partial database; editing and retrieval of records; global information; search; full-text document delivery; library automation; CALIBNET INFO Services

BONET:

Title: Bombay Library Network

Sponsor: NISSAT & NCST (1994)

Objective: To promote cooperation among libraries in Bombay

Services: online catalog; online document delivery; IRS; interlibrary loan; dissemination of information

DELNET:

Title: Developing Library Network

Sponsor: NISSAT & NIC (1988)

Objective: To promote resource sharing; develop a network of libraries; collect, store, disseminate information

Members: 165 Institutions, 600 Libraries, 15 States in India, 5 from outside India

Services: resource sharing; free Software; ICE online facility; books database; thesis database; Indian specialists; database

ADINET:

Title: Ahmedabad Library Network

Sponsor: NISSAT, DSIR (1994) & INFLIBNET

Objective: To bring cooperation among its regional libraries; to develop databases; to integrate scientific and technical information systems

Members: Nine libraries

Services: library automation; library holdings; database in progress

MYLIBNET:

Title: Mysore Library Network

Sponsor: NISSAT (1994)

Objective: Developing software tools; conducting seminar; workshops/training programs; conduct surveys

Host Site: CFTRI, Mysore

Members: 116 Institutions

Services: MYLIB Database; E-journals; food patents; CFTRI Library Bulletin; public services.

INFLIBNET:

Title: Information Library Network

Sponsor: UGC (1991)

Connectivity: computer communication network of universities and R&D; libraries and bibliographic information centers throughout the country

Members: 200 Universities; 400 College libraries; 200 R&D libraries

Services: catalog service; database Services; document supply services; e-mail; BBS: audio and video conferencing, etc.

BALNET:

Title: Bangalore Library Network

Sponsor: JRD;. Tata Memorial Library (1995)

Members: 100 Libraries

MALIBNET:

Title: Madras Library Network

Sponsor: INSDOC & NISSAT (1993)

Members: 15 Libraries

Activity: Two important databases, a directory database of current serials in Madras and a contents database covering articles published in 300 journals available in Madras libraries

Conclusion:

Library automation is essential to provide better services as quickly as possible. Library automation helps the librarians in the formulation of library policies much effectively. By automizing the libraries the problems such as Circulation Related Services, OPAC, Acquisition of Documents, Serials Management, Library Budget and Statistics, Information, Access services and Stock Verification can done easily. It also provide lot of access materials to users/readers & save the time of users.

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