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## LIBRARY AUTOMATION: AN OVERVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

*A well-equipped and well maintained library is indeed, the foundation stone of our modern educational system. Library automation in the 21st century is an inter-connecting system. It enables information users to share information resources through network. This article briefly explains the concept of library automation, objective, need, areas, planning, advantage & disadvantages of library automation, etc.*

## KEYWORDS

library automation, information communication technology, areas of automation, software for library automation

## INTRODUCTION

The library plays a critical role in our society it is an important component of any educational institution, which is hub of the teaching, and learning activities where students, researchers and teachers can explore the vast resources of information. In the age of information communication technology, computers are being used for day-to-day housekeeping activity of the library which saves the time of the end users, and library professional also and at the same time avoid duplication of work and make the library service smooth and effective.

In the age of ICT library scenario has been drastically changed in terms of collection, organization and services. Simultaneously, user's demands and attitudes have changed in its kinds. Also the information seeking behavior of user has dynamically changed. They want relevant, authentic information very quickly within a single place at their hand. This concept has posed challenges for library professionals for quick delivery of library services and information. This development in library field has brought the idea of Library Automation.

## AUTOMATION

Automation is the use of machines, control systems and information technologies to optimize productivity in the production of goods and delivery of services. Automation greatly decreases the need for human sensory and mental requirements while increasing load capacity, speed, and repeatability.

## CONCEPT AND MEANING OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION

The word "automation" has been derived from Greek word "automose" means something, which has power of spontaneous motion or self-movement. The term "automation" was first introduced by D.S. Harder in 1936, who was then with General Motor Company in the U.S. He used the term automation to mean automatic handling of parts between progressive production processes

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).

According to McGraw Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology automation as "a coined word having no precise generally accepted technical meaning but widely used to imply the concept, development, or use of highly automatic machinery or control systems" (McGraw, 1982). Webster's Third New International Dictionary of English Language Automation is defined as "automatically controlled operation of an apparatus, process or system by mechanical or electronic device that takes place of human organs of observation, effort and decision". (Gove, 1966)

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).

Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences "Library Automation is the use of automatic and semiautomatic data processing machines to perform such traditional library activities as acquisitions, cataloguing, and circulation. These activities are not necessarily performed in traditional ways, the activities themselves are those traditionally associated with libraries; library automation may thus be distinguished from related fields such as information retrieval fields such as information retrieval, automatic indexing and abstracting and automatic textual analysis" (Kent, 1977).

## WHAT IS 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.

## NEED AND OBJECTIVES OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION

Information explosion has resulted in the production of a large amount of literatures in every field of knowledge. Accordingly, the print documents are coming to the library in huge numbers which is not possible for a library to manage the collection manually. Now days no user has time to search the required and relevant information from the dense heap of information collection. They have no time to go shelf by shelf to pick up a book. So it necessitated for library automation. In most of libraries are yet to be automated. The various factors that necessitated changing a manually operated library system an automated library system are as follows.

- Recording keeping activities of library can be done effectively in automated environment.
- Issue, return and renewal of books can be performed quickly and searching of documents through Online Public
- Access Catalogue (OPAC) which is a powerful tool of library automation.
- It will be cost effectiveness
- Maintain bibliographical records of all the materials, in a computerized form.



- Provide bibliographical details through a single enumerative access point of holdings of a library.
- Reduce the repetition in the technical processes of housekeeping operations.
- Provide access to information at a faster rate.
- Share the resources through library networking and implement new IT processes to provide high quality information.

### AREAS OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION

As a first step in a planning process, it is desirable to formulate a model for computerization listing all itemized and prioritized information systems being maintained on a manual basis by the library. For this exercise it is necessary to break down these procedures into their constituent parts. When further subdividing these activities, each item is to be considered of its functional elements. The systems and subsystems listed below are only indicative and may vary with differing library system environments.

These are acquisitions, selection, ordering, claiming/cancellation, receiving/invoice processing, extended procurements, Gift tracking, Fund Control, maintains information about all library related funds, ability to group funds (nesting), track fund allocations and adjustments, Fund encumbrance, Fund expenditure, Cash Balance, Free Balance, Automatic updating of fiscal information through recording of specific transactions, Track year-to date expenditures and Create Purchase Orders.

#### TECHNICAL SERVICES

Books, Serials, Special Collections, Cataloguing, Circulation, charge/Renewal, Discharge, Loan Periods, Processing schedules, Holds, Messages, Blocks, Notices, Transaction Recording Devices for offline processing, Member control and Inventory Control.

#### SERIALS CONTROL

Receipt (check-in), Claiming, Bindery control, replacements, monographic serials, invoice processing

#### REFERENCE SERVICES

Desk services, User tools, Bibliographic utilization, Reprography, Interlibrary communications, General Administration, Grants Administration, Library Publications, Bindery, Periodical Citation Searching, OPAC and Bibliographic Database.

#### PLANNING FOR LIBRARY AUTOMATION

- Needs mapping
- Best possible package
- Staff involvement
- Budget (Purchase, Operation, maintenance etc.)
- Hardware requirement (Client /Server, Printer etc.)
- Platform (Operating system)
- User awareness
- Maintenance

#### LIBRARY SOFTWARE'S USED FOR AUTOMATION

- **Database services.** SOUL (Software for University Library)
- Developed by INFLIBNET
- Window based user-friendly software
- Well-designed screens; logically arranged functions with existence help messages
- Based on client server architecture
- Multi user access
- Provides facility to create view records in regional language (multilingual)
- Nominal price (includes installation)
- onsite training, one-year support, free future updates multilingual software)

#### LIBSYS

- Most widely used in INDIA
- Fully integrated
- Multi user
- System design to run on Super, Micro,
- Minicomputer under UNIX/LAN
- platforms

#### SANJAY

- Developed by DESIDOC
- Is an Augmented version of CDS/ISIS
- It is menu driven and works in windows
- environment with LAN support

#### MAITRAYEE

#### LIBMAN

#### ADVANTAGE OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION

- Speed Information processing is done much faster which ensures better work flow through the library.
- Accuracy The degree of precision and accuracy in processing information is high. However, it is dependent on the accuracy of information led into the system.
- Cost effectiveness Operating costs can be reduced if the system is well designed and well managed.
- Reduction in library workloads Library workloads can be reduced as the computer can do vast amount of work and processing.
- Improved services to users High rate and better quality in performance is possible through the use of computers.
- Avoids/eliminates duplication of work.
- Easier access to external databases
- Providing on-line access and search of information possible

#### DISADVANTAGES OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION

- Initial and recurring expenses
- Hardware and Software Obsolescence
- Lack of Staff
- Financial Expenses
- Security Problems
- Maintenance of Automation software is totally depending on Computer administrator
- Continuous staff training is required for it It is totally depend on Electricity
- Costly maintenance

**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 realistic approach. Librarian should acquire adequate knowledge about the hardware and software options available. All libraries should use standard software packages for automation and database creation to facilitate the exchange of bibliographic records between libraries. Databases may preferably be created in the MARC21 format because most libraries at the international level follow this. There is need for continuous monitoring of automation activities for improvement of the situation and for meeting the future needs.

Academic achievement of a student is closely related to his/her ability to find, evaluate and use the required information according to the curriculum needs.

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