LIBRARY AUTOMATION: A STUDY REPORT

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Abstract: *The concept of automation in libraries has changed the scenario of library management. It is a recent trend in the development and growth of library. Automation has changed the library operation and its functionality in to a fast to faster mode. Clients need not to visit shelf to shelf to find out a document. They just get their documents sitting in front of a desktop. Automation has eliminated the man power. It is providing automatic service. Here this article will discuss about the concept of automation, its requirement and various components helps to automate library. A brief dissection has undergone about software package which are available for automation purposes.*

1. Introduction

Present Generation is experiencing a Science & Technology Era. Due to advancement of Science & Technology, particularly Information Technology everything has gone in to a sea change. Library is not an exception to such change, rather it can be said that the 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 is defined as the technology related with the design and development of process and system. It minimizes the human labour in their operation and performs the operations which are routine and repetitive in nature. Automation is the name given to an automatic system of working. Automation of library systems leads to better output, cost effective, and ensures better work environment. It

is a process that changes the library world in terms of both technologies and involvement of people.

2. Concept of Library Automation

Library automation encompasses the housekeeping operation of the library which are performed by computers .It can be defined as the application of automatic and semi automatic data processing computers which perform traditional library house keeping activities such as acquisition, circulation, cataloguing, reference and serial control. Library automation makes materials easier for patrons to locate as well as allowing staff to perform better user services by facilitating a multitude of staff tasks such as acquisitions, cataloguing, circulation and reference. On the other hand, the financial and staff commitment needed to move to an automated system or from one system to another is substantial and long lasting. Automation cannot be approached as a panacea for systemic problems in a library.

2. Needs for Library Automation

Though library automation has yet to take off by the majority of libraries, it is the proper platform to visualize the services of library. Now a 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 shelve by shelve 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.

- 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.
- Record keeping activities of library can be done effectively in automated environment.
- Issue, return and renewal of books can be performed quickly.
- Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is a powerful tool of library automation
- Cost effectiveness

3. What to be automated

All routine works and services of the library can be automated through library automation. Besides in some automation software packages there are provisions for article indexing, abstracting etc. Basically the followings works of library are automated.

a) Acquisitions related operation such as preparation of list, ordering of books, receiving, accessioning, invoice processing, payment request etc.

b) Cataloguing of documents such as update title, generation of library cards, generation of barcodes, authority files etc.

c) Circulation works such as membership registration/cancellation/renewal, issue/return/renewal of documents, fine collection ,reminders etc

d) Serial Control such as registration of serials, serial details, subscription details, payment details, renewal of serials sec.

e) Catalogue cards can be held online that is through OPAC

4. Requirements for Library automation

The basic requirements for any library automation Programmes are software hardware, manpower and finance. These four basic components are discussed below.

4.1. Software

The success of library automation mostly depends upon the nature of the software used for the purpose .The different types of available library software are of following types.

a) In house development software or custom designed

b) Software packages developed by commercial agencies, organizations and institutions.

c) Cooperative Ventures.

Therefore selection of a good library software is one of the most important function of library automation programme. Every software has its own advantages and disadvantages. But it should be selected keeping in mind the need of the organization. List of Some commercial library automation software packages are given below.

Name of Software	*Distributing Agency*
a) CDS/ISIS(DOS)	UNESCO(Nodal Agency)
b) WINISIS (GUI)	NISSAT/DSIR (In India)
c) LIBSYS	Libsys Corpation, New Delhi
d) SANJAY	DESIDOC, New Delhi
e) SOUL	INFLIBNET, Ahmadabad
f) E- GRANTHALAYA	NIC, New Delhi
g) WILISYS	WIPRO India, Bangalore
h) TULIP	Tata Unisys , Noida
i) DELSIS	DELNET, Delhi
j) MAITRAYEE	CMC Ltd., Kolkatta

4.2. Hardware:

Hardware is the next important elements of library automation programme number of products and manufacturers are available for this purpose. The hardware configuration mainly depends upon the software. There are two types of PCs are available in the market such as

(i)   The branded PCs from reputed firms like HP, Compaq , IBM etc.

(ii)   The assembled PC by commercial firms

4.3. Manpower

For running any programme including library automation programme, trained manpower are required. Hence the ;library professionals should be trained properly with requisite computer knowledge for making the automation programme successful. Some software package manufacturers are giving onsite training to the staff at the installation time of software .The user also needs to be trained about the OPAC system .

4.4. Finance

For any programme finance is the important component .The finance of any automation programme includes both installation and ongoing expenditures which includes maintenance, stationeries etc.

5. Problems for Automation

There are many inherent problems associated with library automation programme. The problems can be summarized as below.

1. Initial investment for automation programme is very high.

2. Library staff has to undergo intensive training on automation

3. The professionals are initially psychologically traced.

4. Other departments of the organizations need to be systematic for successful running of the programme.

5. Retrospective conversion of data for big libraries

6. Recurring expenditures needs to be bear positively approved by the authority

7. Regular update of the software package

6. Conclusion

Now a day Library Automation has become the buzz word in library profession and has become a bare necessity for any libraries. An automated library can provide better library services to their users and can maintain the library more properly which a manual library can not do. The record keeping activities and various report generation becomes very easy in an automated library system. But the success of any library automation programme depends upon its proper planning and execution. Hence library professionals need to take right initiatives in right direction.

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