RESEARCH ARTICLE

STATUS OF AUTOMATION AND NETWORKING AMONG THE COLLEGE LIBRARIES AFFILIATED TO BHARATHIAR UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The automation in libraries has changed day to day activities, storage and retrieval techniques save the time of both user and library personal. The objectives of this study are to identify the status of automation through findings of a survey. Out of 120college libraries which were affiliated to Bharathiar University selected for this study. This study tries to analyze the status of library automation , availability of suitable library automation software and network facilities available in college libraries affiliated to Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu. It was found that 92 college libraries computerized and using different types of software. Only 2 libraries out of 92 implemented RFID technology. Only 40.2% of the libraries having web online public access catalogue facility and only25% of the libraries would like to share their resources through networking.

Keywords : Library automation, Networking, Bharathiar University, College libraries.

Introduction

Academic libraries are expected to satisfy the information needs of the academic community consisting of students and faculty members. To expedite the services to the users, they are adopting several strategies, skills and techniques in the information storage and dissemination process. Information technology oriented techniques are adopted to automate the house-keeping operations of the library using automation software packages. Even though, library automation gathered momentum during 1980`s the status of library automation is still progressing.

The exponential growth of arts and science colleges in Tamilnadu recently paves the way for the promotion of higher education to larger masses and the libraries in the arts and science colleges play a vital role in the innovation process of higher education. In this context the automation, digitization and networking of arts and science college libraries help the users to save their time as well as helps to facilitate information sharing among the libraries.

Scanning of the available literature shows that no systematic study has been conducted among the Arts and Science College Libraries Affiliated to Bharathiar University, Coimbatore about issues, challenges and levels of library automation, digitization and networking. Hence, the investigator felt the need to fill this gap and was motivated to undertake this study.

Objectives :

This study covers status of library automation, library automation software packages being used and network facilities available in the libraries . It does not aim at in-depth knowledge of the library automation software packages.. This study is focused only on college libraries affiliated to Bharathiar University where library computerized is in use.

1. To know the status of library automation

2. To find out Network facilities available in the libraries

Methodology

The present study is to find out the "status of automation and digitization in the college libraries affiliated to Bharathiar University". The researcher has identified 92 college libraries which are computerized. The primary data was collected through the well-structured questionnaire a total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to the college libraries and only 92 fully completed questionnaires were taken for this study.

Review of Literature

Shivakumar, T, and Kemparaju (2017)conducted a study on the status of the library automation engineering colleges affiliated to VTU, Karnataka. The article discuss the topics such as availability of LAN facility, level of automation and software being used in the library majority of 143 respondents

have said that they have LAN access in the library and also stated that 109 libraries are fully automated 26 are partially automated and 12 libraries are not automated at all.

A comparative study by Sarma (2016) on Koha, Evergreen, NewGenLib, OpenBiblio, PhpMyBibli found that among these five software the Koha LMS has more provisions, functional, and futures.

Ahmad, (2014) studied the library software awareness with special focus on OPAC Vs Card Catalogue among the users of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, IIT Kanpur, and Kashmir University. The study highlighted the features of LibSys and Virtua software used by the selected libraries. The major finding of this study was that the Kashmir University has successfully installed RFID technology through Virtua. But, the same is yet to take place fully in the selected IITs.

Siddique, and Mahmood, (2014) studied current status of library software being used in the libraries of Pakistan, The study found that the situation in Pakistan regarding library software cannot be compared with the in advanced countries. Lack of standard library software, the multilingual nature of the library collections, poor budgets, computer illiteracy, software piracy and unavailability of support from local vendors are the main hindrances in the effective implementation of library software.

Kari, and Baro, (2014) aimed to look at the library software in use in Nigerian university libraries, The study adopted a descriptive survey method and covered university libraries in Nigeria. The study revealed that university libraries in Nigeria widely use library software such as KOHA, SLAM and VIRTUA for their library operations. The findings of this study will provide useful information to librarians and library administrators in Nigeria and other developing countries who want to automate their library operations.

Data collection

In order to fulfill the objectives set, a sample study was undertaken by using a well framed questionnaire that was duly filled by the respondents through direct post and e-mail. The respondents with varying background based on the important aspects of the age, educational qualification, level of ICT skills, automation of their college libraries etc., were considered. A noteworthy feature was that all the 92 respondents highly co-operated. This was due to the rapport the researcher established with them. The specimen of the questionnaire used to collect the first hand information

from the selected sample respondents is shown in the appendix section of this thesis. The distribution of the sample respondents are shown in the following table.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Table No.1
Status of automation

S. No.	Type of College	Automation	Non-Automation
1.	Government colleges	03	08
2.	Constituent colleges	01	04
3.	Aided colleges	16	0
4.	Self financing colleges	72	16
	TOTAL	92	28

Out of 120 college libraries only two college libraries fully automated and implement RFID technology in their libraries and 90 colleges partially automated and 28 college libraries did not computerized/automated their libraries. The result found that 76% of the college libraries have computerized/automated their library services.
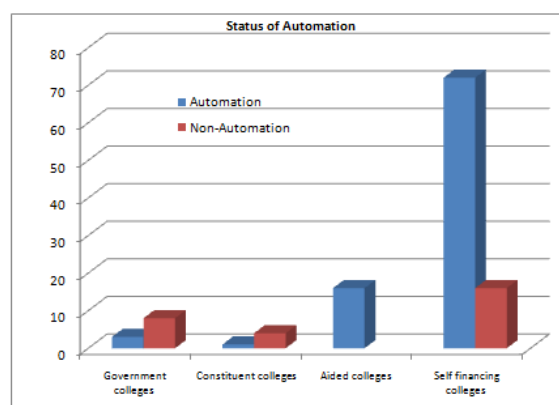

Fig 1: Status of Automation

Table No.2

Type of software and special features available in the software

S. No	Type of software used	Number of colleges	Percentage
1	Commercial	69	75.0
2	Developed in house	10	10.9
3	Open Source	13	14.1
	TOTAL	92	100

Journal of Current Trends in Library and Information Science : International Refereed Journal pp.1-4 | Vol. No. 5 | Issue No. 1 | Jan. 2018

-2-

Exactly three-fourth (i.e.) 75.0 per cent of the respondents specified that they are using commercial type of software, 14.1 per cent of the respondents specified that they are using Open source type and 10.9 per cent of the respondents specified that they are using software developed in-house.
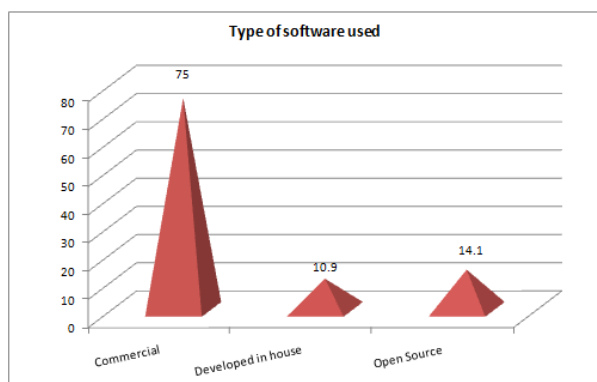

Type of software used

Table No.3

Status of Bar-coded

S.No	Bar-coded	Number of Colleges	Percentage
1	Yes	79	85.9
2	No	13	14.1
	TOTAL	92	100

High majority (i.e.) 85.9 per cent of the respondents stated that their library was bar-coded and 14.1 per cent of the respondents said that they did not barcode their library.

Table No.4
Implemented of RFID

S.No	RFID	Number of Colleges	Percentage
1	Yes	2	2.2
2	No	90	97.8
	TOTAL	92	100

A considerable few (i.e.) 2.2 per cent of the respondents mentioned that their library implemented RFID technology and 97.8 per cent of the respondents mentioned that their library did not implemented RFID technology

Table No.5

Friedman test for library services computerized

S.No	Library services computerized	Mean Rank	Rank
1.	Book Circulation	6.17	1
2.	Reference Service	5.03	5
3.	New Paper Clippings	5.51	4
4.	Current Awareness Services	5.70	3
5.	Catalogue Services	5.86	2
6.	Inter Library Loan	1.68	8
7.	User Education/Orientation	2.89	7
8.	Alerting Services	3.17	6

Table No 5 shows library services computerized. It is known from the above table that book circulation obtained first rank (mean rank: 6.17), followed by catalogue services which obtained second rank (mean rank:5.86), current awareness services obtained third rank (mean rank:5.70), news paper clippings obtained fourth rank (mean rank:5.51), reference service obtained fifth rank (mean rank:5.03), alerting services obtained sixth rank (mean rank: 3.17), user education/orientation obtained seventh rank (mean rank: 2.89) and inter library loan obtained eighth rank (mean rank: 1.68) with regard to the library services

Table No. 6

Library Networking Facility

S. No	Library Networking Facility	No of Respondents (n:92)	Percentage
1.	Library has a network access through		
	LAN	57	62.0
	MAN	2	2.2
	WAN	2	2.2
	Wi-Fi	31	33.7
2.	OPAC facility available		
	Yes	85	92.4
	No	7	7.6
3.	Library catalogue is accessible through WEB OPAC		
	Yes	37	40.2
	No	55	59.8
4.	To share library resources under Library Network Programe		
	Yes	23	25.0
	No	69	75.0

Journal of Current Trends in Library and Information Science : International Refereed Journal pp.1-4 | Vol. No. 5 | Issue No. 1 | Jan. 2018

-3-

The table no. 6 shows that Majority (i.e.) 62.0 per cent of the respondents expressed that their library has network access through LAN, 33.7 per cent of the respondents expressed that their library has network access through Wi-Fi, 2.2 per cent of the respondents expressed that their library has network access through MAN and 2.2 per cent of the respondents expressed that their library has network access through WAN.

Vast majority (i.e.) 92.4 per cent of the respondents specified that OPAC facility is available throughout the campus and 7.6 per cent of the respondents specified that OPAC facility was not available throughout the campus.

Nearly half (i.e.) 40.2 per cent of the respondents accepted that library catalogue is accessible through WEB OPAC and 59.8 per cent of the respondents mentioned that library catalogue was not accessible through WEB OPAC.

A considerable few (i.e.) 25.0 per cent of the respondents agreed that they liked to share library resources under library network programme and 75.0 per cent of the respondents mentioned that they don`t like to share library resources under library network programme.

Major Findings

1. 75 per cent of the respondents specified that they are using commercial type of software.

2. 85.9 per cent of the respondents stated that their library was bar-coded.

3. A considerable few (i.e.) 2.2 per cent of the respondents mentioned that their library has implemented RFID technology.

4. 79.3 per cent of the respondents stated that library resources were connected with local area network.

5. 40.2 per cent of the respondents mentioned that they have separate web page for their library.

6. 62.0 per cent of the respondents expressed that the library has network access through LAN, 33.7 per cent of the respondents expressed that the library has network access through Wi-Fi, 2.2 per cent of the respondents expressed that the library has network access through MAN and 2.2 per cent of the respondents expressed that the library has network access through WAN.

7. 92.4 per cent of the respondents specified that OPAC facility is available throughout the campus.

8. 40.2 per cent of the respondents accepted that library catalogue is accessible through WEB OPAC.

9. A considerable few (i.e.) 25.0 per cent of the respondents agreed that they liked to share library resources under library network programme.

Conclusion

In the current automation and networking use of computers for libraries keeping updated operations is not only simply feasible, but inevitable. It has become a necessity than anything else. Many networks are now emerging in Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. For participation and also the effective utilization of network resources, it is necessary for the participating members to automate their libraries. It is relevant to observe that required hardware for library automation is now available at a reasonable cost and also open source library management software and digital library management software are also available. It is a right time to implement complete library automation and digitization in academic libraries that too in college libraries. The study finds that there is positive sign in implementing library automation in colleges affiliated to Bharathiar University.

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-4-