ONLINE PUBLIC ACCESS CATALOGUE :- AN OVERVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

As a natural outgrowth of the card catalogue, online public access catalogues (OPACs) were established. OPACs have helped to direct users to the library's shelves, based on the concept that catalogue records are surrogates for actual resources owned by the library. The advantage of the OPAC over the card catalogue is that materiality is no longer a requirement for access, and cataloguing descriptions may be made more robust.

Despite this, most librarians and library vendors have been reluctant to develop user-centric search tools. The majority of OPACs provide a wide range of search possibilities without taking into account our existing customers' desire for keyword searching. Most OPACs are limited to just referring to the library's collection and are unable to access information from a range of sources. The results of a query can be arranged in a variety of ways, although most OPACs do not aid patrons in making decisions. Most OPACs do not give a simple way to communicate findings in

today's sharing culture, which is aided by social media. Patrons have shifted to solutions that take into consideration their preferences and behaviours as a result of these and other causes. Librarians and library suppliers are now rushing to come up with solutions that can reclaim the hearts and minds of patrons. This article will analyse common aspects of next-generation OPACs, offer commentary on why next-generation OPACs are important to University librarians, and present a comprehensive bibliography on the topic.

EARLY OPACs

Although a few experimental systems existed as early as the 1960s, Ohio State University in 1975 and the Dallas Public Library in 1978 produced the first large-scale online catalogues. These and other early online catalogue systems had a strong resemblance to the card catalogues they were meant to replace. Users may search a number of pre-coordinate indexes and explore the resultant display in the same manner they had previously traversed the card catalogue using a specialised terminal or telnet client. The complexity of online catalogues increased during the 1980s. The first commercial systems arrived, and by the end of the decade, they had entirely replaced library-built systems. Improved search methods, such as Boolean and keyword searches, as well as auxiliary services, such as the ability to place holds on items that had been checked out, began to appear in library catalogues. Libraries began to create programmes to automate the acquisition, cataloguing, and circulation of books and other library resources about the same period. An online catalogue served as the public interface to the system's inventory, and these programmes were together known as an integrated library system (ILS) or library management system. The majority of library catalogues are inextricably linked to the underlying ILS system.

OLD CARD CATALOGE VS NEW OPACs

Between the OPAC and the card catalogue, there are a number of significant differences: In compared to the card catalogue, users have additional access points with the OPAC, such as standard numbers such as ISBN and ISSN; keywords, and so on. Keyword searching is available for almost every portion of the bibliographic record; this feature aids users in finding material contained in notes, especially contents notes. Right now, most OPACs provide Author, Title, Author/Title, Subject Heading, Call Numbers, ISBN, ISSN and Keywords, etc., access points. A number of academic libraries' OPACs also provide other access points, e.g., government document numbers, music numbers, reserved book lists by courses or by instructors, etc. Users can broaden up or narrow down their search through use of Boolean operators OR, AND, and NOT in the OPACs. They may also filter search results by language, publication date, and document type, although these options are not accessible in the card catalogue. In summary, OPACs give users a lot more options for finding and retrieving information in different forms than

traditional card catalogues. Users may engage with catalogues for the first time in library history, changing search techniques and information displays to improve search results depending on their own information requirements. The design of the OPAC's user interface is critical because it may have a significant impact on the relationships between the OPAC and its users.

WEB BASED OPAC

Web OPAC is an OPAC, which is provided on the web and with the help of internet anybody can access it from anywhere. According to Washington University in St. Louis, "A Web OPAC interfaces, which uses the World Wide Web protocol to act as an OPAC." Ac-cording to ODLIS, "An Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) that uses a graphical user interface (GUI) accessible via the World Wide Web, as opposed to a text-based interface accessible via telnet." Web OPAC is an independent program designed separately from the library program. Instead of searching through the card catalogue, it is programmed to allow members to access the OPAC using their own search for convenience of borrowing. Members may also request information about borrowing, reservations, and other aspects of their library profile, as well as make automated reservations.

CONCLUSION

Instead of searching through the card catalogue, it is programmed to allow members to access the OPAC using their own search for convenience of borrowing. Members may also request information about borrowing, reservations, and other aspects of their library profile, as well as make automated reservations.

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