
Use of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) in Library of R.V.S College of Engineering and Technology, Dindigul-A Case Study

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Abstract

The research work is undertaken to study the effective use of Web Online Public Access Catalogue (Web-OPAC) in R.V.S College of Engineering and Technology, Dindigul. The main objective of the study was to examine the primary data is obtained from the cross section of user community through questionnaires. Web-OPAC is one of the major services. The present study is an attempt to know the use of web-OPAC by the users. The study revealed that the tool is useful and at the same time respondents felt that there must be user orientation needed for the Web-OPAC, to help in retrieving the required documents. Examines the utilization and satisfaction of users about Web-OPAC and highlights the suggestions made by the users for the further improvement.

Keywords

WEB-OPAC, Online public access catalogue,
Library automation, Engineering colleges.

Electronic access

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INTRODUCTION

Technology has resulted in more changes in the libraries over the last twenty years than in all the previous decades of the library history. The fields of cataloguing are not an expectation to this, the emergence of on line catalogues has improved the access to bibliographic data slowly replacing the card form of catalogue. OPAC stands for Online Public Access Catalogue. It is a library catalogue accessed via a computer terminal for the benefit of library users. An OPAC provides users on line access to the libraries catalogue allowing them to search and retrieve records from the online catalogue and depending on the underlying library management software it also offers other facilities such as online reservation borrower status checking and so on. With the advent of the internet and with the World Wide Web (www) many library OPACs can now be searched by remote users anywhere in the worlds, who have an access to the internet.

‘OPAC’ had a different meaning. Public Access was in two different ways-firstly, it meant access to library housekeeping especially circulation (primarily for library staff use) and which could also serve as rudimentary catalogue for the library user the initial interest was not in the bibliographic details. The second way was to give the library user direct access to the machine readable bibliographic records from which card and computer output microform (COM) catalogues were produced for more than a decade through shared centralized cataloguing. Access by the public was in both the cases technology driven.

According to Mahender Singh (2004) OPAC system provides access to the libraries holdings through various catalogues and indexes such as the author’s catalogue, the publisher’s index, conference place index and KWIC/KWOC indexes. Also possible are combination searches using Boolean operates (AND, OR and NOT) that yield highly satisfying and precious results. OPAC system also provides the facility to request acquisition of titles, to reserve materials, and to send personalized SDI, Overdue/recall/collect notices and messages by e-mail.

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF OPAC:

Four Major components:

1. The user interface
2. The main master file of bibliographic records.

3. The Index
4. The Display/ Print Format

SEARCHING OPACS

Two fundamentally different search approaches can be found in OPACs:

- i. Querying/ Query searching
- ii. Browsing

Query searching two types:

- ✓ Phrase searching
- ✓ Keyword searching

BROWSING:

Browsing is used when user's information needs are not precisely defined. Browsing can take place in the set of bibliographic items itself or in the dictionary- in the set of words or phrases which appear in the bibliographic item description.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the present study are to determine to know the:

- a) Existence, use and non-use of and the instruction received in the use of OPAC by the respondents during their undergraduate education days;
- b) Frequency of visit to R.V.S. College of Engineering and Technology Library, instruction received and the sources of such instruction in the use of OPAC;
- c) Use v/s Non use, the frequency of consultation and the reasons for not consulting OPAC;
- d) Student's approaches to and the purposes of consulting the OPAC
- e) Use of OPAC and the difficulties faced in using them;
- f) Usefulness of library staff in providing the assistance for the use of OPAC;
- g) Opinion(s) of students regarding the up-to-datedness', the location, need for user orientation and lectures and
- h) To suggest the measures in improving the effectiveness of the OPAC.

METHODOLOGY:

The present study is descriptive in nature and it is a case study. The researcher has chosen descriptive research design and the method is normative survey. The survey is also analytical in terms of collecting the details of the use of online public access catalogue services in R.V.S. College of Engineering and Technology Library. A survey of the use of OPAC in library of R.V.S. College of Engineering and Technology, Dindigul by the engineering Students, was carried out during 2015-2016 academic sessions using a Questionnaire. Specially designed questionnaire, was randomly distributed to 100 engineering students of the library as shown in the above out of questionnaires, 82 questionnaires were received back from the respondents. The questionnaire sought information on the state of automation, use of the OPAC, problems identified by users militating against the use of OPAC and comments in ways of improving the use of OPAC as an information retrieval tool

LIMITATIONS:

The present study has the following limitations:

- a) The methodology used has got its own limitations.
- b) The study is restricted to use of OPAC in library of R.V.S. College of Engineering and Technology, Dindigul.
- c) The study population consisted of B.E. Students.

Gender Wise Distribution of Respondents:

The gender wise distribution of the respondents.58.54 percent of the respondents is male's engineering students, followed by 41.46 percent of the female engineering students.

Use of the OPAC in R.V.S. College of Engineering and Technology Library:

The study has been identified that, 82.93 percent of the respondents are using the OPAC and only 17.07 percent of respondents are not using OPAC in college. It is inferred that the majority of the students are using library properly.

Frequency of using OPAC

The frequency of OPAC use in spread all over the table, 30.49 percent of the respondents use it occasionally followed by 15.85 percent of them use it once in a week. 14.63 percent of them use it once in

two days. 10.98 percent of them use in daily. 6.10 percent of them use it twice in a week. Only 4.88 percent of them use it once in two weeks and 17.07 percent of them not answered.

Choosing of books and other reading materials:

82.93 percent of them choose their books and other reading material by consulting the OPAC. 63.41 percent of them by consulting the card catalogue. 50.00 percent of them by referring the subject bibliographies. 35.36 percent of them get their materials with the help of library staff. 30.49 percent of them directly from the shelves. 21.95 percent by referring the indexing journals with current contents. 2.44 percent of the respondents choosing of books by any other way.

Purpose(s) of consulting the OPAC

Majority of the respondents consult the OPAC to check whether the required book is available in the library or not (56.09 percent) and to locate the books in the library (42.68 percent), only 28.04 percent of the respondents consult it to compile bibliography of books on a particular subject and 24.39 percent of the respondents consult it to find out bibliographical details. 19.51 percent to check the number of copies available in the stock. It is surprising to note that only 3.65 percent of the respondents consult it, any other.

Consultation of OPAC For purpose other than the book(s) on shelves

Majority (71.95) percent of them are not using the OPAC for the purpose other than the books(s) on shelves. 28.05 percent of them using OPAC for other than books.

Difficulties faced by the Respondents in Locating the Books

Most of the respondents (67.07 percent) responded that they have not any difficult, only 32.93 percent of them responded; they find difficulty in locating the books in the library through OPAC.

Time Spent by the Respondents:

Most of (67.07 percent) the respondents spent less than 15 Minutes to consult the OPAC 24.39 percent of them spend more than 15 Minutes for the use of OPAC.

Table 1: User's approaches to OPAC

S. No	Access Points	NO. of Students	Percent
1.	By Author	58	70.73
2.	By Title	42	51.21

3.	By Subject	38	46.34
4.	By Publishers	30	36.58
5.	By Class Number	04	4.87
6.	Any Other	01	1.21

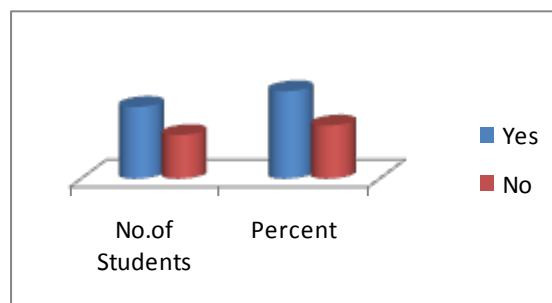
The above table reveals that 70.73 percent of the respondents approach the OPAC by author(s). 51.21 percent of the users approach OPAC under the title, 46.34 percent of the respondents approach the OPAC through the subject, 36.58 percent of the respondents approach the OPAC through Publishers and 4.87 percent of the respondents approach the OPAC through the class number and only 1.21 percent of them any other. When we compare all the five approaches to the users, author approach is more familiar to the respondents as compared to title, subject, publishers, class number and any other.

Table 2: Satisfaction of users in OPAC Arrangement

S.No	OPAC Arrangement Satisfaction	NO. of Students	Percent
1.	Yes	51	62.20
2.	No	31	37.80
Total		82	100.00

The above table shows the satisfaction of students in arrangement of OPAC, the most of the respondents (62.20 percent) of them satisfied with the present arrangement of OPAC in the Library, but only 37.80 percent of respondents are not satisfied.

Figure1: OPAC Arrangement Satisfaction

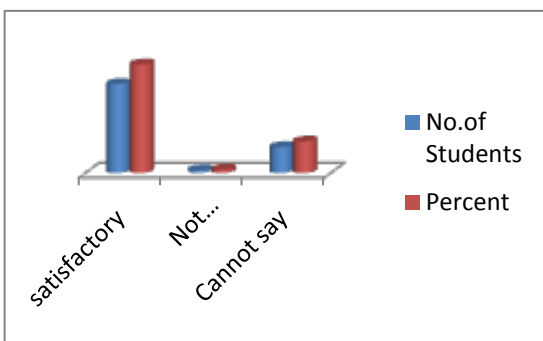


Respondent's opinion(s) about the location of OPAC

The OPAC should be located at such a place that students should find it convenient to use it. There is no second opinion about it, it should be placed at the entrance of the library and also it should be located

nearer to the book stocks as well. The above table reveals that the student's opinions about the locations of the library OPAC, 75.61 percent of the students are satisfied with the present location of the OPAC 21.95 percent of the students have not responded to this question and 2.44 percent of them are not satisfied.

Figure 2: The Respondents Opinion(s) about the Location of OPAC



CONCLUSION

The online catalogue not only an instrument of change in today's libraries, it is also ever changeable. Automated library systems in general and specially on line catalogues will continue to be produced and enhanced from a variety of sources; in – house development, library consortia and commercial firms. This will result in a diversity of online catalogues for some times to come. Librarians must continue to play the role of change agent for the online catalogue. But this will require that they make efforts to learn about the potential of online retrieval, catalogue access issues that cannot be couched in the familiar terms of card catalogue and use user-system interface problems and promises.

From the study, it is evident the OPAC is used by engineering students. This is due to the fact that engineering students seek up- to -date information to augment their study. The use of OPAC by students has increased their information retrieval rate especially in the location of books and other reading materials in the library. This is evident in the fact that all the responses are satisfied with a search outputs.

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