

REVIEW ARTICLE

FROM CARD CATALOGUE TO WEB OPAC

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 17th February, 2018
Received in revised form
25th March, 2018
Accepted 16th April, 2018
Published online 30th May, 2018

ABSTRACT

Due to the development of Information Technology in Libraries, Card catalogue changed the form of web opac. Web OPAC is a library catalogue on the Web or Intranet. Users can search the required information by connecting to Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of Web OPAC anytime during the day and from anywhere in the world.

Keywords:

Card Catalogue, OPAC, Web Opac.

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INTRODUCTION

Web OPAC is a systematic application and not exploitation of information technology. The concept of Web OPAC is very well established and practiced successfully in developed countries especially in USA and UK. Majority of their libraries are well equipped with it and offer regular service to their members. The development of Web OPAC activities can be seen as evolution of OPAC activities into Web OPAC. Simply stated, a Web OPAC is a library catalogue on the Web or Intranet. Users can search the required information by connecting to Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of Web OPAC anytime during the day and from anywhere in the world. A different definition can be seen on the Internet according to which a 'WEB OPAC is an independent program designed separately from the Library Information technology changed the entire environment of the library including resources, techniques, services, etc. OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) changed the traditional card catalogue system. The University Grants Commission (UGC) in India, with the help of the Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET), is playing an important role by providing funds and technical support for implementation of library management systems (LMSs), including OPACs, in university libraries. NIC is also playing important role by supplying free software to their institutions, after open source technologies many LMS are came up, most of the library are implementing the open source LMS.

Online cataloguing has greatly enhanced the usability of catalogues, Online catalogue does not need to be sorted statically the users can be access the online catalogue with the help of a computer system. Most of the online catalogue provides a search facility for any word of the title, author, keywords, subject etc.

Card Catalogue

Library fulfils all the information requirements of every human being. Every person is not able to purchase all types of reading materials. So, they are dependent on libraries/ information centres for fulfils their information needs. Library has organize many documents like books, thesis, manuscripts, periodicals, pamphlets, maps, motion pictures, tapes and other printed and non printed materials. We can well imagine as to what will happen if these documents are not prepared systematically. This system should fulfil all the search approaches about the documents like author, title, publisher and call number etc. Such a retrieval system in the context of a library is called library catalogue. According to Clark (2000) "The library catalogue is an essential tool. It is an index or a key to the collection, containing an entry representing each item" The various types of library catalogue are used to find out the desired information of user community in the library. The card catalogue fulfils the various approaches of the users like author, title, subject and call number, etc. Card catalogue was quite useful tool of information retrieval system Right now, most OPACs provide Author, Title, Author/Title, Subject Heading, Call Numbers, ISBN, ISSN and Keywords, etc., access points of the library . Users can broaden up or narrow down their search through use of Boolean operators OR, AND, and NOT in the OPACs. They also can limit search results by

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language, date of publication and type of document but these facilities are not available in card catalogue. The OPAC-user interface design is of utmost importance since it can have a decisive influence on the relationships between the OPAC and its users.

Online public access catalogue (OPAC): Catalogue is the earliest component of library to be computerized. Initially, computers were used by the library for preparation of catalogue entries and the same were then printed in the form of cards and thus, catalogue was generated using computers. This provision of making available bibliographic records of library holdings to the users for their search through different approaches is called Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). The library staff and the users can access it with the help of computers within the library or within campus wide intranet generated using computers. The OPAC has emerged recently in Indian libraries. Many libraries today are involved in the installation, training and use of OPAC system. OPACs are the keys to library's collection because they allow users to search out what documents are available in the collections. Online public access to a library catalogue has become an important part of library service over the last few years. According to Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science (ODLIS) defines OPAC as, "An acronym for online public access catalogue, a database composed of bibliographic records describing the books and other materials owned by a library or library system, accessible via public terminals or workstations usually concentrated near the reference desk to make it easy for users to request the assistance of a trained reference librarian. Most online catalogues are searchable by author, title, subject, and keywords and allow users to print, download, or export records to an e-mail account." OPAC can refer to either the actual workstation in the library, or to the interface provided by the library that is accessible from anywhere" With the passage of time and increased reliability of computerized catalogue, the system was opened for users. The interface was made more users friendly so that a person with minimum exposure to computers could use it conveniently. This provision of making available bibliographic records of library holdings to the users for their search through different approaches is called Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). The library staff and the users can access it with the help of computers within the library or within campus wide intranet.

Generations of OPAC

The Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs) were introduced in the U.K in early eighties. These have also been introduced in many Indian libraries. According to Hildreth (1995), OPAC can be categorized into three generations on the basis of the evolutionary changes to incorporate novel features in data. The search pattern was more or less same to that of traditional catalogue and provided title assistance to the users. OPAC system has progressively more migrated to Web-based OPAC interface. In digital era Web-OPAC is the newest components of information retrieval system. OPAC is connected with only computer terminals while Web-OPAC is connected with Internet. We can search any document in a particular library through Web-based OPAC from anywhere with the help of internet connectivity.

First Generation OPACs: The first generation of OPAC appeared in the early 1980s as crude finding lists, often based

on circulation system records or based on simple MARC records, perhaps with a circulation, serials, or acquisitions module. First generation OPACs were little more than poor imitations of print retrieval tools. Access points were limited only to those that were available in the card catalogue, that is, left-anchored searches. First generation OPACs were primarily book finding lists and worked best for known-item search.

Second Generation OPACs: Second generation OPACs are similar to information retrieval (IR) system and many features are borrowed from commercial bibliographical information systems. Second generations OPAC in the late 1980's showed major improvements. These OPACs were operated by a command language which is simplified for use of inexperienced user. In this generation we could use keyword searching with its use of Boolean operators and increasing the number of access points for searching. In second generation OPAC searches were of basically two types. Also greatly enhancing the searching process were truncation and wild card support, browsing capabilities (including index term browsing), use of full MARC records, interactive search refinement, and subject access to items. Second generation OPACs also provided greater manipulation of search results and provided better help systems with more informative error messages (although there is still a lot of work to be done in this area).

Third Generation OPACs: The third generation of OPAC system has combined the important features of the first and second generations by providing both phrase searching and keyword searching. In third Generation OPAC is converted to web-based OPAC system. The online catalogues are changing ever since, depending on the trends in information technology and its application in libraries. Some consider the systems that are currently in use (Web OPACs with GUI interfaces, Z39.50 compliant system, etc.) to be third-generation OPACs. OPAC system has progressively more migrated to Web-based OPAC interface. In digital era Web-OPAC is the newest components of information retrieval system. As we move beyond the second generation, however, there are differences in how the profession refers to the more recent developments in OPACs.

Web OPAC: Web OPAC is an OPAC, which is available on the web and with the help of internet Connection any person whether user or staff can access it from anywhere in the world and in any time. According to Washington University in St. Louis, "A Web OPAC interfaces, which uses the World Wide Web protocol to act as an OPAC." According 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 a self determining program intended separately from the library system. It is automatic to assist users to search the OPAC, during their personal search, for the ease of borrowing, in its place of searching through the card catalogue. Sometimes Web-OPAC is called online Catalogue. Since the introduction of online catalogue, the librarian has become aware of the importance of the interface. Until recently, user interfaces for catalogues have been frequently based on traditional menu or command structures with only some attention paid to user's requirements.

Features of Web OPAC: The following significant features of Web OPACs are given as under:

- Combination of search keys - as Author + Year, or Keyword + Year is possible.
- Displays whole bibliographic information details as appeared on reprints.
- To select search keys Author and Year drop-down list-box has been provided.
- Standardization of search key "Author" takes care to search all the related reference.
- It has ability to use hypertext links to facilitate navigation through bibliographic records.
- A move towards emulation of the appearance and search features similar to those found in a search engine is on.
- Linking to full text when available is there
- It is easy to get to through Internet.
- It is possible to search independently by "Author", by "Keyword" in title or "Year".
- Features of traditional OPACs such as storing bibliographic and sometimes fulltext databases; providing direct access to a library's bibliographic database by means of terminal or PC; search result in readily understandable form; sometimes remote access from the library's location; information about community events; links to circulation files, reference help, etc.; search through a variety of access points such as author, title, keyword, subject, periodical title, class number, series, ISSN, ISBN, etc., are available.
- Ability to help bring a convergence in searching of all electronic information available through one interface. e.g., catalogues, CD-ROMS, internet sources, etc.
- Graphical user interface (GUI), which is typically thought of as a combination of windows with pull-down or drop-down menus, icons and a pointing device such as mouse or trackball to manipulate information is available.
- The matching author get highlighted in all search results those are displayed.

Right now, most OPACs provide Author, Title, Author/Title, Subject Heading, Call Numbers, ISBN, ISSN and Keywords, etc., access points. OPACs provide users with many more means of searching and accessing information in various formats than the traditional card catalogues. OPAC and Web OPAC are related to each other in a number of various aspects such as searching, accessing and browsing in both the cases provides pre-coordinated as well as post-coordinated phrases options. OPAC usage is limited, only the persons in LAN/Intranet can use it while Web OPAC usage is worldwide web anyone can access it from anywhere in any time with the help of internet connection.



Figure 2. Indian Statistical Institute Library, Kolkata



Figure 3. National Law School Library, Bangalore



Figure 4. NAL Information Centre for Aerospace Science and Technology, Bangalore

Differences Between Card Catalogue And Web-OPAC:

There are many big differences between the OPAC and the card catalogue: Almost every single part of the bibliographic record is accessible through keyword searching; this capability helps users find data contained in notes, including contents notes.

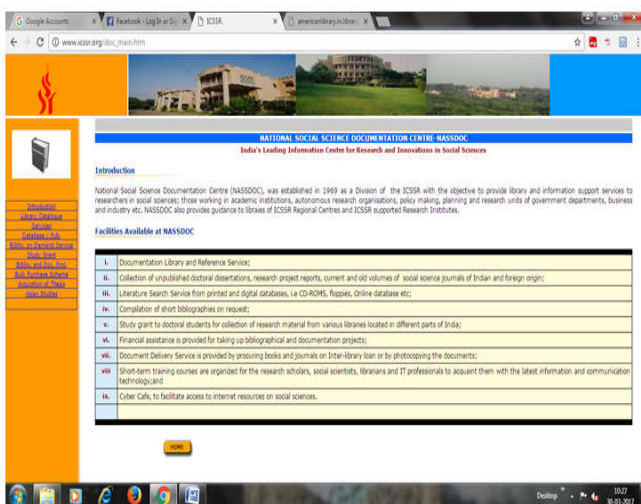


Figure 1. National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASDOC)

List of web-OPAC in India

- The following are some existing Web OPACs in India:
- Central Library, Indian Institute of Bombay
- http://www.library.iitb.ac.in/newsearchbook/opac_s.php?m_memchk_flg=&m_summarN
- National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASDOC)
- http://www.icssr.org/doc_main.htm
- American Centre Information Resource Centres' in India
- <http://americanlibrary.in.library.net/>
- British Council Libraries in India
- <http://library.britishcouncil.org.in/simplecatsearch.asp>
- Cochin University of Science and Technology Library
- <http://opac.cusat.ac.in/>
- Health Education Library for People
- <http://www.healthlibrary.com/search.html>
- Indian Institute of Ahmadabad
- <http://vslopac.iimahd.ernet.in/>
- Indian Institute of Delhi
- <http://10.217.116.6:8080/webopac/sso>
- Indian Institute of Technology Library, Kharagpur
- <http://www.library.iitkgp.ernet.in/lsearch.html>
- Indian Statistical Institute Library, Kolkata
- <http://library.isical.ac.in/>
- Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research Library, Mumbai
- <http://www.igidr.ac.in/lib/opac.htm>
- NAL Information Centre for Aerospace Science and Technology, Bangalore
- <http://www.icast.org.in/opac.html>
- National Institute of Bank Management Library, Pune
- <http://www.nibmindia.org/searchbooks.asp>
- National Law School Library, Bangalore
- <http://www.nls.ac.in/lib/opac/index.html>
- National Science Library, New Delhi

- <http://www.niscair.res.in/InformationResources/nsl/BookSearch.asp>
- Panjab University, Library
- <http://webopac.puchd.ac.in/>
- Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bangalore
- <http://203.200.41.70/cgi-bin/lsearch.html>
- Tata Institute of Fundamental Research Library, umbai
- <http://158.144.68.87/lsearch.html>
- Tata Institute of Social Sciences Library Mumbai
- <http://202.141.154.107/slim/Default.php>

Conclusion

OPAC is an interactive search module of an automated library management system. Any record is searched directly from a node within a database of the organisation or remotely through national and international networks. Members can see the collection and issue status of each document of the information centre. Thus finally we see that a lot of cataloguing work due to availability of various Web OPACs is reduced. Web OPACs improve the quality, speed and performance of the services offered by the libraries. Web OPACs get improve the quality, speed and performance of the services provided by the libraries. The interlibrary loan becomes easier with the use of e-mail and web. They could reserve or request online for the document of their interest.

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