USAGE STUDY OF ONLINE PUBLIC ACCESS CATALOGUE (OPAC) AT SOUTH EASTERN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT: OPAC is higher standard web based information searching tools and it has been used at the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka since 2013. This study aims to find out the user awareness on OPAC with its frequency of use and the highly used search term in OPAC. Also aims to propose suggestion in order to enhance the usage of OPAC. A questionnaire survey method used with stratified random sampling technique to conduct the study.200 questionnaires were used among undergraduates of FAC, FIA, FMC and FE and with 84% response rate the results were analyzed. 10% of undergraduates did not have any idea about OPAC. However, all the undergraduates of FE aware and understand about OPAC. Around 60% of Undergraduates use OPAC to retrieve the information while the rest 40% never use OPAC. The usage frequency of OPAC showed in variation. A significant nine percent of Undergraduates use OPAC frequently to fulfill their needs. This is the point where need to promote the other undergraduate to use OPAC in such manner. More than one third of the Undergraduate use OPAC at library premises only while the 25% use OPAC anywhere. Mostly the OPAC is being used to search and locate the material in the library. However, a considerable number of Undergraduates also use OPAC to find out issued/ non-issued items, number of copies, reserve, renew the materials and their own OPAC account details. Title, author and keyword are mostly used access point in OPAC. The Undergraduates need to be given awareness and training on OPAC.

Keywords: OPAC, Access point, SEUSL, Undergraduate

INTRODUCTION

Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is an online bibliography of library collections such as books, journals, AV materials, electronic materials etc., that is always available and accessible to the public in the world. With the rapid development of technology and the availability of the Internet and its development majority of the libraries in the global visualized their bibliographic information as OPAC with the help of automation of library services and operation by using an integrated library management system. A typical library explore the bibliographic information of their information through catalogue. It help the users to search, identify and locate the information materials available at the library. OPAC facilitate with many access points in order to user search his/her information properly and precisely. Also OPAC facilitate to search information on title, author, subjects, keywords, ISBN/ ISSN, publisher, edition information, Boolean operators, truncation, proximity, location availability and etc.

The information in OPAC is unique and standards all over the world for a particular book or information source. That is the bibliographic information are fed with standard framework of MARC (Machine Readable Catalogue) records. Therefore, it can be simply matched with any other library OPAC and library professionals copy the catalogue through Z 39.50 compliant system.

South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL) was established in 1995. It is located in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka. The SEUSL presently consists with six faculties namely Faculty of Arts and Culture (FAC), Faculty of Management and Commerce (FMC), Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS), Faculty of Islamic studies and Arabic (FIA), Faculty of Engineering (FE) and Faculty of Technology (FT). Around 5000 under

graduate students and more than 100 post graduate students currently engage with their degree programmes at this university.

The SEUSL library has the collection around 120,000 and more than 4000 registered users. The library has entered fully web based automated activities in 2013.with KOHA open source library integrated management system.

OPAC of the KOHA facilitate with many features which include user login account where the user can enter his/her account find the borrowed history, dues, any fines, search history, reserve materials, renew the borrowed materials in addition to search windows. In search it provide complete bibliographic information of the resource material including number of copies, availability in the library, current status of every copy indicating whether it is "available" , "not for loan", "Checked out" and if reserved, reservation with reservation priorities. Also the OPAC facilitate to browse item in the shelf with either side close or next items. The search result facilitate to link with web and online based book side like Google book and Amazon book where the user can go through content and few pages of the books without physically browsing and touching books.

This paper focus to analyze the usage of OPAC by the student of South Eastern University of Sri Lanka with the following objectives:

- To find out users awareness on OPAC and its usefulness in information seeking

- To analyze the usage of OPAC and frequency in searching information on library materials

- To find out the highly used access point or search term in OPAC by user

- To find out reasons that restrict the usage of OPAC by users

- To propose suggestion in order to enhance the usage of OPAC.

METHODOLOGY

The study is limited to users of main library of South Eastern University of Sri Lanka and excluding the users from Faculty of Technology (FT) since the FT has newly established and the number of user low and restricted to only the first year student only.

This was survey based study and well-structured questionnaire was employed to collect data. The population of the study was all registered library undergraduate students of the main library from FAC, FMC, FIA and FE and which was included all first year students, second year students, third year students and forth year students as well.

Stratified random sampling technique was used to extract sampling and 200 questionnaire were distributed with selected sample for this study. The study sample is shown in table 01.

Table 01. Faculty wise study sample

No	Faculty	Sample quantity
01	Faculty of Arts and Culture (FAC)	52
02	Faculty of Mangement and Commerce (FMC)	60
03	Faculty of Islamic studies and Arabic (FIA)	68
04	Faculty of Engineering	20
Total		200

The data were collected in 2018 and systematically analyzed using simple statistical methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The success and precision of any questionnaires survey methods basically depend on the response rate of the questionnaire. The present study reveals that the response rate is quite high which is more than 80%. The faculty wise and year or batch wise distribution of questionnaire and response rate are given in table 02. Users from the FE higher response rate compare with other three faculties. The response rate of first year students is comparatively low irrespective of the faculties when compare with other three batches. The final year or the fourth year students shows higher response irrespective of the faculties. This reflect that the students who have more work load show higher responsible in this study.

It is very clearly identified 12% of the users have no any idea about what is OPAC?, how to use OPAC?, and the purpose of using OPAC. Out of this 12% majority laying on FAC and FIA. Users from FE clearly understood the aspect of OPAC (Table 03).

Table 02: Faculty and year or batch wise response rate

NO	Faculty	Batch	Sample size	Respond quantity	Respond percentage
01	FAC	First year	14	10	71
		Second Year	14	11	79
		Third Year	12	10	83
		Fourth Year	12	11	92
02	FMC	First year	14	10	71
		Second Year	15	11	73
		Third Year	15	12	80
		Fourth Year	16	15	94
03	FIA	First year	17	14	82
		Second Year	19	16	84
		Third Year	16	14	88
		Fourth Year	16	15	94
04	FE	First year	04	03	75

		Second Year	05	04	80
		Third Year	05	05	100
		Fourth Year	06	06	100
Total			200	167	84

Table 03: The awareness OPAC among the users.

No	Faculties	Respondent	Know about OPAC
01	FAC	42	37
02	FMC	48	42
03	FIA	59	50
04	FE	18	18
Total		167	147

The mode of searching and selection of library materials by the user reflect in table 04. Where less than 60% of users from above all four faculties use OPAC to find out their required information and materials from the library. Around 40% of the users find the library materials in other mode. This is because of less awareness of OPAC mainly, and few number of computer terminals, placement of computer terminals, low Internet facilities, low band width and easy accessible of text book from the shelves are some other possible reasons. However, majority of the users stated that they select library materials by the combination of the above modes.

Table 04: The mode of selection of library materials

No	Mode	Frequency	Percentage
01	OPAC	98	58
02	Directly browsing from shelves	25	15
03	Staff assistance	21	13
04	Help from friends	18	11
05	Other	05	03

Table 05: OPAC usage frequency

No	Mode	Frequency	Percentage
01	Once needed/ frequently	15	09
02	Every day	19	12
03	Every week	18	11
04	Every Month	20	12
05	Occationally	14	08
06	Rarely	14	08
07	Never	67	40

The usage frequency of OPAC shows different pattern among the users. Many of users (40%) stated that they never use OPAC for selecting information and library materials. However, highly significant number of users (60%) use OPAC somehow for their information retrieval. Nine percent of users use OPAC, if they need to extract any

information or materials from the library and that is not depend on Daily, Weekly or Monthly. They said that sometime they use OPAC more than five time within a day.

The study also concentrate the place where the undergraduate students use OPAC (Table 06). 70% of the undergraduate use OPAC at the library only. A significant percentage of undergraduates use OPAC at anywhere and anytime by using their smart phones, laptops and even PCs. This is reflect changes in attitude of users towards in information seeking.

Table 06: OPAC using places

No	Place	Frequency	Percentage
01	At the library	61	68
02	At the university	6	05
03	At the home	2	02
04	At anywhere	23	25

The study also revealed that why client using OPAC. The results is shown in table 07. The majority of the client said, they use OPAC to search and identify the available information in the library. However, 64 percentage of client use OPAC not only search and identify but also use identify the issued and non-issued items, to locate the book, identify number of copies, and reserve the books. A few number of clients (5%) use OPAC in order to check their accounts with all other OPAC relevant activities.

Table 07: Reasons for using OPAC

No	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
01	Identify books only	64	70
02	Identify books with its status, availability, copies, etc	20	15
03	Check account with other OPAC relavant activites	06	05

Table 08 clearly explore the usage of access points or search term in OPAC by the users. OPAC facilitate many access point in order to find out an information. Title, author and keyword or subject are highly used (more than 80%) in OPAC to search out the materials. The undergraduate very rarely use ISBN/ ISSN and accession number as search term for their information retrieval. It is very obvious that many undergraduate use combination of search term in OPAC to full fill their information needs.

Table 08: Access point or search term used in OPAC

No	Access points	Frequency	Percentage
01	Title	78	86
02	Author	75	83
03	Keyword/ Subjects	85	94
04	Publisher	10	11
05	ISBN/ ISSN	02	02

| 06 | Accession number | 02 | 02 |
| 07 | Class/ Call Number | 00 | 00 |

However, majority of undergraduates use keywords or subjects to retrieve the information irrespective of the title and author initially. Once they find a set of materials based on subject filtration, they have consider author, title publisher information to choose very relevant materials.

Table 09: Difficulties in using OPAC

No	Difficulties	Frequency	Percentage
01	No or less awareness	42	25
02	No enough training	70	42
03	Internet problem	13	08
04	Low staff assistance	23	14
05	Less number of PC terminals	14	08
06	Complicated	05	03

Finally the study also examined the difficulties or problems in using OPAC. The result is explored in table 09. 42% of user stated that they need further training on OPAC whereas 25% user stated they did not have any awareness on OPAC.

CONCLUSION

OPAC is the wonderful information retrieval or searching tools to be used in library as it is web based and MARC features. The considerable number of undergraduates unaware about OPAC. Therefore, a series proper planned awareness programme and training programme on OPAC have to implement to the users. In addition to all other mentioned difficulties in this study affect the usage of OPAC among the undergraduates. All these difficulties and short coming need to rectify in order to motivate the users towards OPAC.

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