Library Automation and Online Services: Impact on Readers

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Abstract:
Library Automation indicates a high degree of mechanism of different day-to-day and repetitive tasks to be performed by Library staff as well as by users/readers. With the advent of Information technology and computers, human efforts are limited to a great extent.

Library automation can be defined thus: the application of computers to perform routine and traditional library housekeeping activities and operations like. Acquisition, circulation of books and reading materials, cataloguing, indexing, reference service and serials regulation. Automation is used to reduce the amount of library staff time which was devoted to repetitive and routine library activities which are done for the proper functioning of any library activities and services. It is also to be seen that, various library operations are automated in such way that maximum benefit for providing library services effectively and efficiently at a minimum time and energy.

Consonant to the Webster's dictionary "automation is the technique of making an apparatus, a process or a system to operate automatically." In other words, automation is the machinery that mathematically manipulates information storing, selecting, presenting and recording, inputting data or internally generated data. In this way, the word 'automation' is used for automatic technical processing.

Keywords: *Automation, Impact, Online, Reader, Library Automation*

1. Library Automation

Library Automation indicates a high degree of mechanism of different day-to-day and repetitive tasks to be performed by Library staff as well as by users / readers. With the advent of Information Technology and computers, human efforts are limited to great extent.

The introduction of computers has enabled librarians and library staff to apply library automation. When one talks of library automation, it is principally the use of computers, related soft-wares and peripherals media (disks, optical media, magnetic types, storage devices and other appliances) which have enabled computer based products and services easy in library.

2. Definition

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and reading materials, cataloguing, indexing, reference service and serials regulation. Automation is used to reduce the amount of library staff time which was devoted to repetitive and routine library activities which are done for the proper functioning of any library activities and services. It is also to be seen that, various library operations are automated in such way that maximum benefit for providing library services effectively and efficiently at a minimum time and energy.

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Automation is used to make a system automated that is self-active. For this work, electronic machines are used to automate libraries. Thus, library automation means the application of machines to perform the different routine, repetitive and clerical jobs which involve various function and services of the libraries.

In libraries automation is referred to as the process of automation in house functions such as circulation, acquisition, serials control, cataloguing etc.

3. Objectives
The main objectives of library automation are as under.
1. To improve effective and efficient control over entire library operation.
2. Library collection can be improved and controlled.
3. To avoid duplication of repetitive work.
4. To share effectively the resource among various libraries at a local, regional and national level.
5. To obtain the services of the existing staff effectively and efficiently.

4. Why Library Automation is needed?
For various reasons, the library automation is needed.
1. By automation new techniques are adopted.
2. To control over information explosion and growth od documents.
3. By automation accuracy and promptness in service is achieved.
4. Efficiency can be increased.
5. Large data can be handled with ease, great comfort and accuracy.
6. Information can be available in Machine readable form.
7. Problem of space can be solved.
8. Time of library staff and users can be saved.
9. Collection can be controlled.
10. Resources can be shared nationally and internationally by computers.
11. Duplication of work can be avoided.

5. Importance of Library Automation
1. Time can be saved for library users.
2. Librarians can enable to provide better services to the users.
3. Time can be saved of clerical and respective tasks.
4. Collection and streamline circulation can be consistently enhanced.
5. Library users can do more interfaces with information resources.
6. Better facilities for the users by collaborating with other automated libraries.
7. Ease of maintenance of statistics and over dues.
8. Ease in reporting to management.
9. Better access to library collection.
10. It allows easy sharing of resources with other libraries.

6. Impact and Advantages
1. By automation timely access to various library materials can be provided.
2. It eliminates routine and repetitive jobs and perform them more quickly, efficiently and effectively.
3. Time can be saved from material acquisition serials management, budget administration and record keeping.
4. It supports new means of information retrieval by introducing library users/readers to global information.
5. It motivates users/readers and equips them with problem solving and information retrieval skills and provides them with lifelong learning experience.
6. It allows library users/ readers to search collection in other libraries.
7. It enables library users / readers to use search strategies that exceed those that can be used with card catalogue.
8. Circulation work can be controlled excellently.
9. Cataloguing is faster and provides instant access to records.
10. It improves computer awareness among users / readers.
11. It increases productivity in terms os library work as well as providing services.
12. It eliminates human errors while performing routine library work.
13. Professional staff need not spend much time to do the routine library work.

7. Conclusion
Library automation is essential to provide better services as quickly as possible and library automation is the appropriate answer for it. By automation of libraries, circulation related services, OPAC, acquisition of documents, serials management, library budget and statistics, Information, access services and stock verification are easily over come. Not only that, library automation provides users/readers with timely access to materials eliminates routine tasks and performs them more effectively and efficiently, It reduces time spent on materials acquisition, serial Control management and record keeping.

Thus, library automation helps the librarians in the formulation of library policies much effectively. Not only that, statistical analysis of the performance of library helps in formulating policies for coming years.

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