

## **A STUDY ON LIBRARY HOUSE-KEEPING OPERATIONS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In this paper, an attempt is made to delineate the Objectives of three automated operations considered in this study, viz., acquisition Circulation and serials control. Each operation involves a number of automated functions which are briefly described? These explanations convey the sign and meaning of finance the functions involved in each of these operations hold good for the remaining part of the study.

**KEYWORDS:** Library, Automation, India, Functions, University, and library science.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Acquisitions are mainly repetitive work/routine because it is not unusual to find the same information being repeated at various stages right from selection to the procurement processes. Acquisitions involves a great deal of record keeping as wells the usual difficulties soft racking Orders and determining when claims should be produced Manual acquisitions systems are lab our-and paper-intensive, and usually produce only limited amount of management information. Automated generate a wide variety of reports which help in taking appropriate decisions at various stages of acquisition operation.

'Acquisitions' encompasses all aspects of the Procurement of all types of library materials, whether by Purchase, gift or exchange, from the request stage through transfer of materials to cataloguing. Fiscal processes are also included within the scope of acquisitions<sup>1</sup>. Follow the common library However, this study will follow with common library practice of using the term " Acquisitions' to collectively denote those tasks which support the procurement of Library materials which are published one nonrecurring basis, including books, technical Reports, government publications, and a/v materials. The procurement may be either through purchase or through gifts. The major objectives of automated acquisitions systems may be summarized as follows:

- To reduce labour-and paper-intensive work involved in manual acquisitions.
- To maintain up-to-date information/record fall activities involved in Acquisitions.
- To have effective and efficient control over ordering, claiming and cancellation.
- To provide accurate and timely financial information Functions.
- To provide necessary management information reports, whenever they are required.

While difference in purchasing practices and procurement regularities may lead to local variations lead in acquisitions systems, certain basic characteristics and Work steps are always similar in all the systems.

The library acquisitions process begins with the selection of materials by the Acquisitions staff or with the arrival of a request from the patrons. The libraries Catalogue and on-order files are first consulted to determine whether the item is on order or already in its collection. A thorough checking is, normally, done to avoid unwanted duplication. If the acquisitions system contains document Data file (bibliographic data file of library holdings), it is searched to determine whether given material is already owned. Otherwise, (i.e. in case the system does not have on-line catalogue) the manual catalogue is consulted manually. Further, on-order/in-process file will have to be checked to see whether the Item is already on order. If a record is already there either in the on-line catalogue or in the on-order file, assuming that an additional copy will be purchased, the System should support the creation of a new order record just by copying automatically the relevant field. By this, the operator's efforts and time to create an order record are minimized.

However, for a completely new order (i.e., when no matching records are either found in on-line catalogue or is on-order file), all the details are to be filled-in afresh. While specific details will Necessarily vary from one system to another, each order record typically Consists of some combination of the following fields: an Order control number; an order date; a purchase order Number; a requester name or code; a vendor name or code; An indication of the acquisition type (a new order, standing order, prepaid order, and so on), price, a fun name or code to which the item is to be charged; and a status Code or other information required for the tracking of an item at various stages of acquisitions process.

A good acquisitions system supports various order types such as standing order, on-approval, Prepaid order, gifts and exchanges and so on. Depending upon the type of order, the system should accept

the relevant details from the operator. An efficient system handles the ordering of multiple copies and multiple volume documents by accepting minimum possible information and allowing for copying the Repetitive data from record to record. The system should be capable of good data validation and verifications. Through the use of built-in data checks the system should ensure the correctness of the data element identifiers, data element values, and data Interrelationships.

Once an order record has been generated, the system must be capable of transforming the input data into actual orders to be sent to the vendor or other Sources. In India, as the transmission of order via magnetic media or telecommunication lines is not yet in practice, the orders have to be printed by the system as per the specifications of the individual library.

Serials management, an integral part of library operations, has become increasingly complex over the years. Serials management always has been an area that is labour intensive, & demanding high degree of attention to accuracy and detail. The benefits of the application of automation in other areas of library operations is now well established; it is a natural progression for librarians and system designers now to seek to apply the power of the computer to control one of librarianship's most troublesome processes.

As used in this study, the term 'Serials' denotes those publications which are issued in successive parts on a recurring basis, usually, but not necessarily, at regularly scheduled intervals and usually having numerical or chronological designation. The term 'Serials control' refers to those tasks which support the procurement and management of serials collection in a library.

Circulation is a central and highly visible function of a typical library. Circulation, which is often compared with inventory control, involves a great deal of record keeping and correspondingly, staff time. It is highly essential that the records have to be accurate and all information has to be updated immediately after each transaction. In other words, circulation controls are useful if it is in online real-time interactive mode.

Circulation, by definition, encompasses all aspects of patron loan processing and management including closed reserves, holds, material booking and in-library use of the collection<sup>1</sup> Automated support for circulation control vastly improves a library's ability to rapidly and accurately record the loan transactions, to monitor these transactions, to record return of lent items and to support other related circulation functions.

Charge/Issue is one of the fundamental functions in a circulation control system. For charging an item, the Patron Identification Number (PIN) and Documentation Identification Number (DIN) are identified to the system (through OCR or keying in the data or some other means) which are eventually validated by the system for their correctness. Only if both are through with the validation check does the system records the transaction and allows the patron to borrow the item. The validation should not only check whether the entered code (PIN or DIN) is correct but also see whether the total number of items borrowed is within the borrowing privilege of the patron.

In the interest of efficiency, the system should Support having different patron types with different borrowing periods. Further, it should allow different types of items to be loaned for different loan periods as prescribed by the library. A good system allows multiple books to be borrowed in a single transaction. This will, of course, save the time required for each transaction. If needed, the system should print due date slip also. The due date calculation should be done by the system taking into account the general and special holidays as applicable to that library.

The discharge function basically involves receiving the item back into the library and updating the patron's record to reflect the returning of the item a producing an acknowledgement for returning the item, if required. As in case of haring, even in discharging the PIN and DIN are identified to the system. The system after suitable validation, updates the concerned records suitably.

This function allows for the patron to extend the loan period. This function may be thoroughly controlled by the patron type, material type, the reservation status of the book, and other conditions as applicable to a individual library. As many a times, renewal has to be done with or without the presence of the patron and/or item, the control has to be exercised by the system automatically.

In case the item to be renewed has a hold (reservation) or recall outstanding, the renewal should be denied, of course depending on the library policy. Again, depending upon the library policy, successive renewals may be restricted.

This function helps the operator to reserve a document which is on loan. It is the usual practice in libraries to maintain the holds queue on first-come first-serve basis. Even in this function, before actually recording the holds, the system has to govern the hold placement by Material type, patron type and other conditions as required by the library policy. Upon discharge of the item, the system should produce a notice to be sent to the patron at the head of the Queue. If the patron does not

claim the item within a specified time, the system should automatically send the notice to the next patron in the queue. If the situation demands, the system should allow authorized persons to modify the holds queue and/or to cancel the holds to any patron. The system should be flexible enough to accommodate the handling of exceptional situation as and when it may arise.

It is not an unusual situation in libraries to recall the items borrowed by a patron. Even in this function, the system may allow recall to be governed by patron type and material type. Though, normally, an item is recalled if it is overdue and/or is reserved by some patron, there may be other conditions for recall such as item is required for some purpose in the library, the item has to be sent for binding and so on. An item is said to be overdue, if it is not returned to the library on or before date established at the time of charge or renewal or recall. The system should detect the overdue items and produce suitable overdue notices to the patron. When required, the system should be able to provide listings of overdue items and patrons having overdue items.

In order to ensure the prompt returning of items, it is the usual practice in libraries to levy fines against a patron for failure to return items by the due date. Usually, the fine accrued will be calculated upon the discharge of an overdue item. While calculating fines, it is necessary for the system to consider (as per the library policy) the type of item, the patron class, and other specifications as applicable to that particular library. Further, the system should take into account the holiday list during the calculation of fines. If the library policy allows, the system should allow for partial payment of fines also. An efficient system allows suitably authorized staff for waiving of the fines and levying of fines for document (s) mutilated by the patron.

When library materials patron, the system should replacement cost. If the item does not contain calculating the cost, the staffs to enter an amount is declared lost by the able to calculate the bibliographic record for the required information for system should allow library staff to enter an amount. Similarly, depending upon the policy of a library, the books may be treated as lost when the system accrue to the account of the patron an amount equal to the replacement value of the item lost (or not returned).

The principal aspects of this function which distinguish it from ordinary circulation control are the shorter loan periods, the class of patron permitted to use materials on reserve, the handling of fines and other charges, and the handling of over dues. All of the functions available in ordinary circulation

control must be available in reserve collection circulation also. This function may include the circulation of un-catalogued items also. The principal aspects of this function which distinguish it from ordinary circulation control are the type of items to be circulated, shorter loan periods, the class of patrons permitted to use these materials, the handling of fines and other charges and also the handling of over dues. Special materials, here, include all non-conventional information sources such as microforms, A/V materials etc. All of the functions available in ordinary circulation control must be available in special collection circulation also.

Many of the functions require the support of printing at the work station. The system should, therefore, support printing of due date slips, receipt for discharge and fine, hold slips, overdue notices, reports and other communication letters required by the circulation staffroom time to time. Access control is a critical function in circulation control. This function prevents unauthorized access to the system. Normally access control is achieved by allowing the user to interact with it only through a password. Further, the system may be made to identify the 'access level' of the user. Depending upon this access level, the system allows for accessing files/records/fields. A system may allow even patrons of the library to interact with it. But, their (patrons') access is restricted only to read-only access to those Files required for answering usual enquiries. Even among staff, depending upon the 'access level' the system should allow them to carry out only those functions which are permitted to them.

The main purpose of this function is to counter the effects of systems' automatic features and default limits on various transactions. Override should be carefully controlled to ensure its correct use. Examples of override include override on loan period, override on material-type restriction, override limit on number of items charged to a patron, override queue placement and soon.

A good system maintains correct and current financial records and good audit trail. The system should maintain record of fines due by a patron and by item (so that the patron can know how much has been charged for him/her for each item). The system should, at any point of time, provide information about fines levied, fines paid, amount levied for replacement of lost documents, amount paid for replacement of lost document, deposits levied (if any), and deposits refunded (if any). Maintenance of a full audit trail particularly for financial transactions essential. The audit trail Details

should be recorded in such a way that they identify the person effecting the transaction, the date, the time, nature of transaction carried out, etc.

#### **7.4 CONCLUSION**

A library is a growing organization. The growth results in increased number of documents, users as well as routines, operations and transactions. To handle the operations and transactions there is an increasing need for professional staff. Stagnant staff may adversely affect the quality and efficiency of work output. To meet the continuous demands on staff as well as to improve efficiency and effectiveness, computers are being used by the libraries in developed countries to automate their operations.

Automation provides improved services and offers other added benefits. Computers are used for various reasons, such as economy, improvement of services, and efficient management with the help of management information, co-operation, centralization and research.

The library has to invest huge amounts on automation. It may not be economical but there is a possibility for effective and faster operations. Optimum utilization of the facilities, increased number of operations and services may work out to be economical.

The computers initially used for a single function is known as standalone-system. Now the software supports multi-function systems known as integrated systems. The integrated systems are inter-related and interact to share common information and files for all the functions. Now the software is available in modules, so that the library can opt for one or two modules initially and subsequently add the remaining modules, in future, depending upon the availability of resources.

Every library is composed of a number of sets of related activities called functions, such as acquisition, circulation and serial control. Initially the software supported limited operations (that are possible in manual methods). Continuous research and development of software supported extension of computer-use to several other functions and operations. At present, automation is supporting several operations that are difficult in manual methods. The operations that are possible and being carried out with the help of computers were never thought of as possible in earlier days. Results of continuous research and development in Information Technology (IT) are extended for practical application, and as a result the libraries are able to offer better services. Application of

computers can contribute to bring about a change and enhance the image and status of the university library, particularly in the Indian context.

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