

**Effectiveness of On-Line Public Access Catalogues (OPAC) in Fulfilling
the Users' Bibliographical Information Needs in University
Libraries in Sri Lanka.**



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ABSTRACT

The Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is one of the most important and useful information retrieval tools in libraries. It is a computerized online catalogue system, which facilitate to get bibliographical information of the materials in libraries since mid-1970s in the world. In year 2000 the university of Moratuwa, implemented OPAC using of LibSys, in first time of the university library history in Sri Lanka. OPAC can provide facilities like high quality bibliographic information, greater number of access points, interactive searching, on-line training, backup facilities, rapid database management system, authority control files ect.

The main objective of the study is to identify the bibliographical information needs of those who used OPACs and features of OPACs Sri Lankan university libraries in order to evaluate their effectiveness. Further identification of limitations and problems related to OPACs in Sri Lankan university libraries is another objective. The ultimate and the key objectives of this research in to suggest proposals that would contribute to upgrade the OPACs in university libraries in Sri Lanka.

Primary data was collected using questionnaires, personal interviews and observations. The non-probability purposive sampling method was used to select the six university main libraries out of 15 university libraries in Sri Lanka.

The study revealed the key parameters of the OPAC system in Sri Lanka in order to eliminate or reduce technical obstacles, administrable problems and user's complications. To overcome these problems both staff and the users needs to have high level of computer literacy. They also must have s sufficient knowledge on the nature of the components of bibliographical databases. Selecting the suitable library automation software and promoting uniformity between university library activities are the other reforms necessary in this connection.