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Poster

Importance of usage of open source software in libraries & enhancing open source technology based teaching in Library & Information Science

Being a fast developing country, Sri Lanka needs rapid information retrieval for its socio economic development. On the other hand, government has initiated e-Sri Lanka policy for giving people better services in an electronic environment. Information Communication Technology (ICT) based infrastructures are being covered in urban areas as well as most rural areas in Sri Lanka.

In this situation, libraries have major responsibilities by allowing people to access information without difficulty. For that libraries should use good functioning Library Automation Software Systems (LASS). Therefore, Library and Information Science academic institutes should deliver better knowledge in Information Technology (IT) related areas for their scholars. Especially, it is essential to provide theoretical and practical knowledge for planning, designing and developing LASS. Because they are the people governing the libraries in the future, digital libraries with good knowledge contents are required to be implemented in Sri Lanka.

Major functions of LASS are, web based Online Public Access Catalogue – OPAC, web based Circular System, Auto – Remind Notice and Fines, Barcode Support, Full MARC Support and Reading list. Even though each university library and some other public libraries use LASS, most LASSs are not functioning with the view to serve their users and staff members. Most libraries of Sri Lanka use commercial software, which result in additional payment for services.

Open Source Software Systems (OSSS) are a good solution for that, because we can get all the services free of charge. If both required expertise knowledge in the field of IT and OSSS development knowledge is available, anybody can develop and modify required software locally. Librarians with good IT and OSSS development knowledge, will be able to develop their LASS by themselves.

Keywords: Information Communication Technology, Library Automation Software Systems, Library and Information Science, Online Public Access Catalogue – OPAC