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LIBRARY AUTOMATION USING SOUL 2.0 SOFTWARE

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Abstract

In this paper researcher discuss about library automation using SOUL 2.0 software. Library automation refers to the use of computer to automate the typical procedures of libraries such as cataloging and circulation. Library automation in the broadest sense can be taken to mean the employment of machines for library processes. Library automation offers many opportunities to improve service to library patrons. Software for University Libraries (SOUL) is an state-of-the-art integrated library management software designed and developed by the INFLIBNET Centre based on requirements of college and university libraries. It is a user-friendly software developed to work under client-server environment. The software is compliant to international standards for bibliographic formats, networking and circulation protocols.

Keywords:-Library automation, SOUL 2.0 software, SOUL modules

Library Automation

Library automation refers to the use of computer to automate the typical procedures of libraries such as cataloging and circulation. The word 'library automation' is being used in literature for the last four decades. A perusal of the literature would indicate that many authors have not tried to define the term explicitly. They use the term 'Library automation' to mean the use of computers as an aid for library activities. However, some authors have tried to define the term. For instance Markers (1967) says "Library automation in the broadest sense can be taken to mean the employment of machines for library processes. In general, however, library automation has come to mean the application of computers and related data processing equipment to libraries.

Determining the functions that you wish to automate and their priorities relative to each other is important for all sorts of reasons. If needs and priorities are clear, functions can be automated in phases, allowing for more effective use of frequently scarce funding. Moreover, it is a way to develop credibility with funding agencies and be able to take advantage of "sudden" funding opportunities. Finally, evaluations of systems and options will be easier and more productive if you are able to match your highest functional priorities against the corresponding modules available in the marketplace.

Advantages of Library Automation

- Easy & Efficient Management
- Proper & Updated Information to the Patrons
- Keep a check on the obsolete and less useful resource
- Motivate Patrons
- Increase usage of the available resource
- Source the right resource
- Right Information at the Right Place and at the Right Time
- Changing Roles of Librarian

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Steps of Library Automation

Broadly speaking the various aspects involved in automation project, viewed from the angle of System Development Cycle, may be grouped under the following three stages:

- Planning Stage
- Designing Stage
- Operational Stage

Overview of SOUL 2.0 SOFTWARE

Software for University Libraries (SOUL) is an state-of-the-art integrated library management software designed and developed by the INFLIBNET Centre based on requirements of college and university libraries. It is a user-friendly software developed to work under client-server environment. The software is compliant to international standards for bibliographic formats, networking and circulation protocols. After a comprehensive study, discussions and deliberations with the senior professionals of the country, the software was designed to automate all house keeping operations in library. The software is suitable not only for the academic libraries, but also for all types and sizes of libraries, even school libraries. The first version of software i.e. SOUL 1.0 was released during CALIBER 2000.

The version of the software i.e. SOUL 2.0 was released in January 2009. The database for new version of SOUL is designed for latest versions of MS-SQL and MySQL (or any other popular RDBMS). SOUL 2.0 is compliant to international standards such as MARC 21 bibliographic format, Unicode based Universal Character Sets for multilingual bibliographic records and NCIP 2.0 and SIP 2 based protocols for electronic surveillance and control.

SOUL Training Programme

The Centre is organising intensive five days training programme on "Installation and Operations of SOUL 2.0 Software" every month at Ahmedabad for those who have purchased SOUL 2.0 Software free of cost for one person and for additional person on payment basis. The training programme provides focus on the operational techniques of SOUL 2.0 with theory and hands on practice. The existing old SOUL user can also take part in the training on SOUL 2.0 by paying Rs. 5000/- (it includes Boarding, Lodging & Course Materials etc.) in favour of INFLIBNET Centre payable at Ahmedabad through Demand Draft (Cash/Cheque payment will not be accepted). Advance payment and prior intimation is required to enable us to make necessary arrangement.

The software comprises following modules.

- Acquisition
- Catalogue
- Circulation
- OPAC
- Serial Control
- Administration

The in-built network feature of the software will allow multiple libraries of the same university to function together as well as access to the distributed databases installed at various university libraries and union catalogue mounted at INFLIBNET using VSAT network.

- Acquisition
- Catalogue
- Circulation
- On-line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)
- Serial Control

- Administration

Conclusion

With the development of ICT, number of sophisticated software are developed and concept like Library 2.0, Web 2.0, Learning 2.0, and many more are coming up, which will be very useful to satisfy not only the end users but also to make the library operations fast, easy and transparent. Library automation is very much needed in any library. Librarians must aim for integrated software for library automation for their respective libraries. Because there is a strong need to provide web based library and information support services to end users by integrated library software.

Library profession is very important in the current era. Users, management of institutions, government authority, NAAC, Staff, etc. anybody can ask information of library day to day work. All types of information like acquisition of books, cataloguing of reading materials, circulation of reading materials, serial control, etc. is essential for the future development. In the SOUL 2.0 integrated library management software various reports are available in each module. In the software customization of reports is good option is available for the libraries for their requirements. So, SOUL 2.0 software is useful college and university libraries.

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