

# NETWORKS AS TIME SAVING DEVICES IN LIBRARIES

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## ABSTRACT

*In the present information society vast amount of information can be instantaneously accessed even from any part of the world.*

*Until a few years researchers used to start their work by requesting bibliographic searches. Information was obtained from libraries, by attending conferences, etc. But the advent of computer networking accessing information has become easy and quick and this has bridged the gap between the library and the user. The libraries of the future will become less paper libraries as more and more information is available on the networks.*

*The problems which most libraries face are large budget cuts and shortage of staff. Even though the resources that is money, material and manpower decrease; libraries find that there is a substantial increase in the demand for services and the demand for more information.*

*Since the PRL Library has been facing these problems, we have tried to devise ways and means whereby more services can be given with less resources by using new technology. Of course, most of the work described here is possible owing to the library automation, programme which was started in the early sixties and due to the availability of computers, local area network and the e-mail technology.*

## PROCUREMENT

We request the library clientele to give their request for ordering books on the LAN in a specific format. This same entry is edited and used as data for book procurement. This helps to eliminate data entry. The OPAC is searched to avoid duplication. If the records of the books which have been approved for purchase are available in the commercial databases, such as OCLC, Bookbank, etc; then the authenticated records are downloaded and used for computerised book procurement. We are also in the process of downloading data from OCLC CD's for standardising our old records. These records which are in US MARC are converted to CCF. This will be very useful as this standard format will form part of ADINET's Union Catalog of books.

## PROCESSING

Whilst processing the new books received most of the cataloguing information including keywords or index terms are taken from CIP data. These keywords are standardised using the online authority file. The library database is referred whilst assigning class number whereby consistency in classification is maintained.

We propose to use computer generated peel and paste labels for book spine, title pages, bar codes and also for book cards and book pockets.

## CIRCULATION

The Library Users Identification numbers have been bar coded. A CCD scanner is used to scan these bar codes. Also we are in the process of making barcodes of accession numbers for the entire library collection. These will also be scanned whilst issuing library material

and data entry will be totally eliminated whereby the process is made fast and accurate. Reminders for overdue books are sent on LAN.

## ILL & RESOURCE SHARING

Due to budget cut and inflation, sharing resources has become inevitable. Owing to a resource sharing agreement between 3 libraries in Ahmedabad, i.e. **IPR, PRL, & SAC an informal network i.e. IPSNET has been started.** In 1993, forty journals costing Rs. 10 lakhs were discontinued by PRL and also some journals were discontinued by IPR and SAC. The contents pages of discontinued journals are photocopied and sent to the library which has discontinued the subscription. In the PRL Library, the cover page of the discontinued journal is pasted on to a quarto size file. The file is cut according to the size of the covers and the contents pages are filled inside. Files are displayed along with the journals. Readers identify the journal from the cover page, scan the contents and ask for copies of only selected articles.

A large number of requests are received especially from the research scholars to obtain material on inter library loan. We have made an ILL module whereby the user sends the loan request on the LAN in a specific format to the PRL Library. ILL letters are generated using this data and the code of the library from which material is to be borrowed. These letters are sent either by e-mail or by post where e-mail is not available. This same data is used for sending reminders.

An informal network of **Physics, Astronomy & Mathematics** libraries in India called PAMINET is formed. This small network has 9 libraries in India.

The aim of this network is to provide

- discussion of library related issues
- sharing resources, services and reference expertise.

A list of about 100 journals received by air mail in these nine libraries has been prepared. This is very useful when the journal articles are needed urgently by other libraries.

This network is also used for ILL also. ILL request which are not available locally and from the regular sources are simultaneously sent to these 9 libraries and within a short period we get most of the articles. The whole process can be made faster if the documents are delivered electronically by using the OCR. Full text of several journals are available on the Internet free of cost. Also if the hard copy is subscribed, then many publishers provide free access to the online version.

#### LITERATURE SEARCH :

Research Alert - an SDI service - The library is subscribing to the Current Content - Phys-Chem- Earth Sc (PCES) with abstracts on floppy disks. The interest profiles of 60 PRL scientists are scanned against this database and the search results are sent on LAN to each individual. This service is also given to SAC (17 profiles) & also to a few scientists from Gujarat University. The search results are sent to SAC by e-mail and on floppies to Gujarat University users.

We also have another database on CD-ROM, the INSPEC Physics database from 1992 onwards. This is mainly used for retrospective searching. The search required by users vary from author search to the search work done on a particular topic. For the PRL users, the search results are sent on LAN and we get many requests for search from students and researchers from all over Gujarat also. These users take the print out of the search results.

#### OPAC :

Since the laboratory has a local area network (LAN) the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) which contains bibliographic records of the complete library holdings is available on the LAN.

OPAC has details of entire collection

- |            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| * Books    | * Bound Jnls.   |
| * Reports  | * Current Jnls. |
| * PRL Pub. | * Jnl. Articles |

In this OPAC **one can search on all indexed fields**

- |                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| * All Authors    | * Key words |
| * Any Title word | * Accn. No. |

- |             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| * Class No. | * Year |
|-------------|--------|

Search can be conducted on individual field i.e only Author, only Title and only Keyword.

- \* To search in any of these 3 fields, the **beginning word/s** can be given. Help is provided even if the first 3 letters of the word are given.
- \* **Boolean search** for combining any 2 or 3 words occurring either in the same field or from different fields.

#### OPAC MENU :

1. OPAC Instructions
2. OPAC Enquiries
3. About the Library
4. Circulation
5. News
6. Current Awareness Service : new books/ reports/reprints and periodicals
7. Requests for new books
8. Suggestions
9. Modify Password
0. Exit

#### SEARCH ENQUIRES FOUR STEPS :

1. To Login Enter OPAC. Use your present Membership No. as your Member Id & Password.
2. Select OPAC Enquiry and choose search Category and then Search Field.
3. Enter Search Statement and press return. Use '?' for Help and "\*" for Truncation.
4. Option 'D' displays search records. For viewing full record press 'Return'.

#### NET NEWS (nn) :

The library announcements for special acquisitions like McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia in Science & Technology (multi media on CD-ROM etc. is made on the nn.

Before the Internet was operational the content pages provided by publishers like Elsevier were received by e-mail and also put on the nn.

The Internet is also recently installed in the laboratory and a large number of electronic resources are available free of cost.

#### CONCLUSION :

Use of Library automation and the local area network has truly enabled us to give better and faster services with limited resources.