
Mylibrary : A Tool for Content Management

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Abstract

Mylibrary is a personalization tool that allows library users to consolidate frequently used library resources and services. It is a database driven solution enables organization of electronic sources of information and that can be customized to reflect users own personal interests and research needs. By creating a user name and password, users can access Mylibrary from any computer with Internet access. This paper is a case study of Mylibrary development at IGIDR library on Intranet environment

Keywords : Content Management, Content Personalisation, Tools

0. Introduction

In today's Internet era 'Content management' has become absolute necessity. Managing the scattered online information resources, which is growing at phenomenal rate, has now become vital. The user community desires to have all information in electronic form at their fingertips from a single point of access. The access point usually will be library website, which acts as a content management system. Content management would provide a one-stop solution for a speedy delivery of information. The contents of library website typically includes links to electronic databases, reference sources, working papers, Journal holdings and other internet resources.

Mylibrary is one such content management tool similar to a library website, which enables managing library's electronic resources in a database driven environment. In other words there will be a back end

database whose content is retrieved using a CGI written in PERL with HTML front end. Mylibrary can be made available either on Internet or Intranet environment. This paper is a case study of Mylibrary development at IGIDR library on Intranet environment. Mylibrary is open source software available under GNU public license developed by Eric Lease Morgan, University Libraries of Notre Dame.

1. What is Mylibrary ?

Mylibrary is a personalization tool that allows library user to consolidate frequently used library resources and services. It is a database driven solution used for organizing electronic sources of information. Mylibrary system integrates principles of librarianship with globally networked computer resources creating a dynamic, customer driven front-end to any kind of library's set of materials. [6] In other words it helps libraries to provide enhanced access to their local and remote sets of information and data. At the same time, allows users to customize it by choosing sources of their choice from the predefined master list of resources. In other words, it enables users to have individualized spaces, where in each user gets an opportunity to create his/her own personalized webpage like 'My Yahoo'. In such case, the users just have to create an account on the system giving brief details about themselves to add or subtract pre-configured links to create their own personal Webpage.

2. Technical requirements

Mylibrary is essentially a database application, accessible from HTTP/HTML interface. To run this system, following technical infrastructure is required. Mylibrary can be downloaded from the site: <http://dewey.library.nd.edu/mylibrary>.

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- ❖ Hardware
 - Pentium 4 PC, 128 MB RAM with SCSI HDD (preferred)
 - Internet connectivity
 - ❖ Software
 - Unix/Linux Operating System
 - MySQL
 - HTTP Apache web server
 - PERL (Scripting language)

Fair knowledge of HTML is preferable to modify/customize the forms as per the individual library's requirements.

3. Contents of Mylibrary

The contents of Mylibrary include, message from the librarian, about librarian's, library and community links and links to different types of electronic resources viz. reference sources, databases, electronic journals, direct access to opac, search engines etc. However, these contents can be modified/customized as per the local requirements. Apart from these, user's specific personal links can also be made available on Mylibrary system. This can be achieved by creating an account in the system, which is known as 'User Interface'.

User interface is a customizable HTML page. It is accessible via any web browser supporting cookies. The process of creating user interface begins, when a user creates his/her account into the Mylibrary system by providing the personal details such as Name, e-mail, login, password etc along with the subject area of interest. Mylibrary page is dynamically created and displayed once these personal details are submitted. Just before the display, the users can even opt for a cookie based display, so that next time they need not login into the system. This option is not suggested if the PCs are located in common places. Once the system is set, further addition or deletion of pre-configured links as per the user's choice is always possible. In other words, from the existing main system users can create the sub-systems with links of their choice.

Besides the contents, header and footer are other two components of Mylibrary. Header of the Mylibrary displays logo of the organization, a navigation bar, a customize link, login and logout function and link to create a new account. The footer displays the date, and contact information.

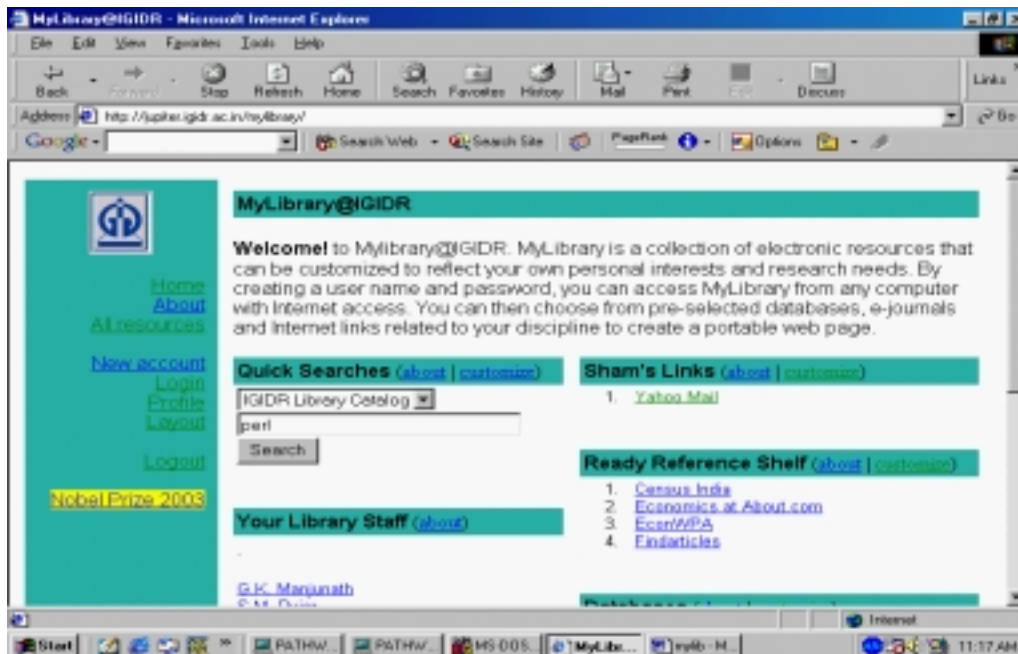


Figure-1 Mylibrary User Interface

3.1 Global message from the Librarian

Global message helps librarians to broadcast their messages to the users of the system. It is a text intended for each user of the Mylibrary who have created the sub-system of their own. Information intended for user from this module includes brief description of Mylibrary, announcements regarding new resources, downtime, news from campus, library events etc. Users cannot customize this message.

3.2 Your Librarians

This section lists names of library staff, e-mail, phone, etc working in the library or associated with user's chosen discipline. Discipline association to specific reference librarian's may not be necessary if the library is having only few disciplines to deal with and where there is only one reference librarian. In this case name of the reference librarian can however be mentioned. The users cannot customize this.

3.3 Library and University/Community Links

These links are initially selected by the librarian with defined list of hyperlinks to services, working hours, homepage, policies, departments, news and events, rules, etc.

These sections are customizable by the users by selecting only links of their choice. Selecting the option 'Customize' hotlink does it. When user clicks on the hotlink, he/she will be provided with a list of available library/university related information sources defined by the librarian or the Webmaster. Each item in the list will be associated with a HTML check box. The user can select or de-select any number of these

items and submit their selections. The system in turn records the user's choices in the database and redisplay the user's Mylibrary page, what is called sub-system, with only the selected items.

3.4 Quick Searches

Quick searches provides direct access to various searchable online resources such as dictionaries, search engines, Web Opac, etc. Selecting OPAC from the pull down menu and entering few keywords in the text box and submitting the form constructs a database query in the form of URL address. The user's Internet browser then redirected to this dynamically created URL address and results of the search are displayed.

3.5 Ready Reference Shelf, Databases and E-texts and E-journals

Like other standard links, certain recommendations by the librarian can also be included as links to reference materials, databases, E-articles and Journals.

Ready reference shelf includes hyperlinks to various reference resources selected by the librarians. Reference sources include online dictionaries, maps, directories, subject specific search engines, data sources etc. It also includes any type of Internet resource with scholarly content.

Databases include hyperlinks to online bibliographic and statistical databases, manuals and lists of offline CD-ROM databases. The E-text and E-journals include lists of electronic journal titles.

Procedure for customizing the links to these resources is similar to what described in section 3.3. Resources may be selected either from A-Z list or from specific discipline(s).

3.6 Current Awareness/Monthly Additions

This section provides a facility for the user to find out the library's new acquisitions in the users interested areas. This is done either by using search facility of library OPAC or going through the monthly additions list. Optionally, users can have these search results regularly mailed to their e-mail address by creating their profile. But implementation of this depends upon the staff availability in the library. It is because; one has to regularly match the user's profile with the new acquisitions of the library and mail contents to the users.

3.7 Personal links

Personal links section allows user to save links of their choice, which they use often and are not included in any other sections of Mylibrary. No library can hope to collect and organize total sum of Internet resources in to a database. Given this fact, Mylibrary provides an opportunity for users to create their own links.

4. Administration

The administration of Mylibrary system is done through its 'Administration' interface. It is a menu of hypertext links protected by username and password. Its menu allows the administrators to create, modify or delete any of the contents in the system database. The important content items of administrative interface include:

- Global message from the librarians
- Names of contact librarians
- Links and descriptions of information sources
- Help texts
- Disciplines
- System's header and footer

To create, modify or delete any of these items the authorized administrator or librarian selects the item from the menu and updates the resulting form. The change takes place immediately.

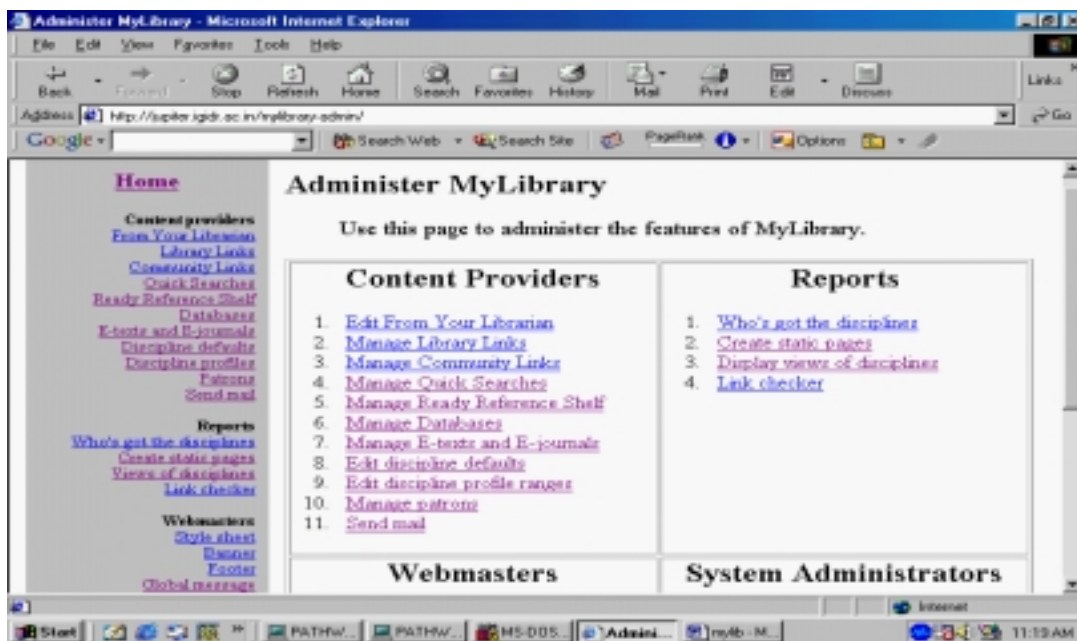


Figure-2 Administrative Interface of Mylibrary

5. Overview of Mylibrary@IGDR

The Mylibrary@IGDR was set up on institute's intranet, to provide its members with a personalized website.

The service at IGDR allows users to set up, collect and organize web resources or other selected information available on the library's website both on the Internet and Intranet. It allows for personal spaces, enhanced content and ensures that the users are using more pertinent and reliable web resources and data.

5.1 Mylibrary@IGDR Interface

On initial access to the system, user will be given access to the default contents under different headings. The contents are hyperlinks to different services and resources. Each type of the resources hyperlinked

are associated with a subject, in most cases it is Economics, which is the main core subject of research at IGDR.

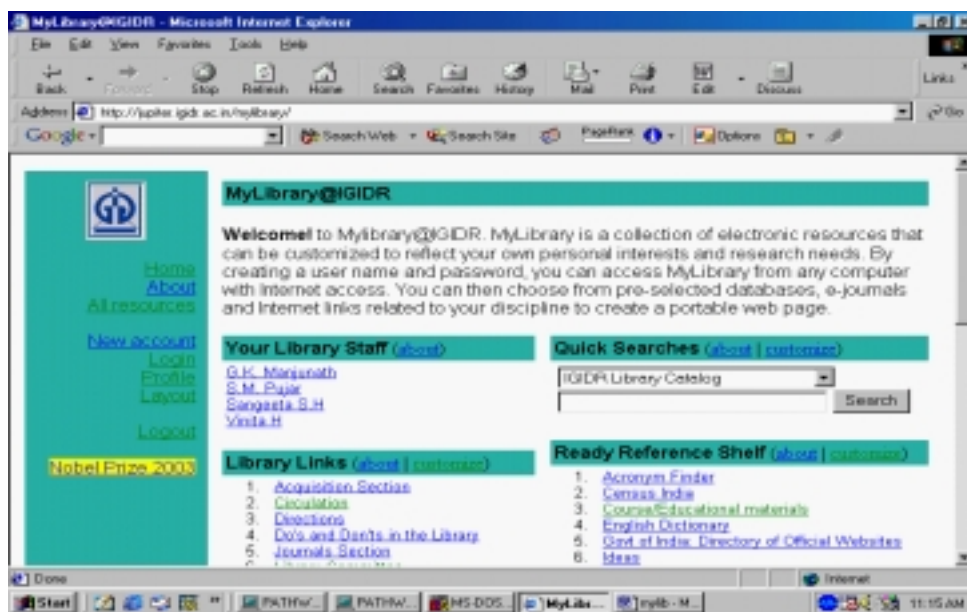


Figure-3 Mylibrary@IGDR Interface

Default links to library information on the system include names of library staff, library rules, library sections, organization of library materials, library committee, library services, homepage, etc. Similarly default links for community information are: Seminars and workshops, fellowships and scholarships, news and events, etc. The links for resources include quick searches, ready reference sources, databases, electronic journals and monthly additions.

Apart from default links there are many more resources, which have been added to the system. These resources are available only to those users, who create their account in the Mylibrary system. Once they create their account, they can 'logon' to the system and select the resources/services of their choice by using the 'Customize' button. Once it is done, their page will show only those resources selected by the user. Apart from resources selected by the librarian's, users can create personal links to such resources, which are not available in the system.

Whenever new resources are added e-mail is sent all the users. That keeps users updated about the system. Link checking is done using link checker facility of the system on a regular basis to find out and modify any broken links to resources.

6. Conclusion

Mylibrary system facilitates information filtering and retrieval. It offers professionals to have a glimpse of the tremendous opportunities generated by database driven websites. With this kind of system libraries can actively suggest valuable resources to their patrons. The system's uniqueness of providing individual spaces for users makes this service more personal.

The success of this system depends upon how many users are actively using it after creating their account. In 2002, as per the statistics of Mylibrary@NCState, the earliest and most well known system had 1,110 active users out of 4, 676 accounts [4].

Implementation of this system may be done in libraries after taking in to consideration manpower availability and the responsibilities one has to handle. For installation of the software professionals are advised to take the help of their institute system administrator, if they do not have sound knowledge of the system administration.

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