

Re- engineering Library Acquisition: A Case Study

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Libraries have always had the ability to respond to the challenges of technology, from the printing press of the middle ages to the print explosion of the twentieth century, to the digital 'print' of today. Modern economic rationalism demands that libraries become more accountable for both the services they provide and the funds they expend. Such accountability requires libraries to investigate, analyze and, where necessary change the methods and processes they have traditionally undertaken to justify their very existence to funding bodies. Re-engineering is about changing to the way we do things. Re-engineering is reinventing the way one does business, by stepping back and examining values, goals, and the system processes used to meet these goals. Process redesign is often an outcome of this evaluation. The acquisition process is one prime process for re-engineering as it consists of a large number of easily identifiable routines which can be compartmentalized, and altered as required.

This paper is case study of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University Library (DRBRAOUL) and its Acquisition Section and how to reengineer the Library Acquisitions.

Keywords: Re-Engineering, Library Acquisition, Dr. B R Ambedkar Open University

1. Introduction

Libraries are user - centered organizations focused on satisfaction. Libraries value access to information. Information Technology has brought significant changes to Libraries. Tremendous changes in the way people use libraries now demand innovations. There is an urgent need to re-create a learning environment in libraries that will enhance resources facilities, services and, expenditure. The introduction of digital resources has not only had considerable impact on the role of libraries in the information society, but it has also had remarkable effect on the way the library is organized.

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Acquisition (1) is the process of locating and acquiring all types of library materials after they have been selected for a library's collection. Others have defined acquisitions as follows:

- Acquisitions is “the process of identifying what the library ought to acquire, determining how and from whom it can be obtained, and actually getting it” (Magrill and Corbin 1989,vii)
- “ Acquisition work involves locating and acquiring the items identified as appropriate for the collection: (Evans 2000, 313)
- “The term acquisitions refer to the process of obtaining library materials after they have been selected.... Acquisitions includes all the tasks related to obtaining all kinds of library materials” (Heitshu 1991, 101-2).
- “Acquisitions is the process of acquiring library materials.... Acquisitions include all tasks related to obtaining all library materials” (Dietrich’s and Schmidt 1999, 1).

Acquisitions departments are generally located in technical services divisions. Technical services operations provide access to information in all its many forms and formats.

‘Acquisition’ involves the process of obtaining materials for libraries (2). There are several distinct acquisition functions: selection, verification, vendor assignment, ordering, claims and cancellations, payments, accessioning, statistics, gifts and exchange. All these functions can be grouped into five major functions: selection, ordering, accessioning, management information and gifts and exchange. The time honored function of the librarian is to accumulate process and make available books and other kindred materials to help the university to carrying on its teaching and research functions. The following

Are some of functions of the Acquisitions Department **(3)** assigned by Wilson and Tauber.

- To develop procedures to meet the needs of the library.
- To handle personally or important correspondence or problems relating to ordering of books, serials, other non – book materials like map & charts, models, pamphlets, films and other materials.
- To consult with heads of other departments concerning book orders.
- To notify the faculty of the non – expenditure of book funds.
- To watch carefully auction, non-book and second dealers, catalogues for opportunities to purchase items on desiderate lists.
- To have materials filmed or otherwise reproduced when they are out of print or otherwise unavailable in the original.
- To interview publisher’s representations, book dealers, collections, and others who are interested in building up the university’s book collection.

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- To read and appraise books and other materials and make recommendations for their acquisition.
- To supervise the handling of all gifts and exchanges coming into the library and also
- Maintenance and use of bibliographic aids peculiar to acquisition work (ex:- dealer's catalogue, trade lists, etc.).
- Maintenance of order files, 'in process' files, desiderate lists, and other records essential to acquisition work.
- Preparation of bills for payment, Book-keeping and other financial activities assigned to the department.
- Preparation of accession lists.
- Informing the individuals about the status of their recommendations.
- Following up on items not promptly received.

Effective inquisitional organization requires not only that the physical surroundings be planned to speed to flow of work, but also that the principles of administration relating to centralization of homogeneous activities, direction, supervision, and control be applied to its functioning. Moreover the Head of the acquisition department should clearly understand the sphere of its activities, its relation to the other technical services and to readers' services, and the personnel necessary for carrying out the functions of the department. The work of the acquisitions cannot be effectively carried out without adequate and willing cooperation of all other departments of the library. The efficient and effective service of the library depends upon a well-balanced and a systematic plan of book-selection formulated with the participation of the faculty, students and the Librarian.

2. Automated Acquisitions System

Acquisition operations were a popular target for automation during the first growth period of library of library automation: the 1950s through 1970s most of the experimentation took place in United States and other developed countries. Though the automation of a few acquisitions was first introduced at the Montclair (NJ)

Public Library as early as 1941, the sophisticated automation began in the mid - 1960s. By this time, the systems were developed to control various aspects of ordering: producing purchase orders, issue open order reports, summarizing expenditures by purchase order, vendor, subject etc., presently very sophisticated systems - turnkey, standalone as well as integrated - are available in the market. Manual acquisitions operations are labor and paper - intensive, slow, and usually produce only a limited amount of management information. The primary motive to investigate automated acquisitions, therefore, appear to be the hope of realizing cost containment, materials receipt monitoring, improving budget control, and expanding function systems into integrated systems.

3. Automated Acquisition System Features

The features that are important in an automated acquisition system are:

- (I) **Selection**
 - ☞ Completion of bibliographic information;
 - ☞ Duplicate verification.
- (II) **Ering**
 - ☞ Discount patterns;
 - ☞ Vendor assignment;
 - ☞ Order Placement;
 - ☞ Status of order, i.e., whether the materials have been received or not;
 - ☞ Notices for claims;
 - ☞ Cancellation of orders.
- (III) **Accessioning**
 - ☞ Matching of received materials with order file;
 - ☞ Budget control;
 - ☞ Payment status, i.e., whether the payments have been related or not.
- (IV) **Gifts and Exchange**
 - ☞ Information like addresses of the Exchange Partners.
 - ☞ Whether the material is being received and sent or not
 - ☞ Notices.
- (V) **Statistics and Rreport Compilation:**

The acquisition module may have several sub - modules like the modules for ordering, budget control, gifts, exchange, etc., to per form difficult function. These modules can be stand - alone or integrated in such a manner that the user can access any of them without exiting the system.

4. Dr. B R Ambedkar Open University

Distance Education (DE) has made remarkable progress over the last two decades and has now gained widespread acceptance as a viable alternative delivery system and alternative to the conventional system (4). Further, the use of information technology (IT) is giving this system and edge over the conventional system, the rapid expansion of IT, computer literary and access to the internet offers immense opportunities for on lone delivery of DE and training. The real time web - based courses are a matter of reality on the internet and the virtual University is no longer a fiction.

DE is learner centered them teacher oriented by integrating various technologies including audio, video, computer, internet, multimedia, satellites, TV, Cable TV, interactive video, electronic transmissions vide telephone lines, posted service etc., Dr. B.R.A.O.U first state open university was established during 1982.

Dr. B.R.A.O.U. is providing its library services to the distance learners depending upon the objectives of its parent organization. Supporting the academic work of the Faculty, the Central Library (CL) has increased its collection of books and non – book materials considerably with a collection of over one lakh books and non-book materials, the library uses computerization for its housekeeping operations. Research Scholars and Faculty can use the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) system for accessing the library database. It is providing centralized acquisition and technical process to its 204 Study Centre's throughout the State at UG, PG, M. Phil and PhD level.

4.1 Library Services

- ☉ Bibliographic Services;
- ☉ Lecture Services;
- ☉ Current Awareness Services and SDI Services;
- ☉ Document Delivery Services directly or through Inter – Library Loan (ILL);
- ☉ Reprographic Services;
- ☉ Reference and information services;
- ☉ Reference services;
- ☉ Automated library services through Internet, etc.

4.2 Pre-requisites of the Library

The University Library supports the academic research at all levels and stages to the distance learners and some of the essential prerequisites on the part of the University Library while rendering library services effectively and efficiently are:

- ☉ Library collection;
- ☉ Library space / reading requirement;
- ☉ Equipment and other facility;
- ☉ Financial support;
- ☉ Library Staff;
- ☉ Resource sharing.

4.3 Library Networking

Dr. B.R.A.O.U.L is using Libsys package. It is a user – friendly with integrated function, interactive and screen oriented menu – drive and multi – user capabilities. In Open University system Study centre's play

an important role. Selection of books at study centres will take centralized acquisition and technical process.

The Central Library was situated within the main campus of the University at Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad. Library activities like Circulation, Acquisition, Technical processing, Periodicals and Reference, Repro-graphic Services are taking place apart from the services provided to the distance learners including Research Scholars, Academic and Non - Academic members.

Regarding the library network - University has conducted a turnkey project with University of Hyderabad to develop networks between Central Library, study centre's and Regional Coordination Centre's. In the first phase Library networking has been done within the Central Library and different faculties. This is a great achievement to develop the first state Open University Library with fully automated systems and will be benefited to all the distance learners. In the second phase development of library networking has been extended to study Centre's and Regional Coordination Centres.

4.4 Acquisition Section

Consists of following procedure (5):

- ☞ Receiving recommended books from the vendors and duplicate checking;
- ☞ Entering into the system for LibSys Software;
- ☞ Main Screen ;
- ☞ Data Entry;
- ☞ Check for duplicates;
- ☞ Bibliographic details;
- ☞ LibSys - Acquisition;
- ☞ Creation of Control Numbers;
- ☞ Developing Order;
- ☞ Accessioning;
- ☞ Notices text;
- ☞ Generating Order;
- ☞ View of file contents;
- ☞ Receiving bills from vendors;
- ☞ Processing of bills;
- ☞ Accessioning & Receiving in the System;
- ☞ Bill Invoicing;
- ☞ Title in Process;
- ☞ Cataloguing of (English, Telugu, Hindi and Urdu Books);
- ☞ Multiple copies;
- ☞ Adding Volumes;
- ☞ Update.

5. Conclusion

Library Services are essential support services in Distance Education. As c\access to Internet - based courses grows an increasing number of e-learners are dispersed around the globe, often in parts of the world where physical access to the collections of large academic and research libraries is impossible. These learners are largely dependent in the quality and academic usefulness of services that the digital library can offer electronically. Automated Acquisition systems and on-line library catalogues are highly visible evidences of computer technology now in use in many libraries. Other computer - related developments may be expected in the near and distance future. Changes brought about the evolving technology allow the library to operate more smoothly and effectively with obvious benefits to library users. Acquisition departments are responsible for getting the materials needed by the libraries' users, in the most appropriate format and in the most efficient manner. Formats and methods change, but the responsibility and the functions of acquiring library materials remain at the core of the acquisitions department. In conclusion I can say that it is the time to the libraries of Open Universities to acquire modern technology and see that the distance learner can be benefited at the utmost level.

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