OPAC - THE LIBRARY SPACE SAVER: A STUDY ON OPAC USAGE IN KULW, TELANGANA

S. SUJATHA

Research Scholar, Dept. of Lib.&Inf. Science Documentation Officer
Central Library, Dravidian University, Kuppam-517426
Email:sujatharathan02@gmail.com

Abstract : *OPAC is boon for libraries. With the help of OPAC libraries can save lot of physical space in the modern society. OPAC, an information retrieval system, has revolutionised access to bibliographic information through search capabilities, and with the help of OPAC the libraries can save lot of space and user can save lot of time. The present study is an attempt to know the usage of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) by the research scholars in Kakatiya University Library Warangal (KULW) Telangana. The study revealed that the tool is useful and the respondents felt that there must be OPAC facility to help researchers in retrieving they require information. Internet search engines have become the preferred tool over the library OPAC for finding information. The OPAC is a good place to check for a library material if one can know all of their access options. The lack of an understanding of the characteristics, skills, and searching abilities of a specific user group in computer-based information systems hinders library and information science professionals in making the best decisions when designing, acquiring, and managing information systems.*

Keywords: OPAC, Space Saver, Kakatiya University, University Library Warangal, Telangana.

1. Introduction

The introduction of the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) has created enormous changes in the library practices. Academic libraries aim to provide more dynamic and versatile services, to library users. In this OPACs should be considered a top priority. The majority of today's OPACs have successfully fulfilled Cutter's model in finding known items. Following the card-catalogue convention, bibliographic elements such as title, author, and subject have been the leading search options in OPAC search menus for many years. It was assumed that users always came to the library with specific author, title, or subject information in mind before searching the catalogue. The traditional catalogue retrieval mechanism is significantly different from the Web search engine. Automated library systems in general and specifically online catalogues will continue to be produced and enhanced from a variety of sources such as in house development, library consortia and commercial firms. Search and retrieval of library materials has become easy due to OPAC.

2. About Kakatiya University

Kakatiya University was established on 19th August, 1976 to fulfil the aspirations of the Telangana people for higher education. The erstwhile Post-Graduate Centre of Osmania University was upgraded and named Kakatiya University. The University was initially accredited with 'B+' grade by the NAAC in 2002 and reaccredited with 'A' grade in 2008. The University has 24 departments in four colleges on the campus with a network of eleven constituent colleges and 471 affiliated colleges. The University is now offering programmes in Engineering, Pharmacy, Law, Computer Science, Business Management, Education,

Science, Arts, Commerce, Oriental courses in the University, constituent and affiliated colleges. It has a spacious Central Library with a rich collection of 1,50,000+ books in addition to 25,000 back volumes of research journals. All the constituent colleges and departments were brought under Campus Network providing round the clock INTERNET facility.

3. Objectives

- To assess what extent the users are using OPAC
- To find out the purpose of use of OPAC
- To assess what reading material they choose in OPAC
- To study the approach of using OPAC
- To know whether the users facing problems while using OPAC
- To study the level of satisfaction of users while using OPAC

4. Methodology

A survey of the use of OPAC in Kakatiya University Library by the users (Post Graduate students and Research Scholars, the faculty members are not visited the library during the time of data collection) was carried out by using questionnaire. Specially designed questionnaire was randomly distributed to 158 users of the library. Out of 158 questionnaires, 124 were received (78.4%) from the respondents. The filled questionnaires were taken for data analysis.

5. Data Analysis

Diagram1: Level of Computer Literacy

Level of computer literacy
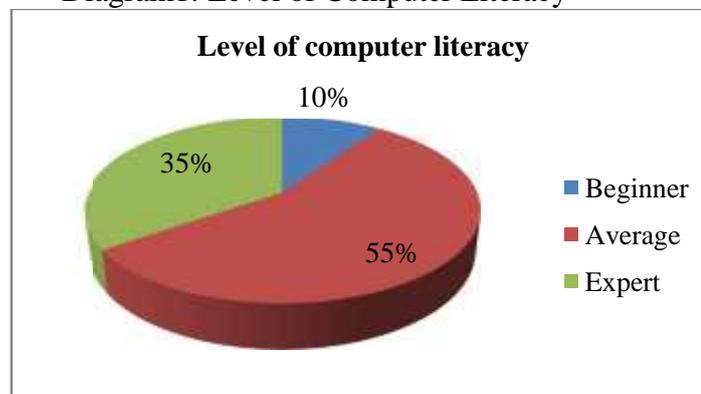
10%

35%

55%

- Beginner
- Average
- Expert

Diagram 1 shows the level of computer literacy of respondents. It is seen that out of 124 respondents 69 (55%) have the average computer literacy followed by 43 respondents (35%) are experts. Only 12 (10%) of the respondents have beginning stage. So, it indicates that majority have the average computer literacy.

Table 1: Age-wise distribution of respondents

Age	Respondents	percentage
21-25	62	50.00
26-30	51	41.12
Above 30	11	08.87
Total	124	100

Table 1 shows the age group of respondents. It is seen that out of 124 respondents 62 belongs to the age group of 21-25 years (50.00%) followed by 51 respondents (41.12%) lie in the age group of 26-30 years. Only 8.87% of the respondents 11 in numbers are in the age group of above 30 years. Majority of the respondents are young scholars (Diagram).

Table 2: Use of OPAC

Usage	Respondents	percentage
Yes	93	75.00
No	29	23.38
Don't know	2	01.61
Total	124	100

Table 2 reveals the picture about the use of OPAC by the respondents in University library. The study has indentified that, 75.0% of the respondents are using OPAC followed by 23.38% of respondents are not using OPAC and 01.61% are replied don't know about OPAC.

Diagram 1: Frequency of use of OPAC

Frequency of use of OPAC

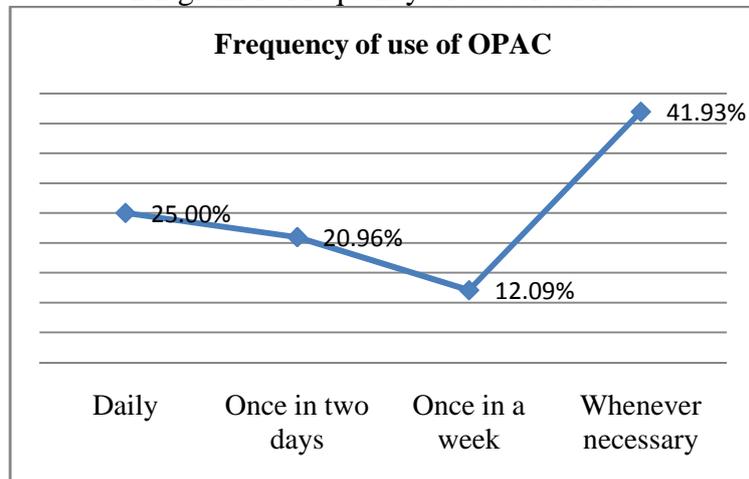Daily 25.00% — Once in two days 20.96% — Once in a week 12.09% — Whenever necessary 41.93%

Diagram 2 depicts that 41.93% of the respondents use the OPAC whenever needed, followed by 25.0% daily, 20.96% once in two days and 12.09% are use once in a week.

Table 3: Choosing Reading Material

Material	Respondents	percentage
Consulting the OPAC	92	74.19
Consulting the card catalogue	48	38.70
Directly from the shelves	32	25.80
Help from the library staff	46	37.08
Others	29	23.38
Total	124	100

(Note: respondents could choose multiple answers)

Table 3 explored that 74.19% of the respondents consulting the OPAC for choosing reading material. 38.70% consulting the card catalogue, 37.08% are taking the help from the library staff, 25.08% are directly search from the shelves and 23.38% are take the help of other medium.

Diagram 2: User approach to OPAC

User approach to OPAC

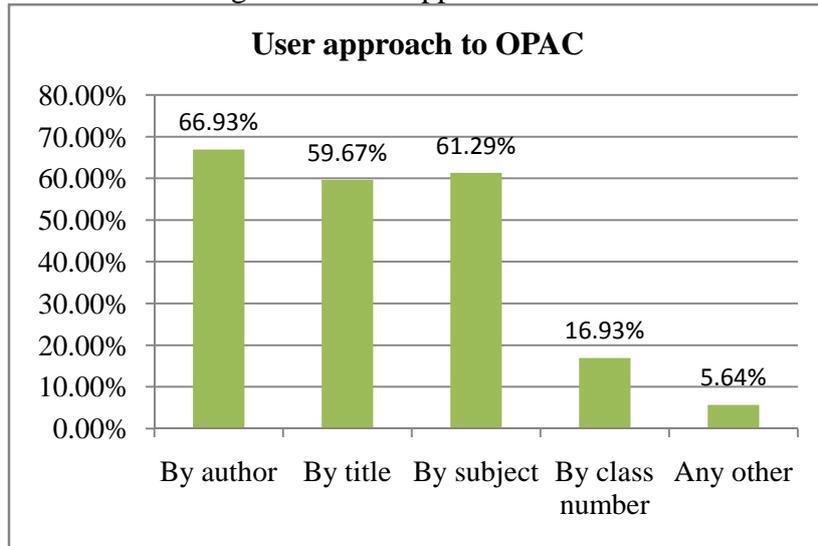| Category	Percentage
By author	66.93%
By title	59.67%
By subject	61.29%
By class number	16.93%
Any other	5.64%

Diagram 3 gives the picture of the opinion of the respondents about user approach to OPAC. 66.93% of the users approach the OPAC by author, followed by 61.29% through the subject, 59.67% under the title, 16.93% by class number and 5.64% of respondents approach through any other means.

Table 4: Purpose of consulting the OPAC

Purpose	Respondents	percentage
To locate the books in the library	81	65.32
To find the bibliographical detail	46	39.09
To check whether the required books are available in the library or not	96	77.41
To compile bibliography of books on a particular subject	55	44.35
Any other	30	34.28

(Note: respondents could choose multiple answers)

Table 4 explained about the purpose of consulting the OPAC. 77.41% of the respondents consult to check whether the required books are available in the library or not, followed by 65.32% to locate the books in the library, 44.35% to compile bibliography of books on a particular subject, 39.09% to find the bibliographical details and 34.28% of the respondents have some other purpose in consulting the OPAC.

Diagram 4: Time spent on OPAC

Time spent on OPAC

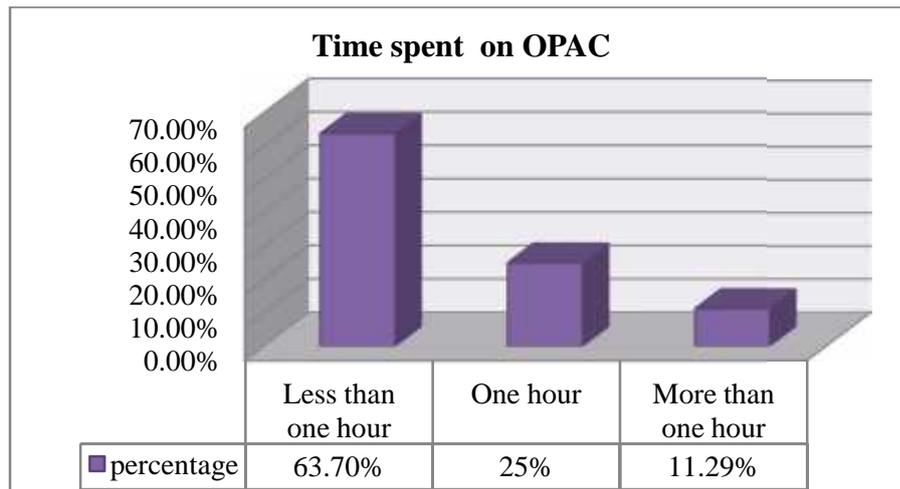|	Less than one hour	One hour	More than one hour
■percentage	63.70%	25%	11.29%

Diagram 3 reveals that to know how much time the respondents are spending on an average in search the OPAC. 63.70% of the respondents spend less than one hour to consult the OPAC, followed by 25.0% spend one hour and 11.29% spend more than one hour for the use of OPAC.

Table 5: Difficulty in locating books through OPAC

Difficulty	Respondents	percentage
Yes	20	16.12
No	91	73.38
No comment	13	10.48
Total	124	100

Table 5 depicts that 73.38% of respondents replied that they don't have any difficulty in locating books through using OPAC, followed by 16.12% of them responded they find difficulty and 10.48% respondents given no comment.

Table 6: Assistance in the use of OPAC by the staff

Assistance	Respondents	percentage
Satisfactory	69	55.64
Not Satisfactory	11	08.87
Not necessary	44	35.48
Total	124	100

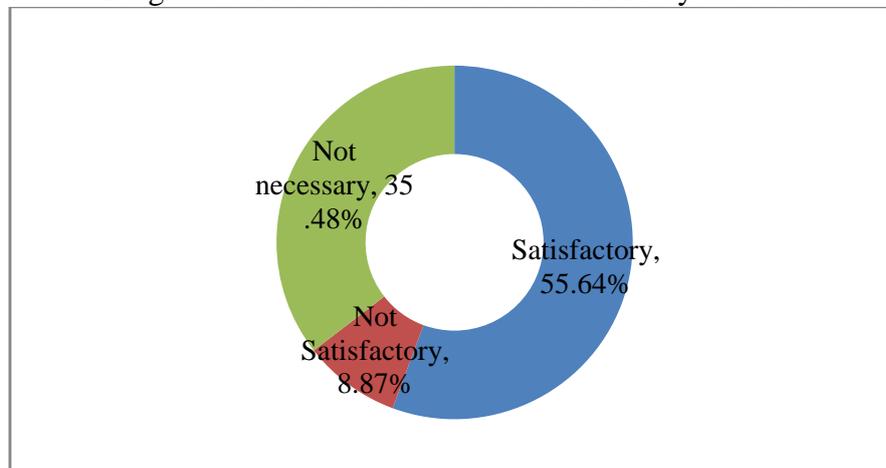Diagram 4: Assistance in the use of OPAC by the staff

Table 6 gives the picture of the opinions of the respondents about the assistance given by the library staff in the use of OPAC. 55.64% of them mentioned that the assistance given by the library staff was satisfactory, 35.48% opinion that staff assistance is not necessary and 08.87% of them are not satisfy the way library staff is assisting in using the OPAC (Diagram5).

6. Findings:

1. Good number of respondents 69 (55.64%) have the average computer literacy followed by 43 respondents (34.67%) are experts.
2. About fifty percent of the respondents are belongs to the age group of 21-25 years (50.00%) followed by 41.12% lie in the age group of 26-30 years. Majority of the respondents are young scholars.
3. Regarding the use of OPAC, a majority of the 75.0% of the respondents are using OPAC, 23.38% are not using OPAC and 01.61% have don't know about OPAC.
4. Considerable percentages (41.93%) of the respondents use the OPAC whenever needed and 25.0% use once in a week.
5. A majority of (74.19%) respondents consulting the OPAC for choosing reading material, followed by 38.70% consulting the card catalogue, 37.08% are taking the help from the library staff.
6. Regarding the purpose of consulting the OPAC, a majority of (77.41%) respondents consult to check whether the required books are available in the library or not, followed by 65.32% whether the books are located in the library or not.
7. Most of the respondents approach to the OPAC by author (66.93%) followed by 61.29% the subject.
8. Majority of the respondents are spending on an average in search the OPAC. 63.70% of the respondents spend less than one hour to consult the OPAC, followed by 25.0% spend one hour.
9. Majority 73.38% of respondents replied that they don't have any difficulty in locating books through using OPAC, 16.12% of responded find difficulty.
10. In order to ascertain the level of satisfaction in assistance given by the library staff in the use of OPAC, it was found that 55.64% respondents were satisfied, 35.48% opinion that staff assistance is not necessary.

7. Suggestions

1. Research scholars have suggested keeping the OPAC up-to-date by adding the new entries quickly and replacing the too old entries by new ones.
2. Some respondents have stressed the library staff regarding the distribution of up-to-date library guides explaining about how to use the OPAC including library services, etc.
3. Some respondents suggested circulating the list of newly arrived books and other reading materials.
4. The respondents have requested to locate the OPAC near the book stocks there by the research scholars can use it conveniently without wasting much time.
5. There is need to train users to acquire basic skills in searching. Research scholars have suggested to give assistance in the use of OPAC by the library staff and also suggested for user-orientation programme for newly arrived research scholars.
6. There is the need for organization and provision of training on information Retrieval and information Communication Technology (ICT) to users.

7. Conclusion

With the growth of manual collections, the physical space has getting a major problem in libraries. To overcome this, the libraries take initiative steps to convert in to digital collections, this helps to save the physical space. In this process the OPAC is also one major step. With the help of OPAC there is no need to built catalogue system, and a study of the effectiveness of an OPAC is useful in this respect. Regarding results, this paper presents the usage of OPAC. The use of OPAC by the research scholars has increased their information retrieval rate especially in locating books and other reading materials in the library. In order to meet the challenges of the new millennium, without wasting further time, it is recommended that all the academic libraries in the country must reintroduce and upgrade their information technology and computerized systems to render better services to the library users. The ultimate goal is that users will be comfortable and confident using library OPACs for their information needs wherever a computer is available and without special training. The future of academic libraries relies on effective OPACs as space savers.

References:

- Dinet Jérome, Favart Monik and Passerault Jean-Michel, "Searching for Information in an Online Public Access Catalogue OPAC: The Impacts of Information Search Expertise on the use of Boolean operators. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning* 01/2004; 20:338-346. DOI:10.1111/j.1365-2729.2004.00093.x Source: DBLP 2014 researchgate.net (Accessed Feb 14, 2014).
- Eng Pwey Lau and Dion Hoe-Lian Goh, "In Search of Query Patterns: A Case Study of a University OPAC," *Information Processing and Management* 42, no. 1 (2006): 1316–1329. (Accessed Jan 20, 2014).
- Holly Yu and Margo Young, "The Impact of Web Search Engines on Subject Searching in OPAC," *Information Technology and Libraries* 23, no.4 (2004): 194. (Accessed Jan 20, 2014).
- Holly Yu and Margo Young, "The Impact of Web Search Engines on Subject Searching in OPAC," 173. (Accessed Jan 27, 2014).
- Jakob Nielsen, "Mental Models for Search Are Getting Firmer," in *Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox*, http://www.useit.com/ alertbox/20050509.html (accessed Feb 20, 2007).
- Jia Mi and Cathy Weng, "Revitalizing the Library OPAC: Interface, Searching, and Display Challenges," In*formation Technology and Libraries* 26, no.4 (2008)napoleon. bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ital/article/viewFile/3259/2872 (Accessed Jan 20, 2014).
- Kakatiya University website. http:://kakatiyauniversity.co.in.
- Ravichandran P and Balasubramani R, "Use of Online Public Access Catalogue by the Research Scholars in Annamalai University Library", *Indian Journal of Library Information and Society* V17, N3-4, Jul-Dec (2008). 144-148.
- The Use of Boolean Operators, *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning* 20, no. 5 (2004): 338–346. (Accessed Feb 01, 2014).