

Retrospective Conversion: Automation Experience at Cardamom Planters Association College, Bodinayakkanur: Case Study

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ABSTRACT

In this digital environment, it is the libraries responsibility to provide latest and timely information to the end users. Advanced technologies in Software field have developed so many major changes in every walk of life. Automation of Library not only saves the time of the Reader but also the time of the Library professionals and enhances the image of the library. In order to provide effective and efficient services to the user community, it is very much necessary to automate the library. In this connection, the CPA College library has been automated and the experiences faced during the automation process are discussed in this article.

Key Terms: Library Automation, Library Software, Library Management, Implementation of Library Software, Retrospective conversion, Library computerization.

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INTRODUCTION

Activities related to acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, serial control, and information retrieval are traditionally known as house-keeping operations. The above mentioned activities are highly labour intensive and the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has changed the library work as so simple and influenced the very nature of the college library, Ravichandra (1992). Presently libraries are undergoing significant changes not only because of new outlook but also in functioning, services, collection development, and information processing, organizing and disseminating the same to the end users. The library and information science profession has undergone a sea change especially due to the impact of library automation, Mulla et.al. (2009). Automation can be done depending upon the type of the library and it is possible to computerize the entire library or some functions of the library. For example, in a public library, it is better to automate the circulation system, if it is special library; it is better to automate the serial and for university libraries, automating the acquisition system will be better option and slowly rest of the systems can be automated in phased manner. Advances in Information and Communication Technologies offering new ways to libraries to manage the information in effective and efficient manner and introducing the modern technology will be good solution to reshape the library, simplifying the library professionals' work and providing interactive services to the users Rajendran, et.al. (2007).

NEED FOR LIBRARY AUTOMATION

Due to advancements in technological developments and sharp

decreasing prices of software, hardware and other accessories, and library professionals enthusiasm on accepting and implementing the library automation were some of the reasons for automating the libraries. For the long period, library is considered as one of the important social institutions which provided knowledge to all the user community and without the help of the library, no institute was considered as complete one. Continues reproduction of knowledge in the form of print and non print media and controlling of the same in effective and efficient manner compelled the library professionals to automate their libraries. Library automation has brought profound changes in the library and library professionals in terms of both technology and involvement. Library automation will help to store, organize and retrieve the materials in effective and efficient way. They can aid the library professionals to discharge their duties very fast and accurately by relieving the staff from repetitive clerical work, Rupinder (2012). As rightly pointed out by, Shivaram (2007) "Library automation improves the quality, speed and effectiveness of services and resources sharing among other library networks, Shivaram (2007)". Hence, automation of college library is therefore is the urgent need of the hour.

PROFILE OF THE COLLEGE

Cardamom Planters' Association College (CPA), Bodinayakkanur is run by Pranthiya Thenninthia Ela Vivasayigal Sangam, is affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University started functioning on 19th July 1974 with two Pre-university sections. College offers various undergraduate, post graduate and M.Phil/Ph.Ds in some programmes.



INITIAL STAGE: EXCEL SHEETS

Initially, the details about the library books and its locations were entered in excel sheets, which was very easy for the users to locate the required books. The process of circulation was performed manually. Library register for entering the book details and library issue cards were used for transaction of books. Since there are number of limitations in manual operations such as scrolling and viewing all the library books, efficient information retrieval, fine collection, and so on, automation was found as the only solution for procuring, organizing and disseminating the information in efficient manner.

PLANNING STAGE

Planning is the first step which requires thorough study of the existing system. A well planned action will help us to march towards success. Hence, basic requirements for library automation have been thoroughly studied before automating the college library.

The collection details of CPA College library was 20000 books, 10 journals and 500 reference and rare collection of historic books which have been identified for entering into the software.

Initially planned for completing databases such as books, journals and rare books up to 10-03-2011 and retrospective conversion work is in progress for total volume of books, journals and so on.

Cost involved in software, hardware, infrastructure facilities, manpower, training to LIS Professionals, orientation to the users and other miscellaneous cost have been worked out.

A thorough study about the available of library management software packages have been analysed before automation. and some of the below mentioned points have been considered for selection of the software.

- Reputation of the software (Company)
- Feed back from other library users
- Number of records, file and field size and so on
- Multi user access and multilingual facility
- User friendly
- Portability
- Cost
- Availability and clarity of documentation
- Support extended before and after installation
- Functions of the software and help messages
- Supporting on international standards such as MARC, Dublin Core, AACR-2 and so on.
- Training
- Warranty
- Maintenance of Annual Maintenance contract

ANALYSIS OF THE ROVAN LMS SOFTWARE

Automation is possible with the help of software and hardware. Both are very much necessary for automating the system and selection of software and hardware is the most important job in

automating the libraries, Mulla et.al. (2009). Based on above mentioned selection criteria, the library decided to go for RLMS software package.

ABOUT ROVAN LMS SOFTWARE

ROVAN LMS is the integrated Library automation software for Schools, Colleges, Universities and other institutions. The software can be used to

- Manage the Libraries diverse resources efficiently.
- Provide detail reports and analysis to the management easily
- Provide easy to use search interface to users
- Save time in circulation

FEATURES OF ROVAN LMS

Following are the features of ROVAN LMS software package listed as below.

■ Flexibility

The software is very flexible and can be adopted to any organization irrespective of the size or type.

■ Barcode Support

Barcode printer and scanner can be attached to ROVAN LMS for automatic barcode generation in custom sized labels and scanning accession number, Member ID, ISBN etc.

■ Client Server Architecture

ROVAN LMS is built on client server architecture that imparts extra strength to storage capacity, multiple accesses to a single database, various levels of security, backup and storage facilities etc. The architecture uses SQL as back end and Visual Basic.NET as front end.

■ Enhanced Reports

ROVAN LMS helps to generate many detailed reports and analysis for better administration.

■ Advanced User Management

Multiple levels of users with different access permissions can be maintained.

■ On-line Help Manual

On-line help manual is provided along with the software. It helps in clarifying doubts readily and to training the new staff easily.

Hardware requirements of the software are

■ Server Requirements

CPU: Pentium P-IV

RAM: 1 GB (2 GB Recommended)

Operating system: Windows XP/Windows NT

■ Client Requirements

CPU: Pentium P-III

RAM: 512 GB (1 GB Recommended)

Operating system: Windows XP/Windows NT/98

❑ MODULES

ROVAN LMS provides both basic and advanced capabilities through the following modules:

- Acquisition
- Catalogue
- Circulation
- Serials
- Web OPAC
- Administration

■ Acquisition

Acquisition module helps to handle the major functions related to acquisition of library materials. This module covers the following functions:

- Ordering of materials
- Receiving of materials
- Payment
- Budget Control
- Reports and analysis

■ Catalogue

Catalogue module helps to catalogue all types of library materials. It covers the following functions

- Cataloguing process
- Catalogue search
- Catalogue card generation
- Stock verification
- Reports and analysis

■ Circulation

Circulation module takes care of all possible circulation related functions in a library. It covers the following activities

- Membership management
- Issue / Return / Renew / Reserve
- Overdue charges / fine
- Interlibrary Loan
- Maintenance (Lost, Binding, Damaged etc)
- Reports and analysis

Well designed screens enable to finish the transactions with few key strokes. Interface to the barcode system is provided for faster and accurate transactions.

ROVAN LMS - CARDAMOM PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION COLLEGE - [Member]

Admin Acquisition Catalogue Serials OPAC Member Circulation Tools Windows Help

CARDAMOM PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION COLLEGE

MEMBER

Member ID: 11210 Password: 11210 Gender: ☐ Male ☒ Female

Name: S Gowri Blood Group:

Status: Active Member Type: Student Date of birth: 09/Dec/1985

General | Group | Resources In Hand

Address: CPA College Date Joined: 23/Aug/2011
City: Bodi General Details Valid upto: 23/May/2014
State: Tamil Nadu Date Left: 23/Sep/2004
Country: Class/Section: 11 B.A. English
Pincode: Course: B.A. Eng
Phone: Department: English
Mobile: Nature: Regular
Email: Type: Day
Remarks: Residential: ☒ Day Scholar ☐ Hostel

Keep details for next entry: ☐ Member Lock: ☐ Save Close

Rovan Software Solutions (P) Limited, Sivakasi www.rovan.in Contact:9943946900 / support@rovan.in Record : 55/58 Thursday, 02 - Aug - 2012

Fig. 1: Barcode System

Serials

Serials module makes keeping track of serials an easy task. It covers the following functions.

- Subscription management
- Issue arrival schedule generation
- Checking in of issues
- Non receipt of issues / reminders
- Back volume management
- Reports and analysis

Web Opac

Web OPAC (On-line Public Access Catalogue) is a window to the library collection. It helps the members to search for items available in the Library through intranet / internet by using

- Acc. No, Call no, Author, Title, Subject, Keywords, Location, Publisher, Supplier etc,
- Boolean operators
- Wild card matching

The query result can be presented as a neatly formatted bibliography in multiple sorting orders as required.

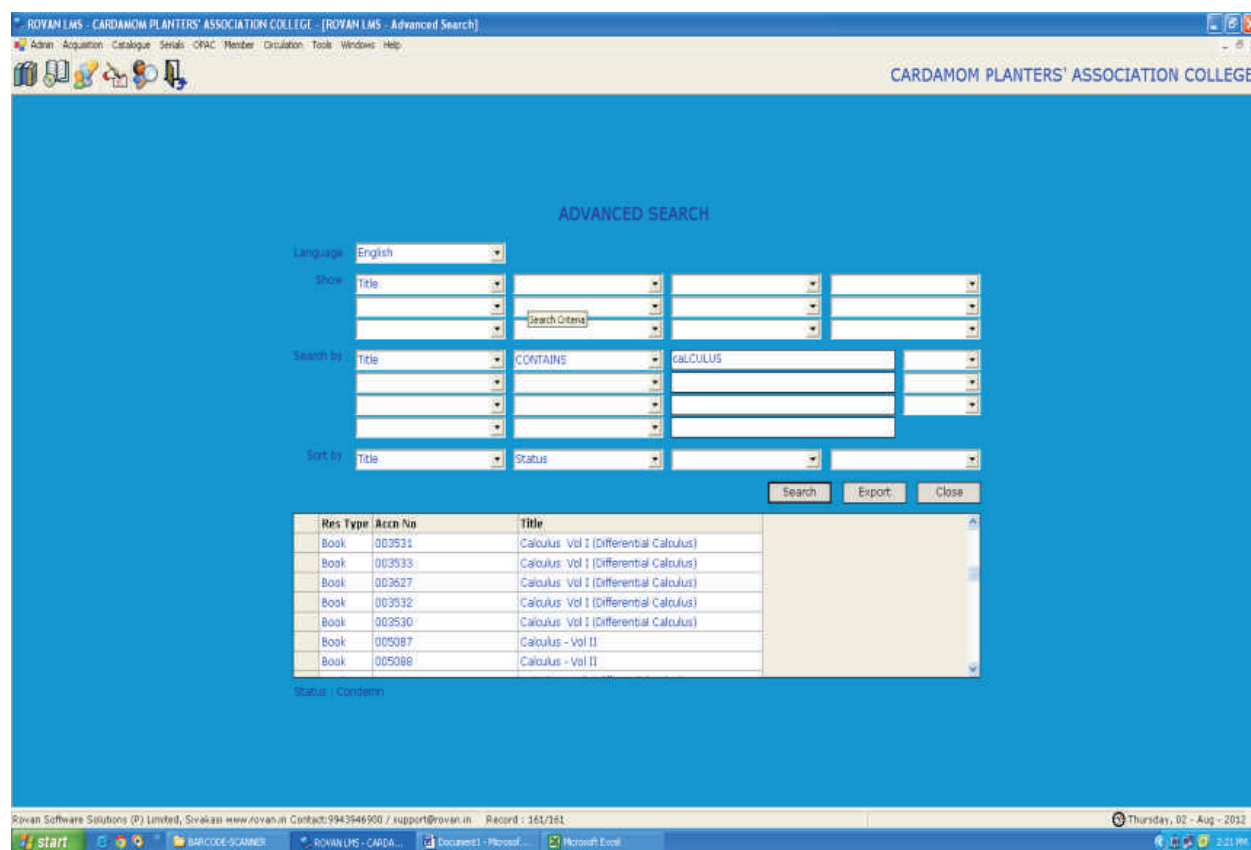


Fig. 2: Advanced Search in the Software

Administration

Administration module helps to perform the following functions.

- User management
- System Audit
- Backup
- Temporary Lock

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The design stage is very important one and may take several months also. After carefully planned, designing stage started. The design stage involved careful appraisal of findings of the system requirements, proposals and alternative solution. In the design process, type of the library, size, functions or modules to be automated and the financial support for automation have been

worked out. Library automation package procured through University Grants Commission (UGC) fund, the cost involved for the library automation process was hardware, purchase of software, training to the library professionals, orientation to the users, and other miscellaneous costs. A team with librarian chosen the software, hardware, operating system, staff requirements, storage of data, retrieval system, method of processing, updating of files and so on. Data entries for all books, journals and rare books have started entering into the database as on 10-03-2011. Presently books acquired are entered through ROVAN LMS software and the entry process of all the documents are in progress. Other operational aspects like documentation, site conditions, maintenance have been thoroughly discussed. After the software and hardware have been selected, the other items like site preparation, problems with old system, testing the new system, data conversion procedures, manpower requirements both library and information technology

professionals have been considered. Modification, changes have made in software, and the same have been documented.

The next stage of implementation involves the actual running of system. In the implementation stage, it should be decided, whether the entire system should be moved to new one or to be automated in phased manner. In CPA college, the data have been entered and circulation is being done through ROVAN LMS software package. Presently most of the operations are carried out through software and it is decided to perform all the operation through software package.

EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Evaluating the new system after some time will be better for finding the new systems efficiency and meeting the objectives of the goal of the organization. Evaluation programme is diagnostic one and once it is diagnosed, then curing will be easy. Once evaluation has been conducted, steps must be taken to improve the system.

In the college, the ROVAN LMS package has been evaluated and some of the limitations have been identified and steps have been taken to rectify the same.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Adequate training to all the library staff members is must and all the library staff members' participation in training is must. One person with having sufficient IT knowledge should take care of the automation package.

In the college, the ROVAN LMS personnel have given adequate training to handle the software without any problem.

Problems Faced While Automating the Library

- ❑ Backup facility
- ❑ Multilingual facility: whether the software helps for the data to enter in the local language and appearance of the same in that language (while retrieval).

Despite its shortcomings, the software has provided for easy reference to our library collection. Users can easily search for the availability of books using author, title, class number, accession number, free text and combination of search. Since all the sections are automated, it is found that circulation was matter of minute and all the repetitive works have been eliminated. Various reports such as user statistics, fine details, transaction, reminder and so on are very easy. The students, research scholars and faculty members have expressed satisfaction over the software. Overall, it is found that despite its shortcomings, use of ROVAN LMS software is very much useful and all are satisfied with the software.

FINDINGS

The present study has been made to understand the major issues which are involved in the planning and designing of library

automation. The findings and experiences of the present study are listed below followed by relevant suggestions:

- Hardware and software requirements for library automation are listed
- Selection of software is listed
- Major steps for planning and designing for library automation are provided
- Different modules, menu screens and special features of ROVAN LMS software are explained.
- Different functions and services provided by the library are explained and presently the library is automated

CONCLUSION

Automation is need of the hour for any college library, since most the library operations are repetitive. Though, the development of software is possible, it will be time consuming and designing the software according to the international standards will be cumbersome. The package introduced in our library supports for all activities carried out in the library. Automation relieves the library professionals from doing their repetitive clerical jobs and leads to job satisfaction and also enhances the image of the library. The staff and users are very much satisfied with software package, since it is simple and user-friendly. With this package, we are able to provide better services to all the users of Cardamom Planters Association College, Bodinayakanur.

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