M-OPAC- SMARTPHONE BASED LIBRARY BOOK SEARCH APP

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Abstract : In the last few decades, the revolution in mobile technology is changing the way information delivered and accessed in library. An increasing number of academic libraries provided services and content delivery to mobile devices. This article highlights the mobile revolution and application of mobile technology in libraries with special reference to M-OPAC. The above paper also focuses on concept of M-OPAC with its need. Further, some salient features of M-OPAC and its advantages are also discussed.

Key-word : Mobile Technology, Educational App, OPAC, Web-OPAC, M-OPAC etc

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Introduction :

The advancement in ICT has brought out revolutionary changes in libraries and information centers. The application of ICT in libraries has changed the face of the libraries services in information storage, retrieval and dissemination of information. ICTs helps library professionals to manage their various in-housekeeping operations such as circulation, acquisition, maintenance of catalogue, periodical management etc. by automating them. At present application of the computer technology for library housekeeping operations such as administrative work, acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, serial control, OPAC etc. known as library computerization/automation. Among all the above library housekeeping operations the most important and widely used retrieval tool by users is Online Public Access Catalogue i.e. OPAC. According to the ALA Glossary "Online Public Accesses Catalogue(OPAC) is a computer based and support library catalogue (Bibliography Database) designed to be accessed via terminals so that library users may directly and effectively search for and retrieve bibliographic records without the assistance of a human intermediary such as a specially trained members of the library staffs. The terms OPAC, web-OPAC and m-OPAC have similarity in their functioning but there is a slight difference between them as:

OPAC : OPAC is client server based library catalogue with limited usage i.e. Only the persons in LAN can use it and also u**sers have to follow the program of the particular OPAC software in that library.**

Web-OPAC : Web OPAC is an OPAC over cloud based technology, which is provided on the web and with the help of internet anybody can access it from anywhere.

M-OPAC : M-OPAC is a Smartphone app of the particular library's OPAC that provides the same information as the OPAC but it needs android device/Smartphone to use it.

Why M-OPAC ?

Now days, Mobile Phones have more advanced features and capabilities than ever before. The mobile technology has made communication and information sharing timely with less effort. Now Smartphone's are more and more affordable and are performing many functions of computers and replacing computers with Smartphone apps. Smartphone's also changed the teaching-learning environment of the college. Mobile phones i.e. smart phones are come with much more advanced features and capabilities and this result in the people's dependency on computers is decreasing and shifting towards mobile technology. Smartphone's are used as a tool of accessing information from the web portal. At present providing library services through Smartphone's is need of the hour. The primary focus of users from academic community is library catalogue to search the libraries resources. Due to the mobile revolution the provision of OPAC services over mobile phones has started and it helps to ensure friendly, easily, simply and quickly search of library resources.

Further, in India most of the colleges and its students are located in rural area and also from several studies it is quiet observed that all students will don't have their own desktop/laptops but almost all students have their own Smartphone with internet. These results in most of the college libraries are procuring/developing M-OPAC app from their software developer to facilitate the catalogue search easily and simply by using android cell phone or smart phone.

What is M-OPAC ?

M-OPAC is the online public access catalogue which is accessible through mobile having android system. **M-OPAC is a smart phone based Book Search app which** offers a low-cost cloud-based platform. All library users all over the world get easy to use App for free book search. M-OPAC is simple to use smart phone based mobile OPAC search engine app to search the library books. The M-OPAC simply provides a mobile friendly interface for accessing the library catalogue using Smartphone. The M-OPAC offers a great new way to find items and prepares library for future requirements. M-OPAC provide searches according to title, author, publisher, keyword, subject and many more to the users.

Features of M-OPAC :

- **Easy Book Searching :** Libraries can upload the book database on M-OPAC cloud and the users can readily search book details from the database of their particular library or different libraries using different filter options, such as title, author, publisher, subject, ISBN no., published year etc. With the easy book searching, student can have a clear idea regarding the availability of the book in particular library.
- **Reservation of Book Online :** The interactive OPAC mobile app enables the users to access the content and make book claims or reservations on required days within a few clicks. Easy search option with provision of demand or reservation of books makes it convenient for users to reserve the book online instead of physically visiting to the library.

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Volume : 3 (2023)
Special Issue :1 (March)

LIBRARY SCHOLAR
International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Library Science

ISSN
2583-2549

- **Book Issue Details :** The users can know the number of books issued on their name. The users can see the title of the issued books with its issue and due dates. It will help the users to return the books within time and to avoid unnecessary fine.

- **Book Transaction History :** This feature enables the users to know total number of issue/return of the books done by them. The book transaction history shows the list of books with date issued and returned by the user in whole academic year. Book transaction history keeps the records related to books issue/return by users.

- **Search History :** The search history feature offers a cumulative list of search queries performed by the user during the search activities. Moreover the auto-search option helps the users to select a search in the list and return to that prior search with a mere click of a button which saves their time.

- **Shelf Browse :** This feature helps in quickly locating book from library collection. This is similar to physically searching book from left to right on a library shelf. This feature helps in using specific numbers to the book row or shelf which can quicken the searching activity.

- **Common Platform :** The most integrated feature of the M-OPAC, which acts as a common platform for the library community to share knowledge and ideas. The user can easily make book claims and apply for inter library loans for a specified amount of time.

- **Overdue Details :** This feature enables the library user to know the dues on their name. It shows the total over dues not only on dues on non returned items but dues on returned items i.e. books.

- **New Arrivals Details :** New arrivals feature of M-OPAC helps the users to know about newly arrived titles in library. New arrivals details show the title of newly arrived books with its author, publisher and other details with number of copies.

- **Scan QR code :** The most prominent feature of the M-OPAC is provision of scanning QR code facility. While entering in the library users need to scan the QR code posted in library to avail the library facilities. It keeps the records of the particular user related to check in and check out of the user. It helps the user to know the how much time he spent in library. For library professionals QR code feature helps to know about number of users visiting library day wise.

Advantages of M-OPAC App :

- Simple to use, low cost and instant implementation and no training required.
- Instant popularity- library resource collection is seen by all users at a time
- No need of costly computers/laptops. Just a Smartphone is required.
- Hosted on cloud. So 24*7 access to anyone from anywhere.
- Users don't need to visit library Physically to search the books
- Saves the time and money of the users by searching books online within a few clicks
- Optimized Library Operations

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Conclusion :

In the age technology libraries have adopted computer and its associated technologies and successfully passed through developmental stages like automation of in house-keeping operations, providing faster access to its collection, and digitization to provide multiple accesses at users desktop. Libraries and library professionals must not hesitate to adopt all possible new technologies like ICT, Wi-fi, Library 2.0 and mobile technology to redesign, and transform its services so as to deliver information and its services to the user's doorstep. Explosive growth of mobile devices and applications will force the academic libraries to drive new services and changing the way information delivered and accessed. An increasing number of libraries provide services and content delivery to mobile devices. Today users of academic library are not much more interested in the using manual catalogue cards. This results in emergence of OPAC to search the library books.

But very few academic libraries are offering internet based OPAC - Book Search facility. Also, OPAC has some limitations like users get access to data of only one library where he/she is registered. There is no common platform where all worldwide libraries can share their data with users & a global search engine for users to search books from all over the world and the solution for this application of M-OPAC. Now days Students expect immediate, personal, easy access to information regarding items available in library on their mobile devices. They want mobile access to library systems and more. To meet these demands, M-OPAC of mobile enhancements specifically designed to meet the unique needs of library users.

Acknowledgement :

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