USE OF ONLINE PUBLIC ACCESS CATALOGUE IN GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, AMRITSAR: A STUDY

Shiv Kumar[1] and *Ranjana Vohra*[2]

The aim of the present study is to investigate the use of Online Public Access Catalogue by the users at Guru Nanak Dev University Library, Amritsar (Punjab). A sample of 112 users was taken from various categories of users covering different disciplines such as Basic Sciences, Applied Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities. A questionnaire was designed and distributed among the users to collect the primary data. The paper focuses on various aspects of OPAC such as awareness, frequency of use, frequently used access points, satisfaction level, etc. The findings revealed that most of the users use the OPAC to locate the documents despite facing some difficulties. However, majority of the users are not satisfied with the OPAC. The study suggests that the users should be made familiar with the use and operation of the OPAC by providing special training.

KEYWORDS/DESCRIPTORS: Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), Library automation, University libraries, Libraries, Guru Nanak Dev University.

1   INTRODUCTION

Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is one of the automated services being provided in libraries. OPAC is an important retrieval tool and supports search and retrieval of bibliographic records through several approaches. OPAC provides basic search, advanced search, browsing search, Boolean search, and search through access points such as author, title, subject, keyword, call number, etc. It also supports additional functions such as providing loan status, location and reservation. It has more search capabilities and facilities than the traditional catalogue. Today, the OPAC has been adopted widely in Indian libraries. It is important to know how effectively the users are utilizing this service. In this study, an attempt is made to examine the perception and satisfaction of users regarding the OPAC in Guru Nanak Dev University Library, Amritsar.

2   GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR: A BRIEF INTROUCTION

Guru Nanak Dev University was set up at Amritsar, Punjab to mark the five hundredth birth anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji in 1964. During the 46 years of its existence, the university has achieved a place in the academic world. The UGC has identified it as a "Centre for Excellence in Sport science" and the Executive Committee of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has accredited the 'Five Star Status' to the university.

[1] *Research Scholar*, Department of Library and Information Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh 160014, INDIA. E-mail: shiv1977@gmail.com
[2] *Professor*, Department of Library and Information Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh 160014, INDIA. E-mail: ranjanashiv@yahoo.com

Bhai Gurdas Library, the Central Library of Guru Nanak Dev University, is named after the great Sikh Scholar Bhai Gurdas who had the privilege of taking dictation from the reverend fifth Sikh Guru Arjun Dev Ji for the compilation of the holy scripture of the Sikhs, ADI GRANTH. At present, it has a collection of nearly five lakh volumes. It is a member of two national networks, INFLIBNET and DELNET. The library provides access to more than 4500 journals and some databases through UGC-INFONET E-journals Consortium. Almost all house keeping activities are computerized. Earlier, the library was using in-house software for the records of the library holding. Now it is using WINISIS, Windows version of CDS/ISIS, after customizing this software according to its needs and requirements. This software serves almost all activities and services of the library. The library has a local area network connected to university network. It is providing OPAC service to its users and for this purpose, six terminals have been dedicated.

3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the present research study is to:

- Study users' awareness about the OPAC;
- Know whether users have acquired the knowledge of using OPAC;
- Identify the most used and the least used search options by the users in searching the OPAC;
- Investigate whether users need user orientation and assistance of library staff to use the OPAC; and
- Find out the problems faced by users and their level of satisfaction in using the OPAC.

4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is confined to the faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate student members of Guru Nanak Dev University Library, Amritsar.

5 METHODOLOGY

The survey method of research has been adopted to conduct this study. For this purpose, a questionnaire was designed to collect information regarding the users' perception and satisfaction about the OPAC. The sample was selected from different categories of users such as faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate students by using 'stratified random sampling method'. The questionnaire was distributed among 112 users of Bhai Gurdas Library during the end of 2008-2009 academic session, out of which 90 (80%) users gave the responses. The researchers have also personally discussed various aspects of the OPAC with some users – those responded to the questionnaire – to make the data and information more authentic. The distribution of respondents was as below:

Table 1: Category-wise distribution of respondents

Designation	No. of Response	Percentage
Faculty Members	18	20.0

Designation	No. of Response	Percentage
Research Scholars	13	14.4
Postgraduate students	59	65.6
Total	**90**	**100**

6 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

6.1 Discipline-wise Representation of Respondents

Discipline-wise representation of respondents is shown in Table 2. Users of different categories are from various disciplines. Users are grouped under four disciplines viz., Basic Sciences, Applied Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities.

Table 2: Discipline-wise representation of respondents

Discipline	No. of Response	Percentage
Basic Sciences	22	24.4
Applied Sciences	21	23.3
Social Sciences	23	25.6
Humanities	24	26.7
Total	**90**	**100**

The table reveals 24 (26.7%) users from Humanities, 23 (25.6%) from Social Sciences, 22 (24.4%) from Basic Sciences and 21 (23.3%) from Applied Sciences.

6.2 Gender-wise Distribution of Users

The responses received from both male and female respondents of university library are as follows. Table 3 shows that out of total 90 respondents, 46 (51.1%) respondents are male and 44 (48.9%) are female.

Table 3: Gender-wise distribution of users

Gender	No. of Response	Percentage
Male	46	51.1
Female	44	48.9
Total	**90**	**100**

6.3 Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

Table 4 depicts the distribution of respondents according to their age groups. The data indicates that 58 (64.4%) users are less than 25 years, 22 (24.4%) belong to the age group of 26-35 years, 7 (7.8%) belong to 36-45 years and very few constituting 3 (3.3%) belong to above 45 years.

Table 4: Age-wise distribution of respondents

Age (in years)	No. of Response	Percentage
Below 25	58	64.4
Between 26-35	22	24.4
Between 36-45	7	7.8
Above 45	3	3.3
Total	90	100

6.4 Awareness of Users About OPAC

Table 5 presents the awareness of users about the existence of OPAC service. 84 (93.3%) out of 90 users are aware of OPAC, whereas only 6 (6.7%) users are not aware of OPAC service. It can be observed from the table that most of the users are aware of OPAC facility available in the university library.

Table 5: Awareness of users about OPAC

Awareness of OPAC	Number of users	Percentage
Yes	84	93.3
No	6	6.7
Total	90	100

6.5 Frequency of OPAC use

Table 6 indicates the frequency of OPAC use. 'No response' in this table refers to those users who are not aware of OPAC service as shown in the preceding table. The table indicates that only 7 (7.8%) out of the total 90 users use the OPAC very frequently, 25 (27.7%) use frequently, 29 (32.2%) use occasionally, 7 (7.8%) use rarely and 16 (17.8%) users never use the OPAC. Majority of the respondents are found to be using the OPAC either regularly (very frequently and frequently) or moderately (occasionally) in the university library.

Table 6: Frequency of OPAC use

Frequency of use	No. of users	Percentage
Unaware	6	6.7
Very frequently	7	7.8
Frequently	25	27.7
Occasionally	29	32.2
Rarely	7	7.8
Never	16	17.8
Total	90	100

6.6 Reasons for Not Using the OPAC

As shown in Table 6, 16 (17.8%) users 'never' use the OPAC. In this regard, an attempt is made to determine the reasons for not using the OPAC. Table 7 reveals that 11 (68.7%) of the

respondents mentioned 'Lack of knowledge', 13 (83.3 %) opine 'Complicated/confusing to use', 7 (43.7%) opine 'No output/null retrieval', half of them opine 'Lack of on-screen help', 2 (12.5%) opine 'Lack of assistance from library staff', 5 (31.3%) opine 'Slow speed' as reasons for not using the OPAC. It is clear from the data given in the table below that there are three major reasons i.e. 'Lack of knowledge', 'Complicated/confusing to use' and 'Lack of on-screen help', for not using the OPAC.

Table 7: Reasons for not using the OPAC

Reasons	No. of users	Percentage
Lack of knowledge	11	68.7
Complicated/confusing to use	13	83.3
No output/null retrieval	7	43.7
Lack of on-screen help	8	50
Lack of assistance from library staff	2	12.5
Slow speed	5	31.3
Lack of computer systems	0	0

Note: Total percentage will not be 100 because of multiple responses.

6.7 Other Methods Used by Users

Table 8 indicates the other methods used by those not using the OPAC. Out of 16 users 13 (81.3%) consult card catalogue, followed by 11 (68.8%) resort to searching the library shelves . 7 (43.6%) get help from library staff and an equal number of users get the help from friends.

Table 8: Other methods used by users

Other methods	No. of users	Percentage
Consult card catalogue	13	81.3
Search shelves yourself	11	68.8
Ask library staff	7	43.6
Ask friends	7	43.6

Note: Total percentage will not be 100 because of multiple responses.

6.8 Preference of Users Toward OPAC and Card Catalogue

Table 9 shows that 59 (86.8%) out of 68 users prefer the OPAC when both the OPAC and card catalogue are available in the library, while only 9 (13.2%) users prefer card catalogue. Hence, majority of users prefer the OPAC. During informal discussions with these users, it has also come out that the OPAC is convenient to use in comparison to the card catalogue.

Table 9: Preference of users toward OPAC and card/print catalogue

Preference of users	No. of users	Percentage
OPAC	59	86.8
Card catalogue	9	13.2
Total	68	100

6.9 Knowledge of Using OPAC

Knowledge of using the OPAC is an essential factor for searching the resources of a library. Users were asked to indicate their own assessment of their knowledge of using OPAC. The data is presented in Table 10. Only 1 out of the 68 users felt that he/she possessed *excellent knowledge*, 16 (23.5%) possessed *above average knowledge*, 32 (47.1%) possessed *average knowledge*, 14 (20.6%) possessed *below average knowledge* and only 5 (7.4%) possessed *extremely poor knowledge*. It is clear that nearly 75% of users feel that they do not possess adequate skills for effectively using the OPAC.

Table 10: Knowledge of using OPAC

Knowledge of using OPAC	No. of users	Percentage
Excellent	1	1.5
Above average	16	23.5
Average	32	47.1
Below average	14	20.6
Extremely poor	5	7.4
Total	**68**	**100**

6.10 Purpose of Using OPAC

Table 11 shows the purpose of using OPAC. 43(63.2%) users consult the OPAC to know the availability of the required document in the library, 44(64.7%) to know the location of the required document and 15 (22.1%) to know whether the required document issued/checked out.

Table 11: Purpose of use of OPAC

Purpose of using OPAC	No. of users	Percentage
Availability of required document	43	63.2
Loan status	15	22.1
Location of required document	44	64.7

Note: Total percentage will not be 100 because of multiple responses.

6.11 Frequency of Use of Access Points

Table 12 highlights the frequency of using access points available in the OPAC. Almost one-third of users search information/documents through author access point very frequently, nearly half of users search information/documents through author access point frequently, 5(7.4%) search information/documents through author access point occasionally, an equal number of users search information/documents through author access point rarely and none of users is found who never use author access point. Almost similar kind of observations is found in the case of Title access point.

Table 12: Frequency of use of access points

Frequency of use	Author	Title	Subject	Keyword	Call/Class Number	Combined search
Not aware	2(2.9%)	0(0%)	9(13.2%)	49(72.1%)	54(79.4%)	56(82.4%)
Very frequently	23(33.8%)	17(25%)	6(8.8%)	1(1.5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Frequently	33(48.5%)	34(50%)	7(10.3%)	1(1.5%)	1(1.5%)	2(2.9%)
Occasionally	5(7.4%)	12(17.6%)	6(8.8%)	5(7.4%)	1(1.5%)	3(4.4%)
Rarely	5(7.4%)	5(7.4%)	21(30.9%)	3(4.4%)	6(8.8%)	1(1.5%)
Never	0(0%)	0(0%)	19(27.9%)	9(13.2%)	6(8.8%)	6(8.8%)
Total	**68(100%)**	**68(100%)**	**68(100%)**	**68(100%)**	**68(100%)**	**68(100%)**

Only 9 (13.2%) users are not aware of Subject access point. 13(19.1%) of total 68 users use Subject approach regularly (very frequently and frequently). Only 6 (8.8%) use it occasionally, 21 (30.9%) use it rarely and 19 (27.9 %) never use it.

Majority of users are not aware of Keyword, Call/Class Number and Combined search. The data available in the above table indicates that very few users search the resources of library through the aforesaid access points. It is clear from the table that Author and Title are the most used access points. The data further implies that known-item searches are more common than unknown-item searches. These findings coincide with the studies conducted earlier (Ariyapala and Edzan, 2002; Oduwole and others, 2002; Ortiz-Repiso and others, 2006; Malliari and Kyriaki-Manessi, 2007; Villen-Rueda and Moya-Anegon, 2007 and Rajput & others, 2008).

6.12 Problems Faced by Users in the Most Used Access Points

Over half of respondents appear to have experienced some problem in using the OPAC (Table 13).

Table 13: Problems faced by users in the most used access points

Problems faced	No. of users	Percentage
No Response	9	13.2
Yes	34	50
No	25	36.8
Total	**68**	**100**

An understanding of the nature of problems faced by users should help in improving the OPAC. About a third of the respondents (11 out of 34) mentioned 'No *output/null retrieval*' as a major problem, while about 11% of users did not know '*to narrow/expand* a search'. Further analysis of the data that the users are not acquainted with search strategy of the OPAC to find out the relevant information and documents. Many also '*Do not know how to use*' the OPAC (Table 14).

Table 14: Type of problems/difficulties in the most used access points

Problems/difficulties	No. of users	Percentage
No Response	10	29.5

Problems/difficulties	No. of users	Percentage
No output/null retrieval	11	32.5
Lack of knowledge	3	8.8
Do not know how to narrow/expand search results	4	10.8
Results/output too large or too small	3	8.8
Lack of on-screen help	1	2.9
No results/output but books in library	2	5.9
Total	**34**	**100**

6.13 Awareness of Orientation Programme

The University library does conduct an orientation programme which has a component on use of OPAC. However, over 60% of the respondents seemed to be unaware of the orientation programme (Table 15). But even all those who were aware did not attend the programme. The figures (Table 16) indicate only a quarter (17 of 68) of the respondents had attended the orientation programme.

Table 15: Awareness of orientation programme

Awareness	No. of users	Percentage
Yes	26	38.2
No	42	61.8
Total	**68**	**100**

Table 16: Orientation programme attended by respondents

Orientation attended	No. of users	Percentage
No Response	42	61.8
Yes	17	25
No	9	13.2
Total	**68**	**100**

6.14 Availability of Library Staff Near OPAC

In responses to a query 'whether library staff members were available near OPAC terminals to assist users, over 60% of the respondents stated that library staff members were not available (Table 17). This is particularly important in view of the fact that 70% of the respondents felt the need for staff assistance in using the OPAC (*See* Table 18).

Table 17: Availability of library staff near OPAC

Availability of staff	No. of users	Percentage
Always	8	11.8
Usually	6	8.8
Occasionally	13	19.1
Rarely	29	42.6
Never	12	17.6
Total	**68**	**100**

Table 18: Need of assistance of library staff

Need of assistance	No. of users	Percentage
Always	21	30.9
Usually	29	42.6
Occasionally	8	11.8
Rarely	9	13.2
Never	1	1.5
Total	68	100

6.15 Adequacy of OPAC Terminals

Most respondents appear to feel that the number of OPAC terminals is adequate (Table 19).

Table 19: Adequacy of OPAC terminals

Adequacy of OPAC terminals	No. of users	Percentage
Strongly agree	6	8.8
Agree	35	51.5
Neutral	21	30.7
Disagree	3	4.5
Strongly disagree	3	4.5
Total	68	100

6.16 Overall ease of using OPAC

The data related to overall ease of using OPAC is depicted in Table 20. The table reveals that very few users constituting 4 (5.9%) respond that the OPAC is very easy to use, 10 (14.7%) respond that the OPAC is easy to use, 37 (54.4%) respond that the OPAC in slightly easy to use, 15 (22.1%) respond that the OPAC is difficult to use and very few users i.e. 2 (2.9%) respond that the OPAC is very difficult to use. It is clear from the data that a small group of users opine that the OPAC is easy (very easy and easy) to use.

Table 20: Overall ease of using OPAC

Ease of use	No. of users	Percentage
Very easy	4	5.9
Easy	10	14.7
Slightly easy	37	54.4
Difficult	15	22.1
Very difficult	2	2.9
Total	68	100

6.17 Overall Satisfaction Level in Using OPAC

Table 21 exhibits overall satisfaction level of users in using OPAC. The table gives the picture that out of 68 users very few users i.e. 3 (4.4%) are fully satisfied with the OPAC use, 12 (17.6%) are satisfied with the OPAC use, 31 (45.6%) are slightly satisfied with the OPAC use, 18 (26.5%) are dissatisfied with OPAC use and only 4 (5.9%) are very dissatisfied with the OPAC

use. From the below table, it is clear that a small proportion of users is satisfied (fully satisfied and satisfied) with the OPAC working.

Table 21: Overall satisfaction level in using OPAC

Satisfaction level	No. of users	Percentage
Fully satisfied	3	4.4
Satisfied	12	17.6
Slightly satisfied	31	45.6
Dissatisfied	18	26.5
Very dissatisfied	4	5.9
Total	**68**	**100**

7 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The library has to adopt appropriate measures to increase the awareness among the users about the orientation programme. The programme should familiarise the users about the various access points such as subject, keywords, class number, etc as most users – even those using the OPAC – do not seem to be aware of the various access points and search devices to get the maximum use from the OPAC service. Users need the assistance of library professionals in using the OPAC effectively.

7.1 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study is confined to Guru Nanak Dev University Library, Amritsar. The study can be replicated in other university libraries of Punjab as well as in various university libraries in the country to get a comparative overview.

8 REFERENCES

1. Ansari (M A); Amita. Awareness and use of OPACs in five Delhi libraries. *The Electronic Library*. Vol. 26(1); 2008; p11-129.

2. Ariyapala (P G); Edzam (N N). Foreign postgraduate students and the online catalogue at the University of Malaya Library. *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science*. Vol. 7(1); July 2002; p57-67.

3. Chandrashekara (M). Use of catalogues in University libraries in Karnataka: An evaluative study. University of Mysore, Manasagangothi. 2002. *Ph.D. Thesis*. http://hdl.handle.net/2009/2103 [Accessed on June 15, 2009].

4. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. http://www.gndu.ac.in/ [Accessed on May 10, 2009].

5. Malliari (A); Kyriaki-Manessi (D). Users' behaviour patterns in academic libraries' OPAC: A multivariate statistical analysis. *New Library World*. Vol. 108(3/4); 2007; p107-122.

6. Oduwole (A A); others. On-line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) use in Nigerian academic libraries: A case study from the University of Agriculture, Abeokutta. *Library Herald*. Vol. 40(1); 2002; p20-27.

7. Ortiz-Repiso (V); Others. How researchers are using OPAC of the Spanish Council for Scientific Research Library Network? *The Electronic Library*. Vol. 24(2); 2006; p190-211.

8. Villen-Rueda (L); Others. The use of OPAC in a large academic library: A transactional log analysis study of subject searching. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*. Vol. 33(3); 2007; p327-337.

9. Rajput (P S); others. Use of online public access catalogue in Devi Ahilya University Library, Indore. *SRELS Journal of Information Management*. Vol. 45(1); 2008; p55-62.