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Embracing E-Resource Discovery Technique Using Open Source Software: The IUB Library's Experience

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Chapter 8

Embracing E-Resource Discovery Technique Using Open Source Software:
The IUB Library's Experience

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this write-up is to share the extent of the practice of discovery tools to explore e-resources at the Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) Library, by its faculty members, research scholars and students. This study is also aimed at investigating and sharing the technical procedure of implementing the discovery tool using open source software, i.e. VuFind. A number of popular open source discovery tools have been examined. A comparison has been made to adopt the most suitable one. This study pointed out that a discovery tool has been instituted first time in Bangladesh from the library professionals and university library perspective. The write-up also provided a total scenario and working process of the VuFind discovery tool which has almost all the advanced technologies of the next generation catalog. The study also found that VuFind may be a good tool for moderately technologically competent library professionals for managing their resources with minimum cost and efforts, having customizable code and unlimited instances.

INTRODUCTION

Globally Internet has an immense impact towards research and development. Electronic resources (e-resources), particularly electronic journals (e-journals) are getting importance in lifelong learning and research. Traditionally libraries were like a big warehouse which are today transforming into 'access point libraries'. The environments of learning are being rapidly developed and changed by electronic

publications and digital resources. Appropriate knowledge management tools are required to ensure the knowledge to become more accessible and visible. To meet up the ever-increasing demand of digital resources, libraries throughout the world are expanding their horizon in subscribing digital resources for their clients. At the same time managing and providing access to those digital resources has become a major concern for the library and informational professionals worldwide. Information professionals throughout the world are initiating and adapting appropriate knowledge management systems and processes to maximize their product output to their patrons. Library users are now very much dependent on technology. They are very much interested to find their desired resources within short span of time ignoring where it is and how to get those. Library professionals themselves must cope with the ever changing demands of their users. Accordingly, they have to implement new and sophisticated technology to provide better services to their clients. With the development of the web environment, knowledge management in libraries became convenient both for professionals and the users. Library professionals are now able to provide library and information services to individual users' doorsteps with the help of technology. Resource discovery tools are among such technological achievements in the library which enable users to find their required information in a single place with very simple queries from multiple sources. IUB Library implemented a free and open source discovery tools for better management of its resources and to support teaching, learning and research activities of IUB community. This write-up attempts to describe the different phases of implementing, i.e. installing, configuring and customizing a resource discovery tool at IUB Library.

MOTIVATION

Resource discovery is to mean the process of identification and access to the information that are relevant and required by the user. By e-resource discovery system it is meant a collective set-up of web environment, where content integration from a diversity of information products and services are represented from a variety of domains relevant to the information needs of the user. Here, relevancy of resources and smooth access are the main requirements irrespective of their location, storage media and procedure, or the authority of the resources. IUB Library subscribes many electronic databases to support its user community but the management of them was becoming difficult. Databases were listed alphabetically in the website and accesses were provided accordingly. As a newly developed library website yet needed more tasks to become more functional, so very few information regarding subject-wise lists of journals or discipline-based searching as well browsing was not yet provided there. So, users were not fully aware about the coverage of the specific database. Although the expert users and faculty members were accustomed with their subject relevant database, the novice user felt very uncomfortable. In other words, new users did not know which database can best suit their subject requirements. As a result, getting maximum output from the databases was difficult. To overcome these obstacles and to provide optimum services, IUB Library implemented an e-resources discovery tool for its users. So, as a pioneer of utilizing a variety of e-resources, it is very justified to do such task for better access to resources in an effective and novel manner.

The growth of the library automation has been emerged during the 1960s. Though in Bangladesh, free and open source software specially Integrated Library System (ILS), Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and Institutional Repository (IR) implementation are going as a slow coach but the embracement of next-generation catalogue awareness, enhancement and advancement are rare, very unsatisfactory. In

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