

## LIBRARY AUTOMATION AND DIGITISATION

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### Abstract

*Library Automation and Digitization are the two terms which each and every one is talking about in every seminar, conference or even in our day to day activities in this profession. There are both differences and similarities between Library Automation and Library Digitization. Thus we can say that library automation is the first process to be done before the digitization of the library can take place, because without automation it will be very difficult to jump straight into digitization of any library.*

*Keywords: Automation, Digitization, Library Automation, Library Digitization, Electronic Library*

### 0. Introduction

We are talking about library automation and digitization every now and then. In this information age with the emergence of information technology people are totally dependent on these technologies and there is a need to introduce the technologies everywhere like hospitals, banks, railway stations, libraries etc. The need arises for centralization of the sources of information as well as to hasten the work in such kinds of service institutions. So the traditional libraries are in the process of automation and the automated libraries are in the process of digitization so that they will be able to achieve the goals and objectives of the library that is to satisfy the users.

### 1. What are Library Automation and Digitization?

According to AEA Glossary of Library and Information Science "automation is the performance of an operation, a series of operations or a process by self-activating, self-controlling, or automatic means. Automation implies the use of automatic data processing equipment such as computer or other labour saving devices". Therefore library automation is nothing but the application of modern technology like computers, telecommunications etc for automating the library functions in information storage and retrieval for improving the services to users.

Digitization is the process of application of the modern technology like computers, telecommunications, scanners, OCR (Optical Character Recognition) etc, for automating the library functions plus converting the printed collections into digitized format. In

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general we can understand that automation is the first step, and then only it is possible to proceed for digitization of libraries.

## 2. Similarities and Differences between Library Automation and Library Digitization

Most of us are still confused about the difference between Library Automation and Library Digitization. Is it not the same, in library automation we must have computers it is the same in the digitization also, in library automation we must use library software it is the same in library digitization also. But there are some differences and similarities between these two terms, and the followings are the differences:-

Library Automation	Library Digitization
1. Library automation means the use of computer(s) in the library	1. Library digitization also means the use of computer(s) in the library
2. In library automation there should be computers for the library managers to operate the services in the library and also there must be computers for the users to aid in searching for the book from the database through OPAC (Web OPAC if internet facility is available)	2. In library digitization, the library should provide computers for each user for searching and reading the digitized materials because it will be impossible for them to access digital information without machines like computers. Web OPAC is a must for digitized library.
3. In Library automation the library managers can use the software like SOUL (Software for University Libraries), WINISIS (Windows version of CDS/ISIS), LIBSYS (Library System), ALICE, LIBERTY etc.	3. In library digitization there are software especially meant for digitization. Again different types of soft wares are there i.e open source softwares and proprietary softwares. Softwares for digitization are Fedora, Greenstone, Eprints, DSpace etc
4. In library automation the library managers have to create the database of the total collection in the software they use, this means that they have to enter the detailed descriptions of each and every document present in the library. With the help of the software they can also catalogue, classify and circulate the printed documents to the users.	4. In library digitization the library managers have to convert the printed documents into the digitized format with the help of the scanners, OCR (Optical Character Recognition) machine etc. and they also have to maintain a database(s) of the contents of the electronic documents. It means that not only the detailed descriptions but the content as well has to be digitized.
5. In automated library the collection will be in the printed form as in the traditional libraries, only the functions and services provided to the users will be electronically.	5. In digitized Library the collection will be in digitized or electronic format and the functions and services of the whole library also will be performed electronically.
6. In Library Automation though Internet is essential for networking and resource sharing, yet even if there are no internet facilities available automation is still possible.	6. Without the internet facilities it will not be possible to create the digital library.

<p>7. In library Automation the library managers don't have to scan the documents available in the library because in the database they create, they have to enter only the detailed descriptions of the document and not the content.</p>	<p>7. In library digitization the library managers need the scanners, OCR (Optical Characters reader) machines to convert the whole content of the document into the digitized format.</p>
<p>8. In automated library the printed documents are physically available in the library except those documents which are born electronically.</p>	<p>8. In fully digitized library where the collection is purely digitized the documents will not be physically available in the library but they will be available in the electronic or digitized format which we cannot touch and see physically.</p>
<p>9. In automated library copy right is not necessary because only the detailed description of the document is entered in the computer and not the contents.</p>	<p>9. In case of digital library copy right is required because the contents of the document have to be entered in the computer. Therefore copy right is the biggest issue in digitization of any library.</p>
<p>10. In automated library if there is no electricity the services like cataloguing, classification, issue, return etc will not be able to function, where as the users can sit and read the printed documents in the library.</p>	<p>10. In digitized library, in case there is no electricity, all library functions will be stopped and the users will not be able to even view the document unless there is any back-up for the electricity.</p>
<p>11. In Automated library the collection which it has, can be owned by entering its details in the accession register, giving the accession number and putting the seal on the document to show that the document belongs to that particular library.</p>	<p>11. Here it is not possible because the document is available only in the digitized format.</p>
<p>12. In Automated Library the collection development is the same as in traditional library because we have to acquire the documents (Books, Journals etc) in the physical form, and if internet facility is there, the library managers can also acquire the e-journals or e-books from the publishers through the internet electronically.</p>	<p>12. In digitized library the collection development is not the same as in the automated or traditional libraries because they have to acquire the documents electronically in digitized form. Here the whole process of buying and subscribing of the documents will be electronically.</p>

13. In Automated library the Librarian must be there to manage the library.	13. If the library is not pure digital library- that is hybrid library which is traditional as well as digital library then librarian will be there but if it is purely digital library then no librarian will be necessary.
14. The stock verification can be carried out just as in the traditional libraries because the documents are physically	14. The stock verification will be difficult to carry out because the collections are not physically available in the library.
15. It is easier for the users to borrow the documents from the library, refer to them and return them back to the library. If they feel the need to keep a copy, then they can photo copy or Xerox it if not then they can just use it and return it back to the library.	15. When the document is in digitized or electronic format then the users must have the reading machine. If they don't have the reading machine like computer etc at home then they will have to take the print out of the document first and then only will it be possible for them to read.
16. To automate the traditional library a lot of training for the library staff is required because to handle for the first time the unfamiliar technology will be very difficult.	16. To digitize the automated library though training is required for the library staff but not that much because they are already familiar with the technology applied.

### 3. From Library Automation to Library Digitization

Automated Libraries everywhere are now in the process of changing to an advance process that is Digitization. To change from automation to digitization is not as simple as we think. In fact it is a long process again. The first step to take is the data conversion that is to convert the database which they have in any software they had used earlier. But there is a big problem here because if that earlier software does not have a standard format which is followed by the digitized software then there will be a loss of data which is not less than a nightmare to the Librarians. If this is the case then the whole process has to start again in creating the database(s) and side by side to convert the collection into digitized format. The computers configuration, i.e both hardware and software, must be increased according to the requirement. So there is a lot of investment for both the processes.

### 4. Conclusion

The biggest challenge for the library professionals is to be able to cope with the changing demand of the users, to provide them the services to their satisfaction. Library automation and Library digitization are not much different from each other. So library automation is the stepping stone to library digitization because one cannot just jump straight to digitization without automation first. But are we the library professionals prepared for library digitization? Are our users also prepared for it? Because especially in a country like India, we cannot expect each and every house hold to have computers, so it is difficult to read the

### 5 REQUIREMENTS FOR AUTOMATION

Power is another problem because if there is no power then the library will not be able to function and we find that there is load shedding from time to time in order to save power in every corner of the country. The only way for us is that, when there are problems we should try to find out the solutions for those problems for the benefit of all.

### References

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