

# Integrated Library System and Library Leaders

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**Abstract:** An integrated library system (ILS) is a software suite that libraries use to manage their resources and services. It combines various functions into one unified system, which helps librarians efficiently handle various tasks in library. Library professionals upgrading is vital in today's rapidly evolving technological and information landscape for updating their traditional Library system into integrated library system.

**Keywords:** ILS, Modules of ILS, OPAC, Library professionals, Digital Library

## INTRODUCTION

Libraries play a critical role in communities in nurturing literacy, education, and a love for learning and reading. They provide just access to information, helping to fill the gaps in education and technology, and support lifelong learning. A library serves as a place to store and organize resources, making them accessible to the public. These resources can include books, magazines, journals, digital media, research papers, and more. The goal of a library is to provide individuals with the tools they need for learning, research, recreation, and personal development. Libraries can differ based on their function and the type of resources and to whom they provide service. Public Library, Academic Library, Research Library, Special Library, Digital Library are the types of library. Innovations in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have brought about drastic changes in the day to day functioning of libraries. Technological aids have been used in libraries to facilitate and enhance the library services as and when they are introduced. In the late 1800s the typewriters revolutionized the working of the libraries. Introduction of the microcomputers brought about a transition from manual systems to automated systems in housekeeping operations of the libraries. The library collections have also changed over the years. More and more multimedia resources are getting added to the library collection.

Integrating Library System

An integrated library system (ILS) is a software set that restructures library operations. A cloud-based integrated library system (ILS) is a software solution used by libraries to manage their collections, patrons, and services in a centralized and accessible way. Distinct from old-style traditional library systems, a cloud-based ILS is hosted on remote servers and can be accessed by the internet from anywhere. An integrated library system (ILS), also known as a library management system (LMS), is an enterprise resource planning system for a library, used to track items owned, orders made, bills paid, and patrons who have borrowed. The use of cloud-based library management systems has increased drastically since the rise of cloud technology started. An ILS is usually made up of a relational database, software to interact with that database, and two graphical user interfaces one for clients, one for staff. Now ILSs are mostly based on relational database architecture. In such systems files are interlinked so the deletion, addition and other changes in one file automatically activate changes in related files. It means integrated library management system is sharing a common database to perform all the basic functions of a library.

Integrated Library System's primary objectives are basically three

- Efficient housekeeping operations of library
- Well-designed Information Retrieval
- Integration of library Materials with open datasets

The modern ILSs are now capable to be integrated seamlessly with linked open data like name authority data, subject access systems etc., open contents like book reviews, table-of-contents, cover images and social networking tools like Facebook, twitter through semantic web technologies and information mashup.

## FEATURES OF INTEGRATED LIBRARY SYSTEM

- Ease of use: The software should be simple and easy to use

- **Technical companionability:** The software should run on the library's hardware and support the latest operating system version
- **Data import and export:** The software should allow users to import and export data from other systems
- **Data integration:** The software should allow users to integrate data into the system
- **Support:** The software should provide support, such as online training, on-site training, and a help desk

It includes various modules, including cataloguing, circulation, acquisitions, serials, and an online public access catalogue (OPAC).

#### MECHANISMS OF AN INTEGRATED LIBRARY SYSTEM

An Integrated Library System (ILS) is a sophisticated software system designed to streamline and manage all aspects of a library's operations. It's essentially a comprehensive platform that integrates various library functions into one unified system. Here's a breakdown of its key mechanisms

1. Core Components 2. Data Flow and Integration 3. User Interfaces 4. Key Features and Technologies

##### 1. Core Components

- **Relational Database:** At the heart of an ILS is a robust relational database. This database stores all the library's information, including:
  - Bibliographic data (details about books, journals, etc.)
  - Patron information (member details, borrowing history)
  - Circulation data (loans, returns, holds)
  - Acquisitions data (orders, invoices)
  - Serials data (journal subscriptions)
- **Software Modules:** The ILS software is divided into modules, each handling a specific library function. These modules interact with the central database and with each other, ensuring seamless data flow. Common modules include:
  - **Acquisitions Module:** Tracks purchasing processes, budgets, and inventory for acquiring new materials and manages the ordering, receiving, and invoicing of library materials.

- **Cataloguing Module:** Creates and maintains bibliographic records, often using standards like MARC, allowing for easy organization and retrieval of library materials.
- **Circulation Module:** Manages the check-in and check-out of library materials, tracks borrowing history, due dates, overdue items, and fines.
- **Serials Module:** Tracks journal and magazine subscriptions, issues, and holdings.
- **Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC):** Provides a user-friendly interface for patrons to search the library's catalogue and manage their accounts.
- **User Management:** Helps maintain and manage user accounts, including personal details, borrowing privileges, and fines.
- **Reporting:** Generates data for library usage, inventory, finances, etc. This helps administrators make informed decisions.
- **Interlibrary Loan (ILL):** Facilitates borrowing and lending items between libraries within a network.

##### 2. Data Flow and Integration:

- **Centralized Data:** The ILS ensures that all library data is stored in one central database. This eliminates data redundancy and inconsistencies.
- **Module Interaction:** The different modules in the ILS are designed to interact seamlessly. For example, when a librarian catalogues a new book, that information is automatically available in the OPAC for patrons to search.
- **Workflow Automation:** The ILS automates many library tasks, such as sending overdue notices, generating reports, and managing interlibrary loans. This improves efficiency and frees up staff time for other tasks.

##### 3. User Interfaces:

- **Staff Interface:** The ILS provides a dedicated interface for library staff to manage all library operations. This interface is typically designed with tools and features specific to each module.

- Patron Interface (OPAC): The OPAC allows patrons to search the library catalogue, place holds on items, renew loans, and manage their library accounts. Modern OPACs are often web-based and accessible from anywhere.

#### 4. Key Features and Technologies:

- MARC Standards: ILS systems often use MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloguing) standards for bibliographic data, ensuring consistency and interoperability.
- Barcode Integration: Barcodes are used to quickly and accurately identify items during circulation and other processes.
- Web-based Access: Many ILS systems offer web-based interfaces for both staff and patrons, enabling access from any device with an internet connection.
- API Integration: Some ILS systems provide APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) that allow them to integrate with other library systems and services.

The integration aspect of the system is crucial because it streamlines workflows, ensures consistency across different library functions, and offers a better user experience for both patrons and staff. There are many popular ILS options such as Alma, Koha, and Evergreen, each with unique features. It sounds like you're working in library management or library technology, particularly with integrated library systems (ILS). These systems are essential for managing and automating various library functions such as cataloguing, circulation, acquisitions, and user management.

### LIBRARY LEADERS AND INTEGRATED LIBRARY SYSTEM

Library professionals play a crucial role in the implementation and effective use of an Integrated Library System (ILS). They act as the bridge between the technology and the library's mission to serve its users. Library leaders and ILS (Integrated Library Systems) are closely related. ILS are software systems used to manage library operations, such as cataloguing, circulation, acquisitions, and serials management. Library leaders are responsible for making decisions about which ILS to purchase and how to implement it. They also need to ensure that the ILS is being used effectively by library staff and that it is meeting the needs of library users. Here are some of the ways in which library leaders and ILS are related:

- Selection and implementation: Library leaders are responsible for selecting and implementing an ILS that meets the needs of their library. This involves evaluating different ILS products, negotiating contracts with vendors, and managing the implementation process.
- Training and support: Library leaders need to ensure that library staff are properly trained on how to use the ILS. They also need to provide ongoing support to staff as they use the system.
- Evaluation and improvement: Library leaders need to evaluate the effectiveness of the ILS and make improvements as needed. This may involve upgrading the system, adding new features, or changing the way the system is used.
- Budgeting: Library leaders are responsible for budgeting for the cost of the ILS. This includes the cost of the software, hardware, training, and support.

In addition to these specific tasks, library leaders also need to be aware of the latest trends in ILS technology. This will help them make informed decisions about which ILS to purchase and how to use it.

#### *Challenges for library leaders to face in relation to ILS*

The key challenges that library leaders face:

- *Keeping up with technology:*  
ILS technology is constantly evolving. Library leaders need to stay up-to-date on the latest trends in order to make informed decisions about their ILS.
- *Managing costs:*  
ILS systems can be expensive. Library leaders need to find ways to manage costs without sacrificing functionality.
- *Meeting user needs:*  
Library users have a variety of needs. Library leaders need to ensure that their ILS meets the needs of all users.
- *Integrating with other systems:*  
ILS systems need to be able to integrate with other library systems, such as discovery systems and digital repositories.

Despite these challenges, ILS systems are an essential tool for modern libraries. Library leaders who are able to effectively manage their ILS will be able to provide better service to their users.

#### *Key responsibilities of Library Leaders in relation to ILS*

Here's a breakdown of their key responsibilities:

#### 1. System Selection and Implementation:

- **Needs Assessment:** Library professionals are involved in assessing the library's specific needs and requirements for an ILS. They understand the library's workflows, collections, and user base, which helps in selecting the most suitable system.
- **System Evaluation:** They participate in evaluating different ILS products, considering factors like functionality, cost, vendor support, and compatibility with existing systems.
- **Implementation Planning:** Library professionals contribute to developing an implementation plan, which includes data migration, system configuration, staff training, and go-live strategies.
- **Data Migration:** They oversee the migration of existing library data (bibliographic records, patron information, etc.) to the new ILS, ensuring data integrity and accuracy.

#### 2. System Administration and Maintenance:

- **System Configuration:** Library professionals configure the ILS to meet the library's specific needs, including setting up circulation rules, defining cataloguing standards, and customizing the OPAC interface.
- **User Management:** They manage user accounts, permissions, and access levels within the ILS, ensuring security and data protection.
- **System Maintenance:** They perform regular system maintenance tasks, such as software updates, database backups, and troubleshooting technical issues.
- **Vendor Liaison:** They act as the primary point of contact with the ILS vendor, reporting problems, requesting support, and staying informed about system updates and new features.

#### 3. Training and Support:

- **Staff Training:** Library professionals train library staff on how to use the ILS effectively, covering all modules and functionalities.
- **User Support:** They provide support to library users, helping them navigate the OPAC, access digital resources, and troubleshoot any issues they may encounter.

- **Documentation:** They create and maintain documentation for the ILS, including user manuals, training materials.

#### 4. Data Management and Analysis:

- **Cataloguing and Metadata:** Library professionals are responsible for creating and maintaining high-quality bibliographic records in the ILS, using standards like MARC and RDA.
- **Data Analysis:** They use the ILS to generate reports and analyse data on library usage, collection trends, and circulation patterns. This information helps in making informed decisions about collection development, resource allocation, and service improvements.

#### 5. User Experience and Outreach:

- **OPAC Enhancement:** Library professionals work to enhance the user experience of the OPAC, ensuring it is user-friendly, accessible, and provides effective search and discovery capabilities.
- **Promotion and Outreach:** They promote the library's resources and services through the ILS, utilizing features like online book displays, virtual exhibitions, and personalized recommendations.

In heart of library system, library professionals/ leaders are essential for the successful implementation and ongoing use of an ILS. They possess the knowledge and skills to manage the system, train users, ensure data quality, and leverage the technology to enhance library services and meet the evolving needs of their communities. Automated library system may support as a decision-making tool for library manager and policy makers, this is very important because Library Automation system can generate a huge set up data and Statistics. On the basic of that data and Statistics, library policy makers, library managers can take different effective decisions. So, Library Automation at the one hand, you are supporting your user, on the other hand you are supporting your staff for better efficiency and thirdly you are also supporting your library manager and policy maker to take different effective decision and automation of library may take also the benefits of changing nature of the resources

Library Automation as a whole provide increased operational efficiencies, these are achieved through different kind of computer application in Libraries; Automation of housekeeping operation also relieves professional staff from routine clerical tasks and

thereby makes themselves much more productive; betterment of library services in terms of speed, qualities and efficiencies. At the same time, through the use of different kind of Web 2.0 technologies, automation may create interactive, collaborative and participative platform for user-centric library services. We always talk that user is at the centre stage, so Library Automation is basically supporting to go for a user at the centre stage model and at the same time, it supports improvement of existing services and introduction of new services. So as a whole, after Library Automation we can achieve different kind of pool factor for our library, we can make library free from two fundamental barriers to information access that is time and space. But the moment you are using a Web-enabled Library Automation system and your OPAC is available through the web, you are free from time and space. That means users can access your library database right from their home, right from their office and from any time, at anywhere, in any format. So, this is actually changing your library fundamentally and you are getting read of two fundamental barriers of information communication.

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