

The university of guyana library

[Education](#), [University](#)



The University of Guyana Library, located on the main campuses, in confronting the difficulties to guarantee information resources are effective, efficient and accessible, have physical catalogues to display what materials are available in its collections and where the materials are. In 2014, in keeping with technological advances in libraries worldwide, the University of Guyana Library (UG Library) started an Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) operated by KOHA Open Source Integrated Library System. Ogbole and Morayo (2017 cite by Aina 2004 op. cite) claimed, “ OPAC is the most modern form of the library catalogue, where bibliographic records of all the documents in a collection are stored in the computer memory.” At UG Library, OPAC is the library’s computerised catalogue that is available virtually to students, faculty members who use the library through computer terminals.

Access to the online catalogue may also be done through a web-OPAC allowing persons outside the university campuses to have access to the catalogue of the library expediently. Borgman (1996) stated, “ The user-friendly design addresses screen displays and functional capabilities but does not search deeply into task motivation, much less into the connection between a computer user and the work. Users were expected to adapt to systems and considerable effort was devoted to user training.” Given that the OPAC web design offers a professional approach, users experienced user-friendly designed interfaces, such as a simple menu-driven, interface using offline storage of search strategy, automatic login procedures, and software-controlled navigated searching techniques. While the user interface of the UG Library portal remains user-friendly, some users discovered difficulties

with the layout. The complete web design appears easy to manipulate for users who possess knowledge of the online search. Users expected that input allowed them to manipulate the system and output allowed the system to process the effect of their manipulation.

The system is capable of adapting to users rather than requiring users' adaptation to the system. Banati, Bedi, and Grover (2006) stated, "The relationship between usability and trust is a very complex relationship." Yet, some researchers opined OPACs interfaces intended to reduce online connection time and printing options. The intention is that search and retrieval of the UG Library collections should be easy due to OPAC. Usability experts argued that current users have already developed a firm mental model of searching; A box where they can type words; A button labelled "search" that they click to run the search; and A list of top results that's linear, prioritized, and appears on a new page—the search engine results page Nielsen (2005).

UG Library OPAC search allows users to do simple searches (any keyword) via the drop-down menu where users can search for books, journals, e-books using the authors, titles, subjects, ISBN numbers, Publishers and Barcodes, information that is known to the library user. The feature also supports advanced searches within the set of previous results by extending or restricting the search scope. Users had hitches with the feature that provided control over the search. Users only accessed the basic search features although the system allows users to search using a combination of words and phrases using Boolean AND, OR, and NOT. The overall display of

UG Library OPAC lacks esthetics. The aids in the visual display, lacks multimedia features such as audio, real play, etc., as such, users were not coping with the deficiencies and in some instances, users were unable to find books in the collections. Some Guyanese users lack computer knowledge and were reluctant to change to the new technology and the designs of the interface of the system were not as user-friendly as expected. The system would have revealed some difficulties to online users and online assistance proved futile. The title links are misleading.

OPAC title links on the result page did not take users to the specific bibliographic record but, instead, users had to click a full record link that is sometimes difficult to locate to view the individual bibliographic record. This feature is misleading and makes the retrieval process inefficient. Usability of the OPAC system did not make the inefficiency less evident although some users lacked training on how to conduct searches and to retrieve information. It is also necessary for the University to consider alternative sources to power the library software or collaborate with other Universities within the region to assure the improvement of the OPAC system.

Notwithstanding the many issues with the system, information retrieval within the OPAC system of the UG Library continues to be an important concern at the library. The Library should have the OPAC designed more comprehensively to ensure fewer difficulties, in to boost users' usage.

Educating users about the search and retrieval system of the OPAC will eliminate most of the challenges associated with the use of OPAC. Keywords search should highlight when performing a keyword search. In highlighting

keywords, users can decide how relevant the retrieved publication is to their aim. Most university libraries in the region have this feature. The user interface is not the only line of improving a good OPAC system of the library. The technological factor, mechanisms for the better use of OPAC and continuous education on the awareness of the use of this new service is also important. University of Guyana Library should aim to design user-centres, self-sufficient online catalogues that fit the web 2.0 model. Ultimately the goal is that users will be comfortable and confident using the library's OPAC for their information needs wherever a computer is available and without special training.

In conclusion, the OPAC system of the University of Guyana Library, the information-seeking world, has entered an era of self-service. Self-service is being described as an “ I wish I had known that the solution for needing to teach our users how to search the catalogue was to create a system that did not need to be taught.”(Tennant, 2005). The OPAC system of the University of Guyana Library is still in its operational phase. With more work in improving the ineffective areas, the system will fulfill its mandate that is to improve the overall library function.