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The topic of my paper is online-searching versus hard copy catalogues. As the Library Bureau for forty years have lived from selling printed cards, it is of course of great concern what will happen to the traditional hard copy catalogue.

Here I have an example of our printed cards about 1940 and 1960 and the card of the 70'.

Even though this card is result of the newest technology we all can see that there has been very little development from the first days.

There are different ways of defining of catalogue. One is: A catalog is a systematic record of the holdings of a collection, its purpose being to enable a user of the collection to find the physical location of information in the collection.

Some say that the catalog's funktion is simply to provide information about materials that are in a library's collection.

Some say that the library catalog not only provides information about or access to items in a collection, it also organizes the collection, assists users of the catalog by providing information about its own organization. Still other emphasize that a catalog is not simply an instrument that contains information about a library's collection, it is also a functional communication system that gives users direction and access to bibliographical information.

In short is the library catalog simply a finding list or is it a bibliographical tool?

The development of the catalog is only to some degree of result of research.



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Example of print cards.

Still Pauline Atherton lists findings for 50 years of research in "Catalog Users' Access from the researchers Viewpoint" published in "Closing the catalog". (1980).

Still we have not uncovered a master design for our catalogs.

#### Findings

##### 1. Behavior of catalog users

- a) remember titles better than authors
- b) most people only look up only one entry

##### 2. Known-item search

- a) author search requires 5 x card examination
- b) permuted title indexes raise success rate

##### 3. Subject searches

- a) often fails because the user cannot tell if it is right book
- b) people mostly think up a subject heading or entry word that will give.....

American

##### 4. Physical structure

- a) abbreviated catalog would satisfy 80-90% of users
- b) principles of redundancy and multiple access routes will raise success rate.

#### The card catalog

The information about the library's collection is scattered:

The card catalog, the record catalog, binding file, on-order file, circulation record.



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The average user is unaware of these files and regards the card catalog as the sole source of bibliographic information. To the user the only thing of importance is: Can I have the item which I seek?

As many catalog users do not ask for help, when they fail to find what they seek. As the files increase in number, size and complexity the barrier becomes more formidable.

Aversion to searching through a large number of cards frequently encountered in card catalogs for the works of cooperate authors or for periodicals with common titles.

Card files are difficult to maintain. The filing system itself is a source of error and it is frustrating for the user to find different filing rules and wrongly filed sequences.

Also it is difficult to provide information about new materials. The paper-based system are keeping the new items from their users.

The card catalogue is highly resistant to change - and if improvements are suggested the cost of change is estimated - and we find that we need as well financial and human ressources which prevents it.

The card catalog is complexed unadaptibility - a barrier to library use.

### The book catalog - the micro catalog

The next possibilities are for new catalogs which are produced from machine-readable files: book or microform.

The book catalog has proved to be too expensive and slow in production. In Denmark we since 1969 have had 2 union catalogues for childrens and school-libraries. An attempt to produce the catalog for the Copenhagen municipal libraries



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in bookform was only tried twice - and today they are served by a catalog in microfiche and microfilm.

The COM-catalog has many virtues, but the costs of maintaining microform catalogs are often underestimated. There are rising costs every year (monthly supplements and complete cumulation once a year). Still the catalog is a linear record allowing access only one factor at a time. Although the COM-catalog does not have all the disadvantages of the card catalog, neither does it possess the advantages of the truly new form - the online catalog.

#### **Why adopt an online catalog?**

What are the reasons that libraries wants to adopt online public access catalog (OPAC).

#### **Is it to improve service?**

At first glance it seems obvious that online service could provide improved service to users.

On the second glance you may be in doubt because you need to know the user needs before service can really be improved. User needs and user behavior comprise the first of several key issues when introducing for an online public access catalog.

#### **Is it to improve productivity?**

#### **Is it to increase efficiency?**

Even though it is not clear that adoption of an online catalog will or can improve productivity or efficiency or produce substantial savings there is potential for reducing personnel costs.

#### **Is it to cut cost?**

The cost of maintaining an online catalog will be lower than the cost of maintaining the card catalog, excluding start-up costs.



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The online interactive catalog will not really be a catalog as that term is understood. It will be part of an integrated and rationalized library automation system. The catalog as such will cease to exist.

The basic advantage of developing an integrated online system is that it can help to eliminate the need for maintaining a number of largely redundant files, that are costly to maintain.

You may well use card catalog studies but you should be aware, that there is a fair chance, that the online catalog will not be used in the same way that the card catalog is used.

We cannot know how people will try to solve problems under a new set of circumstances.

You might say that comparison between the two catalog types is akin comparing of bicycle to a manned space vehicle. Both facilitate the transporting of humans from place to place, but there similarity ends.

Online catalogs provide

- men search strategies
- greater flexibility
- more access points

The online catalog is part of the cataloguing process which updates the files immediately - and information is available to the user at once.

A single record will be the vessel in which all hitherto discrete pieces of information are stored. Instead of consulting (or probably not consulting) in numerable files, a single question put to the integrated online system will yield all the information, the library has.



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The number of access points provided by the online catalog should be at least as numerous as the number of access points offered by the card catalog. But still while the good qualities of the card catalog should not be ignored, an online catalog can enable users to search for records in ways not possible in traditional catalogs by offering new methods of access as well as additional points of access.

Any word in subject headings - publishing year - publisher

The online system will encourage access to information by combinations of factors.

The ability to interact with the user is what makes the online catalog a "manned space vehicle". It is this capability that is of key importance.

Gives us the opportunity to create user service tool - not only a fancier card catalog.

Constructing and introducing computer catalogs we can refer to a number of research-studies from U.S. and UK.

Being a little behind the development might show to be fortunate as experience and development of hardware and software offers more possibilities. Not only can you take advantage of the experiences of the pioneers, but a good deal of standardization can be postponed until more knowledge is gained.

Who knows what card catalogues would be like today had they been studied with such diligence in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

These characteristics against which to measure the user reaction:



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- 1) Simplicity (clarity)
- 2) Order (file arrangement)
- 3) Completeness (comprehensiveness)
- 4) Association (connectedness)
- 5) Accessibility (convenient access)
- 6) Responsiveness (prompt action)
- 7) Control (manageability)
- 8) Versatility (variety in modes of access)
- 9) Reliability (confidence)
- 10) Support (assistance on demand)

The question of user behavior and needs is clearly intertrined with the issue of use of catalog records in terms of access points needed or desired and the use of information that appears in the bibliographical record once access is gained.

In the card catalog all bibliographic information is found. The online catalog gives opportunity to display different revels and forms of displays depending of the needs of the user.

The overall conclusion is that most users favor the online catalog prior to the card catalogue - even if you have access to both, which seems still to be the case in many libraries in U.S.

Even to quite new users up to 85% preferred online access (Pikes Peak Library). The major reason was that the system was easy to use, secondly easier and faster than the card catalog. If the online system is part of the automation system the benefits of seeing the location, number of copies and loan-status is mentioned.

Users tend to bring greater knowledge of titles than they do of authors.



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How well will users of the card catalog be able to cope with a totally different tool.

A study from Ohio State University library system showed that patrons were more successful with the department library card catalogs than with the online catalog (7 times as big). This study examines the reasons for this

- lack of experience
- problem titles where the card catalog seems to give more hints and inspiration
- problem titles contained word in stoplist names in titles a.s.o.
- wrong algorithm used wrong commands.

It is significant that the vast majority of library people are regular users. This means that the efforts in a solid educating of the users are worthwhile.

Approx 80% of online searches are successful  
40% by subject  
33% seek information on a topic or subject  
53% are searching for titles  
50% are for known items  
60% users only use one index

Several attempts have been made to the problem of using the correct catalog forms right spelling and different systems copy with this in different ways.

A consistent finding of card catalog use studies has been that the longer the file, the higher the rate of failure in catalog rearches. Recent findings suggest that the same phenomenon may occur in online catalogs.





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There are basically two ways of minimizing the number of unsuccessful searches: 1. By revising the choice and form of access point to make them more predictable and 2. Making additional access points to serve the different needs of users.

Users' perceptions of problems most often was "increasing the result when too little is retrieved", followed by "finding the correct subject term is difficult". Many users would like an ability to view a list of words related to their search words - to browse the subject list or a thesaurus.

Of course it must be remembered that these user research findings are from us with dictionary catalogs and subject headings.

Upon the whole computer search by subject seems to be difficult, where as searches by author, title or combination of the two is easy.

Responsetime is a psychological factor. Most x preferred the waiting times to be uniform, rather than a delay of about 8 seconds followed by one of forty.

It would be extremely helpful if we could learn what added features would be most useful to users. Such informations is however difficult to obtain because the average user has no way of knowing what he needs/wants untill he tries it - or it is at least suggested to him.

Although generally satisfied it seems proved that the sufficient number of terminals for public use is a major problem as is space for writing (or need of printers).

The aspects of the online system which allow for retrieval by unconventional means and by those factors in combination are what make the online systems truly user-oriented - but we need to ask them.