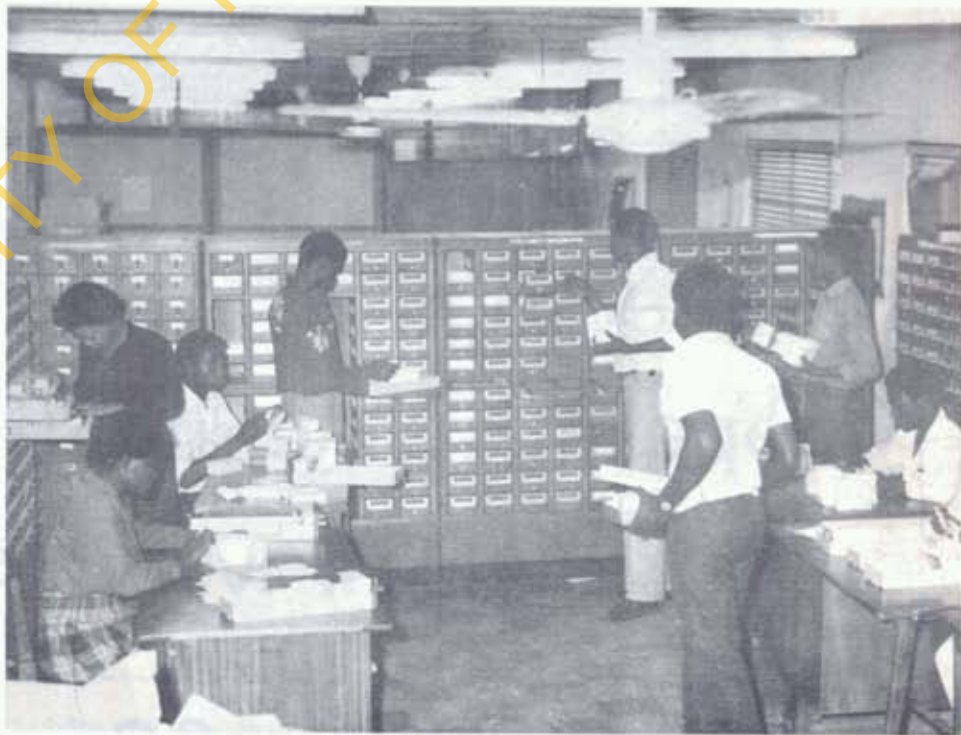# Nigerbiblios

Card Catalogue Expansion in Ibadan University Library

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by
G. D. Ekpenyong and A. Faniran
University of Ibadan Library

INTRODUCTION

The Ibadan University Library is one of the oldest libraries in Nigeria. It does not only cater for students and academic staff but it is a very important research library containing important and rare works on African history with emphasis on Nigeria. It contains approximately 339,000 volumes and receives over 5,800 current journals and other serials. Incorporated in the library system are about 28 branch and faculty libraries with a total holding of over 160,000 volumes.

Since this library moved to its present site in 1954, the card catalogue has not been extensively expanded. New catalogue cabinets have been added from time to time when some of the drawers became too full for easy consultation by users. The recent extensive catalogue expansion exercise became necessary when it was realized that many of the drawers were full and the cards were too tight on the rods. This congestion made it almost impossible for readers to consult the cards conveniently. In some cases, the trays became so tight that it was extremely difficult to put ones fingers between the cards while checking.

The Ibadan University Library Catalogue is a divided Catalogue with the following divisions:

(a) Author/Title Catalogue
(b) Serials Catalogue
(c) Subject Catalogue
(d) Bliss shelf list Catalogue
(e) L.C. shelf list Catalogue
(f) Union Catalogue

The library has been thinking seriously about automating its cataloguing procedures for some time now but this has been hampered by lack of funds and it would be a long time before this can take place. Card catalogue will still have to be used in Ibadan University Library for some time till automation becomes possible. As a result of this, it therefore became necessary to expand the catalogue.

THE EXERCISE

The main objective of this exercise was to expand the Card Catalogue from 501 drawers (Currently occupied) to 702 available drawers. The long vacation (July — September of 1979) was chosen for this exercise. During this period, students and most library users were away on vacation thus making the catalogue area less busy.

The working plan was divided into 6 phases, as follows:

(i) Determination of the number of cards presently in the 501 drawers and dividing this number by the total number of drawers available for expansion. This gives an average number of cards to be arranged in each drawer

(ii) Making the new division arrive at above with distinctively coloured consecutively numbered guide cards.

(iii) Drawing up a hand-written list of labels to be made for the new drawers.

(iv) Typing temporary labels and duplicating them by xeroxing so as to provide more legible labels.

(v) Shifting the cards within the catalogue drawers, insertig temporary typed labels and editing the xeroxed labels.

(vi) Preparing and inserting permanent drawer labels.

TABLE 1

Size of Ibadan University Library Catalogs

Card catalogues	Approximate length of cards in cm.	Number of drawers before expansion	Number of drawers after expansion
1. Author/Title catalogue	10,143 cm	441	567
2. Library of Congress (LC) Shelf List catalogue	986	42	90
3. Union catalogue	450	18	45
TOTAL	11,579	501	702

ACTUAL OPERATION

To save time a random sampling of about 40 drawers was undertaken to give an estimated number of cards per drawer. The cards in each drawer were carefully measured to the nearest

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centimetre (c.m.). Measurements of 40 drawers were recorded in column 'x' of Table 2, observations 1 — 40. The 441 drawers of Author/Title Catalogue were numbered 1 — 441 accordingly. The average length of cards per drawer was obtained by dividing the sum of the observations in column 'x' of Table 2 by the number of occupied drawers measured. Multiplying the number of occupied drawers in the Author/Title Catalogue by the average length of cards gives the approximate total length of cards in the Author/Title catalogue. A similar procedure was also undertaken for the shelf list, and union catalogue.

TABLE 2

Author/Title Catalogue

Internal length of each drawer = 34 cm

Observation Number	Drawer Number	X (cm)
1	2	21.5
2	10	30
3	15	21
4	22	20
5	29	26
6	32	24
7	40	20
8	48	30
9	51	23
10	60	22
11	69	25
12	75	19
13	83	31
14	90	24
15	100	21
16	109	22
17	120	23
18	130	30
19	138	24
20	145	22
21	151	25
22	160	23
23	169	21
24	176	22
25	180	27
26	191	21
27	200	19
28	216	24
29	220	22
30	225	32
31	241	19
32	250	22
33	261	25

TABLE 2: CONT'D.

Observation Number	Drawer Number	X (cm)
34	273	21
35	327	21
36	347	22.6
37	390	19
38	426	20
39	438	22
40	441	21
	TOTAL	926 cm

Average Length of cards per drawer $= \dfrac{926}{40}$ cm

$= \underline{23}$ cm

Actual number of occupied drawers $= 441$ drawers

Average total length of cards in Author/ catalogue $= (441 \times 23)$ cm

$= \underline{10.143}$ cm

Total number of drawers now available for future expansion $= 567$ drawers.

Average length of cards/drawer will be $= \dfrac{10.143}{567}$ cm

approx. $= \underline{18}$ cm

TABLE 3 — Shelf List Catalogue

Number of occupied drawers = 42

Observation Number	Drawer Number	X
1	1	17
2	9	22
3	11	27
4	14	29
5	16	26
6	19	31
7	23	29
8	28	18
9	32	15
10	36	9
	TOTAL	223

Average length of cards (n cm / drawer $= \dfrac{223}{10}$ cm

$= 22.3$

approx. $= 22$ cm

Number of occupied drawers $= 42$

Average length of cards in Shelf List catalogue $= 22 \times 42$ cm

$= 924$ cm

Number of drawers available for expansion $= 90$

Average cards / drawer $= \dfrac{924}{90}$ cm

$= 10.3$ cm

$= 10$ cm

TABLE 4 — Union Catalogue

Number of trays occupied = 18

Observation Number	Drawer Number	X (in cm)
1	1	28 cm
2	3	28 cm
3	6	31 cm
4	15	31 cm
5	18	31. cm
	TOTAL	149 cm

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Average length of cards / drawer

$$= \frac{149}{5} \text{ cm}$$

$$= 29.8 \text{ cm}$$
$$\overline{30}$$

Average total length of cards in Union catalogue

$$= 30 \times 18 \text{ cm}$$
$$= \underline{540} \text{ cm}$$

Number of drawers actually occupied = 18

Number of available drawers for expansion = 45

Average length of cards / drawer will be

$$= \frac{540}{45} \text{ cm}$$

$$= \underline{12} \text{ cm}$$

While marking off the new drawer divisions, the cards were divided at average intervals and judgement had to be made to determine the exact cut — off points to simplify labelling. This operation was carried out by professional Librarians who later supervised Library assistants in the actual shifting of cards. The professionals also rechecked to make sure that the cards were correctly shifted before the new permanent typed labels were fixed unto the drawers. (See table 2 for caluclations).

Discussion

The internal length of each drawer was 34cm. It is very important that the cards within each drawer should not be more than half the length of each drawer (ie 17cm in length) to enable free movement of cards and at the same time be able to accommodate more cards in the future. The cut — off point for the cards in each of the drawers was therefore decided to be 17cm. The 17cm of cards per

drawer predetermined, however, could not be strictly adhered to because judgement had to be made about a convenient way of breaking between the alphabets in order to make sense and leave room for accommodation of more cards in future. It was therefore preferrable to make breaks between "Def" and "Deg" for example (since this arrangement will be more flexible) rather than between "Defen" and "Defoe". Experience shows that to arrive at good cut — off points with good and simple letter combinations, the length of cards is sometimes slightly more and sometimes slightly less than 17cm, but this length proves to be a reasonable average which may be adopted for maximum advantage.

It was observed that in the Author/Title catalogue, the length of cards per drawer arising from the calculation (Table 2) was 18cm. This length was only slightly more than the 17cm predetermined as the cut — off point per drawer. Since this difference is negligible, the cut — off point for the Author/Title catalogue was left as 18cm.

After calculation from the LC Shelf List and Union catalogue (Tables 3 and 4) the length of cards per drawer came to 10cm and 12cm respectively. Since these length are still less than the predetermined 17cm, they were each left at 10cm. and 12cm.

CONCLUSION

The main problem that arose from this random sampling method was that after cards had been transferred, it was observed that in each case (i.e. Author/Title, Union and LC Shelf List catalogues) a few drawers were left unoccupied at the end of the exercise. This should not have arisen if all the drawers were measured to determine the exact length of cards in each category of card catalogue. To prevent this, it might be necessary for a smaller library with less number of drawers to measure all the cards per drawer to arrive at a more accurate figure.

This exercise was very successful in this library and was carried out by the staff of the Cataloguing Section. In future, however, it would be necessary for the Cataloguing Section to know the annual rate of catalogue card growth to enable them predict when the next card catalogue expansion exercise will take place.

For any library, the card catalogue expansion exercise will remain a must until the cataloguing process is fully automated.

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