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New Accessions in E-way : New Additions E-Group of Library, University of Moratuwa .

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Introduction

Preparing new accession lists is a conventional current awareness service in academic and other libraries of Sri Lanka. New accession list normally contains a list of bibliographic records of items added to the library collection in order of their addition. Univerity of Moratuwa, Library (UML) had a tradition of preparing new accession lists quarterly. These list(s) were then sent to all academic departments of University of Moratuwa and other outside libraries of interest. However, it was noted that the time lag between the actual addition of items to library stock and the distribution of accession list to the academics is significant. As a result, academics did not have the opportunity of browsing or borrowing newly added items other than their own recommendations. On the other hand, inquiries regarding the items in the accession list were very low. Though, there is a possibility of generating New Accession lists through the Integrated Library System, further editing and inspection are always needed to publish a quality document. When consider the time and resources spent to generate these lists, UML felt printed accession lists were not cost effective.

There are various mechanisms by which academic staff can be alerted rather than offering traditional current awareness service such as printed new accession list. (Heery and Morgan, 1996).

Internet provides medium of communication through various virtual communication tools. These tools can be utilized to extend the potential of librarians beyond the physical library timely and effectively (Seneviratne, 2003). Furthermore, academic staff members of University of Moratuuwa have personalized access to e-mail and Internet within the university. Hence, UML

took the initiative to establish an e-group to announce newly added items on "Display" to academic staff community using a mailing list. *(pl. see Fig. 1)*

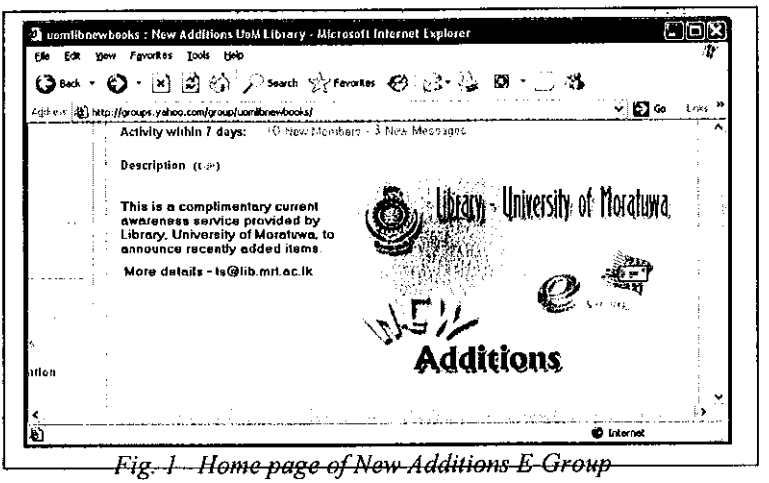

Fig. 1 Home page of New Additions E-Group

In addition, it was decided to limit the number of items on "Display" to 20-30 for a period of one week. At the beginning, new books were placed on display shelves on Friday and kept for seven days. Then E-mail message was sent via the E-Group.

New Additions E-mail

A list of bibliographic records is to be sent via e-mail. As there were 20-30 records per a list, the receiver could easily scroll through the e-mail. Each record contains the most important bibliographic fields such as title, author, place of publication, publisher, year of publication, classification number and the accession number(s). The records are sorted by the classification number and subject headings are given following the Universal Decimal Classification. Subject Headings are used in a way to attract the receivers to find more about the items added. Each and every e-mail message has a running number as identification number, the month and year of addition as a subject of the e-mail. The location of the new library materials are added also given at the top of the message *(pl. see Fig. 2)*.

UML decided not to circulate any messages other than New Additions through this group. Technical Services Staff of UML were given the facility to post message

i.e. New Additions to the E-Group using their official e-mail account. The moderator who is the Assistant Librarian in charge of Technical Services Division has to give the approval to the message sent by technical services staff after logging on to the E-Group. Moderator has the ability to edit, approve or delete messages appropriately (Fig. 3). Such approved messages were only sent to members of E-Group automatically.

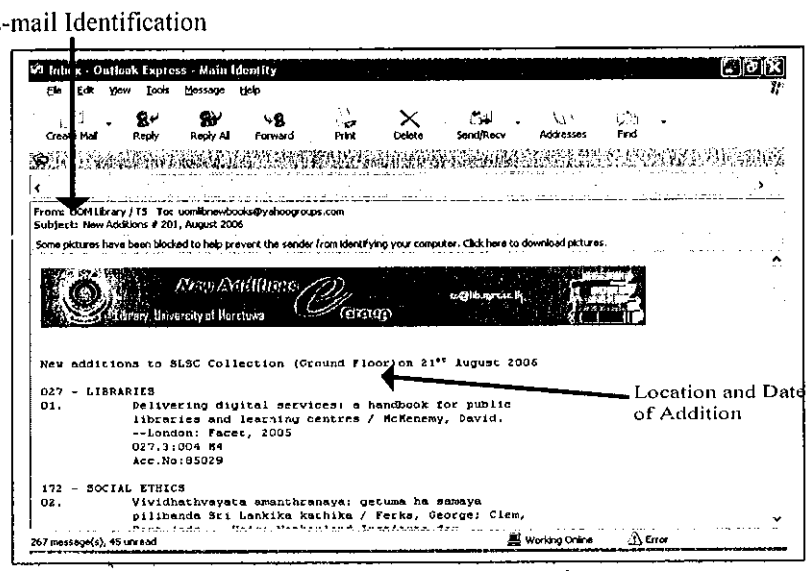

Fig. 2 New Additions E-mail

E-Group always provide a summary of lists sent through and academic staff as well as other interest groups can access the site to view past messages. In addition, it displays a message history. It gives a clear picture of progress of the library acquisitions.

E-Group Membership

Any mailing list allows individuals to subscribe and automatically receive messages posted to the list by other subscribers. As an initial step, UML added the e-mail addresses of all the permanent academic and academic support staff members to the E-Group. Now UML has the practice of adding each and every new academic and academic support staff member at the beginning of each month. The E-Group has the facility of adding 10 members per day and UML can invite any

number to join. Frequent member additions and updates are carried out by the Assistant Librarian in charge of Reader Services Division. *(pl. see Fig. 3).*

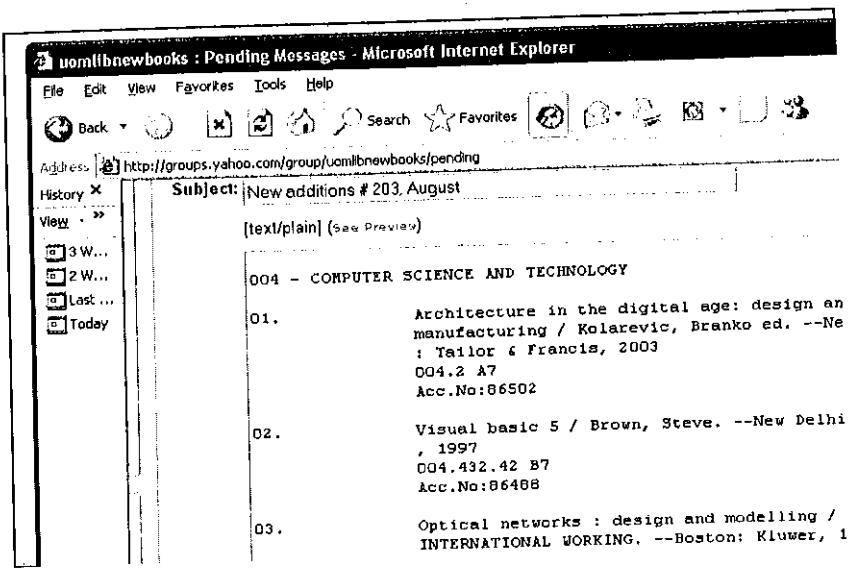

Fig. 2 Editing a New Additions E-mail

UML has given the publicity to this E-Group via their website (www.lib.mrt.ac.lk), Library User Guide, orientation and training programmes. Especially Part-time research Students are encouraged to join this group since they are not frequent visitors of the Library. Moreover, UML library members are given the facility of reserving library materials online. Hence, they can straightway reserve the titles of their interest through the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). A link is provided in the New Additions E-mail to access the OPAC. UML have noted that considerable number of new books on display is reserved by academic staff members.

E-Group members can post messages directly to the group or to the Technical Services Division. Though, their messages are not circulated through the group, member queries are always answered by replying e-mails. UML has noted that academic staff members are having a keen interest of the classification number of the library items and they send their comments if the library items are not categorized appropriately. In such instances, librarians can still learn from staff and researchers about their subjects of interests.

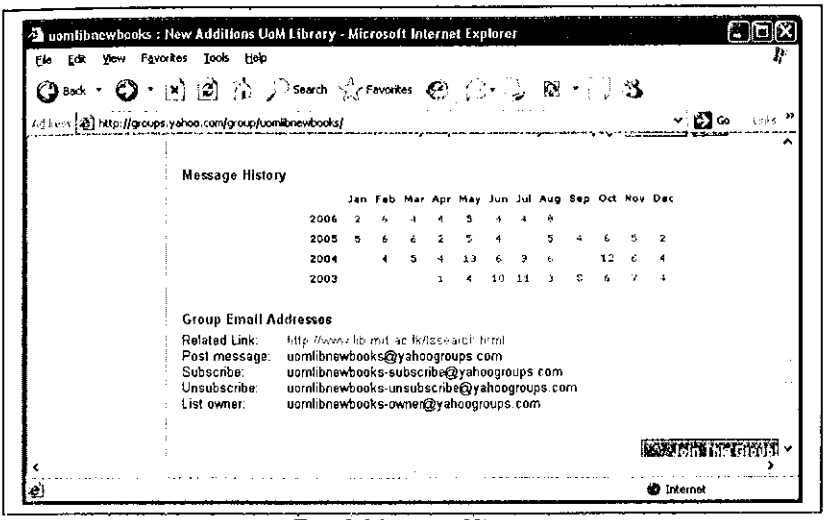

Fig. 3 Message History

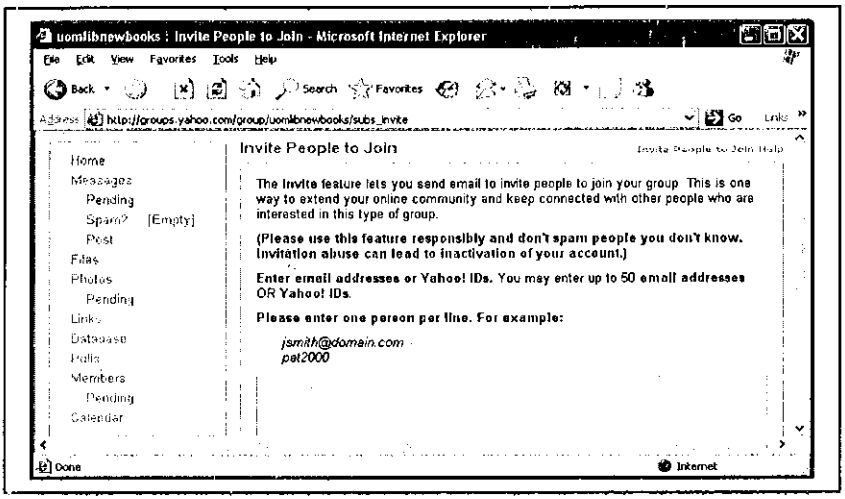

Fig. 3. Adding Members to E-Group

Future Developments

Not only the list of bibliographic records of library items but covers, table of contents etc. can be also attached to this E-Group. In addition, library user can also be redirected to specific record of the OPAC through this E-Group.

Finally, E-Group can be utilized as a method of attracting users to the library.

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Heery, Mike and Morgan, Steve (1996). Practical strategies for the modern academic library. London. *Aslib*,

Seneviratne, T.M. (2003). Internet and its impact on university Libraries: a case study at University of Moratuwa. Unpublished MLS thesis. University of Colombo.