

# RESEARCH WORKS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE VOLUME 1

Yushiana Mansor  
Ahmad Bakeri Abu Bakar



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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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## Editors

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## 9. SUBJECT SEARCH IN OPAC

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### ABSTRACT

This chapter shares important findings from previous research of OPAC user studies. User studies gave useful insights into how users interact with OPAC in locating library materials. Compared to known-item search, subject search has been found to be more problematic. A number of factors contributed to such phenomena. Factors to improve subject search in OPAC is discussed.

### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

Previous studies of users' interaction with OPAC found that the users frequently used the "known item search" feature as an access point to locate the library materials compared to the subject search. It was also found that users faced more difficulties and problems when doing subject search compared to known items searches. Large and Bahesti (1997) proved that in transaction logs analysis, it was suggested that anything from 24% to 78% of OPAC searches were for authors or titles. User surveys pointed to a slightly narrower range between 33% and 67%. This reflects the preference of known items search. Studies of card catalogue use showed that more experienced users of the card catalogue, including library staff, faculty, and advanced students, were more likely to perform known item searches than subject searches (Larson, 1991).