

CUSTOMIZATION OF OPAC IN KOHA OSS FOR WOMEN PRECISE: ENHANCING ACCESS TO GENDER-FOCUSED KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES

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ABSTRACT

Women Studies Libraries are essential for promoting education, research, and public understanding of issues pertaining to gender equality, women's empowerment, health, law, and development. Even though KOHA is used by many academic libraries as their Integrated Library Management System, the OPAC interface is frequently left in its default state and fails to capture the unique characteristics of collections that focus on women. This piece is an application-focused, practical guide to modifying the KOHA OPAC (version 25.11) for a Women Studies Library. The study covers search filters, topic-based organization, the use of custom HTML and CSS, OPAC look configurations, and user-friendly browsing tools. Essential codes, implementation challenges, screenshots, and viable solutions are presented in a straightforward manner. According to the research, OPAC modification greatly enhances the accessibility, usability, and visibility of knowledge materials pertaining to gender concerns.

Keywords: KOHA, OPAC customization, Women Studies Library, Gender studies, User experience, Library automation

Introduction

Women Studies Libraries foster a variety of academic and social programs pertaining to women's health, law, education, social justice, gender equality, and empowerment. These libraries serve teachers, legislators, and members of the public in addition to students and scholars. For this reason, having the correct knowledge at the appropriate moment is crucial. As digital access has become more and more necessary, the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) has emerged as the main way for users to find library materials. Nonetheless, the OPAC in many libraries continues to be generic and fails to account for the unique characteristics of collections that focus on women. As a result, it is frequently challenging to find pertinent information and make the most of available resources. KOHA, an open-source Integrated Library Management System, offers versatile OPAC customization choices that let libraries change the appearance of their OPAC without changing the underlying system files. This essay illustrates how the KOHA OPAC can be modified in real-world Women Studies libraries to enhance user experience and access.

About KOHA OSS

The first open source library automation system is KOHA. Its development is guided by a growing community of users from all over the world working together to accomplish their technology objectives. The features offered by KOHA are always changing and growing in response to the needs of its users.

- **Integrated Library System (ILS):** Libraries of all sizes worldwide actively utilize KOHA, a complete, enterprise-level integrated library system. It may be used for both regular library tasks and sophisticated functions. The program has specialized modules for acquisition, circulation, cataloging, serials management, authority files, customized reporting, barcode and label printing, several notification formats, and offline circulation for scenarios when the internet is not accessible. Whether a library is tiny or a big organization with many branches, KOHA works just as well.
- **Multilingual and Simple to Customize:** KOHA offers support for several languages, and its language possibilities are constantly growing. By tailoring the interface to meet local and regional demands, libraries may make it accessible to a wide range of users.
- **Advanced Search Features:** With an improved catalog display, KOHA offers strong search capabilities. By facilitating the integration of additional content from outside sources like Amazon, Google, LibraryThing, Open Library, Synthetics', and similar services, it improves user experience and discoverability.
- **Adherence to Library Standards:** KOHA adheres to globally recognized library norms and procedures, such as MARC 21, UNIMARC, Z39.50, SRU/SRW, SIP2, and NCIP. This guarantees compatibility with other library systems and a seamless data exchange, while simultaneously supporting current library workflows and resources.

- **Platform Independent and Web-Based:** All KOHA interfaces, including OPAC, circulation, administration, and self-checkout, are web-based and built using common web technologies like JavaScript, CSS, and XHTML. With this, KOHA may be used on any platform without the use of particular software.
- **Free and Open-Source Software:** KOHA is made available under the GNU General Public License (GPL), version 3 or later, guaranteeing total independence from vendors. Libraries have the option of managing KOHA on their own or getting assistance from commercial suppliers because they are not bound by any one service provider. The library maintains data ownership, giving it the ability to switch service providers as necessary and facilitating simple migration. By being open, the library data is subject to greater institutional management and long-term viability.

Necessity for OPAC Customization in Women's Studies Libraries

In terms of subject matter and user needs, women studies libraries are distinct from regular academic libraries. Women-centric themes and topics are often overlooked by default OPAC interfaces. Typical difficulties noticed are:

- Problem locating resources that concentrate on women
- An excessive number of irrelevant search results
- Absence of subject-specific browsing
- Lack of aesthetic appeal and clarity

By establishing a clear, user-friendly discovery interface in accordance with the goals of women studies, OPAC customization aids in resolving these challenges.

Objectives of this article

- To demonstrate the range of options for customizing OPAC in KOHA
- To illustrate how HTML and CSS may be used to create an OPAC that caters to women
- To arrange Women Studies collections by subject headings.
- Utilizing filters and facets to enhance the search experience
- To find and address implementation difficulties with viable solutions

Methodology

Instead of using a theoretical model, the research uses a practical implementation strategy. The following procedures were observed:

- Assessment of the settings of the KOHA OPAC system (version 25.11)
- Using OPACUserBlock and OPACUserCSS to modify the interface
- Using accepted subject headings in MARC records
- Observing the behavior of the OPAC following customization
- Input from library workers and users
- The method is application-based and descriptive.

OPAC Appearance Settings in KOHA

Systems preferences is the key parameter to customize the OPAC appearance in KOHA 25.11v.

Location: : In Server system, logged KOHA for 'Staff Terminal' and identify like below

Administration → System Preferences → OPAC

Major preferences used:

- **OPACUserBlock** – to exhibit custom content
- **OPACUserCSS** – to pertain custom design
- **OPACFacets** – to permit search filters

With these configurations, you can safely modify the system without touching any of the fundamental files.

Custom HTML for Women Studies OPAC

Custom HTML is used to create a clear identity for the Women Studies Library on the OPAC home page.

Main HTML Code

```
<div class="women-opac-header">  
  <h1>WOMEN – LIBRARY OPAC</h1>  
  <p>Gender Studies | Women Empowerment | Health | Law</p>  
</div>
```

This banner assists users right away recognize the scope and focus of the library.

Custom CSS for Visual improvement

CSS is used to enhance readability and comfort.

Main CSS Code

```
body {  
  background-color: #fff9e6;  
}  
.women-opac-header {  
  background-color: #8e3a59;  
  color: light yellow;  
  padding: 17px;  
  text-align: center;  
}
```

The OPAC environment is tranquil and inviting due to the use of soothing colors and legible fonts.

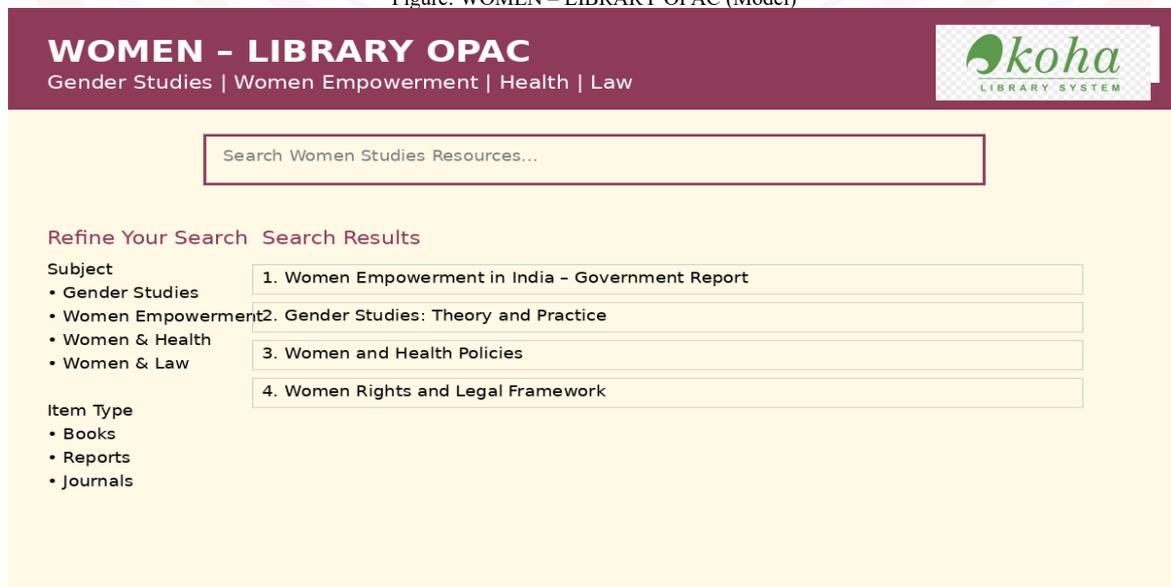
Organization of the collection related to Women Studies through Subject Headings

The foundation for successful OPAC discovery is the use of subject headings. Using consistent subject terms like the ones listed below, MARC field 650 \$a is used to catalog Women Studies materials:

- Gender Studies
- Women Empowerment
- Women and Health
- Women and Law

Proper subject tagging enables meaningful facets and browsing options in OPAC.

Figure: WOMEN – LIBRARY OPAC (Model)



WOMEN - LIBRARY OPAC
Gender Studies | Women Empowerment | Health | Law

Search Women Studies Resources...

Refine Your Search Search Results

Subject

- Gender Studies
- Women Empowerment
- Women & Health
- Women & Law

Item Type

- Books
- Reports
- Journals

1. Women Empowerment in India - Government Report
2. Gender Studies: Theory and Practice
3. Women and Health Policies
4. Women Rights and Legal Framework

Search Filters and Facets

Search facets facilitate users filter outcome effortlessly.

Facilitate Facets

- Subject
- Item type
- Language
- Year of publication

Users who are new to sophisticated search methods will find facets to be especially helpful.

Advanced Search and Bibliographic Record Display

Advanced search allows users to combine multiple criteria such as subject, year, and item type. Bibliographic record displays clearly show title, author, subjects, call number, and availability status. This clarity reduces user dependency on library staff.

Implementation Problems and Solutions

Issue Area	Practical Answer
The OPAC is not being updated	Clear cache, refresh
Errors in HTML	Just clean the tags
The CSS is not functioning	Compare the names of classes
Missing facets	Enhance cataloguing
Confusion in search	Make use if topic browsing
Staff hesitation	Train and motivate
OPAC mess	Simple layout
Maintenance over-time	Regular evaluation

Results

According to this article:

- Users could find resources that were geared toward women with greater ease.
- Following customization, OPAC usage rose.
- Pupils frequently used subject browsing.
- Less work for employees in the guidance department
- Overall satisfaction with the OPAC increased.

In order to increase the number of women in the industry, there must be more female representation in the media.

Suggestions

For specialized libraries, push clear of standard OPAC designs.

- Use consistent subject headings
- Check the content of the OPAC on a regular basis
- Consistently gather user input
- Conduct brief training courses on the OPAC

Conclusion

In Women Studies Libraries, KOHA OPAC modification is a useful and affordable method of increasing access to gender-focused knowledge resources. Libraries can greatly enhance user experience by implementing straightforward visual settings, arranging collections by subject headings, and activating search filters. The research demonstrates that careful OPAC customization turns a simple catalog into a valuable discovery tool that advances academic study and female empowerment.

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Informative material

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The first open source library automation system is KOHA. Its development is guided by a growing community of users from all over the world working together to accomplish their technology objectives. The features offered by KOHA are always changing and growing in response to the needs of its users.

Complete ILS. KOHA is a genuine enterprise-class ILS that is used in libraries of all sizes throughout the world and offers a wide range of features, including fundamental and more complex capabilities. Among other things, KOHA has modules for acquisitions, circulation, cataloging, serials management, authorities, flexible reporting, label printing, multi-format notices, offline circulation for when internet access is unavailable, and much more. Regardless of the size of the consortium or whether the library has one or several branches, KOHA will be effective.

Translatable and multilingual. With an increasing number of languages available each year, KOHA offers a wide variety of options.

Full text searching Effective search capabilities and an improved catalog presentation that can utilize material from Amazon, Google, LibraryThing, Open Library, Syndetics, and other sources.

Meets Library Standards. KOHA is designed in accordance with library standards and protocols such as MARC 21, UNIMARC, z39.50, SRU/SW, SIP2, SIP/NCIP, which guarantees interoperability between KOHA and other systems and technologies while still supporting current workflows and tools.

Web-based interfaces. Because KOHA's OPAC, circ, management, and self-checkout interfaces are all built using standards-compliant World Wide Web technologies (XHTML, CSS, and JavaScript), KOHA is a genuinely platform-independent solution.

Open Source / Free Software. The Free Software General Public License (GPL), version 3 or later, governs the distribution of KOHA.

There is no vendor lock-in. A key aspect of the free software commitment is the absence of vendor lock-in; libraries are free to install and utilize KOHA themselves if they have the necessary in-house know-how, or they may buy support or development services from the best available providers. Libraries should be able to switch support providers and export their data at any time. It's crucial to confirm that your support company permits this and that it employs a strong data management system.