DISPLAY OF PERIODICALS

Inspite of great advances made in the systematic analysis and announcement of the contents of an ever increasing number of periodicals, proper display of current issues of periodicals, received in the library, remains to be an effective device to bring the author and his readers nearer. The paper discusses the objectives of periodicals display and the methods and equipment available and brings out the relative merits of these equipment and models. Some of the display models are illustrated.

With the advent of documentation, the work relating to the analysis and reporting of current literature appearing as articles in periodicals has stolen the show, but in a library, display of periodicals remains an important method to announce the arrival of new issues of periodicals to the clientele. There are different ways of displaying and storing the periodicals and in this article different methods of display of periodicals and the equipment required are dealt with. A few important points about display are as follows:

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<th>Display</th>
<th>Current issues alone</th>
<th>Display of current issues plus storage of backnumbers</th>
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There are three kinds of arrangements to be considered here:

(i) Display of current issues only.

(ii) Display of current issues plus storage of some of the backnumbers of that volume or year; and

(iii) Display of current issues plus storage of all the backnumbers of that year or volume.

Now let us consider the different models available and how far they satisfy the methods of display mentioned above in the light of:

- (i) Economy
- (ii) Service and
- (iii) Readers approach

MODEL-1. DISPLAY ON READING TABLES

Perhaps, the simplest way of displaying the periodicals is to scatter them on the reading tables. But this gives a very clumsy appearance and considerable juggling is needed on the part of a reader to extract the required journal. Moreover for a change of periodical, the reader may have to change his seat for at every seat one particular issue of a periodical is placed. So this arrangement may not be convenient to the reader. "A flat display on tables is impossible to keep tidy and should be adopted as a last resort", says Miss J. Simmons.

MODEL-2. TABLE WITH CENTRAL GALLERY

Probably a later development is the display of periodicals on a gallery fixed at the centre of a table, the overall measurements for which will be 8' wide, 6' deep (vide illus No. M2). It may also be noted that the Indian Standards Institution has standardised the following specifications for the periodicals table (vide illus No. M2A). The
M2 Table with a central gallery

M2A Specifications for display table.
[Reproduced with kind permission of ISI, from IS: 1829(Part 1) - 1961, Specification for library furniture and fittings, pt 1- Timber; available from all offices of the Indian Standards Institution at Rs 4.00 per copy]
exact specifications quote catalogue No. ISI: 1829 (Part I-1961), page number 9 item No. 17 are as follows:

17. Periodicals table

17.1. Dimensions and constructional features

17.1.1. The essential dimensions for periodicals table shall be as shown in Fig. 13 [illus. M.2A]

17.1.2. Gallery for periodicals: The gallery for periodicals shall be as shown in detail in Fig. 13. To prevent the periodicals from toppling over, a wire or cord may be secured along the front of each step of the gallery, above mid height.

17.1.3. Label holder: On the table top along the length of the gallery an inclined labelholder shall be provided. It shall have a groove with a slightly wedgeshaped across section to take a strip of cardboard above 50mm wide as shown in Fig.13 [illus M.2A].

17.1.4. Kneehole space and foot rest: The kneehole space and foot rest shall conform to the requirements given in 7.1.4 and 7.1.5.

7.1.4. Kneehole space: The kneehole space shall be 450 mm deep, 550mm high and 600 mm wide.

7.1.5. Foot Rest: The foot rest, either in the form of a fixed rod or bar or as a separate pipe at 150mm height from the floor may be provided, where necessary.

This model serves a 'dual' purpose, in the sense that the table can be utilised not only as a reading table but also for display. This model accommodates fairly large number of periodicals, say sixty to seventy.

The aforesaid model can be improved by making provision for storage of backnumbers in side-cupboards (vide illus No. M.2). But in this case the disadvantage is that, though the table is claimed to serve a dual purpose, the reader at the table is disturbed every now and then by other readers who want to pick up the journal required or who want to replace the journal after perusal. It is obvious that not more than four or five people can sit on either side of the table whereas provision is made to accommodate sixty to seventy issues. So the readers of the other fifty to sixty periodicals prove themselves to be a source of disturbance to the readers at the table. Moreover the unit is weighty and not easily movable.

The periodical table of the Fuel Research Station of D.S.I.R. designed by Dr. D. T. Thomas which has drawn the attention of the visitors (as is stated in the Library Association Record, Vol. 55, Dec. 1953, p. 397) may be considered to be a modification of the Model No. 2. The modification is nothing but substitution of the central gallery with nine horizontal sheets of plate glass which together form ten glass shelves extending the length of the rack.

The periodicals lie flat on the glass shelves. Each glass shelf is labelled on both sides of the rack with the name of the periodical it accommodates. The periodicals are arranged roughly in alphabetical order.

But this model does not allow display of periodicals as they are placed flat and due to this, considerable juggling is required to extract the periodical needed in case the periodicals are misplaced. Also, compared to Model No. 2, it accommodates lesser number of periodicals.

MODEL-3. DISPLAY STANDS

Perhaps this is an improvement on Model No. 2 (vide illus No. M. 5 Type 4). To be specific one of the functions of Model No. 2 is ignored here. Only the central gallery of the periodicals table is given the shape of an independent display stand. In this model, only the top of the periodical is revealed. "The rack easily accommodates from 25 to 35 magazines. The rack is easily movable. Backnumbers of magazines may be stored on the roomy shelf in the rear". (Mehra & Co., and Standard Library Supplies - Library furniture catalogues).

But I feel that the space at the rear is not adequate to accommodate all the backnumbers and so this model demands the provision for a separate unit or at least an additional unit for the storage of the backnumbers.

MODEL-4. SHELF WITH PIGEON HOLES

If display is considered to be only of secondary importance, periodicals may be
stored flat in pigeon holes; these are specially made units with shallow shelves fitted between uprights. Such a unit 3' wide, whose lowest shelf is 12" from the floor and whose height is 6' could house 90 to 100 periodicals, when they are placed with their lower edge only exposed. If the spine is shown, which is perhaps preferable as an aid to quick identification, a greater length of shelving space is needed for the same number of periodicals. The journals are stored upright on shelves with a vertical partition every 9" or so apart.

Though it results in a great saving of space, the periodicals are not so much displayed to be made accessible to readers. They may be provided with jackets. The journals can be numbered on the spine or the title may be printed thereon. Each periodical may be allotted a pigeon hole and an alphabetical arrangement may be followed. Or else, periodicals may be classified according to the subject and sufficient numbers of pigeon holes may be allocated for each subject. However, the pigeon holes should be labelled for easy identification.

Great care should be taken to ensure that readers return periodicals to the correct pigeon hole, because the reader is apt to return his periodical to the nearest empty space rather than to the correct place. A method of limiting the likelihood of misfiling is to have protective covers bound in a series of distinctive colours using a different colour for each row of pigeon holes, each series of fifty numbers, or for a group of initial letters if alphabetical filing is used.

However the difficulty in this kind of arrangement is that the reader should first look into the index prepared for the journals location.

MODEL-5. SUGGESTION OF D. L. SMITH AND E. G. BAXTER

According to Smith and Baxter, "The most satisfactory method however, is to use ordinary shelves of adequate depth (9"), with any suitable height between shelves, laying periodicals flat -- latest issue on top and previous unbound parts underneath." (Vide illus No. M5. Type 3).

M5 Four types of shelving for current periodicals.
Philip Colehan while editing a symposium on furniture and furnishings in the Assistant Librarian, of 1963, summarised the different ways of display of periodicals, and one of them appears to be an improvement on the method of display suggested by Smith and Baxter. The periodicals are filed flat in book cases of conventional design, but with extra shelves and with one or two removable sloping shelves at chest height in each book case for display of most important titles. Remaining titles are filed flat.

**MODEL-6. SLOPING DISPLAY RACK WITH PROVISION FOR DISPLAY OF CURRENT ISSUES ONLY**

A popular method is to display the magazines in racks with sloping shelves having a projecting lip along the edge upon which the periodical rests in an upright position. In this model the full cover page of the periodical can be seen and the display is certainly attractive. A unit of 7' 6" x 3' x 15" deep with 5 sloping shelves may accommodate 15 journals. (vide illus. No. M. 6).

**MODEL-7. SLOPING DISPLAY RACK WITH PROVISION TO HOUSE A FEW BACKNUMBERS UNDERNEATH THE CURRENT NUMBER**

A further evolution in designing periodical display unit is perhaps that of model No. 7. The shelf has alternating sloping and flat shelves. Current numbers are displayed on sloping shelves with corresponding backnumbers housed on flat shelves directly below. Here the model is almost similar to item No. 6, but for the provision made for keeping the latest backnumbers underneath the current number. (vide illus. No. M 7 and M 5 type 2).

This is probably to "save the time of the reader" in picking up the latest backnumbers. So here we presume that the readers want mainly the latest backnumbers and the previous issues.

Of the models so far considered Model No. 4 & 5 do not permit display of periodicals. The other models for display demand the provision of a separate unit for the storage of backnumbers. In other words the display unit is meant mainly for the display of current journals and the backnumbers cannot be stored. Even model 2, 3 & 7 though they offer some shelving space for backnumbers, the space is insufficient. For instance, model No. 2 accommodates from 60 to 70 current journals, but backnumbers for only 25 to 35 journals can be accommodated in the storage space provided on either side. So also the space provided at the rear in model No. 3 is inadequate to accommodate the backnumbers of all the current journals displayed on the front side. Model No. 7 is designed to store only a few latest backnumbers along with the display of the current journal.

Experience and observation proves that it is more economical and convenient to keep the current number and all the backnumbers of a journal together, for "earlier numbers of the current volume will be found to be as much in demand as the current copy (D. E. Davison)". Backnumbers, especially in the case of technical magazines, are as important as the current issues. Even considering the recreational magazines, the reader may like to go through the backnumbers when the current number is not available to him or when he is interested in going through an article published previously. It is inconvenient to both staff and readers if backnumbers have constantly...
to be sought in a storage room. So we must consider equipment for combing the housing of current issues with the storage of all the backnumbers for the year or volume.

MODEL-8.

The display unit meant for this purpose may be 7'6" x 3' x 15" deep with six compartments individually enclosed by hinged sloping top hung fronts with ledges at bottom and with hooks and eyes. This unit accommodates about 15 to 20 journals. The display front may be opened and the backnumbers can be stored behind the current journal (vide illus No. M8 & M5; Type 1).

THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS MODEL

(i) There is economy, for the same unit serves both for the display of current

(ii) As the reader can have access to all the issues of a volume or year at a time, the functional aspect is satisfactory from both service point of view and from readers approach point of view.

The model thus satisfies the three requisites mentioned earlier - economy, service, and readers approach.

PROBABLE DIFFICULTIES

PROBLEM: 1 It is important to ascertain whether it is possible to house all the back-numbers of a journal along with the display of current periodicals. The reasons being:
(1) We have no control over the thickness of a periodical. For any reason the periodical may either become bulky or may become thin.

(2) We have no control over the periodicity of a journal. The periodicity may change from time to time if not frequently at least occasionally.

If a weekly is considerably thick it is likely that we may not be able to house all the backnumbers immediately behind the current issue.

**SOLUTION-1.** A probable solution to get over the difficulty is to classify the journals into weeklies and non-weeklies and design display units of Model 7 for the weeklies with greater storage space. But this kind of classification has the disadvantage of breaking the sequence and unless the reader is aware of periodicity he has to look for the magazine in two sequences.

**SOLUTION-2.** Next solution is to design a flexible model.

For example, let us consider that in model No. 7 provision is so made that the flat shelf is adjustable and so also the sloping front is removable and can be fixed at any place for display of the current issue.

**DISADVANTAGES:** (1) The model becomes undoubtedly more expensive and thus less economical. There is no economy of space too. Imagine a weekly, a monthly, and a quarterly are placed side by side in a sloping front. To accommodate all the backnumbers of the weekly, extra space is allotted for storage as the equipment is flexible. There is no need to say that the space required for the backnumbers of monthlies and quarterlies is less compared to the weeklies for the simple reason that 51 backnumbers are to be stored in the case of a weekly; 11 in the case of monthly and 3 in the case of a quarterly if backnumbers are to be housed for one year in the unit. So there is wastage of storage space as the same volume of space is provided for weekly, monthly, and quarterly though the later do not require so much of space as that of the former. Moreover due to irregular shelving the beauty in display is marred.

We cannot have flexible method in model 8 as in this model the sloping shelf should be in proportion to the height of the storage space behind. So a flexible equipment is not practicable.

**SOLUTION-3** A simple solution to get over the difficulty is to cut short the number of periodicals on display on the sloping front leaving enough space in between two journals and arrange the backnumbers in more than one row. But due to such gaps the beauty in display may be marred and also the reader may doubt whether any issue is 'missing'. Moreover when we are displaying only two issues instead of three in a sloping front to provide more storage space behind we are losing display space for one journal.

**PROBLEM NO. 2**

Another problem to be faced by the librarians is the over sized periodicals. The solution is to arrange the over sized periodicals, as it is done in the case of over sized books, in a separate sequence.

**CONCLUSION**

1) It is desirable to display the periodicals.

2) It is more desirable to combine display of current periodicals with storage of all the backnumbers.

3) It may not always be possible to house all the backnumbers of a journal along with the current one on display. A flexible equipment is not satisfactory from space and economy point of view and so is not recommended.

4) At one stage or other the storage may become partial but it is preferable to house as many issues of the backnumbers as possible of a journal (for the year or volume only) and to that effect model No. 8 is recommended which offers relatively more economy of space and money and accommodates in a large number of cases almost all the backnumbers of a journal.

The general conception is that the sloping display units occupy much space and are considered only when the number of periodicals is not too large. But of the three sloping display units Model-6, 7, & 8, it will be noticed that model No. 8 cannot be considered a space consuming unit as even otherwise i.e. even if the periodicals are not displayed but only stored, the storage space required would be nothing less than what is available in Model No. 8 which serves for both display and storage of journals.
REFERENCES


