Smart Library Management: An IoT-Driven Approach to Modern Library Automation

Sheela S [1], Amulya S A [2], Anusha S H [3], Lankesh Wodeyar [4], Mohammed Parvez [5]

[1]Asst. Professor, Dept. of ECE, JNN College of Engineering., Shivamogga, Karnataka, India

[2,3,4,5] UG Scholar, Dept. of ECE, JNN College of Engineering., Shivamogga, Karnataka, India

Emails : sheela_s@jnnce.ac.in [1], anushahalaswamy@gmail.com [2], amulyashetty033@gmail.com [3], lankeshwodeyar18@gmail.com [4], parvez3907@gmail.com [5]

Abstract

The rapid growth of educational institutions and the exponential increase in library resources have exposed inherent limitations in traditional library management systems, which rely heavily on manual processes to manage books, user authentication, and inventory tracking. This research paper presents a comprehensive study of a Smart Library Management System (SLMS). The proposed system integrates Internet of Things (IoT) technologies with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), biometric fingerprint authentication, and autonomous robotics, to automate and optimize library operations. The implementation combines a web-based management interface with an Arduino-powered autonomous robot, capable of navigating to proper location and identifying preferred book. This paper details the system's design, methodology, results, and broader implications, situating the work within the context of contemporary research on digital automation and information management infrastructures. The work demonstrates significant improvements in operational efficiency, accuracy, and user experience, while also discussing the challenges and limitations inherent to such technological transformations.

Keywords: Smart Library Management, Internet of Things (IoT), RFID Technology, Biometric Authentication, Arduino, Library Automation

1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries continue to play a vital role in supporting learning, research, and knowledge sharing. With the rapid growth in student population and the increasing volume of books and digital resources, libraries are required to manage large inventories while ensuring quick and reliable access to information. However, many educational institutions still rely on traditional library management practices that involve manual record keeping, physical verification, and human-dependent operations.

These conventional systems often result in long waiting times for students during book issuing and returning, difficulties in locating specific books, and frequent errors in maintaining records. Manual processes are time-consuming and prone to mistakes such as misplacement of books, incorrect entries, and loss of data. As library collections expand, managing them efficiently using traditional methods becomes increasingly challenging.

Additionally, accessibility remains a major concern. Students with physical limitations or time constraints may find it difficult to navigate large libraries and search for required resources. Security and accountability are also significant issues, as traditional identification methods can be misused or misplaced, leading to unauthorized access and inaccurate tracking of library usage. In the era of digital transformation, there is a growing expectation for libraries to adopt smarter, faster, and more reliable systems. Addressing these challenges is crucial for libraries to remain effective, organized, and relevant in modern educational institutions.

Smart Library Management System (SLMS)

that combines IoT technologies, biometric authentication, and autonomous robotics. The system aims to automate book identification and tracking using RFID and QR technologies, improve security through fingerprint-based authentication, support autonomous book retrieval using a line-following robot, and offer a centralized web-based platform for real-time inventory and user management. The proposed solution serves as a scalable and adaptable framework for modern library automation. By unifying hardware and software components, the SLMS improves operational efficiency, transparency, security, and inclusivity, demonstrating the potential of automation to transform traditional library infrastructure into a smart, user-friendly system.

2. Literature Review

Neloy et al. (2020) [1], Gupta et al. (2020) [2], Barma et al. (2018) [9] and Srivastava et al. (2021) [11] had used the concept of autonomous means self-navigating robot for indoor environments like smart library management. This reduces the human effort in carrying books from one place to another inside the library.

Irkam and Putra (2023) [3] and Suhail (2021) [4] presents the concept of integrating fingerprint and RFID with Arduino to identify user as well as books. This provides secure way of handling the library management system. Fernández-Caramés et al. (2016) [10] studied the security aspects of RFID-based IoT systems. Dhanalakshmi and Mamatha (2009) [5], Kotecha (2008) [6] in their work contributed foundational knowledge on RFID-based library management systems. Also, the concept of automated book issuing, returning, and inventory tracking using RFID was incorporated in their work. Luo et al. (2018) [7] gave insights into robot positioning and guidance using RFID-based identification of the robot's indoor location (position) through Wi-Fi and RFID fingerprints. This highlights the approach toward robot navigation and localization in indoor environments like libraries.

Ramkumar et al. (2020) [8] in their work demonstrated the integration of IoT with digital library management applications.

Form the survey, one can understand that, an autonomous smooth self-navigating robot for indoor applications can be built using Arduino based IoT technology for applications like smart library. For identification of books and their location properly, an RFID card reader can be used. Similarly, to recognized authenticated users for secure transaction, figure print reader can be used. Also, for proper maintenance of books and user database, as well as for smooth transaction, a web application can be built. Overall, this survey shows a clear trend toward replacing manual library operations with smart, automated systems that enhance efficiency, accuracy, and user convenience, while also highlighting challenges related to system complexity, cost, and scalability.

2. Implementation details

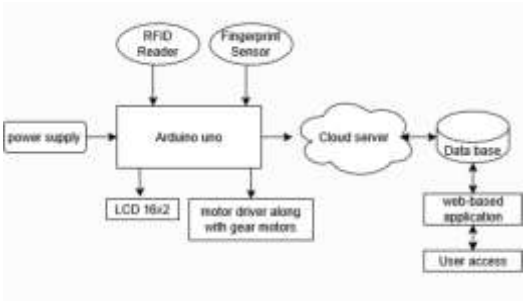

Fig 1. Block diagram of Smart Library Management using IoT

Figure 1 illustrates the block diagram of the proposed system. The Smart Library Management System (SLMS) is implemented as a two-tiered platform. One is web-based platform and the another is autonomous robotic platform.

1. **Web-Based Application:** A digital interface developed using HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Python, and MySQL. This application manages user and book database, transaction history, and administrative controls.

2. **Autonomous Robotic Platform:** This platform an Arduino UNO-based robot equipped with IR sensors for line-following navigation, an RC522 RFID reader for book identification, and an R305 fingerprint sensor for secure user authentication.

The integration of both hardware and software platforms ensured seamless communication and coordination between users, administrators, and automated devices.

The following subsections provide the complete details of the proposed work.

3.1 Web Application

The web application serves as the central control system. Its core features include: user registration, book transactions like issuing and returning into a single streamlined workflow through a centralized web application. Users are first registered is the software. When they come for book transaction, first their authenticity is verified. For a particular user, while issuing a book, its availability is verified in real-time using RFID-based identification. During return, the system automatically updates inventory status, borrowing history, and overdue records while generating digital receipts and alerts if applicable. This end-to-end automation significantly improves operational efficiency by reducing transaction time, enhances accuracy through biometric and RFID-based validation, and ensures a seamless user experience with minimal manual intervention, while supporting scalability and comprehensive system analytics.

3.2 Autonomous Robot

During book issuing, the registered student is authenticated using the fingerprint sensor. The availability if the required book is displayed in the software. If the book is available, then the robot navigates autonomously along predefined paths using IR sensors to locate the required book. The RFID reader scans the book tag and verifies it before issuing. After issuing the book, the transaction is recorded as issued. For book return, the user is again authenticated, the RFID tag is scan to confirm the book, and the system updates the database while the robot transports the book back to its designated section. This integrated workflow ensures secure authentication, accurate book tracking, and automated physical handling with minimal human intervention. Figure 2 shows the circuit diagram of the autonomous robot implemented.

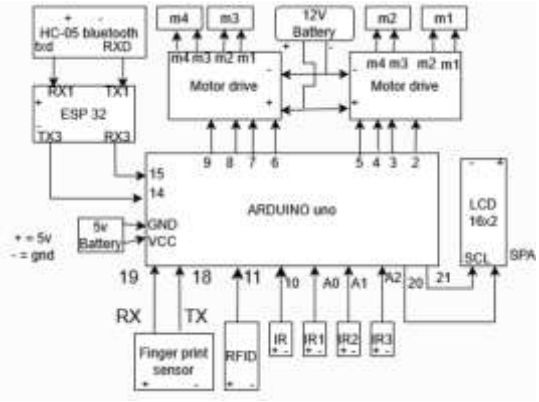

Fig 2. Circuit diagram of Autonomous Robot

4. Results and Discussion

This section provides the details of the results obtained in two aspects, one based on operational performance and the other based on system functionality.

4.1 Operational Performance

The SLMS was deployed in a controlled educational environment to assess its performance across key metrics:

a. **Efficiency:** The system demonstrated a substantial reduction in average book retrieval and issue times. Automated navigation eliminated the need for manual searching, reducing user wait times and improving overall throughput.

b. **Accuracy:** RFID and biometric verification minimized instances of misplacement, unauthorized access, and erroneous record-keeping.

c. **User Experience:** Students and staff reported increased satisfaction due to streamlined processes and reduced dependency on physical registers or ID cards.

d. **Scalability:** The modular design supports expansion to larger collections and multi-floor environments, with minimal modifications. Table 1 summarizes the comparative performance metrics before and after SLMS implementation.

4.2 System Functionality

System functionality is verified as follows:

4.2.1 Book Handling and Tracking

RFID tags affixed to each book allow for contactless, high-speed identification. The robot's RFID reader communicates with the web application, ensuring real-time updates to inventory and transaction logs.

4.2.2 User Authentication

The R305 fingerprint sensor provides robust, tamper-resistant authentication. Each user's fingerprint is linked to a unique database ID, with verification occurring prior to any transaction. This approach eliminates the risk of lost or stolen ID cards and enhances accountability.

4.2.3 Autonomous Navigation

IR sensors enable the robot to follow predefined paths with high reliability. The Arduino based control logic processes sensor inputs and adjusts motor outputs to maintain alignment. While the current implementation uses simple line-following,

4.2.4 Web Application Features

The management interface supports:

• Book Search: Query by title, author, category, or RFID/QR code.

• Member Management: Add, remove, or modify user profiles and borrowing privileges.

• Transaction Logs: Monitor issues, returns, overdue items, and fines.

• API Integration: Import and export of book data via Frappe API.

Fig 3. Report Dashboard showing Most Popular Books and Highlights for paying customers

The system successfully generates a detailed report shown in the Figure 3 of the most popular books shown in the Figure based on rental frequency. In this report, A Man Called Ove appears as the most frequently rented book, with a total of twenty copies in the library, seventeen available, and two currently loaned out. This demonstrates the system's ability to collect and analyze circulation data accurately. By

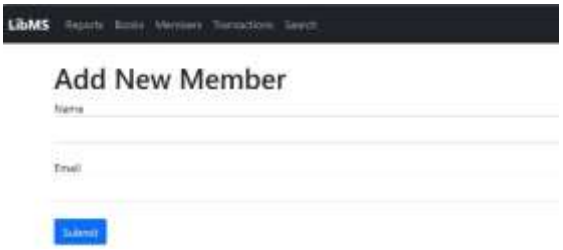

Fig 4. Add new Members interface of library Management system

The Member Management module shown in the Figure 4, provides an organized list of all library members, showing details such as name, email, registration date, outstanding debt, and total amount spent. One member is recorded with an outstanding debt of 15.0 and total payments of 50.0, illustrating how the system tracks financial obligations and borrowing history. This module enables librarians to monitor member activity and manage dues and account status effectively. Its structured layout improves administrative efficiency and ensures accurate record-keeping.

Fig 5. Bot waiting to scan Book

The automated book-retrieval system is designed to enhance library efficiency by integrating a robotic arm with fingerprint authentication and RFID scanning technology. In this system, shown in the Figure 5 users first verify their identity through a fingerprint sensor, ensuring secure access and preventing unauthorized book retrieval. Once authenticated, the system identifies the requested book using an RFID reader that detects the unique RFID tag attached to each book.

Fig 6. Robotic Arm Waiting to hold a book

After locating the correct book on the shelf, the robotic arm—controlled by a microcontroller and driven by servo or stepper motors—moves precisely to the detected position, grips the book using a specialized end-effector, and delivers it to the user. By combining biometric security, accurate RFID-based identification, and automated robotic handling, the system provides a fast, reliable, and fully hands-free method for book collection, significantly reducing manual effort while modernizing traditional library operations.

4.3 Comparative Analysis with Existing Systems

Reference Paper	Limitations	Improvements in SLMS
Neloy et al. (2020) Shortest Path Automated Delivery Robot	Focused on generic delivery robotics support for library automation inventory management	Adapts autonomous navigation specifically for library book retrieval, integrated with RFID biometric authentication, and digital inventory management
Gupta et al. (2020) IoT-Based Smart Library Using Line-Follower Robot	Limited security mechanisms and minimal user authentication	Enhances the system with fingerprint-based biometric authentication, centralized web-based management, and improved data security
Irkam & Putra (2023) Fingerprint and RFID-Based Security System	Designed mainly for document security; not tailored for library workflows	Extends biometric and RFID security to user authentication, book issuing/returning, and transaction logging within a smart library environment
Dhanalakshmi & Mamatha (2009) RFID-Based Library Management System	No robotic assistance and no real-time IoT integration	Integrates autonomous robotics and IoT connectivity, reducing manual handling and improving efficiency and accessibility

6. Conclusion

The Smart Library Management System using IoT successfully modernizes traditional library operations by integrating RFID, biometric authentication, Arduino-based control, and autonomous robotics. The system automates book identification, user authentication, and navigation within the library, significantly reducing manual effort, human errors, and processing time. Secure fingerprint verification ensures authorized access, while RFID enables fast and accurate book tracking. The autonomous robot enhances efficiency and accessibility, particularly in large libraries. Overall, the project demonstrates a cost-effective, reliable, and scalable digital infrastructure that improves library efficiency, security, and user experience, laying a strong foundation for future smart campus and fully automated library solutions

7.LIMITATIONS

7.1 Hardware Constraints

• Sensor Reliability: IR sensors require unobstructed, clean paths; dust or physical damage can impair navigation.
• Power Management: The robot's reliance on battery power necessitates regular charging and maintenance.
• Processing Limitations: Arduino UNO's limited memory and computational capacity constrain the

complexity of onboard algorithms

7.2 System Scalability

• RFID Read Range: Effective only within a limited proximity; interference or damage to tags can disrupt transactions.
• Biometric Variability: Fingerprint sensors may struggle with worn, wet, or unclear prints, leading to occasional authentication delays.

7.3 Environmental Factors

• Physical Layout: The system assumes a controlled environment with well-defined paths; significant structural changes may require navigation logic.

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