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Library Hi Tech News
Importance of e-Books in Improving Access to Scholarly Materials by University Students in Kenya
Dickens Rodrigues Wendo Arnold Mwanzu

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Introduction

Over the past ten years, the use of e-books has changed the practice and procedures within libraries with new access and usage. Interactions that were not perceived possible now provide instantaneous access to global resources. Information and services are now accessible in ways that could not have been conceived years ago. (Kanti, 2008). Likewise, Mehana (2009) suggests that the use and access to electronic information resources in libraries has been seen as the solution that increases effectiveness, caters for mass access to up-to-date information and reduces cost in the light of unprecedented changes and challenges. According to Rosenberg (2006), it was the emergence of the internet that enabled libraries in Africa and other developing countries to have access to never ending qualities and quantities of information and knowledge.

Chisenga and Rorissa (2005) point out those institutions of higher learning in Africa do not enjoy the same information delivery methods like those in developed countries except those in Southern Africa as there is great disparity in the adoption and use of ICTs in academic libraries. Waiganjo (2006) states that academic libraries in Kenya suffer poor funding, poor communication systems and lack of technology savvy qualified librarians. The case is not different in Uganda. Magara (2002) pointed out that power unreliability, management attitude and poor ICT skill of the librarians; Adeya (2007) writing from Tanzania states that inadequate computerization, inadequate infrastructure and inadequate human capacity as the major challenges towards ICT use.

In Kenya, the Commission for University Education (CUE) that regulates the establishment of institution of higher learning, requires that academic libraries provide a collection of information resources for all academic programs to include current and relevant collection of textbooks including e-books; journals, reference and bibliographic sources. The resources should be in print, non-print and electronic formats (Commission for University Education, 2007). Few Kenyan University Libraries have invested heavily in ICTs for teaching, learning, research and general administration at the University. According to Rosenberg (2006), some academic libraries in Africa have embraced the e-books phenomena owing to the adoption of the necessary technology infrastructure and have made them available to users.

E-book Study

This study adopted a descriptive research study design. This design allowed the collection of accurate information, which was analyzed to make useful recommendations. For this study, the target population comprised of all graduate students at the United States International University.

The population size as of Fall 2015 comprised of 759 graduate students from five programs. The study adopted stratified random sampling technique. Random sampling was use to select the respondents from each of the program groups. The data collection methods involved primary data collections; the research procedures involved the conducting of a pilot study to confirm the reliability of the research instruments.

On computer literacy, it was found out that an overwhelming majority of the student respondents (80%) were computer literate. 11.5% were below average while the remaining 8.5% did not respond to the question. On technological factors that contribute to the effectiveness of e-books, the findings established that graduate students have a very clear understanding and awareness of e-books (mean=3.889, sd=1.129, cv=0.290). It also established that ease of access and use of e-books improves students' interest (mean=3.63, sd=1.196, cv=0.330), there is user satisfaction with e-books (mean=3.716, sd=1.2787, cv=0.346) and connecting and interacting with e-books does not require a lot of intellectual effort (mean=3.667, sd=1.304, cv=0.356).

The least influential factors in the technological factors contributing to the effectiveness of e-books usage were lack of adequate computers for its access while on-campus (mean=2.425, sd=1.482., cv=0.611), Distribution of internet connectivity being poor, thereby indicating that both the internet infrastructures in use at the time of interaction with e-books held sway and heavily determined the access speed (mean=2.425, sd=1.482, cv=0.558), the concept of information access "anywhere, anytime" to learning was not relevant; this indicates that the respondents had not appreciated the concept of e-books, and therefore necessary to buy-in for this concept to be established by the library (mean=3.481, sd=1.484, cv=0.426) user identification and passwords to the databases was also established as a challenge to researchers (mean=3.316, sd=1.388, cv=0.419). The findings are indicated in Table 1 below

		Mean	Std. Deviation	CV
1	My contact with e-books is very clear and understandable	3.889	1.129	0.290
2	Using e-books in learning and teaching has improved my performance	3.630	1.196	0.330
3	I feel contented when using e-books	3.716	1.287	0.346
4	The University Library has e-books for the university community's use and exposure	3.724	1.353	0.363
5	I find it more easy to get information using e-books than print resources	3.545	1.293	0.365

6	As a result of using e-books, I have developed my research abilities	3.423	1.272	0.372
7	The access keys (User identification and passwords) to the databases are easy to use and access	3.316	1.388	0.419
8	Using e-books provided by the library has increased my productivity	3.076	1.308	0.425
9	I find the concept of information access "anywhere, anytime" to learning more convenient	3.481	1.484	0.426
10	There is fast internet and sufficient access points to enable access and use of e-books	2.889	1.612	0.558

Students were asked whether they use e-books for a variety of tasks. 65% agreed that they use e-books in writing term papers, conference papers, assignments; teaching and research, while 20% to some extent disagreed with the statement, with only 15% being neutral.

On the results on the role of individual factors that enhance and facilitate the access and use of e-books, the findings established that students encounter problems when carrying out searches in e-books (mean=3.785, sd=1.173, cv=0.310) as the most critical factor. The least factor was the knowledge and awareness of the e-books subscribed by the university library (mean=3.123, sd=1.503, cv=0.481) were some of the least.

The results established that bandwidth of internet connectivity allows for downloading of files in all format (mean=2.864, sd=1.104, cv=0.385) as the main leading challenge in the institutional factors while support from the university management on the introduction of e-books by financing its subscription (mean=2.833, sd=1.445, cv=0.510) was one of the least factors affecting the institutional support. E-books are therefore deemed quite significant in efficient access and delivery of scholarly information to academic institutions
.

Recommendations

The study concluded that technological factors are important in enhancing the effectiveness of access and usage of e-books as a mode of access to scholarly information. The study found that user exposure to e-books, availability of peer reviewed articles, anywhere anytime accessibility of library contents and speed of internet connection are the factors enhancing e-books access and use. The critical individual factors are very important in enhancing the effective utilization of library e-books. The study concludes that awareness creation, reasons for using e-books, training on the usage of e-books, individual interest in the use of e-books and pear influences are critical factors that affect individual access and use of e-books. The study concluded that adequate access points for e-books speed of internet connectivity, supportive librarians, e-books

availability, hands on training on e-books available and distribution of access keys are the main institutional factors that contributes to the high access and use of e-books.

It is recommended that academic libraries prepare students for the changing technological world, it is important to make it a policy for students to have personal laptops and tablets and for libraries to help students install relevant e-resources on their devices To avoid the detachment from e-books in some students, marketing and awareness must play a big part of the process. Librarians have a role in training users, therefore they should be well aware of the functionality of e-books and be able to help the users in areas like accessing, downloading and printing of e-books.

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