Chapter 9
Adoption and Use of Discovery Tools by Selected Academic Libraries in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

The chapter discusses the adoption and use of e-discovery tools by three selected academic libraries in Zimbabwe. Through the use of a multiple case study a study was carried out to identify factors that led to the adoption and use of discovery tools by the three selected academic libraries. The study sought to find out the reasoning behind the selection of e-discovery tools, to assess the challenges and opportunities met in the use of e-discovery tools and to evaluate the impact brought about by the use of discovery tools. The study drew its theoretical framework from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). The TAM best explains the adoption of numerous technologies ranging from software packages to various online services. Some of the findings revealed that all the three libraries chose to use the EBSCO discovery tools even though it is expensive for them.

INTRODUCTION

Discovery tools have emerged as a new platform offering simple, quick, and easy access of information. Academic libraries in both the developed and developing worlds have recently turned to the new network-scale discovery systems to either supplement or replace existing online catalogs and older federated search tools. According to Aymonin, et al (2011: 2) discovery tools are becoming more and more usual in academic libraries. “This evolution reflects the mutation of libraries themselves. In particular, libraries are progressively less concerned with the accumulation of documents but more focused on providing access to the information that students and researchers need, regardless of the origin and document format” (Aymonin, et al 2011: 2). The tools are also becoming preferential because of their...
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ability to foster user-centred service and their ability to take libraries where users are. They are being used as a way of enticing and retaining patrons who are already immersed in the ‘world of Google’.

This study was carried out to establish the status quo in Zimbabwe concerning the use and adoption of discovery tools by academic libraries in the country and to find out the reasoning behind the selection and use of e-discovery tools by selected academic libraries in Zimbabwe. To accomplish the purpose of the study, the Technology Acceptance Model developed by Davis et al (1989) was used as a framework to act as a basis for the study. TAM stated that the success of a system can be determined by user acceptance of the system, measured by three constructs: perceived usefulness (PU), which is defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her performance; perceived ease of use (PEOU) which refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort; and attitude towards usage (ATU) which refers to the degree to which a person evaluates and associates the target system with his or her job. If the system is not easy to use, then it will probably not be perceived as useful. According to the model, user’s perceptions about the system’s usefulness and ease of use result in a behavioural intention to use (or not to use) the system (Davis et al., 1989; Nov & Ye, 2008, cited by Shroff et al., 2011). Thus, the study sought to find out factors that influenced the adoption and use of discovery tools in three academic libraries, and to find out the views of librarians towards the use of discovery tools. It is envisaged that the study will contribute to a whole new body of knowledge in the new area of e-discovery tools in Zimbabwe, and it will act as a baseline for other researchers interested in the same area in the country.

DISCOVERY TOOLS

OCLC’s WorldCat Local, Primo from Ex Libris, EBSCO’s Discovery Service [EDS] and ProQuest’s Summon are among the main discovery systems used in most academic libraries worldwide (Hanrath and Kottman 2015, and Edwards 2015). Unlike the federated search tools, “web discovery engines work by compiling their own indexes to the major library content sources and then configuring them to match the holdings of the individual library customers and additionally incorporating some local content” (Edwards 2015). Breeding (2015: 2) described discovery interface as the “next-generation catalogs”, emerging to provide a more modern replacement to online public access catalog (OPAC) modules of integrated library systems (ILS) and there-by providing an improved end-user interface that can be used by researchers to submit queries, receive results, employ faceted navigation, and other features consistent with web-based resources. However, they should not be confused with federated search products because discovery tools promise to provide a single interface to multiple resources based on using a centralized consolidated index whereas the federated products search remotely and only give limited feedback (Yang and Wagner, 2010: 691).

The advantages of using e-discovery tools are well documented. Babu and Krishnamuthy 2012, Edwards 2015 and Asher, Duke, and Wilson 2013; Lown, Sierra, and Boyer 2013 cited by Hanrath and Kottman 2015 agreed in consensus that discovery tools are one way of enticing and retaining patrons who are already immersed in the ‘world of Google’. The tools have been seen as of great assistance in the discovery of information held by libraries. Babu and Krishnamuthy (2012: 441) have this to say quoting from a Library Journal (2011) review on discovery interface experiences:
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