Chapter 8

Utilising ICTs for Resource Sharing Initiatives in Academic Institutions in Zimbabwe: Towards a New Trajectory

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the use of Information and Communication Technologies and their impact on resource sharing initiatives within the context of library consortia in Zimbabwe. The writer also explores the various projects initiated to promote resource sharing. The challenges and opportunities that ICT’s provide are also meticulously explored. The writer probes how ICT’s have transformed academic libraries in Zimbabwe in the context of digital technology. It also seeks to find out the benefits that libraries can accrue from investing in ICT. The paper also explores the extent to which academic libraries are making use of technology to contribute to the national and global research agenda.

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INTRODUCTION

In the Information and Communication Technology (ICT’s) driven world, it has become extremely complex for academic libraries to solely satisfy the information needs of their users without cooperating with others. This has forced many libraries to enter into cooperative arrangement to share resources. The twenty-first millennium presents numerous challenges for academic libraries because of ever increasing cost of library resources, dwindling budgets, rising cost of scholarly publications, competition from free Web Based resources, digital divide, and rapid pace of ICT’s. Globally, there is a macro-economic challenge and budgetary constraints which have resulted in limited fiscal support for academic libraries thus affecting quality of service delivery at a time when the critical role of information in development cannot be compromised. In the drive to remain relevant and buoyant against a background of such challenges, academic libraries are exploiting and embracing the numerous opportunities ICT’s provide such as intra and inter-institutional cooperation and partnerships, Free Open Source Software (FOSS), and open access initiative (OAI), federated searches, knowledge discovery, webometrics among others.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Role of Technology in Leveraging Library Services

The proliferation of ICT’s heralds a new dawn for Academic libraries as they change from being mere custodians of print based information to vigorous disseminators of scholarly information and research according to Taha (2010:293). Academic libraries have used their ingenuity through utilizing Information and Communication Technologies to respond to their nation’s research and development agenda. Shaffer (2014) views the twenty-first century as the “Age of Intelligence” characterized by ubitiquos computing and proliferation of information from diverse sources and subsequently its mediation by human beings, and machines to create insight. Such technologies have helped academic libraries to overcome challenges of distance and time and provide timeous relevant, reliable and current information to users, for example, some of the local Universities have access to digital collections of other reputable academic libraries in the first world through cooperation and partnerships. World Economic Forum (2012) posits that technology has the potential to help nations and individuals to overcome periods of stagnation in their development, through unprecedented growth and power of world-wide networks.

Chen, Meservy and Gillenson (2012) state that technology adoption goes through initial, adoption and post adoption phases and University libraries in Zimbabwe
Cost Issues in Digitalization and Preservation: A Case Study of a Small-Scale Music Library
[www.igi-global.com/article/cost-issues-in-digitalization-and-preservation/206865?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/cost-issues-in-digitalization-and-preservation/206865?camid=4v1a)

Digital Libraries in the Western Region of China
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/digital-libraries-in-the-western-region-of-china/191584?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/digital-libraries-in-the-western-region-of-china/191584?camid=4v1a)