

Access to Global Research Information: Collaborating for Research – the Arcadia study

Agatha N KABUGU

Systems Librarian, University of Nairobi Library, Kenya

Email: akabugu@uonbi.ac.ke

Abstract

Access to global research information is essential for the advancement of knowledge. Over the last decade, institutions of higher learning in East and Central Africa have greatly benefited from various support programmes that have focused on enhancing access to research information by researchers as well as providing support in other areas like training as well as ICT support. It is also observed that in majority of these countries, efforts have been made to create collaboration forums to facilitate sharing of resources.

These efforts have created a situation whereby availability of quality research information can no longer be considered a major hindrance to research efforts. The issue of availability of subscription and other free online resources has been well addressed over the last couple of years. Internet connectivity has been improving with the connection of the region to high speed broadband networks. Though the perception of researchers in most of these institutions is that access to global research information is poor, this situation is not replicated on the ground.

This paper aims at presenting findings of a study undertaken in 2009/2010 by the Association of Commonwealth Universities on behalf of Arcadia exploring the issues of availability, access and use of online journals in select Universities across four countries in East and Central Africa. The interrelationship of technology, awareness, skills and campus networks and their impact on strengthening of access to research information is presented.

Keywords: Global research; electronic journals; access

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