ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: THE CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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Academic libraries are critical contributors to knowledge generation which serves wide spectrum of the society. The fundamental role of academic library is to collect, process, and store, disseminate and utilize information to provide services to the user community. The use of digital resources has contributed to reshaping of information retrieval and access to practices in university libraries. In order to make use of the growing range of electronic resources users must acquire and practice the skills necessary to exploit the digital information. The aim of this study was to assess the extent of access and utilization of digital information services in academic libraries in Kenya with reference to University of Nairobi library. Objectives of the study were to assess access and utilization of digital information resources in the university of Nairobi library, establish the level of awareness of digital information services in the library, identify the challenges facing the library users in relation to access and utilization of digital information services in the library and suggest possible solutions to the identified problems in the library. This study used a descriptive survey design where the target population comprised of 96 postgraduate students of the University of Nairobi. The sampling technique applied to arrive at the target population was purposive sampling technique. Data were gathered and collected through the use of questionnaire for postgraduate students in the school of business. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents often used the library to access digital information resources mainly for writing class assignments. The study also showed that majority of the respondents rarely approached the librarians for assistance in the library and majority were unaware of digital information services. The study revealed major challenges faced when accessing and utilization of digital information as lack of adequate information skills, lack of awareness and training and poor information infrastructure. The following recommendations were made from the study in order to ensure successful utilization and accessibility of digital information services in academic libraries, the stakeholders should formulate strategic plan and ensure extensive training is offered to library users, policies which increase reliability of internet connectivity, use awareness of digital information services and through an effective marketing and promotion strategies enacted in libraries to enhance mobilization of more library users. Access and utilization of digital services is of vital essence to academic libraries if the research output it to be achieved and this project suggest what academic libraries could do to improve the services.

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