

USE OF NEW MEDIA TOOLS IN DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE AMONG UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STAFF IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Scholarly communication is integral to the research process and to the enhancement of literacy. Traditionally, research has been published in print journals which continue to be the preferred channel, especially in developing countries like Kenya. However, scholarly communication is changing with the growth of new media and these changes are impacting on all members of the academic community and on how they go about creating and maintaining scholarship. Kenya, like the rest of the developing world, still lags behind in research publishing and heavily relies on foreign countries for almost all forms of knowledge (Makotsi, 1998, Darko-Ampem, 2003). These developed countries of Europe and North America control large chunks of both print and electronic information and thus have continued to maintain a scholarly information divide between the developed and the developing countries like Kenya (Lor, 2007). This has made Kenyan scholars heavily dependent on developed countries for assessment and publication of their scholarly works. However, scholars have argued that new media can help overcome this scholarly information divide (Gu and Widen-Wulff, 2010). With new media tools, researchers have more options when they develop their scholarly communication by new information behaviours, which extend and enrich the meaning and the environment of social media (Beer, 2008). New media tools underline features such as openness, interactivity, participatory, and user-centred activities. However, Kenyan researchers have been slow in adopting and accepting new media for creating and disseminating their works of scholarship. As a result, the visibility of Kenya's research output in comparison with the developed world remains low (INASP, 2012). The aim of this paper is to dialogue on the factors influencing the acceptance and use of new media in conducting scholarly communication activities among the academic community in Kenya's public universities.

Key Words: New media, Blogs, Wikis, Scholarly communication, scholarly journal.