

An Exploratory Study on Access and Utilization of the Institutional Repositories among Academic Staff at Egerton University, Kenya

Abstract

The proliferation of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), the paradigm shift from print to electronic formats (e- format) of resources, the increase in prices of journals, shrinking library funds and cuts in library subscriptions, have awakened academic institutions, into the establishment of Institutional Repositories (IR). In the last few decades libraries have adopted latest technologies with an aim of providing the best services in the most user friendly form. However academic libraries have encountered various challenges in keeping faith with their role of collecting, preserving and disseminating intellectual output of the institution. Faculty participation in self archiving, accessing and using the repositories has also been a major challenge to contend with. In light of this fact, this exploratory study examined the access and utilization of institutional repositories among academic staff at Egerton University. The main objective was to assess how the academic staff at Egerton University accessed and used the institutional repository for their scholarly work. Through a survey conducted among 84 academic staff, 2 ICT personnel and 4 library staff, quantitative and qualitative data gathering approach consisting of a structured questionnaire and an interview schedule was employed to meet the objectives of the study. The paper provided a firsthand description of building and developing the institutional repository at the university and also described expected benefits of the repository to the university and users. The findings indicate that the majority of academic staff was not aware of the existence of the institutional repository nor were they able to deposit their scholarly work. A lack of appropriate strategies for marketing the institutional repository among all stake holders was also eminent. The study concluded that the library should collaborate with faculty members in promoting the access and use of the institutional repository so as to entice them in self archiving their scholarly work.