

The impact of Web 2.0 tools on academic libraries in Kenya.

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Abstract

Web 2.0, the read/write social web, has become ubiquitous in most academic libraries, even in developing countries. The use of Web 2.0 tools is increasingly changing the way academic library users seek, access, use, or share information. Thus, the use of Web 2.0 has the potential of impacting the efficiency and effectiveness of service design and delivery in academic libraries the world over. This study explored the impact of Web 2.0 on the effectiveness of service delivery in academic libraries in Kenya. Data for the study were collected through an analytical survey of the web platforms of nine academic libraries in Kenya. The libraries were selected through information-oriented purposive sampling. Additional data were obtained from key informant interviews with librarians and users in two academic libraries also purposively selected from the nine. Secondary data were also collected through documentary analysis of relevant literature. The findings of the study reveal that the use of Web 2.0 tools in academic libraries in Kenya has increased the users' interests in the library resources and services; promoted learning; as well as enriched library promotion and marketing programmes. The findings also revealed that the effective use of Web 2.0 tools in academic libraries in Kenya is hampered by infrastructural, technical, technological and cultural challenges, among other factors, which require urgent attention to enhance their impact. The findings of this study can be used to justify investments in Web 2.0 platforms by academic libraries. They can also be used by library schools to develop curricula which empower librarians to make optimal use of Web 2.0 and similar tools.

Key words: Web 2.0, academic libraries, Kenya.

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