M&E of electronic resources in academic Insitutions in Kenya
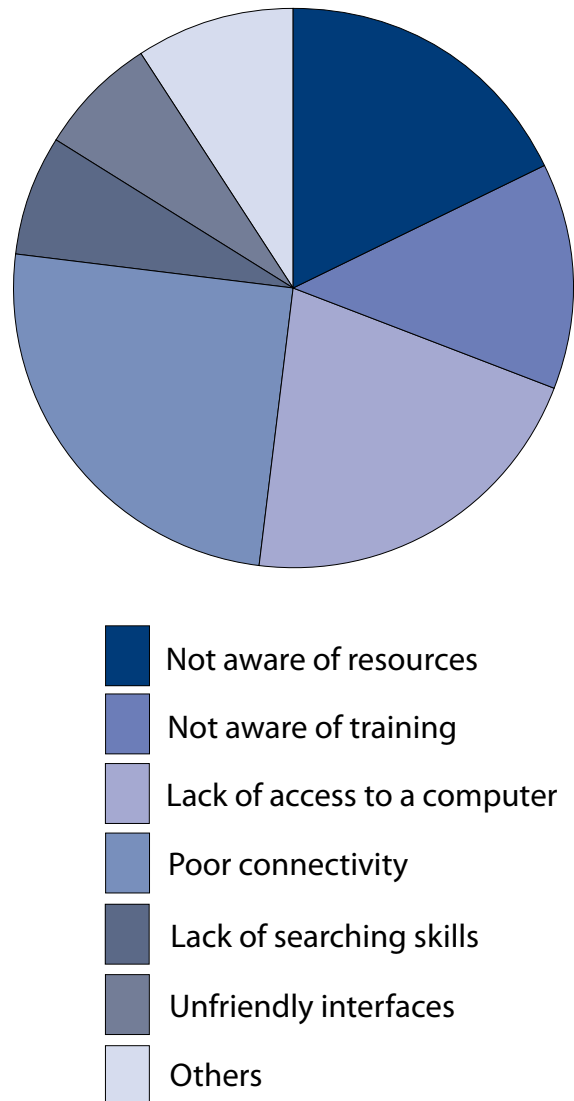
Executive Summary

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The revolution of Information Communication and Technology has brought a great change in the way libraries are providing services. Libraries have continued to embrace these technologies vis-à-vis Internet thus seeing the introduction of electronic resources (e-resources) to the library collection and services. With the advent of internet and subsequent emergence of e-resources, libraries have encountered a myriad of challenges ranging from: collection management; cost of the resources; marketing of these resources; and training users on how to use these resources. These are some of the challenges that saw libraries in Kenya come together in 2002 to overcome and resulting in the subsequent formation of the Kenya Libraries and Information Services Consortium (KLISC) in 2003.

Very little is known about usage, the users or factors influencing usage during the time since the introduction of e-resources in Kenya. The team members of this study, initiated as part of a joint KLISC and the INASP:PERii monitoring and evaluation capacity enhancement project in Kenya, therefore selected this area as the focus for their research project. In particular this study aimed to examine the extent of e-resource usage, the impact of marketing and training activities and the challenges encountered. The data collected will also provide a useful source for future research and analysis.

Overall findings to emerge, as detailed in the summary report and appendices, provide us with a comprehensive picture of the current situation in relation to the provision and access of e-resources in Kenya, and likely in many similarly positioned countries elsewhere. Whilst poor connectivity and lack of adequate access to computers emerge as the major barriers in maximizing usage of e-resources , it is also evident that usage is enhanced where awareness levels are high and training provided. In this case; data has suggested that the library needs to increase marketing and or improve its marketing strategies in order to reach out to all its clientele. Given the high number (66%) of trained respondents (55%) indicating training had enhanced their access and retrieval skills and with many noting a marked improvement in academic output and referencing skills, there are evident benefits to increasing investment in training. Despite the need for online resources and remote access, the need for the library as a space is still appreciated as users requested provision of more computers and also more quiet reading space, with data indicating the library as the site of choice for access, and the librarian as the most trusted source of training.

Barriers to Access

- Not aware of resources
- Not aware of training
- Lack of access to a computer
- Poor connectivity
- Lack of searching skills
- Unfriendly interfaces
- Others

For more information, see Monitoring and evaluation of electronic resources in academic and research institutions in Kenya on the INASP website. The report is available in full or as a 16 page summary.

Also see The Impact of E-resource Usage in Academic and Research Institutions in Tanzania for a similar study in Tanzania.