DATA MEETS CUSTOMERS – DIGITAL SERVICES IN LIBRARIES IN AFRICA – ARE WE DOING IT RIGHT?

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Introduction

- Several Initiatives since 2000

- Several academic libraries in all sub-regions of Africa

- Some national libraries are also involved

- Research libraries also involved, most in SA

- Several training programs, most recent in AAU in July 2015

Why digitise?

- Data, a key input in national development

- Most data available are unstructured

- Most texts now paperless, tools needed for access

- Texts now have simultaneously access

- Libraries today mine data on the web, add to content of print and make available for access, considering copyright issues

- Limited budgets, high cost of digitisation equipment, increased / changing needs of users for digital information means Libraries need a digital information strategy

Ultimate Aim of the National Library

- First place to call for data about the country
- Be the trusted source for such data/ information
- Be the main source for data collection and preservation
- Effectively manage data – planning, coordination, funding – for easy access
- Single point of entry for data and related resources
- Ability to influence data creators on strategies, standards and technology to use
- Easy accessibility , brand identity, ability to absorb changing user needs while still providing high quality content
- Strong collection development policy – for high quality selection, preservation, dissemination of data for high impact use

Are we doing it right?

Consider these !

Do we have a Digital Information Strategy ?

- Involves all sources of content providers (creators, collectors, access providers and preservers) digital service providers); Infrastructure (policies, technology, standards, laws, human resources); Leadership (strategic planning ,funding, management) for effective National Digital Information Strategy

- Strengthens digital content – How?
    - provide good environment, improve practices ,diversify production of digital content and digitise information of national value

- Ensures preservation of digital information – How?
    - select and capture content for long time preservation; do preservation related research and training in new skills; increase public awareness of digital preservation and have a digital preservation repository network

- Maximises digital access – How?
    - easy, equitable access and global visibility of content, open access to digitised public information ; increased use of digitised content for research ; awareness of copyright use effectively

Guiding Policies

- Data management process

- Quality assurance standards

- Open Access or Open Source

- Ownership of data, privacy and rights

- Method of metadata documentation

- Preservation, Storage and security

Management Hot Points

- Is the content a public good ?
- Should IP rights be protected ?
- Is proper initial data management planning relevant to eliminate challenges during data creation and curation for high quality data for users?
- Is it necessary to form a Private/Public partnership for continued availability of content
- Is it important to ensure global access to content for great use and impact?
- Need for ethical and legal views of sharing sensitive and confidential data?
- Should research data be anonymous to allow for re-use?

Conclusion

- Digitisation of data by different types of libraries in Africa is gaining ground fast.

- Legislation and Policy are needed to ensure good practices for sustained high quality output to ensure optimum user satisfaction.

- Are we doing it right for effective results??