



Information technology for 21st century African Libraries: bringing the learning and research community into digital learning spaces

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Summary of presentation

- Introduction
- African university Libraries and higher education
- Report on survey
- Digital Repositories
- Library as space
- Conclusion

African university libraries

- Traditional role
 - Supporting research, teaching and learning
- Intermediary role
- 21st century role
 - Digital engagement
 - Libraries as communication spaces

University libraries: technology and content

- Technological aspects
 - Open source technology
 - wireless
- Digital Knowledge
 - Digital repository
 - Knowledge sharing

Report of African Survey

- Survey objective: extent to which wireless technology used to support learning
- 40 University libraries surveyed
- 11 responded

Wireless technology

- Mobile phones
 - SMS
 - Web access
 - OPAC
 - Full-text databases
- Wireless access
 - Laptop access

Advantages of using service

- Ease of access to student
- Efficient way of reaching students and staff
- Flexibility and utility for researchers
- Convenient for learners
- Quick reliable communication

Disadvantage of wireless technology

- Expensive installation to institution
- Expensive, not affordable by some students
- Unreliable network coverage
- Bandwidth limitations
- Network Safety and security

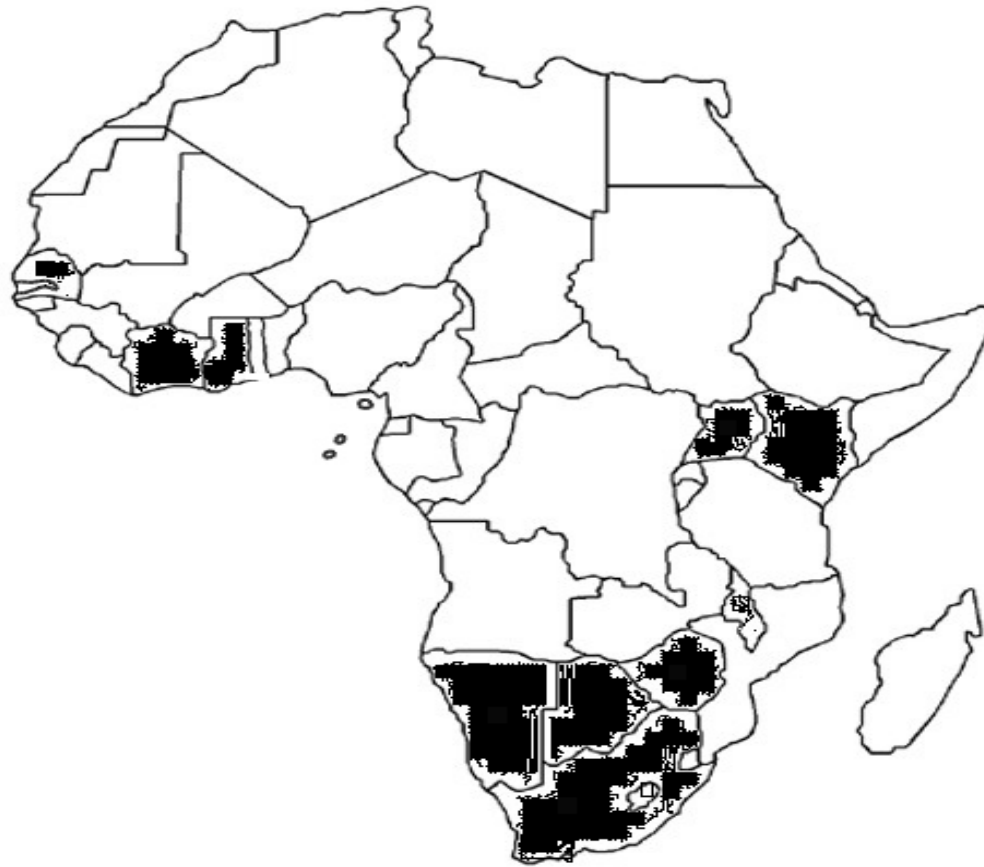
Emerging issues

- Technology available in both proprietary and open sources
- Is it necessary?
 - 24/7 Access and support for staff and students in 21st century
- Affordability
 - Private - public sector partnerships
 - Creative solutions that support learning, teaching and research

Digital repositories

- Digital repositories prevalence
 - Digital collections capturing and preserving the intellectual output of a single or multi-university community
- Open source software usage prevalent
 - Most use D-space and e-prints
- OERs emerging and related to institutional repositories as they both promote Open Access

Digital Repositories



Digital repositories (cont..)

- Visibility of African scholarship
 - Indigenous knowledge in digital spaces
- Opportunity to shape digital knowledge space not only as consumers of digital content but contributors
- OERs & digital repositories and African ways of learning, teaching & research

Libraries as space

- Libraries both digital and physical space
- Creating convergence in global and local knowledge for learning communities
- Supporting inter and multi discipline knowledge development and preservation
- Flexibility and utility enhanced by wireless

Libraries as space(cont.)

- Learning and research mandate
(Intermediary role not reason to be)
- Customized services reflecting institutional role
- Physical division of spaces (research, discussion space, group learning spaces)
- Open access philosophy

Conclusion

- 21st century African libraries emerging
- Technology itself a tool not determinant
- Opportunity to deliver African digital research and learning content just in time
- Supporting learning and research digitally
- Collaboration across boundaries and institutions will build on current growth

- Thank you for your attention.

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