

Digital Literacy Transformation and Implications in Institutions of Higher Learning in Kenya

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Abstract : Knowledge and digital economies have brought challenges and potential opportunities for universities to innovate and improve the quality of learning. Disruption technologies and information dynamics continue to transform and change the landscape in teaching, scholarship, and research activities across universities. Digital literacy is a fundamental and imperative element in higher education and training, as witnessed during the new norm. COVID-19 caused unprecedented disruption in universities, where teaching and learning depended on digital innovations and applications. Academic services and activities were provided online, including library information services. Information professionals were forced to adopt various digital platforms in order to provide information services to patrons. University libraries' roles in fulfilling educational responsibilities continue to evolve in response to changes in pedagogy, technology, economy, society, policies, and strategies of parent institutions. Libraries are currently undergoing considerable transformational change as a result of the inclusion of a digital environment. Academic libraries have been at the forefront of providing online learning resources and online information services, as well as supporting students and staff to develop digital literacy skills via online courses, tutorials, and workshops. Digital literacy transformation and information staff are crucial elements reminiscent of the prioritization of skills and knowledge for lifelong learning. The purpose of this baseline research is to assess the implications of digital literacy transformation in institutions of higher learning in Kenya and share appropriate strategies to leverage and sustain teaching and research. Objectives include examining the leverage and preparedness of the digital literacy environment in streamlining learning in the universities, exploring and benchmarking imperative digital competence for information professionals, establishing the perception of information professionals towards digital literacy skills, and determining lessons, best practices, and strategies to accelerate digital literacy transformation for effective research and learning in the universities. The study will adopt a descriptive research design using questionnaires and document analysis as the instruments for data collection. The targeted population is librarians and information professionals, as well as academics in public and private universities teaching information literacy programmes. Data and information are to be collected through an online structured questionnaire and digital face-to-face interviews. Findings and results will provide promising lessons together with best practices and strategies to transform and change digital literacies in university libraries in Kenya.

Keywords : digital literacy, digital innovations, information professionals, librarians, higher education, university libraries, digital information literacy

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