Adoption of radio frequency identification technology in university libraries: A Kenyan perspective

A Kenyan perspective

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the adoption of radio frequency identification (RFID) technology in handling and supporting information services and activities in Kenyan university libraries.

Design/methodology/approach – The study utilized a survey research design to collect data, ideas, opinions, views and suggestions from the respondents drawn from various university libraries in Kenya. Collecting data and getting in-depth information from the respondents was done using a web-based structured questionnaire, document analysis and participant observation.

Findings – The findings from the study show that few university libraries in Kenya are using radio frequency identification technology to handle and support information services and activities. The study also found various problems hindering the adoption of the technology, such as a lack of information communication technology (ICT) policies, lack of a business approach, limited market opportunities, lack of lobbying or negotiating skills, inadequate funding and budgeting, and lack of ICT competencies and skills. The study recommends that library ICT professionals, information professionals and other stakeholders should make tireless efforts to implement and use RFID technology with the view to building, strengthening, improving and supporting information work and activities in university libraries.

Research limitations/implications – The study involved RFID technology, a relatively new and emerging innovation in university library and information systems, especially in the Kenyan context. The study also involved university libraries in Kenya that provide and support the fundamental functions of their respective universities.

Practical implications – Fundamentally, library ICT professionals, information professionals and other stakeholders need to take appropriate measures to address issues affecting the use of RFID solutions. There is a need to empower university libraries and information professionals with the right mix of ICT knowledge and skills necessary in the modern information environment.

Social implications – Across the world, university libraries are increasingly adopting and

implementing RFID solutions in order to handle and support information work and activities. Of critical importance to the discussion is the extent to which university libraries in Kenya are using this technology to handle and support information work and activities effectively and efficiently. Proper management of library operations and services is necessary in university library and information systems.

Originality/value – The focus of the study was to assess the extent to which university libraries in Kenya are adopting and using RFID systems in information work and activities. This research is useful in providing a point of reference for university libraries and information professionals, increasingly going for similar solutions in Kenya and Africa in general.