Bridging the information gap with the patrons in university libraries in Africa: The case for investments in web 2.0 systems

The case for investments in web 2.0 systems

The Authors

Elisha Ondieki Makori, *Library, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya*

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine and demonstrate the extent to which university libraries in Africa are bridging the information gap through the use of web 2.0 systems, including challenges and prospects.

Design/methodology/approach – The review adopted a combination of various data collection methods and approaches, including current academic literature, document analysis, desk review guides and reports on university libraries.

Findings – Review results indicate that few university libraries in Africa have embraced the use and application of web 2.0 systems. It is regrettable that web 2.0 is not new in libraries, although many African university libraries have not adopted the concept. Web 2.0 systems, including blog, delicious, YouTube and Facebook among others, are no longer a preserve of commercial organizations.

Research limitations/implications – The review involved university libraries in Africa because of their perceived role in creation, management, preservation, transmission or diffusion and utilization of information and knowledge. University libraries provide information services to support research, teaching, learning, and community activities of respective universities.

Practical implications – University libraries in African countries face various challenges in implementation of web 2.0 systems. Web 2.0 systems have proved to be useful in addressing issues and challenges of open, distance and e-learning programmes. Information professionals should support implementation and use of relevant web 2.0 systems.

Social implications – Across the globe, university libraries are increasingly using web 2.0 systems to support, promote and extend information services to their patrons. In the modern information world 2.0, it is important for university libraries to identify relevant web 2.0 systems and integrate them into mainstream library and information services.

Originality/value – The review provides useful insights regarding the use and application of web 2.0 systems in university libraries in Africa.