

# CHALLENGES FACING MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE ACCESS AND USE OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES IN THE LIBRARY

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**Abstract** *The study aimed to identify the challenges that confront users while accessing and utilising electronic information resources at Maasai Mara University library and finally suggest possible solutions for the identified challenges. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a target population of 3180 students. A sample size of 343 participants was drawn from undergraduate students who are in their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of study. The stratified sampling technique was used to group the respondents into strata according to their respective schools and year of study. Respondents were randomly selected. The drop-and-pick-up method was used in the administration of the questionnaires. The challenges faced while access were; lack of adequate search skills (80%), lack of appropriate training on accessing the resources (78%) and inadequate computers (72%). The study recommends sufficient networked computers, students' sensitisation on the worth of electronic resources and well-planned user awareness and user education programs by the library.*

**Keywords:** *Challenges, Access, Use, Electronic Resources, Students*

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## INTRODUCTION

The integration of information communication technology (ICT) in the field of library and information sciences have transformed the methods of accessing storing, retrieving and disseminating information among library users. Based on users' requirements, different types of services are provided in academic libraries, which include the provision of electronic resources and services. Library electronic information resources are extensively important resources in many dimensions of life, such as education, employment, government, commerce and healthcare, among others. Information has become fundamental to the current society. The information desires of every person in this era have enlarged in manifolds, established on the exactness and immediacy and above all, further than the constraint of place and time. Due to the remarkable progression and continuous enlargement of technology, the roles of academic libraries become quick to respond in making information and also how and where to provide the facilities. These advances have affected the format and bases and the library has moved moderately to the simulated domain of the internet; due to this library consumers can access services from the exterior of the library.

The Maasai Mara University library services are incorporating electronic information resources in their

traditional (print) information resources as the institution strives to improve the quality and quantity of its collection. If e-resources are not widely utilised then it's difficult to obtain a corresponding return on investment. The emergence of electronic information resources are becoming the new practice of information distribution and access which has steered a revolution in academic libraries. In the electronic environment, the information services can be accessed and disseminated as and when necessary, and therefore the services of the libraries are not narrowed to the physical four walls but are incorporated into local, regional, national and global networks.

The ultimate objective of the library is to gratify the user requests by giving better and more value-added information services that enrich the image of the library and the position of library and information science. To achieve this, library professionals should be well conversant with up-to-date practices of information provision. In an effort to reach users accessing the library via their computers, many library consortia are extending their service to include virtual services. Web-based services internet library services digital library services and electronic library services are terms with similar meanings. As many libraries change to the provision of services in a digital setting, the enriched access to the electronic library collection is making the use of digital resources more attractive and more realistic. Traditional

services had changed themselves into internet-based online services using electronic technologies. The predetermined tasks like purchasing, organising, preserving, retrieving and distributing information to the users are mainly entrusted to the libraries. Even before the present internet era right from the ancient times this always remains the primary objective of a library. Electronic resources require the same attributes as the manually offered services that are timeliness and accuracy accompanied by knowing the needs of the user. Electronic resources are well-known for the following; ensure that users' needs and accessibility of information sources matches at all times:

- Information delivery to the users is timely and in an appropriate fashion.
- Ensuring the information provided is of high quality, appropriate and accurate.
- Provide users with guidance and support to build their information search and application skills.

An improvement in the way in which information is accessed, stored and transferred in the library has improved due to the preface of new technological developments. This development has largely impacted the mode of library operations and information services. These developments gave rise to new sources of information for the library patrons that are electronic information resources. Their use has become common in many universities and other institutions of higher learning. The present day's academic system digital records resources have come to be a key platform for students and faculty, and the management also investing cash in upgrading their current systems. The very old information source library has become a fairly affected domain in terms of round-the-clock access and reliability with velocity and security in contrast to the modern-day electronic sources resources. It is indispensable to create new modes to supply services to the user computers even off-campus by the use of the WWW platform.

As greater sources are created by means of the web, issues occur related to search & access to the same. Users would like to see their library on the e-resources, capable to meet their all data desires no longer solely on demand but also in anticipation of demand. But to overcome this problem, MMU libraries may have to have more & more electronic resources, which shall assist to offer new and more qualitative services to their users. E-resources mean sources, which are handy in digital form; it might also be books, databases, journals, full-text articles, pictures, photographs, images, music, & different multimedia. These resources are delivered via Android phones, tablets, laptops and computers with the help of e-devices. Other comparable terms used for e-resources are net sources, digital resources and online resources. The electronics sources have the greater benefit of easy and portable benefits assisting users, like students,

researchers and individuals access well-timed services with superior choices like sharing, editing, modifying, etc.

According to Edem and Egbe, 2019 an effective academic library aims at ensuring the system servers the user's needs effectively and efficiently, the main function of the library is to acquire select organise classify store and preserve the information materials to ensure are available to the right users at the right time and in the correct format. The library users have the responsibility to judge the library services and the priority of library patrons is important backed by the support that they are the key reasons why the library operates.

A library that is not used by users serves no importance, and it could be as good as dead as it cannot defend its existence (Adeniran, 2013); students use electronic information resources in research to do assignments for current awareness, but they need skills to utilise the resources.

In the current society where information proliferation and information explosion is experienced it's important for individuals to know how, where and in which format information should be retrieved supported with the fact that not all information sources are reliable and therefore one has to possess information literacy skills in order to get the information required. The advancement of ICTs in the library makes it significant to look at the challenges faced by users in utilising electronic information resources (Ahmed, 2017).

The initiation of ICT has improved the ease of use of electronic information resources among the academic community in the recent years all over the world. This growth has posed challenges to libraries in their attempt to meet up information needs of clientele in the digital age. Due to the technological uprising and advent of current ICT, the scholarly society no longer depends upon the traditional library resources and services. They are, however, encouraged to rely on electronic information resources with hope that, the enormous of information available for access and use in electronic formats can extremely accomplish their research and scholarly needs as a better alternative to traditional print services (Swain, 2019). Hence, as the popularity of e-resources continues to grow, almost all academic libraries are progressively shifting from print documents to e-resources where provision, access and dissemination of these information resources are considered more paramount than merely owning them. With this libraries are obligated to rethink the aspect of collection development. Commenting on the advantages of electronic resources, Dadzie (2018) writes that electronic resources are very useful research tools that complement the print-based resources in traditional library setting. Their advantages include: access to restricted information that might be restricted, access to more current

information, which is available in various formats, that is full text, abstracts, tutorials, PDFs, etc.

## Advantages of Electronic Information Resources

The following are the added advantages of e-resources over the print media:

*Multi-Access:* A networked resource gives multiple access points to multiple users at the same time irrespective of their geographical location.

*Speedy Retrieval:* An e-resource is a lot quicker to look through to extract and to incorporate the information into other material and to cross reference between various publications.

*Content Analysis:* The e-resources contain a gigantic amount of information, but more significantly in a mixed format mode i.e., images, video, audio and animation, which could not be replicated in print.

*Consortia Mode:* The e-resources can be subscribed in a consortia format too, thus cutting down the costs but reaping the same benefits.

*Interactivity:* Articles/issues/chapters can be read, commented by the readers, amended quickly and greater feedback can be given through the web, it allows interaction among the users.

## Special Features of Electronic Information Resources

Electronic resources in general have some discrete qualities that distinguish them from traditional resources. E-resources are further distinct by the nature of the information on the net itself. These qualities are: high compact storage, ease of reproduction, multiplication, manipulation and transmission, Contents can be very easily detached from its media or container, ease of moving the contents from one medium to another, ease of transmission, communication and storage, hypertext and multimedia and seamless integration of print and electronic resources among others.

## Statement of the Problem

Libraries in Kenyan public universities are currently faced with complex challenges posed by rapid revolutionary advances in ICT technologies and that MMU library services cannot be the exceptional thus MMU library must redesign its position as an academic library in order to meet the above evolving information needs for users. The purpose of this study was to identify the existing problems in utilisation of

electronic information resources and how they were being accessed by the undergraduate students in public universities in Kenya with regards to Maasai Mara university library services and suggest possible solutions to the challenges.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Identify the major challenges in utilising electronic information resources.
- Suggest possible solutions to the identified challenges.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What challenges confront students in the access and use of electronic information resources?
- What are the possible solutions to improve utilisation of electronic information resources?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Several factors have been identified that hinder college students from using sources effectively. They consist of records, literacy skills and awareness, availability of digital resources; get entry to electronic databases, value of acquisition/subscription, infrastructure, web connectivity, etc. For example, troubles recognised by postgraduate students in gaining access to digital resources in Makerere University, Uganda, include slow web connectivity, insufficient computer systems and opening hours, the unwillingness of library workforce to help them in the lab and the price of printing (Okello-Oburu, 2018).

Due to high expectations from the library users, budget limits and rising cost of library material are some of the challenges faced by academic libraries (Nazir & Wani, 2018). Kahn and Underwood (2017) state that with the increase in the price of printed journals and books due to higher costs of production and subscription rates academic libraries have been stressed. notwithstanding the significance of e-resources to academic libraries, their utilisation is hampered by various factors which include poor funding and high cost of Its equipment Universities are already experiencing financial constraints and a decrease of funding from the government, it is becoming hard for academic libraries to afford these resources.

In the year 2005, INASP carried out a surveyed and found out that the use of electronic resources in the African continent faces the following challenges that cannot be ignored if their access and utilisation is to be fully realised. The challenges are: poor ICT facilities, lack of electronic resources themselves, poor connectivity to the Internet, poor funding, lack of management support lack of user education in use of electronic resources and low bandwidth, among others.

The INASP sentiments are real to some extent. There are some libraries in Kenya that have all these, but the usage of e-journals is nevertheless very low. In 2012, INASP was once commissioned to undertake a survey of initiatives that have been in place to enable entry to digital journals within the developing world. The survey showed that there used to be goodwill among the publishers to make their content on hand as broadly as possible within the growing world, at a low cost, or free.

In Ghana, for instance, Agyekum and Ossom (2018) studied the extent of electronic assets usage among tutorial personnel and faculty individuals of Kumasi Polytechnic, the investigations pointed out that even though over twenty databases comprising three thousand e-journals have been subscribed through the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana, utilisation was loaded by means of complication referring to access, sluggish Internet connectivity, regularly occurring energy outages and lack of enough search skills.

At the University of Nevada, Beiseler and Kurt (2017) noted that e-books workflow is hampered by issues to do with pricing, licensing digital rights management and digital formats. Johnson et al. (2018) share the same sentiments, and he is of the same view that there is no standard mode for packaging and pricing electronic resources and libraries can best determine the range of purchasing and pricing models to adopt in relation to access agreements and value for money.

Because of the various challenges and technicalities involved in the whole process of acquiring, processing and accessing e-books Beisler and Kurt (2017) showed how their library has shifted from its conservative operation to digitised services incorporating electronic resources on the technical division of the library. Library collections today consist of printed material, electronic resources, subscription databases and open access resources.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, academic library students expect to, without difficulty, access digital sources and offerings at a single point. The management of these two collections (print and electronic) is posing a huge task to librarians thinking about the restricted budgets, expertise needed and different technical problems involved. Kahle (2017) recognised three essential corporations, namely Google, Amazon and the Internet Archive, have digitised substances at a very massive scale in order for customers to search and purchase resources. The thousands and thousands of archived books have advanced libraries that many can be downloaded in an open-access domain.

Some of the challenges that users of the internet in Africa are confronted with a range of poor skilled manpower, lack of regulations and guiding policies, very high cost of both software and hardware, erratic power supply and last but not least, limited funds from the government. The study

further notes that internet access was generally inadequate in academic libraries and advocates for its improvement, which will only be possible if there is enough funding is granted to the African Region Anie (2019) and is currently all over the world internet is accessed via wireless connection with local area networks nominated at various points for uninterrupted access everywhere on campus.

In a study by Ajayi, Shorunke and Aboyade (2017) enumerate that electronic resources are chiefly made handy for academic purposes. The study concludes that elements hindering the superb use of e-resources in Nigerian higher institutions is a lack of tactical planning, unskilled workforce, internet access, inconsistent training, monetary constraints, few computers and undependable electrical energy supply.

The find out about by Makgahlela and Bopape (2016) on the use of electronic resources by the postgraduate college students at the Delta State University, Nigeria, revealed that, although the postgraduate students had to get the right of entry to digital resources, bad searching skills, shortage of power supply, a confined area in the library and low bandwidth subscriptions have proved to avert the utilisation of electronic resources by the postgraduate students. The researchers advocated proactive measures like the collaboration between colleges and faculty librarians to provide orientation and coaching and to create greater cognisance of e-resources. The library was additionally counselled to deploy generators to aid electricity supply, to set up an unbiased internet server to grant uninterrupted Internet connection and to create an institutional repository for open access.

Zinn and Langdown (2019) studied e-books usage among South African academic librarians. The research showed that the trend e-book adoption was gradual among academic librarians in South Africa, and that libraries have preferred both printed and electronic resources. They listed factors hindering sufficient e-book availability to be the high cost of subscribing to the e-books and scarce e-books in most disciplines. The cost of equipment to read e-books, the unreliability of Internet access and the lack of training on how to use e-books was identified as the major factor for ineffective utilisation of e-books in South African academic libraries.

In a related study, Dolo-Ndlwana (2016) examined the use and value of library e-resources through lectures and postgraduate college students at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa. The study revealed that, though the university had notably invested in e-resources and associated computer-based technological know-how to ensure 24/7 accessibility each on and off-campus, e-resources have been usually underutilised by students.

In a comparable study by Badenhurst (2016) the lookup

revealed that, in spite of continuous training and information literacy, the use of e-books used to be low. Although 67% of students had been aware of e-books, only 63% of them used e-books and 57% preferred using both printed and e-books. Possible constraints identified had been the use of technology, lack of devices to access e-books, inadequate digital literacy, lack of infrastructure and access restrictions to e-books. Schaub (2019) referred to that 92% of university students in the United States, Slovakia, Japan and Germany overwhelmingly indicated a preference for studying printed books over e-books. The purpose for this is established by Orgem (2016) that the ease of use of digital assets will surprisingly motivate users.

A survey with the aid of Joshua (2019) unfolded that students at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, were barely utilising e-resources due to insufficient recognition and training. While the find out about pointed to the truth that students used both printed and digital formats, they strongly affirmed that if enough e-resources were provided, they would like to migrate to digital data retrieval.

This corresponds with findings from the survey by Du Plessis and Wiese (2019) of South African students' acceptance and use of e-textbooks, which concludes that most college students select both printed and e-textbooks. Although the study has revealed that 82% of students hardly ever use e-textbooks, the majority of the college students choose e-textbooks if there had been sufficient and provided.

Both Nisha and Ali (2017) and Kwafao, Osman and Afful-Arthur (2017) mentioned that over 90% of library customers had been aware of databases at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, the Delhi University and the University of the Cape Coast, Ghana respectively. Users, if truly skilled and furnished with adequate e-resources, using a "Google-like" portal access approach, ought to eventually have an effect on their assessment rating of the library system. Based on this, libraries are stimulated to take a periodic evaluation of the utilisation frequency of users in their domain. Akin to this assertion, the study by Owolabi et al. (2016) indicated that the undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan derived pride from the use of e-resources in the college library.

The latest research on e-resource utilisation all concluded that, even though most respondents had access to contemporary and updated e-resources, utilisation was once hampered by using low bandwidth, lack of skills, unreliable Internet access, inadequate workstations, inappropriate information in databases and budgetary constraints (Adeleke & Nwalo, 2017) Based on the findings of this study, the fact that the 21<sup>st</sup>-century user prefers online information (Kumah, 2018), supported by Kahn and Underwood (2018) predict that "with an alternate in the way libraries operate, comes the need for librarians to be inclined and in a position to change as well."

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a target population of 3180 students. A sample size of 343 participants was drawn from undergraduate students who are in their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year of study. The stratified sampling technique was used to group the respondents into strata according to their respective Schools and year of study. Respondents were randomly selected from the strata. The drop-and-pick-up method was used in the administration of the questionnaires.

For this study, the preferred method of data collection was by the use of questionnaires. The data were collected through the use of structured and semi-structured questionnaires, which were developed by the researcher based on the research objectives. The questionnaires constituted both open- and closed-ended questions. The researcher used structured or closed-ended questionnaires in the collection of data from students due to the advantage that closed-ended questions give the respondents a list of all possible alternatives, thus giving the respondents complete freedom of response. It is also the case that structured or closed-ended questionnaires are easier to analyse and administer, since each question is provided with alternative answers.

Data analysis was done on the obtained data from the questionnaires. It was analysed by simple descriptive analysis and cross-tabulation. Tables and charts were used to summarise the findings of the research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The target population of the study was 343 respondents/students to fill in self-administered questionnaires. However out of the 343 targeted respondents, the researcher managed to get back 266 copies of questionnaires were returned and found fit for the analysis, representing a response rate of 76.

**Table 1: MMU Student Records September 2019**

School	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Year
Arts and social science	208	316
Business and economics	530	383
Education	532	470
Science and information sciences	260	181
Tourism and natural resource	150	149
Total	1680	1500

Source: MMU student record 2020.

Undergraduates	Total Population	Sample Size	Percentage
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	1680	178	52%
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	1500	165	48%

## Demographic Characteristics

The demographic information was important for the research study because it provided their background information, which helped to establish the respondent's differences and find out how they may affect the outcome of the results, which was useful as background data. The demographic characteristics are summarised in the tables below.

### Gender of the Respondents

Gender was considered as an important factor in this study for the students in relation to the utilisation of electronic information resources. Since different genders have different perceptions on the access and utilisation of electronic information resources.

**Table 2: Gender of the Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	170	63.9
Female	96	36.1

Source: Author, 2021.

The results presented in Table 2 show that the majority of the respondents were male gender 170 (63.9%) while the rest were female gender 96 (36.1%) It was the opinion of the researcher that the university has not achieved gender parity in the enrolment and intake of students.

### Age of the Respondent

Age is also an important issue considered in the study, as it helps to give a varied experience and opinion of the respondents. It is noted that the opinion of various people can be analysed effectively considering their age groups. The results were presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Age of the Respondent**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
19-21	67	25.18%
22-24	172	64.66%
25 and above	27	10.15%

Source: Author, 2021.

The results presented in the table above indicate that a majority of the respondents are in the age bracket of between

22 and 24 years 172 (64.6%) and 19–21 years 67 (25.1%) and a few fall above the age of 25 years 27 (10.1%). It was the opinion of the researcher that the majority of the respondents are of young age and who are considered to be digital born. This is interesting as this age bracket is the age where students might be having advanced skills in technology.

### Different Types of Electronics Resources

The study sought to establish the various types of electronic resources available for access by students via the university web page as shown in the Table 4. As revealed by the Table 4 below, 106 (39.5%) are the majority of the respondents use electronic journals, 25.2% used the institution repository, 19.8% choose the OPAC 10.2% and 5.3% preferred to use electronic books and online databases, respectively. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents used electronic journals as their preferred electronic information resource. The study agrees with the Kenchakkanavar (2019) study in India on the major types of electronic information resources.

**Table 4: Types of E-Resources**

Electronic Resource	Frequency	Percentage
Electronic journal	106	39.5
E-books	27	10.2
Online databases	13	5.3
OPAC	53	19.8
Institution repository	67	25.2

### Opinion on Electronic Resources

The study sought to establish the opinion of the respondents about various aspects regarding electronic resources. The findings imply greatly that many users expressed lack of training as the major problem that hinders the utilisation of electronic resources and that students are familiar with electronic resources and also a majority of the respondents' disagree with the statement that students regularly seek online help from the library staff. This indicates that the respondents had expressed lack of training as the major problem in access and utilisation and they really seek online help from the library staff.

**Table 5: Opinion on E-Resources**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students are familiar with e-resources	46%	54%	0	0	0
Lack of training is the major setback for access and utilization of e- resources.	78%	22%	0	0	0
Students usually seek online help from library staff	0	0	2%	68%	30%

## CHALLENGES FACED

Identifying the major challenges that hinder access and utilisation of the use of electronic resources was also an objective of the study. 72% indicated inadequate computers and access points, 80% cited lack of adequate search skill, 78% said lack of appropriate training on access and utilisation of electronic resources, while 43% pointed out that a lot of information is being retrieved is a problem, and only 38% indicated poor network connectivity. In fact inadequate computers and limited access points, inadequate search skills and lack of appropriate training on the utilisation of electronic information resources are not only a challenges at Maasai Mara University but also in other institutions of higher learning in other parts of the world see (Khan, 2016), Okiki (2018) contends that information overload is a contributing factor to low usage of electronic resources.

The table below shows the factors underlying the challenges that students encounter when utilising information resources. The most crucial of the underlying challenges include a Lack of knowledge of search techniques to retrieve information effectively with struggling to locate relevant information 192 (72%), lack of adequate search skills and difficulty in manipulating the databases 214 & 213 (80%). This study revealed that problems in retrieving a lot of information 228 (86%) respondents. This was supported by difficulty in manipulating the databases 214 (80%) of the participants. Respondents' lack skills to adequately use electronic information resources 213 (80%). Majority of the students 192 (72%) agreed that there are predicaments of inadequate computers/access points. while lack of ICT skills, slow internet services/poor network connectivity is the least challenges facing the library users with 10 (37%), 11 (38%) and 114 (43%) respectively. The students are really having challenges in utilisation of information resources in Maasai Mara University Library. The most disturbing of these challenges are a lot of information that is retrieve, difficulty in manipulation of the databases, making it slow in locating the most appropriate information resource. This situation is affecting students in several ways particularly on electronic information resources on their academic pursuit.

**Table 6**

Problem	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate computers/access points	192	72
Struggling to locate relevant information	192	72
Lack of adequate search skills	213	80
Lack of appropriate training on access of e-resources	207	78
Lack of ICT skills	100	37

Problem	Frequency	Percentage
Poor network connectivity	101	38
A lot of information that is retrieved.	228	86
Difficulty in manipulating the databases	214	80
Power outage	114	43

**Table 7: Strategies to Improve Access and Use of E-Resources**

Item Statement	Frequency	Percentage
Increase bandwidth	192	72
Provision of stable power	192	72
Provision of more networked computers	213	80
Organize training	207	78
Increase access to e-databases	187	69
Provide more user-friendly databases	101	38
Computer training to all first year students.	210	79
Practical orientation information literacy skills program	235	88

## Strategies to Improve on E-Resources Utilisation

To elicit the respondent's contribution to the improvement of electronic resources access and utilisation, the following are some of the suggestions that came up.

### Provision of More Networked Computers

It was noted with a lot of concern that there is a shortage of networked computers in the library. The same findings were also found in a study by Haliso (2019) and other studies that investigated information technology challenges in libraries and information centres.

The respondents gave the following comments with regard to the provision of networked computers in the library:

*"Very few computers in the library, it is really difficult time wasting and frustrating waiting to get access of the machines".*

### Lectures to Insist Students to Use E-Resources

The inadequate search skills were cited as one of the major challenges that students face in utilising electronic resources in the MMU Library. The quote below from the respondent supports it.

*“Not finding some of the information that you are looking for on the databases. It can only be improved by lectures giving us assignments that we can find information relating to the topic that they give us. Because they also tell us that we must use the e-books and e-journals from the library data base”.*

The best improvement that have been suggested by the respondent:

*“Through lectures motivating us to use such resources as form of comprehensive information and that regulates us form learning on how to access these materials. As most of them, I never knew they had existed since I have done this survey”.*

### **Library to Do Awareness Campaigns of E-Resources**

The utilisation of library information resources can be improved by doing marketing and awareness campaigns, as quoted by the respondents.

*“The Library should introduce out-reach programmers and vigorous Promotions on the use of electronic resources in order to ensure that electronic information resources are well marketed.*

### **More Training on Search Strategies Techniques and Skills**

Training should continue being provided to library users to further increase the number of effective uses. On the issue of training, the respondents suggested as quoted below:

*“Library orientation and training should be made a compulsory provision to the first year’s student.”*

*“We should be taught about effective search strategies to alleviate the electronic search process.”*

Continuous training of library users on access and use of electronic resources will decrease the number of students who rely on other sources for information and consequently improve on the utilisation of electronic resources at MMU Library.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Challenges in Utilisation of Electronic Information Resources**

Research findings of this study designate that concurrent challenges undergraduate student’s face in their quest

to access electronic resources. According to this study, the results have shown that the respondents are aware of electronic resources, but the access and usage are low as many of the respondents admitted to accessing the resources occasionally. The reason for low usage and access was mainly due to a lot of information that is retrieved, difficulty in manipulation of the databases, making it slow in locating the most appropriate information resource, to lack of adequate search skills, lack of appropriate training on accessing the resources, inadequate computers and finally poor network connectivity. The study shows that users are faced with numerous challenges while trying to access and utilise electronic information resources. This is due to inadequate training from instructional librarians on the best way to access and search the available electronic resources. The study concluded that users experience a variety of challenges like a lot of information that is retrieved, difficulty in manipulation of the databases, making it slow in locating the most appropriate information resource, lack of adequate search skills, lack of appropriate training on accessing the resources, inadequate computers and finally poor network connectivity leading to under-utilisation of electronic information resources at Maasai Mara University.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations are offered:

There is a need for more efforts to improve the extent of access and use of electronic information resources in the institutions studied. This can be done by organising appropriate user education for students for better access and use of the available electronic information resources.

The institutions should provide an adequate number of computer terminals in their libraries. Also, the provision of skilled manpower to facilitate easy access and use of the available electronic information resources is highly desirable.

Appropriate ICT gadgets that can guarantee speed and steadiness internet services are required to address the issue of slow networks in the libraries.

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