

Новая роль университетских библиотек в обеспечении научной коммуникации и исследовательской деятельности: перспективные направления развития библиотеки южноафриканского университета

The New Roles of University Libraries in Supporting Scholarly Communication and Research: a South African University Library perspective

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Миссия университетов заключается в создании и распространении знаний. Научные коммуникации и университетская библиотека играют важную роль в выполнении данной миссии. Университетские библиотеки должны поддерживать обучение, образование и научную деятельность университетов, обеспечивая доступ к информационным ресурсам и их использование как в своем физическом пространстве, так и за его пределами. В докладе рассматривается роль библиотеки Университета Зулулэнда в контексте академического образования в Южно-африканской Республике; дается определение научной коммуникации; анализируется роль Библиотеки в обеспечении научной коммуникации. **Ключевые слова:** научная коммуникация, поддержка научной деятельности, университетские библиотеки, библиотека Университета Зулулэнда.

The mission of universities is to create and disseminate knowledge. Scholarly communication and the university library both play a significant role in enabling universities to achieve this mission. University libraries are expected to support teaching, learning and research by facilitating and providing access to information resources both within and outside its physical boundaries. The paper contextualizes the University of Zululand Library within the South African academic landscape; defines scholarly communication; examines the role of the Library in supporting scholarly communication and concludes by outlining the main issues.

Keywords: scholarly communication, research support, university libraries, University of Zululand Library.

1. Introduction

The increasingly technology and knowledge driven information environment is placing enormous pressure on academic libraries to redefine their roles and services in order to accommodate the needs of the members of the academic community. Academic libraries are adapting to these changes differently because their sizes, budgets, policy, facilities, orientation, needs, users and services are not always the same. Using a largely qualitative approach, this paper accordingly discusses the role of university libraries in supporting scholarly communication in South Africa based on a case study at the University of Zululand, which is one of twenty six public universities in South Africa and among the top 100 universities in Africa based on different university ranking agencies (Thelwall & Kousha, 2015). The paper contextualizes the University of Zululand Library within the South African academic landscape; defines scholarly communication; examines the role of the University of Zululand Library in supporting scholarly communication, largely through participant observation; and concludes by outlining the main issues, implications and limitations, and proposing recommendations.

2. Background and context

A recent report on libraries in South Africa (Satgoor, 2015) shows significant positive developments among academic libraries in the country. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) seem to be a major catalyst in the development of the libraries and enabling their burgeoning access and use. Notably, university ranking, the role of research, new ways of scholarly communication, and other factors that affect the universities as a whole, also impact on academic libraries (Onyancha, 2015). Traditionally, academic libraries' major role is to support teaching, learning and research. The major standards and guidelines for university libraries in higher education, such as the Association for College and Research

Libraries (ACRL, 2011), identify academic library standards to include: library vision, mission and objectives; teaching and learning, including virtual learning; information resources; ICT resources; access; services; facilities; staff; administration structure; budget; and education and training /information literacy. While all the itemized library standards are important, the libraries increasingly assume new research roles as information access and service spaces keep shifting. Jaguszewski and Williams (2013) acknowledge that, “in today’s environment, libraries often find themselves defining, occupying, and redefining new roles at the same time.”

Considering the latest developments at universities, academic libraries have to review how to continue to effectively provide the necessary support to the university academic community in the new technologically advanced, competitive environment that affects the educational system and academic libraries as well. For instance, Raju and Schoombee (2013) refer to the UNESCO conference on higher education (2009), which talks about the importance of incorporating critical thinking in teaching, learning and research. It seems that there is no specific model with new roles and services which can be uniformly applied to all academic libraries. This has been noticed by Ellis, Rosenblum, Stratton and Ames-Stratton (2014), who reiterate the lack of “best practices or organizational models to follow”. Although the guidelines and standards, such as that of ACRL (2011) and the availability of substantial number of publications (Berrington, 2015; Jaguszewski & Williams, 2013; Pietersen & Raju, 2015; Tise, Raju & Adam, 2015), provide the foundation on which to develop suitable models. Consequently, each academic library has to choose a strategy for providing current, tailor-made facilities, products and services to fit their individual university’s research needs, budgets and priorities.

South Africa has 26 public universities: four universities of technology that focus on vocationally oriented education; six comprehensive universities that offer a combination of academic and vocational diplomas and degrees; and eleven traditional universities that have strong research focus and offer theoretically oriented university degrees.¹ The student numbers range from 400,000 (e.g. the University of South Africa (UNISA), which focuses on distance learning to 135 (such as the newly established Sol Plaatje University). Research activity and productivity depend on the orientation of the university. Most of the universities have Institutional Repositories (OpenDOAR²), with the exception of the two most recently opened universities. The University of Zululand belongs to the comprehensive category of universities with an enrolment of 16,198 students, of whom 1,183 are postgraduate students (honors, masters and doctorate). UNIZULU has four faculties: Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Commerce, Administration & Law, and Faculty of Science & Agriculture. The university’s two libraries are located in KwaDlangezwa, which is the main campus, and Richards Bay, which is 40 Km away from the main campus. Traditionally the library enables collection development, library orientation, information search and retrieval, training on the use of a specific database when requested by an individual, and individual help on different topics. Information librarians (professionally qualified librarians, normally with postgraduate qualifications such as a Master’s degree) provide these services to their relevant departments.

During the last two and half years, the library, in partnership with the Research Office (research directorate under the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation), shifted its focus to research and scholarly communication support, largely through research awareness, library user training, and education through workshops for both undergraduate and postgraduate students and academic staff. Before discussing the new roles of the UNIZULU Library, the scholarly communication would be unpacked in the next section to provide a background of the library services.

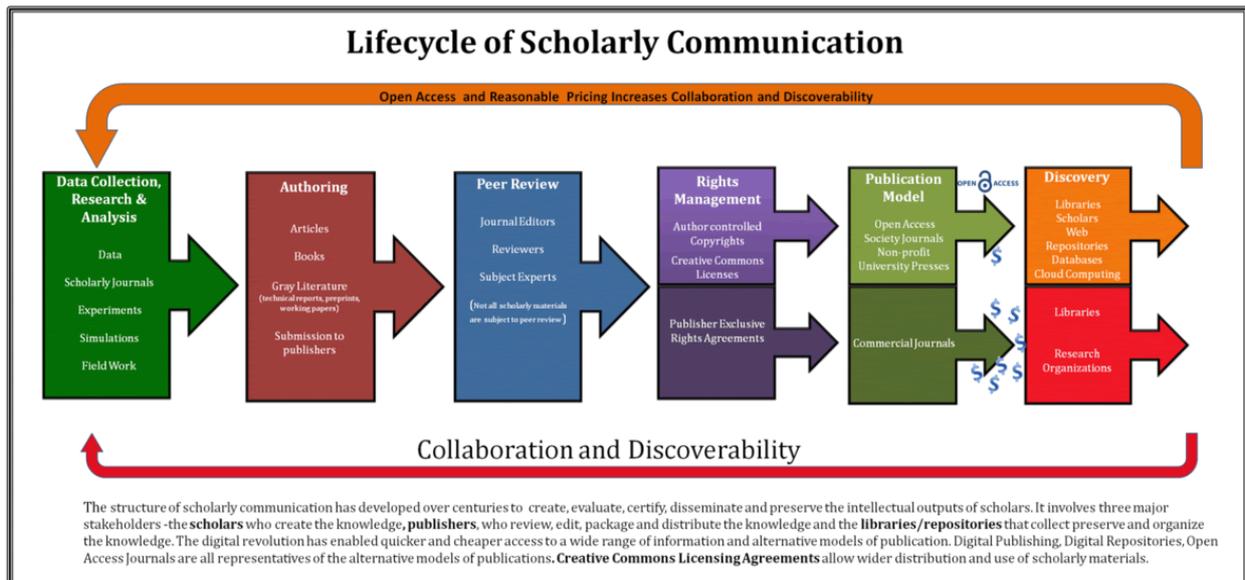
3. Scholarly communication

Scholarly communication has been part and parcel of the academic community for centuries, with significant changes in the communication whenever a new technology was introduced, such as printing, photography, broadcasting, telephony, computing, World Wide Web (WWW)/ Internet, mobile and social

¹ <http://businesstech.co.za/news/general/101412/here-are-south-africas-26-universities/>

² <http://www.opendoar.org/>

media technologies. Scholarly communication is widely defined as “the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use. The system includes both formal means of communication, such as publication in peer-reviewed journals, and informal channels, such as electronic listservs” (<http://www.arl.org/focus-areas/scholarly-communication#.VXkWy03lrIU>). It involves research and knowledge creation; knowledge processing (documentation, recording, digital curation), and knowledge dissemination and sharing (publication and communication). Intellectual property rights such as copyright and research publication quality assurance largely by peer review but also citation/impact analysis where the library plays major roles. The lifecycle of scholarly communication is important for understanding the communication processes:



(<http://www.lib.washington.edu/scholpub/images/oaweeek2011/oaweeklifecycle.png/view>).

Scholarly publication and communication channels include: self-archiving (blogs and websites); researchers’ social media (e.g. Research Gate, Academia.edu); Institutional Repositories (IR); conferences, seminars and workshops (CSW); Open Access Repositories; digital scholarship; publishing/e-publishing (books, articles, journals); knowledge sharing/research collaboration; community of practice/networks; e-science/ e-research (Tenopir, Sandusky, Allard & Birch, 2014). Scholarly communication, as noted by Ocholla (2011) and Rotich (2011), is important in many ways. It enables education/enlightenment and gratification; encourages community of practice/ networking and incentive; prevents others from taking credit for one’s work or using one’s materials; enables capacity building or research human resource development; encourages learning higher standards of writing; contributes to knowledge; enables knowledge and information sharing; supports justification for funding by an individual, department or institution; supports tenure - “publish or perish”; enables career progression and recognition/ visibility/ or awards such as the Nobel prize; supports propriety/ ownership of intellectual property; and provides an opportunity for scholars to support culture and industry within their countries and institutions and raise the status and profile of their scholarly communities. New developments in electronic publishing, self-archiving, institutional repositories and Open Access have contributed significantly to the development of scholarly communication (BOAI, 2002; Ocholla, 2011). Academic libraries (Ocholla, Ocholla & Onyan-cha, 2013) increasingly support self-archiving, open access and institutional repositories, metrics (harvesting data from Scopus, TR-WoS, Google Scholar, SciVal (Elsevier’s tool to analyze and benchmark the world of research)), InCites (a customized, citation-based research evaluation tool on the Web that enables one to analyze institutional productivity and benchmark your output) and researcher’s social media (Onyan-cha, 2015; Thelwall & Kousha, 2015) for scholarly communication. The next section will

demonstrate the link between scholarly and research support with ongoing activities at the UNIZULU Library.

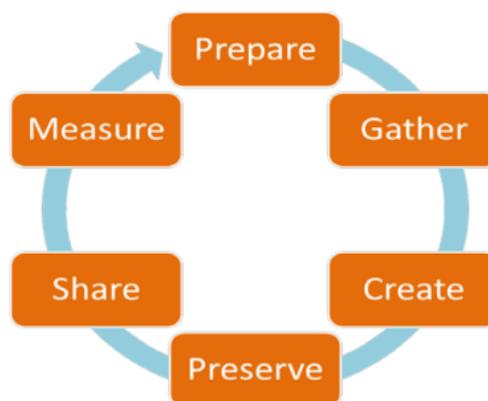
4. The changing role of academic libraries: the UNIZULU approach

Information access patterns and library spaces and services are changing rapidly, and with Internet expansion, libraries have gained strong competitors. A large number of academic communities still prefer using ‘Google’ to library subscribed databases for information access. Tise, Raju and Adam (2015) found “that searching for information is being done increasingly by the researchers themselves, rather than information professionals”. The implication is that librarians have to encourage this process, but also provide enough support and training to the researchers that borders on information literacy, which has been recently defined as “the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning” (ACRL, 2015).

At the UNIZULU Library, information librarians provide information services to their relevant departments to support teaching, learning and research. Previously, reaching all library patrons was very challenging (especially with only a few Information librarians), and new ways of delivering services had to be explored. Priority was given to research support due to the university’s goals to increase research productivity. A preliminary study was done by a group of information librarians to sample UNIZULU’s researchers and establish, among other factors, how much they know about the library facilities, services and resources; for what purposes they use the library; and how they view the library’s role in the research cycle. A questionnaire was distributed and the findings showed that: most of the researchers were not aware of the new library spaces (such as the Research Commons) and services, especially research support at the UNIZULU Library; academics were mostly involved with individual research, followed by the supervision of Master’s and PhD students; and most of the academics rated the library as very important and helpful. The study helped to provide an insight into the library’s status, identify gaps in communication and services, and offer a strategy on how to improve the awareness of research support.

For Tise, Raju and Adam (2015), “the need for strategically planned and applied research support services becomes ever more crucial.” Information librarians can offer competitive services to researchers, especially if they are provided with the necessary training, as also acknowledged in Namuleme and Kanzira (2015) recent study. It is extremely important for librarians to understand the research lifecycle as demonstrated in Figure 1 (Schoonbee, 2013) in order to support it.

Figure 1: Research life cycle (Schoonbee 2013: 15)



Bearing this in mind, UNIZULU Information librarians have developed a range of carefully selected training topics or themes for workshops which could help to reach the research community in a quick, strategically organized and effective way. The topics and themes consist of a mix of previously offered (now revised) and new research issues covering scholarly communications and research. As a relatively small institution with only 1200 postgraduate students and about 360 academics, minority (30%) have

their research output indexed in SCOPUS and TR=WoS databases (Ocholla, Mostert & Rotich, 2016) that are popular for indexing quality research. Information librarians selected the topics which are suitable for UNIZULU researchers and this selection keeps on changing according to client needs and available resources. The series of workshops include but are not limited to the following: i) Introduction to library facilities, services and resources; ii) Plagiarism; iii) Turnitin; iv) Advanced search techniques for e-resources; v) Referencing management tools (Endnote or Mendeley); vi) e-TDs & IRs; vii) Social networks for researchers; viii) Publishing, including OA and copyright; ix) Visibility, including research or author impact and researcher ID; and x) Research funding. The topics can be grouped to suit users' needs and new areas are added on request.

This system helps librarians to not only deliver services at a particular stage of a researcher's study, but also to measure the service provided with valuable feedback through evaluation. It is worth noting that this is one of the services through which researchers and librarians develop trust and bring partnerships and engagement into the research process, as also acknowledged by Berrington (2015).

Managing workshops

The UNIZULU Library only has one computer training lab which accommodates 30 people. Due to the high volume of requests for training, information librarians have to pre-book the venue.

They use Google platform with Gmail and other applications for their internal communication that enables access to all presentations, workshop materials, meetings' minutes, and other shared important information. On the Google drive, the librarians have an Excel file which mirrors the activities related to the requested training workshops. The file is constantly updated by all the information librarians involved and provides all the necessary details, such as who requested training, which department, when, time, for what level (Hon, Master's, PhD), topic, number of attendees, venue, and librarian responsible for the training. When it is done, the file is updated by the librarian (with 'done'). The value of this file is extremely important, especially for statistical, planning and report writing purposes. Analyzing the file shows which information librarian is the most active, which department uses library services the most, which workshop is the most popular, how many post graduates or academics were trained, what are the numbers, which month is the busiest, etc. This statistical data can be used for planning purposes, lobbying for expansion (e.g. better equipped and bigger computer lab), library reports, presentations, reports for faculty board meetings, and other matters. It helps information librarians measure the volume of work they are doing in terms of training. Aside from that, for each group, there is a register and evaluation form with a short questionnaire about the workshop, presentation, facilitator's knowledge, facilities used, and suggestions. The feedback from the users is used to monitor the quality of the service offered.

New library spaces

Dedicated library spaces for researchers are identified as a major factor in supporting research by the library (Namuleme & Kanzira, 2015; Raju & Schoombee, 2013). The UNIZULU Library has created two new modern library spaces for researches and postgraduate students: Info Cellar and the Research Commons. The Info Cellar provides a comfortable and convenient environment for learning and research for all UNIZULU Library users. It offers a variety of library services, including the Journals Section and Inter Library Loans (ILL), which is for materials available at other higher education institutions' libraries, and other specialized libraries. ILL is available for postgraduate students and academic staff only.

The second library space is the Research Commons, which is a scholarly common room reserved exclusively for senior postgraduate students (Master's and Doctoral levels) and academic researchers. It offers formal and informal work spaces (users need to bring their own laptops and/or other devices), a seminar/consultation room, tea/coffee facilities (self-service), Wi-Fi, and is wheelchair accessible and will soon be open 24/7. Professional librarian is available (office hours) for research consultations onsite. The librarian also facilitates workshops (by arrangement) and information discovery, and provides advice on research publications (including open access publishing), metric/performance evaluation reports (e.g. Author Impact Factor), researcher ID/Profiling, and reference management tools.

New partnerships and collaborations

The importance of collaboration and partnerships between the library and other stakeholders cannot be overstated (Berrington, 2015; Jaguszewski & Williams, 2013; Namuleme & Kanzira, 2015; Shore & Shearer, 2015). Tise, Raju and Adam (2015) advice that in order “for the library to be embedded in the new higher education landscape, it has to ensure that its proactive services will command a partnership relationship as opposed to a reactive and ‘peripheral support service’ relationship”. Shumaker (2012) defines ‘embedded librarianship’ as “a distinctive innovation that moves the librarians out of libraries and creates a new model of library and information work. It emphasizes the importance of forming a strong working relationship between the librarian and a group or team of people who need the librarian’s information expertise.” These partnerships do not happen overnight. Academic librarians need to be assertive, creative and knowledgeable; demonstrate high professionalism; show their willingness and flexibility to provide assistance; deliver expert information services; and work very hard to win the trust of other parties.

It is not an easy path, but at the same time it’s exciting and rewarding too!

So who are the UNIZULU Library partners?

Thus far, the UNIZULU Library’s partners include the Research and Innovations office, the Faculties, Centre for Teaching and Learning, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) department. The UNIZULU Library has established a very productive working partnership with the Research and Innovations office. Meetings, events organization, participation in workshops (e.g. strengthening Doctoral supervision, Writers’ Retreat workshops) are some of the areas of collaboration. One of the more exciting events organized by the Research and Innovations office and the library is a ‘Research Awareness Month’. The benefit of hosting this important event at the library is evident: librarians can showcase the facilities (such as the Research Commons), organize library and faculty displays, provide library training workshops, facilitate service providers’ presentations (e.g. Ebsco, Elsevier, WWIS, etc.), and prepare and design marketing materials (e.g. posters, programs, bookmarks). Library presentations on research support are included in the program for postgraduate induction, giving the opportunity for the information librarians to be introduced to the postgraduate students. The library marketing materials (library guides, bookmarks with librarians’ contact details and the library workshops) are distributed to all the participants.

The Faculties prepare their own detailed training program for the postgraduate students (after the university induction), which lasts for several months and covers a wide range of topics. The library is actively involved by facilitating a number of the workshops, providing marketing and publicity through the social media and library displays.

Some of the effective training sessions for researchers and postgraduate students were organized in collaboration with the library, its service providers (e.g. WWIS, Elsevier, etc.), Research and Innovations office on metrics, publishing for the new authors, etc. The Centre for Teaching and Learning includes information librarians to inductions of new academics, to make detailed library presentations on library related services. The UNIZULU Library works closely with the ICT department on issues concerning the library system, DSpace, remote access to library e-resources, Turnitin, and other matters. With new plans on Research Data Management (RDM), there is a need to strengthen partnership with ICT. All of this points to the fact that library issues have to be prioritized and fully integrated into institutional functions and strategic planning. The library in turn should look for opportunities and have a flexible attitude in providing services and pursue new partnerships and collaborations.

What are the new skills Information librarians obtained during this process?

According to Raju and Schoombie (2013), “the shift in the role of the librarian is from ...[that of] supporter of the research process to a contributor to the process.” It is recognised that librarians would provide higher quality services, understand the scholarly community better, and be more respected within

the academic community if they conducted research and published (Ocholla, Ocholla & Onyancha, 2012; Ocholla, Ocholla & Onyancha, 2013).

As a testament to the rapidly changing information and technological environment, there are two generations of librarians (experienced and inexperienced) at UNIZULU with a different set of knowledge and skills. This requires supporting one another through in-house training and knowledge sharing in a teamwork environment to achieve the main goals. According to Berrington (2015), “while the new skills and knowledge had to be acquired...the transfer and adoption of existing core behavioral competencies was fundamental to the success...” Likewise Pasipamire (2015) found in her study, that “workshops, informal engagements and personal development initiatives were the most popular to obtain new skills, not to mention seminars, conferences and self-training”. Unfortunately, engaging in research was the least popular method.

At UNIZULU, the information librarians performed their own knowledge audit to map those with advanced skills/knowledge, ranging from social media to bibliometrics, open access or referencing tools for knowledge sharing. Despite the challenges, most of the librarians were very enthusiastic about the new roles of the library and information services. The librarians had to be honest with themselves and identify the gaps in their knowledge through the same methods identified by Pasipamire (2015) and learn multi-skilling. The focus was then to familiarize, test and handle a wide range of the newly selected research topics. Some librarians could advance faster and others took their time, but all the information librarians were trying to embrace the new roles and functions. Looking at 2016’s information librarian training needs, it is very clear that more training is required and this varies from presentation skills and Microsoft Office, to digital curation, Research Data Management (RDM) and Learning Management System (LMS). At present, the librarians at UNIZULU are confident, knowledgeable and proactive, and provide quality services, organize and coordinate library events, facilitate workshops, prepare marketing materials, use social media, and provide individual consultation or library instruction, but there are still many areas which need to be explored and learned, especially with respect to the collection, organization and dissemination of research data. The main setbacks to librarians’ development seem to correlate with Pasipamire (2015) findings, that is funding issues; lack of university policies for non-teaching staff; self-development; lack of research support skills and knowledge; and lack of exposure to appropriate technologies.

Information librarians are in the process of exploring ways of using UNIZULU’s LMS Moodle to maximize its potential, especially in marketing, communication and the promotion of e-resources. LMS would help information librarians to reach and communicate with library clients off campus.

5. Conclusions

UNIZULU academic community (researchers and postgraduate students) value the library and appreciate newly introduced information services. To sustain a provision of current research support services and activities, it is important to:

- Strengthen the partnerships between the Research and Innovation Office, Research Deans, Centre for Teaching and Learning, postgraduate students and the library to achieve the institution’s research productivity goals
- Revise the library’s organizational structure
- Establish a special unit (with senior librarians, minimum requirement being a Master’s degree) dedicated to research support only
- Organize continuous training for trainers (information librarians)
- Upgrade the ‘Research commons’
- Encourage librarians to conduct research and publish (Ocholla, Ocholla and Onyancha 2012; 2013)
- Empower library staff to attend and present at conferences/workshops

- Enable continuous support, recognition, partnership and collaboration from all stakeholders
- Provide relevant technological tools
- Advise library schools to update the library science curriculum to keep up with the changes

The UNIZULU library needs to continue to be at the center of teaching, learning and research by providing novel spaces and services to students and researchers, and understanding, supporting, partnering and collaborating with all stakeholders. This will positively contribute towards the institution's research productivity and the quality of UNIZULU graduates in general.

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