

Internet Use by Students of the University of Dar es Salaam

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Abstract:

This paper is based on a Master's dissertation whose objective was to determine the purpose for which students of the University of Dar es Salaam use the Internet (see www.udsm.ac.tz/). It was to determine if students were using the Internet for academic purposes. The study also investigated the level of students' access to the Internet, as well as the problems students faced in Internet use. The web site has specific information on faculties, institutes, and departments, including training programmes. The Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) has been installed at the Main Campus and UCLAS libraries, replacing the manual card catalogues. The OPAC has simple and advanced search options, using ADLID software. Plans are underway to convert the manual catalogue of MUCHS library into an online catalogue. The survey method was used as the basic method for data collection, employing the questionnaire and the interview. Participant observation and focus group discussion are other methods used. The study revealed that the level of students' access to the Internet was low, and the major reason was that at the time of the study, computers with Internet facilities were inadequate. The findings also revealed that the students who had access to the Internet were not using it effectively. They used it mainly for communication with friends and relatives more than for academic purposes. The cause of this was found to be lack of skills required for effective use of the internet. The study recommends the provision of more computers with Internet facilities, increasing Internet access speed, as well as providing more chances of training in Internet use.

Keywords:

Internet, Learning, Students