

The use of online public access catalogue (OPAC) at university of Arusha library

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The purpose of this study was to assess the use of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) in library services. The study also aimed at assessing the status of OPAC facilities, assessing the extent to which users are using OPAC, identifying factors that deter effective use of OPAC, as well as soliciting views on measures to improve effective use of OPAC at University of Arusha Library. Data were collected through questionnaires, face to face interview and observation.

Findings revealed that the number of OPAC computers terminals available was inadequate; OPAC was accessed within University Wireless Network and majority of respondents accessed OPAC within library premises. However, the findings indicate that OPAC was not effectively working due to slow connection and instability of electricity.

With regards to the extent of OPAC use, the findings revealed that there is low use of OPAC; sometimes students access library materials by browsing them directly from the shelves and by consulting librarians and colleagues.

With regard to challenges faced in using OPAC, the findings revealed the following challenges: shortage of OPAC computers, lack of orientation from library staff; new relevant bibliographic information in OPAC is not added on time; instability of electricity and slow internet connection. The study recommends, among others, provision of more OPAC computers, periodic information literacy training for students, introduction of information literacy compulsory course across the curriculum, improvement of internet speed and provision of standby generator in the library.