

DRAFT

**ASC-CODESRIA Conference: Bridging the North-South Divide in Scholarly Communication on Africa. Threats and Opportunities in the Digital Era**

**Kenniscentrum Leiden, Archimedesweg 31, 2333 CM Leiden, The Netherlands**

**Rapporteur: Marian Smit, ASC**

<b>Session 4:</b>	<b>The effects of ICTs on scholarly communication</b>
<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Prof. Dr. A.J. Dietz, Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies, University of Amsterdam</b>
<b>Keynote speech</b>	<b>Mr Olivier Sagna, L'Ecole des Bibliothécaires Archivistes et Documentalistes, EBAD/UCAD, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar</b>
<b>Date and time</b>	<b>Friday 8 September 9.00-12.00</b>
<b>Rules of procedure:</b>	<b>Limited time for questions and debate after the presentation of each paper</b>

**9.00-10.00 Keynote speech by Mr Olivier Sagna, L'Ecole des Bibliothécaires Archivistes et Documentalistes EBAD/UCAD, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar**

Questions and comments:

- A participant remarks that Africa is afraid to leave paper and replace it with E-journals because of poor infrastructure. In many places electricity is not always available. Sagna answers that this fear is understandable, that infrastructure is only one of many difficulties ICT development in Africa faces but this should not stop Africans from joining the digital revolution because it will bring Africa many benefits too.
- Another participant asks what software should be used for the African market. Sagna replies that software made especially for Africa is preferable.
- A participant stresses the importance of the following issues:
  - The awareness process, especially within circles of senior staff members and management. They must be trained.
  - Training of all kinds of people.
  - Collaboration and partnership. Within faculties and within universities.
- A participant remarks that Olivier Sagna should not compare Africa with developed countries, by saying “nothing happens”. “Africa goes at its own speed”, says the participant. Sagna answers that he did not say that “nothing happens”. And that he does not agree that Africa should go at its own speed (i.e. slowly). Africa can move fast, look at our telecommunications developments, these are moving very fast. We do not have to do things small. Applause!

**10.00-12.00 The effects of ICTs on scholarly communication**

Five papers were presented during the fourth session:

**1. Christine W. Kanyengo, University of Zambia Medical Library.**

**Paper: Managing digital information resources in Africa: Preserving the integrity of scholarship**

Questions and comments:

- A participant stresses the importance of cooperation, for instance within INASP.
- A participant remarks that electronic subscriptions have their advantages because books fall apart and get stolen.
- Ms Kanyengo replies that e-journal subscriptions are very expensive.
- Another participant joins the discussion by pointing to the many projects that make e-journals low cost and available for the African market.
- Ms Kanyengo says she is not very enthusiastic about these projects because they are temporary and not for everybody. And in the long run they are not a solution.
- Another participant says that he knows several institutes that make use of these projects and benefit from them.
- The chairman brings in the suggestion of letting Codesria look at several of these free/low cost e-journal projects and putting the results on the website.

**2. Diston Chiweza, University of Malawi**

**Paper: The potential for virtual library services to promote teaching and research and reduce the digital divide: A case study of the University of Malawi**

Questions and comments:

- A participant remarks that training users is also very important. Chiweza agrees.
- A participant asks why Chiweze compares Malawi with Australia? Chiweza replies that it is for practical reasons. He lived in Malawi and also lived in Australia.

**3. Miriam Conteh-Morgan, Ohio State University Library**

**Paper: Weaving other Anansi webs: Developing the Electronic Literary Map of Africa**

Questions and comments:

- A participant brings up the issue of language: shouldn't African literature in Africa be also for Africa? Shouldn't things also be published in African languages? Conteh-Morgan replies that this is an issue of money: the market for literature in African languages is too small to make it profitable.
- A participant asks, about African literature: what is considered African? Conteh-Morgan answers that it is difficult to give an answer to this question because of the diaspora.

**4. George Shibanda, University College Librarian, Western University College of Science & Technology, Kakamega. Kenya**

**Paper: Enhancing e-journal use in Kenyan universities**

Questions and comments:

- A participant stresses the importance of doing further research on the topic: what do African universities really want from the Internet?
- A participant remarks that it will take years of training! Shibanda agrees that training is very important.
- A participant remarks that especially end-user training is important. He suggests using library students to train other students.

## **5. Sofiane Bouhdiba, l'Université Numérique Tnisiene**

### **A l'ère du sommet mondial des sciences de l'information. Mythe ou réalité?**

Questions and comments:

- A participant asks if all material for lessons is available online? Bouhdiba answers: no, only part of it.
- A participant asks: what are the costs for students? Bouhdiba answers that it is almost free, that means 100 dinar, about €60.
- A participant remarks that in Senegal a lot of students fail and asks what the experience is with this new university. Bouhdiba replies that is too early to say: it has just started, we do not have statistics about students failing.
- A participant asks if, considering the rise of a new kind of unemployment – unemployment among university graduates – it will be easy for them to find a job after graduating from this university,. Bouhdiba answers that most people who go to this university already have a job. For instance, many civil servants go to this university to get better jobs.

## **Chair: Prof. Dr. A.J. Dietz, Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies, University of Amsterdam**

### **Summary of the day:**

- There is the need for a policy framework at an African level.
- Each university should have its own plan and ICT policy.
- Be aware of digital archival software. It is too early for standardization.
- We need coordination. Let's share our experiences. We can do this for example in a regional body like Codesria.
- Cost effectiveness. E-journals can be cheap, free or subsidized. What are the possibilities? Codesria could play a role here.
- About local publishing in Africa. Heinemann is not local. Local publishing is a mirage. Use mixed strategies. There are various global players.
- E-infrastructure *does* improve access. It gives the opportunity to compare research. Go and look how other universities do it.
- Access to material changes. Users change. Young users use free materials. Google is dominant: so what? Use it.
- What is the role of librarians? At what level should they give training?
- Many problems. But it is a start of best practice. Outside academia there is sometimes much more innovation. NGOs, the military. Try to find out how they manage.
- Emergence of development groups. Strong virtual communities. Join them. Present your results in these communities.

- In NGOs and the World Bank, open space writing is being used more and more. During the development of a piece of work it can already be published. Why not publish it on your own website? Forget about publishing in official channels. Beat ISI!