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ICADLA-2

Developing Knowledge for Economic Advancement in Africa
Proposals for Collaborative Projects and Programmes

University of the Witwatersrand
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Supporting African Digital Library Projects: Experiences from the Field

by
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Outline Of Presentation

- Background
- Formation of Support Network
- Projects
- From SAGSN to ADLSN
- Partnerships
- Support Activities
- Challenges
- Recommendations
- Conclusion

Background

What is a Digital Library?

A digital library (DL) is "an organised collection of information, a focused collection of digital objects, including text, video, and audio, along with methods for access and retrieval, and for selection, organisation, and maintenance of the collection“ (Witten and Bainbridge, 2003)

Background

Digital Library Software: Greenstone

Greenstone is an open source suite of software for building and distributing digital library collections (New Zealand Digital Library Project, n.d.)

Formation Of Support Network

In 2004 a Greenstone Support Organisation for Africa (GSOA) was conceptualised (Dynal Patel) with these phases:

Phase One
A comprehensive feasibility study with the support of an advisory panel of African specialists (study: Peters, 2006)

Phase Two
Preparing facilities and resources

Phase Three
Launch of services, start of monitoring, reaching sustainability

Phase 2 and 3: externally funded projects

- Pilot Project (2007 - 2008)
  - Southern African countries
- 2009 - 2010 Project
  - Included countries from other regions
- External funding from the US
- EIFL FOSS as executing agency
- All coordination through Regional Coordinator

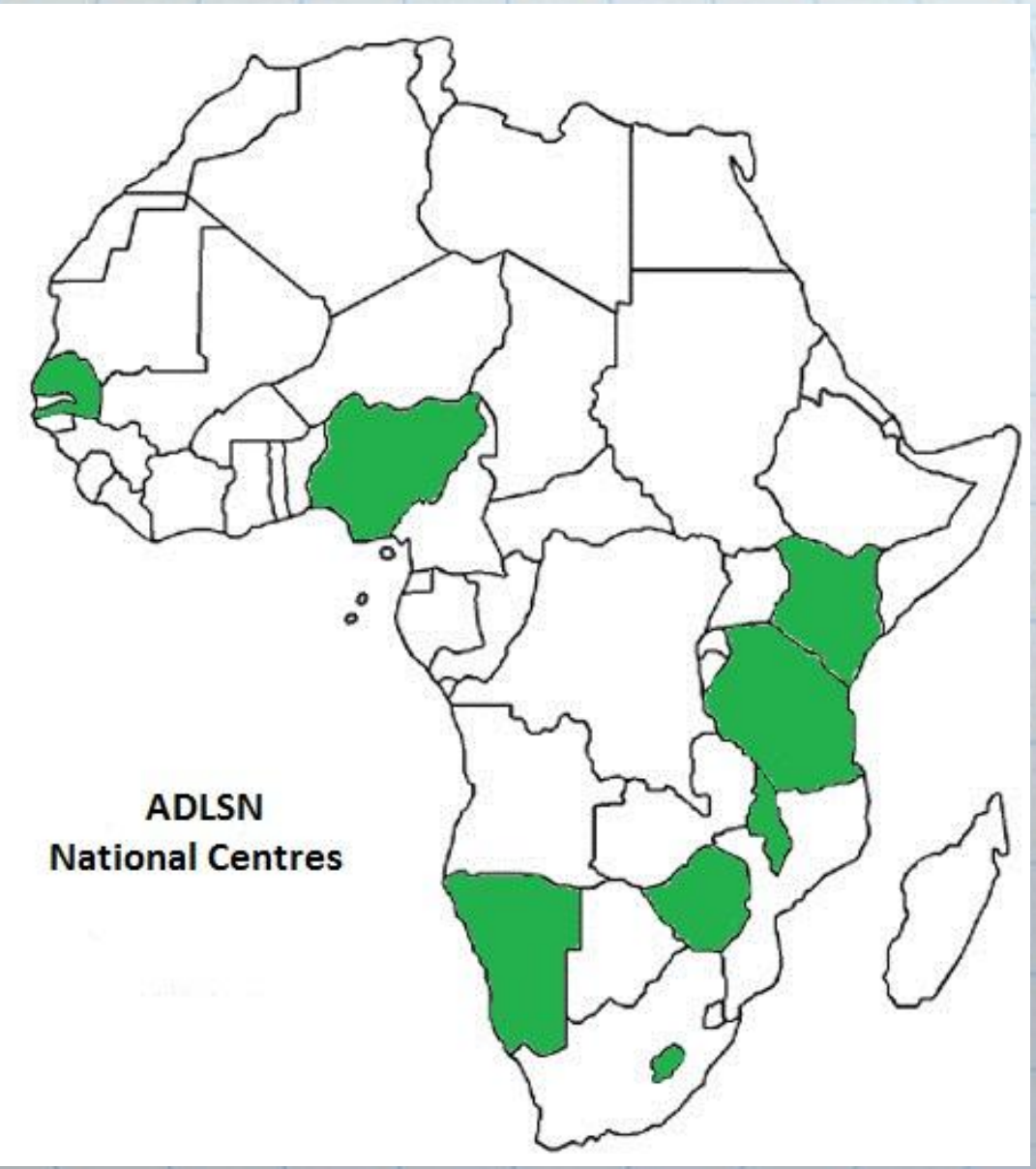
ADLSN National Centres

Senegal

Nigeria

Namibia

Lesotho



Kenya

Tanzania

Malawi

Zimbabwe

The Cascading Principle…

Whereby National Centres draw trainees from neighbouring countries including Botswana, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Swaziland, Uganda and Zambia, who are in turn candidates to start their own National Centres

The 2009-2010 project added these numbers of specialists trained by in the use of Greenstone:

Ethiopia	1
Kenya	35
Lesotho	6
Malawi	10
Mali	1
Nigeria	44
Senegal	23
Tanzania	55
Uganda	1
Zimbabwe	39
10 countries	215 new specialists

In 2009 – 2010 as a result of training and follow-up support through the National Centres

Over 65 collections have been created containing approximately 20,000 items of all types, including conference and seminar papers, research reports, student projects and theses, past examination papers, archival materials and multimedia.

See: http://www.adlsn.org/results

From SAGSN To ADLSN

Vision
To be a leading network in the development of digital content in Africa

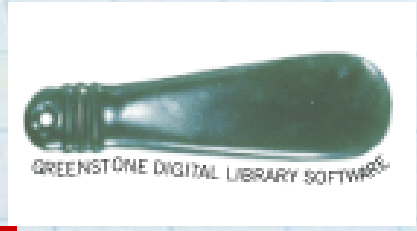
Mission
To facilitate access to local digital content in Africa by means of open source software

ADLSN Key Strategic Objectives

- Extending the network to other countries in Africa
- Continued promotion of digital collections development
- Providing technical support for open source digital library (and related) applications as tools to build collections.
- Giving advice on funding opportunities, sustainability, and best practices in managing digital libraries.

Partnerships

- Greenstone Community
- University of Waikato
- eIFL
- UNESCO
- KIT
- IR-Africa











Support Through Training

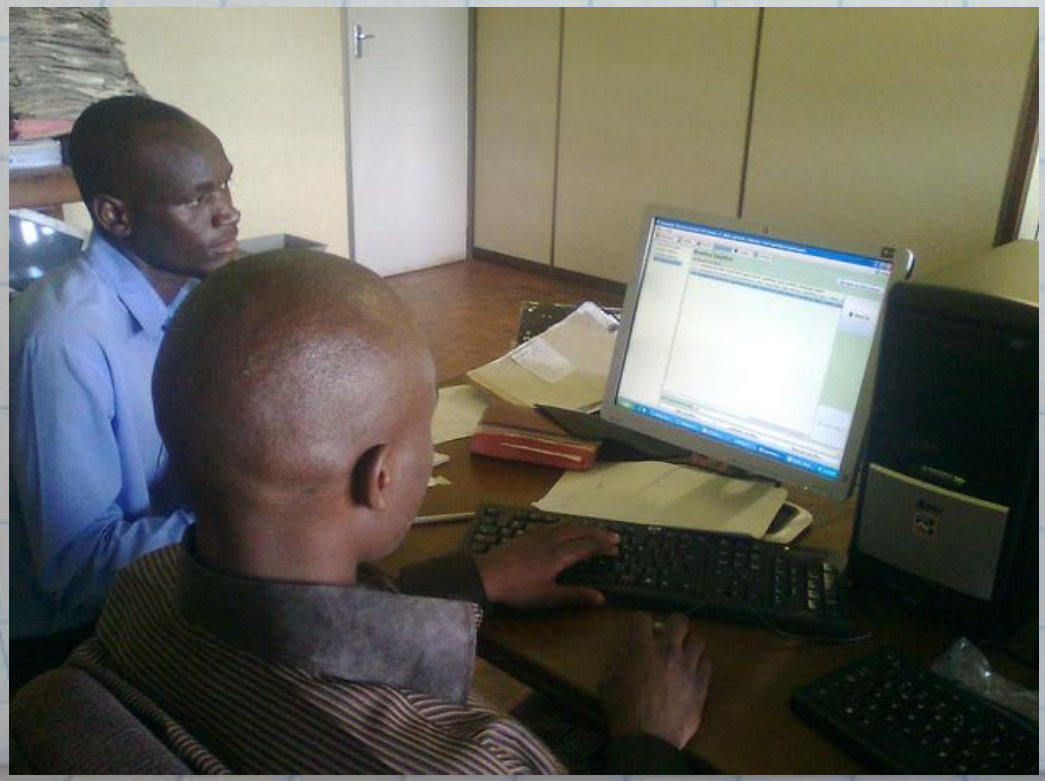
- Workshops
  - Formats
  - Duration
  - Participant mix
- Ad hoc Training
- Internships

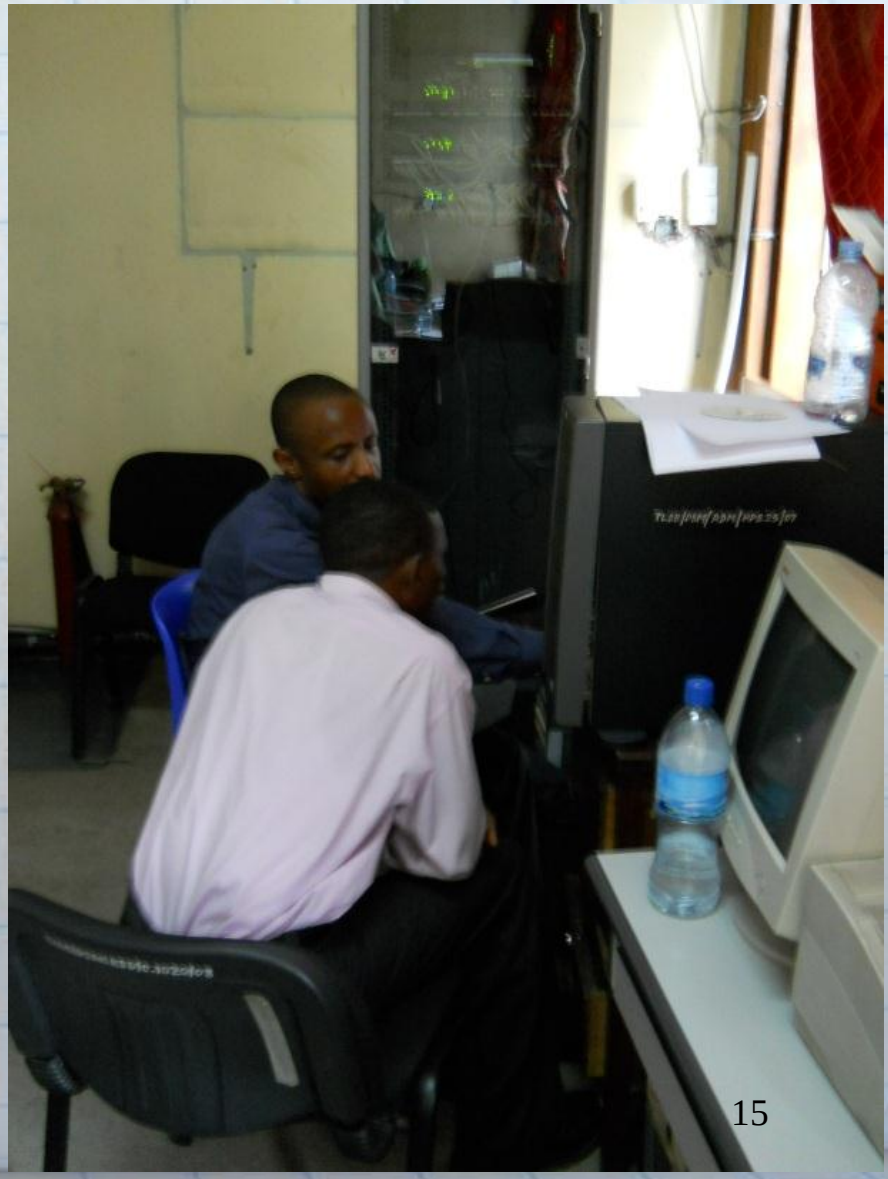




Other Support Activities

- Site visits
- Mailing List
- Chat
- Telephone





Challenges

- Choosing between applications
  - Choice Matrix
- Lack of Technical Infrastructure
  - Sharing of equipment, e.g., scanners
- Low Technical Skills Levels
  - Workshop participant mix, internships
- Low Skills Levels Amongst Information Professionals
  - LIS Curricula, e.g. SLADS
- Hosting
- Copyright issues
- Sustainability

Recommendations

- Programmes should be demand-driven, results-oriented, starting with advocacy targeting top management and policy makers in participating institutions.
- Projects should include provision of collaborative hosting solutions to ensure global access to African knowledge produced in local digital libraries.

Recommendations (continued)

- Training initiatives should target the right people
- Library schools must be engaged and encouraged to align their curricula to incorporate emerging technologies.

Conclusion

- In order to ensure success, DL projects need top management support and institutional commitment

Thank You!

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For more information...

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http://www.adlsn.org

References

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