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DIGITIZATION OF ARCHIVAL RECORDS: THE KENYA NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND DOCUMENTATION SERVICE EXPERIENCE. PPT

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About the author

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Abstract

Background

- The Kenya National Archives was established in 1965 by an Act of Parliament to provide custody to public and private records of enduring value, among other functions.
- Some information resources at the Kenya National Archives were created as early as the 17th century.
- Some of these have deteriorated due to environmental, biological, and human factors, among other hazards.
- This underlines the need for long-term availability of such resources.

- This paper is a sojourn in the digitization endeavours at the Kenya National Archives. Showing;
  - What has been done, in the four-phase attempt to digitize over 680 million pages of records
  - Challenges experienced, particularly those of inadequate human capital and financial resources, among others.

Digital Information Centres: An overview

- A digital information centre is an information facility in which collections are managed and accessed electronically.
- The digital content may be stored and accessed locally or remotely via computer networks
- Digital resources have completely changed the mode of information management and access.

Requirements for a digital information service

- **Technical infrastructure**
  - High-speed local networks and fast connections to the internet
  - Relational databases that support a variety of digital formats
  - Electronic document management functions that will aid in the overall management of digital resources
  - Hardware: desktop computers, hard discs, UPS, printers, scanners etc
  - A variety of servers, such as Web and FTP servers

- **Trained staff**

Tennant (2006) asserts,

"…….We need people who are not afraid of jettisoning traditional activities in favor of new ones. We must have people who can learn constantly, foster change, and create new kinds of collections and services … we must train, support and encourage them."

- **Digital Software**

  Acquire software that can meet requirements, If not,

  - customize the software to meet your needs;
  - find a different piece of software.

Building a digital collection

- This entails
  - Digitization i.e. converting paper and other media in existing collections to digital form;
  - Acquisition of “born digital”, i.e., original digital works such as electronic books, journals, and data sets created by publishers and scholars;
  - Access to external materials through the internet (libraries without walls).

Why digital Information centres?

Among other benefits:

- Multiple access to information;
- Resource sharing;
- Access;
- Storage/ space;
- Enhanced information retrieval.

Note: KNA&ADS cannot be measured against these advantages.

Digitizing Records at KNA&DS

- **Goal:** To digitally preserve content and context of archival records and other endangered publications for purposes of preservation, access and dissemination.
- **Objectives:**
  - Develop institutional digital information infrastructure to ensure preservation and longevity of archival information resources

……..objectives

- Develop online *Record Search* databases where researchers are able to submit requests for records.
- Offer multiple, faster and cheaper access to resources, reference processes, and resource sharing.

Justification for the project:

- The core function of any archival institution is to ensure long-term preservation of valuable records for posterity and make them available for use.
- However, the KNA&DS has been limited and users have had to:
  - visit the Search room at the Kenya National Archives;
  - hire Research Assistants to do research on their behalf;
  - request and pay for reprographic services and postage.

- Wait patiently until information is retrieved and delivered.
- The aim of this digitization project is therefore to primarily offer users faster and cheaper access.

Methodology

- Pre-digitization, digitization, metadata capture, post-digitization and finally

  M & E.

At KNA&DS, the following issues were considered:

- **Adequate Staff**
- **Acquisition of equipment for digitization**;
  - Computer hardware and software
  - Storage facilities
  - Scanners (50)
- **Selection of information materials**

- **Baseline Survey (Pre-digitization stage)**

  The following is the summary of the state of records:

  - Fragile pages 30%
  - Normal 70%
  - A4 pages 90%
  - Non A4 10%
  - Legibility Good
  - Yellowing 97%

- According to KNA&DS Digitization proposal 2005, the following was the status of Africana publications
  - Total number of publications - 6,884
  - Total number of pages - 2,180,367
  - Average number of pages per publication – 314
  - Mean year of publication – 1945
  - Oldest publication – 1673

- Publications Status Percentage (%)
  - Good – 974, 430 pages 45
  - Good/torn pages – 35 0.5
  - Yellowing 39149p. 1.8
  - Yellowing/ torn 23,682p. 1.1
  - Heavy yellowing 12,631 0.6
  - Heavy yellowing-12631 1.1
- Total number that require attention amounts to 2,160,367 pages.

Process:

- Selection
- Ascertain physical conditions of materials
- Scanning
- Quality Control
- Metadata
- Online Delivery
-

It is worth noting that the process has not gone through all these levels.

Metadata and actual information is not yet online.

Cooperative digitization venture

- KNA&DS partnered with other government organizations in digitization ventures:

  - National Council for Law Reporting (KLR)
  - National Assembly
  - The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Archives (KNDRA).

Challenges of digitization at KNA&DS

- Low internet connectivity
- Low levels of ICT literacy/e-resource use among users
- Information security
- Copyright management
- Preservation
- Metadata

Way forward:

Exporting the digital contents online for access. The KNADS is in the process of building its capacity. This will realize the objectives for which the project was initiated and ensure sustainability. Once access to digitized information is achieved, then we will be there

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Thank you.

Welcome to Nairobi for SCECSAL 2012.