Into the information age: Computerization of the Copperbelt University Library
Ed by: Maurice Chimfwembe Lundu and Charles B. M. Lungu
ISBN 1 902928 10 5 (sb)
Cost: £12.00 (incl. p&p)

This book describes the experience of the Copperbelt University Library and how they went about computerisation. Six present and past library staff at the Copperbelt University, Zambia, document their experience of automating library services, from 1993 to 1999. They worked closely with the advisor to the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), who also wrote the Foreword. All the contributors are well qualified to produce such a work given their profiles at the end of the book.

Expectations raised immediately one reads the title of this book are to establish:

• what steps were followed during the computerisation process;
• what transpired at each stage;
• what hardware and software were used;
• challenges faced in terms of hardware and software limitations, costs and user skills;
• the way forward for Africa i.e., what can we learn from the Copperbelt University Library experience?

The message that is communicated to fellow-librarians and those with an interest in the development of libraries in Africa is presented in nine chapters. An overview of the Copperbelt University Library environment is given, the driving forces towards the decision to automate, the role of donors and how they provided funds and influenced the computerisation process, system design and implementation, maintaining and updating the existing databases, automating the circulation system, stocktaking, and the introduction of electronic information services, plus assessing the whole process, and looking at the future needs of the library. In reading this book one is given the practicalities of how the computerisation process was carried out, including the computerisation of the various modules/functions.

The contributors also present their experiences of the review exercise in the newly computerised environment, how the transition from a manual to an electronic environment was undertaken, and their concluding remarks.

The book addresses the need for librarians to share realities and challenges and how these can be dealt with. Each chapter examines and evaluates stages in the computerisation process, the initial strategies, the procedures for updating of the databases, automating the circulation system, the changes in stocktaking procedures, and the introduction of the e-based information services.

This book is a contrast to library computerisation projects undertaken in the more affluent areas, which differ vastly from what is described in this book. Experiences from an African environment are documented so as to act as a source of reference for other African libraries. Useful references, most of which are from within the region, plus Appendices are also provided, an encouragement for interested readers. Other useful features include the tables with factual data, reflecting the effort by the contributors in producing this kind of work. It is mentioned that there is "no need to reinvent the wheel when computerizing"; however, some of the problems faced by this library are highlighted in the 9th chapter.

The book has been written in such a way that the reader with some knowledge of computerised library systems and its terminology will be able to understand it. However, it might seem daunting to someone who has only worked with manual library systems, or who has not been exposed to computerised library systems.

Lessons to learned in computerisation process include that:

• without external financial assistance, library automation in the African environment is unlikely to happen,
• there is a need to place staff training and development at the heart of library computerisation activities;
• library automation is not a once-off project, but rather a continuous process that needs maintenance and expansion;
• there is need to ensure that adequate funds will be available to maintain the existing system and improve its capabilities in future years;

To a large extent, the reader will learn much through reading this book, but more would definitely be achieved if other libraries in the region could also document their experiences so that readers have a comparative view. The reviewer recommends that library and Information professionals, lecturers and students of library automation in developing countries (the majority of which are in Africa) read this book.

Reviewed by: Dr Joyce Bukirwa Nyumba, Assistant Lecturer, East African School of Library and Information Science, Makerere University, P O Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda
Library funding: Adequate financial support for African university funding. John Willemse
ISBN 1 902928 13 X (sb)
Cost: £6.00 (incl. p&p)

Funding university libraries in the East, Central and Southern Africa (ECS) region, as elsewhere on the continent, has been of great concern to university library administrators, managers and users. The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) took the bull by the horns and decided, "to develop, formulate and finalize guidelines, norms and standards, suitable for practical application by university librarians/libraries." The strategies were to examine and recommend what percentage of the host university budget should go to the library; what percentage of the students’ fees should be apportioned to the library; which income-generating activities would be undertaken by the library; and the system to control university library funds. To study the status quo and establish possible solutions, INASP commissioned Professor John Willemse, a LIS educator, renowned academic library manager, prolific writer and with a long experience of IFLA, particularly the section on university libraries. He undertook a survey of the university libraries in the ECS region from which certain findings were established. Recommendations derived from these findings are fully discussed in the respective chapters of this book.

The theme of the book revolves around the truism that good libraries are essential for good universities and therefore need good funding. The book first reviews university library funding at the global level before examining the current state in the ECS region, and at the continental level. It further discusses important related issues, including required standards and norms as a means to influence the authorities to improve funding; the library budget in relation to the host university, either in terms of the definition as a percentage of the university budget or as the university’s actual expenditure; a percentage of students’ tuition fees for the purpose of developing the library; and the libraries generating their own funds so that they are not solely dependent on university funding.

The major finding is that most of the university libraries in the ECS region are inadequately funded. The most enticing section of the book is Chapter 11, which features the recommendations.

The general recommendation concerns the recognition of the indispensability of the library to the university, the need for autonomy of university libraries, regular collection of library statistics, and the need for approval by the AAU of the terminology applicable in university libraries. Other recommendations include the adoption of standards as guidelines and performance measurements; and income generation schemes to supplement the inadequate library funding and minimise the dependency on funding from the university. Other alternatives for funding, such as donors, should be explored.

The book uses minimum professional jargon and is therefore very clear and easy to read. It has comprehensive and up-to-date references and an Appendix featuring action plans related to university library finance and sustainability passed at SCANUL-ECS Conferences.

Reviewed by: Professor I M N Kigongo-Bukenya, Director, East African School of Library and Information Science, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +41 531530
Email: direct@easlis.mak.ac.ug

Who next...?: A guide to children's authors. 2nd ed.
Norah Irvin (Ed.)
ISBN 1 901786560 (sb)
Price: £13.99 (17.5% trade discount and orders over 10 copies). Postage: UK nil, Europe £4, rest of world £6.50 for single copies. For multiple copies L1SU should be contacted.

Parents, teachers and public librarians all strive to promote reading. They want children to enjoy reading and to widen their horizons in the ongoing search for new and exciting authors. Often this is difficult, because children claim to have read everything of interest (Reviewer’s comment: “I can recall doing this myself.”), and the “promoters” recommendations are limited by their own reading experiences, and the knowledge of authors a particular child might like. Their only alternative is then to rely on recommendations by other parents, librarians and teachers. Who next...?, however, aptly solves this problem by offering a ready reference work on children’s fiction and authoritative