

# **Biodiversity Heritage Library and Open Access Content**

## **Sensitization workshop**

**2 August 2012,**

**JKML - KENET Conference Room**

- *Protocol*
- University Librarian
- All other invited Guests and Researchers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

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I am delighted to be with you today to talk about dissemination of research output through Open Access Content.

Research is one of the major pillars of the very existence and purpose of universities. At the University of Nairobi, research forms a critical component of the university programmes worldwide and is one of the three core functions of the University.

While we may conduct research in order to achieve tenure and promotions, it is now recognized that the real need for research is to transfer research into practice so that the interactions between

research, reflection, practice and policy moves us forward in terms of our knowledge base and in terms of development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in effect, research without dissemination of the findings is like a light placed under a table in a dark room.

As we all know, the most common avenue for disseminating research findings is by publishing in refereed journals or academic books.

One common challenge in Africa is access to local research content. The existing research output in developing countries is often not available even within their own borders

The Open Access initiative is changing all this. The initiative has made a wealth of resources freely available to researchers and information specialists globally and it is gathering momentum towards making remarkable contribution to increasing access to research output.

One such content is the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL). “The Biodiversity Heritage Library is a consortium of natural history and botanical libraries that cooperate to digitize and make accessible the legacy literature of biodiversity held in their collections and to make that literature available for open access and responsible

use as a part of a global biodiversity commons.” (BHL website - <http://biodivlib.wikispaces.com/About> - 31/07/2012)

University of Nairobi has a lot to contribute to BHL particularly the research that is already in the public domain. The Vice-Chancellor has already approved that the Theses Volumes that are held in the Library be digitized for easier access by researchers.

However, before the process of digitization is started it is important for us to ensure that availing resources in this manner will not violate copyright of the researchers.

To this end, the Library is in the process of developing an Open Access Policy that will ensure that there is no copyright violation of the material so digitized.

Ladies and gentlemen, at this stage I wish to seek your indulgence to digress into highlighting just a few events at the RPE Division which are intended to grow research at the UoN, and also get our research into use, as a matter of information.

The RPE Division has put in place mechanisms to invigorate and facilitate research activities within the university by streamlining research management and building research capacity. Last year, the RPE Division in partnership with UNES initiated the proposal writing workshops in which a number of academic staff members have been trained. To date, about 263 staff members have been

trained, 70% of trained are academic members of staff. The workshops are going on and I wish to encourage staff members to take advantage of the opportunity and attend the training workshops. Our target is to have this as an ongoing practice in order to strengthen our research capacity.

The RPE Division has brought together a number of multidisciplinary teams to answer to calls for research funding. We have already been successful in responding to these calls and are still working on others. We hope that this will inculcate a strong research culture at the UoN and create a vibrant research environment in all Colleges.

The Division also recently held a workshop to develop a UoN Research Grants Management Strategic Plan. The strategic plan will form the blueprint of research grants management at the UoN which will streamline the management of research processes from proposal development stage to dissemination of findings to engaging and informing policymaking.

- DRUSSA Programme (brief)

The objective of this workshop is to sensitize researchers in CBPS and CAVS on Biodiversity Open Access content.

Lastly, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my hope that this workshop will sensitize us to start thinking of and to embrace the idea of e-resources and also will give us an insight on how we can responsibly enhance the utilization of the material hold like Theses, which are already in the public domain by contributing to Biodiversity Heritage Library.

I wish you a fruitful discussion.

Thank you.