

UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM LIBRARY

DATAD PROJECT DEVELOPMENT REPORT

1.0 THE PRE-AMBLE

1.1 Project conception

The DATAD project (Database on African Theses and Dissertations) was established following a feasibility study carried out between the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Project for Information Access and Connectivity (PIAC), in 1998. The purpose of this study was to determine the viability of a pilot project to build a database of theses and dissertations completed in Africa and to make recommendations for its implementation.

1.2 Objectives of the Project

The main objectives of the DATAD Project are to:

- ◆ Create capacity in African Universities for the collection, management and dissemination of theses and dissertations electronically;
- ◆ Provide visibility and improve accessibility to the work of African scholars both within and outside of the continent;
- ◆ Facilitate the development of relevant copyright procedures and regulations which will promise the protection of the intellectual property rights of African University researchers
- ◆ Provide support for AAU programs which aim at capacity building in the area of research, promotion of operation among member Universities and networking of institutions having access to central source of information;
- ◆ Contribute towards the creation of an environment conducive for research and publication in African Universities and the region as a whole.

The feasibility study involved site visits to some selected African Universities and out of eighteen Universities visited, eleven Universities were selected for a

three-year pilot project which is partially funded by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. University of Dar es Salaam was among the eleven African Universities.

2.0 PRELIMINARY PREPARATIONS

2.1 UDSM Project Management Team

The project management team was formed at the University of Dar es Salaam following the recommendations by the Senior Project Officer, Ms. Mary Materu-Behitsa, in her letter to the Vice Chancellor on 12th July 2000. Also it was one of the requirements according to the DATAD pilot project. The project management team constituted persons from relevant departments and offices in relation to the envisaged project as follows:

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|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Prof. P. Mushi | - | Directorate of P/Graduate Studies |
| 2. Prof. J. Nawe | - | University Library |
| 3. Prof. R.S. Katapa | - | Statistics Department. |
| 4. Dr. M. Twakyondo | - | Computer Sc. Dept. |
| 5. Dr. F. Sechambo | - | IRA |
| 6. DARUSO Representative | - | UDSM Student's Body |

All team members were willing and positive about their participation in the committee.

2.2 Procurement of equipment and software

The equipment and software needed to run the DATAD project at the University of Dar es Salaam were brought on the 19th September 2001 by the Association of African Universities. Equipment procured included two Dell model computers with monitors, one flatbed scanner and one LaserJet printer. This equipment was supplied by the LINK Company of the UK.

2.3 Installation of the equipment and programs

Programs required to run the two computers, scanner and DATAD database were installed by the expert from AAU on 15th December 2001. These include Procite (database software), Omnipage Scansoft (for scanning text), Reference Web Poster (for posting information from the database to the WWW), Word Perfect Office 2000 (for word processing), Mcafee (for virus scan) and a CD-ROM writing program. One computer was installed as a server for DATAD database and another as a workstation for data entry and text scanning. The server is also intended to be used as a web server for hosting DATAD database to make it available on the web.

2.4 Training on managing the DATAD database

This training was conducted by the expert from AAU from 18th to 22nd December 2001. Covered in the programme were the introduction to Procite program, data entry, scanning abstracts from theses/dissertations and incorporating scanned text into the database, CD-writing, importing data to the server and activating the same for access on the web. The training included both theory and practical. It was very well received by staff and drew enthusiasm on the skill so much so that at the moment, almost all permanent staff of EAF and ICT/REF departments, are conversant with the Procite, and can be called upon to lend a hand whenever the need arise.

3.0 ACTUAL DATABASE BUILDING

3.1 Extent of the Work

As of May 25th 2002, the number of theses/ dissertations in our collection amounts to 4,000. On the outset, this is the minimum number of records we do expect to index into the DATAD database. Beginning this year todate, there are

over 1,000 entries on the database, of which 500 are fully edited and written on a CD.

3.2 Institutional Contribution

The UDSM Library has made the following contributions towards the project's implementation and development:

3.2.1 Existing LIBIS (OPAC) database

The already present Library Catalogue Database is of great help in the smooth implementation of the project as it serves as a ready-made soft copy of the bibliographic information for the entries. Since all theses / dissertations in the library are already in the OPAC, it makes it easier for the staff doing the elementary data entry to copy this information, hence the OPAC complements the entries of the DATAD worksheet more faster.

3.2.2 Workforce & Expertise

The presence of ample competent staff members in the Library who offers expertise and additional workforce enhances the accomplishment of the project faster. The library has dedicated some of working day hours and extra ones, for about eight members of its staff for assisting in data entry and editing exercise of the database. Among them is an administrator who is solely responsible for statistics records keeping, division of records to be edited, general coordination of the staff involved in the database and compiling ones that are ready and ultimately writing on the CD.

3.2.3 Equipment facilitation

In order to speed-up the building of the database, apart from adding more workforce into the project, the Library has also improvised two more

computers, and still securing a means to utilizing other available scanners in the library.

4.0 RELATED ACTIVITIES

4.1 The LIBIS Database

The ongoing application of ICT and ultimate full automation of the library has brought about the sustainable development of the LIBIS (Library Information System) database, thus the OPAC services since 1998. The expertise and resources acquired in working with LIBIS has made the initiation and the implementation of DATAD project, easier to takeoff and manage.

4.2 The Local Content Sub- Project

In a bid to satisfactorily serve the information needs of its clientele, the library has undergone number of transformations, including the re-organization of its materials, operational and administrative setup. In the same regard, there has been establishment of a number of local content databases, such as the Biodiversity and Environmental database, Creation of Tanzania regional databases. Such projects have made the organization gain experience in dealing with establishment of new projects of similar type as DATAD. These databases hold information, of which some of it could be utilized to modify DATAD needs. These related databases are using WinISIS program.

4.3 The SIDA/SAREC Sponsored Bibliographies

The office of Director of Postgraduate Studies (DPGS) is undertaking a mini-project of compiling the annotated bibliographies of all theses and dissertations done by the students sponsored by the donation from the SIDA/SAREC. To accomplish this exercise, the DPGS office work in close collaboration with the Library EAF department where theses and dissertations are deposited.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

5.1 Frequent Power-cuts or Low Voltage

The sole-reliance on the unreliable electricity power supply by the National Utility Supply Company (TANESCO), has been a major impediment for the efficient provision of the library services at UDSM. The library had experienced frequent power-cuts and low-voltage since early February until mid April. The same has marred the smooth implementation of the project. However, at the moment, the library has so far managed to secure its own long awaited generator, and it's now on its final installation stages, hopefully the problem will be taken care of.

5.2 Scanning Problems of Retrospective Documents

The model of the scanner improvised for the project is not that friendly to accommodate the older versions of computer fonts/prints, especially the dot matrix ones and also those typed by the ordinary typewriter and then duplicated. This usually brings about poor quality output of the scanned image, such that when posted into relevant Procite database field, it tends to change a lot of the abstract content, esp. with figures and symbols. The scanner has also proved to be slow, especially after working for some hours constantly when there is a huge workload. However, efforts are there to secure another proficient scanner within the library means.

5.3 DATAD Project Working Policy

DATAD project need a written-down or stipulated guidelines / directives on how to treat different types of the materials in the collection as an agreed DATAD working policy. For instance, at UDSM library we do not have a common stand on how to handle documents resulting from postgraduate diploma holders, works with non-African origin, whether by its setting or the author, documents on foreign language other than own official language.

However, since we are on early stages of the project, with coming stakeholders meeting, we hope this issue is will be discussed.

6.0 PROPOSALS TOWARDS PROJECT ENHANCEMENT

The following suggestions are put forward as steps to be taken to the implementation of the project:

6.1 Additional scanner

In a bid to accelerate the database building, it's proposed that a new powerful and efficient scanner should be secured. This will also solve the problem of dealing with the retrospective documents on older versions of fonts / prints and those duplicates of ordinary typewriter.

6.2 Abstracting work

Aiming at covering all the intended documents in the collection, there should be competent staff to embark on the abstracting work of the documents without abstracts or those with length summaries of up to four or five pages.

6.3 Sponsor field

It's proposed that, apart from the newly introduced gender field, another one should indicate the sponsoring body of the student /source of funding to his/her research. This will be of help in compilation of statistics needed by the UDSM and other different stakeholders.

6.4 Working Policy

It's proposed that, the challenge regarding the working policy as discussed in **no. 5.3** above, should be formulated soon.

6.5 Financial facilitation

It's proposed that, the financial resources are a factor in order to boost the morale of the staff involved in the database, hence advance funds should be available at shorter intervals instead of waiting till the end product is submitted. Responsible institutions can find modalities to facilitate this and take the proceeds from the DATAD-AAU.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Generally, this project is considered to be a sound idea that would add value to our Library collection, especially when such an index will be printed and also same abstracts would be added on the OPAC. Indeed it's a project that will see its conception objectives as stated in **no. 1.2** above becoming a reality.

Signed.....

Dr. F. MUKANGARA
Library Project Coordinator

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