

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
DATAD PROJECT REPORT : APRIL, 2003

A : BRIEF INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND.

When the AAU invited Makerere to participate in the DATAD Project, the idea was welcomed wholesale. Makerere undergraduate students started coming out in 1952, and the Graduate Programme started in 1964 when MAs and Ph.Ds were offered. These opened the way for production of Theses and Dissertations, that have accumulated over the years. The majority of Theses and Dissertations at Makerere have remained unpublished, and therefore unaccessible to a wider community both in and outside Uganda. The objectives of DATAD Project include:-

“provide visibility and improve accessibility to the work of African scholars both within and outside the continent”,

“... promotion of cooperation among member universities and networking of institutions having access to a 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” among others, were not only timely, but long overdue!

B. IMPLEMENTATION.

?? The nature of work and extent accomplished.

The data entry work started soon after the visit of the AAU staff to Makerere in January 2002.

Initially three people were identified for data entry. One person dropped out because she was located away from the main Campus where the Project computers were installed and there were problems of incorporating her in the Project. This robbed our database of medical materials since her library is specializing in human medicine.

All together the mandatory 2000 records were entered in the database. The process has continued, but on a slower pace, due to staff transfers, and by the second week of April an additional 50 titles had been added on the database. The pace will pick up as the staffing situation improves.

However, data entry hit a snag when it came to enter scientific and mathematical records. The many symbols and equations used could not be located. A lot of such records were left out until the problem is solved.

?? Database accessibility on the LAN.

The library has a big project of computerising all the library functions. It is part of the University-wide project. Laying of the Library LAN had to wait to fit in this University – wide plan. Fortunately this started about 2 weeks ago and is now in progress. The Library has got a server on which the DATAD will be hosted to be accessed by library users. The Library has got 40 computers from which the users will have access to the database. Meanwhile, the database is accessible only on stand alone.

?? Archival policy of Theses and Dissertations.

Print.

The library receives 2 copies of each Thesis/Dissertation from the University. One copy is kept as an archival copy while the second copy is kept for circulation.

Microform.

In addition, the Library has started to systematically microfilm all the Dissertations and Theses as a way of preserving the holdings. So far 550 Theses have been microfilmed, and the process will continue until every Thesis/Dissertation is microfilmed.

Electronic.

The Library has held several workshops on the subject of Electronic Resources Library Management and the topic of Archiving has surfaced, not only for Theses/Dissertations but other resources like journals. It has been noted that digital archiving has a lot of challenges which need serious planning, and collaboration by all those involved in collecting digital information objects, protecting their integrity over the long term and retaining them in an accessible form for future use.

The Library embarked on the MakLIBIS project whose main objective is primarily focussed on providing maximum service to the clientele of the library by improving information processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination. The project has identified Sub-projects within the main project, among which are installation of the Local Area Network (work is nearing completion) and digitising of library materials and establishment of full text databases.

The digitization and digital archiving of Theses/dissertation will be carried out during this phase.

?? The process for the Policy on Copyright :

Soon after the first DATAD Workshop in Addis Ababa in June 2002, the DATAD Implementing Team wrote a Paper entitled “ Copyright Issues with Regard to Theses/Dissertations submitted to Makerere University”. In this paper the importance of

having a Copyright Policy in view of the fact that when DATAD goes on the web there would be requests for full-text copies of Theses and Dissertations, was spelt out. Suggestions were made, and the paper was submitted to the Library Management. Unfortunately, this matter could only be finally decided by the highest organ of the University, but due to some technicalities in the new Universities and Tertiary Institutions Act, this organ is not yet in place. The final decision is therefore awaiting the institution of this organ.

C : IMPACT TO INSTITUTION/COMMUNITY.

?? The impact of the DATAD to the implementing unit. It has given us a challenge to continue organizing theses/dissertation records electronically. We have had staffing problems but we have endeavoured to continue the work. So far 50 more records have been added on the 2000 that were sent to DATAD.

?? The wider university community is yet to feel the impact of DATAD because it is still accessible only on the stand alone, as we await the completion of the LAN, which is in the final stages.

?? We shall need the final outcome of our Copyright Policy before requests for full text are adequately responded to.

D: GENERAL EVALUATION OF DATAD.

DATAD is a very good project which should be given all the support as it has come out to address a need that has been in existence for a long time in African Universities.

The success or failure of DATAD in the following areas:-

?? The Objectives:

One of the objectives of DATAD was to:-

“Facilitate the development of relevant Copyright procedures and regulations which will promote the protection of the intellectual property rights of African University Researchers”.

AAU should have provided appropriate guidelines in this area. I believe Universities are willing to be guided about the best practices in this area. A lot of people are still suspicious about allowing their work to be on the Web. They need assurances.

?? The Activities.

One of the activities for DATAD was to draft Copyright and IPR guidelines for discussion with Participating Universities. This activity was not carried out and it may affect eventual accessibility to DATAD if Institutions come out with differing policies, or not clear policies.

?? Management.

DATAD has been very well managed from the Centre. At Makerere the management has also been very supportive. If this continues it will lead to the success of the project and to sustain it in future.

?? Workshops.

The one workshop that has been held was very successful. It generated a lot of ideas and challenges, and solved some of the problems that were being met during the initial implementation of the project. We were able to share experiences, and for Makerere it gave us more determination to push on with the project and to see that we input the mandatory 2000 records.

?? The equipment.

The equipment provided by AAU has worked well. However, the scanner has posed some problems. It has not been able to recognize old Theses which were typed with manual typewriters and older versions of computer fonts/prints, especially the dot matrix ones. The scanned abstracts of these Theses have been very poor and needed a lot of editing, which has been time-consuming.

?? The Software .

The software installed for DATAD has worked well for the greater part of the project. However, problems cropped up about 3 week ago when we failed to access the webposter. The problem could not be solved by our IT personnel. We sought support from IT at Accra. The help given has failed to solve the problem, which is still with us. We hope to have it solved during this workshop.

?? Training.

Initial training period was too short. A lot of important issues e.g how to handle scientific and mathematical records could not be tackled. If funds permitted, a subsequent visit by IT support from AAU would have been most welcome.

?? Communication with AAU.

This has been excellent throughout the Pilot period.

?? IT support at Makerere .

IT support has been given whenever required. However, for DATAD to continue satisfactorily this support should be strengthened, and queries dealt with promptly.

E: OTHER COMMENTS ETC.

?? DATAD list server.

DATAD list server has proved very useful and all members should use it more frequently to share experiences.

?? The idea of including IT personnel in the Workshop was very thoughtful. These people are key to the success of DATAD and should be involved in all its activities.

?? DATAD should be fully incorporated in the Institution's activities, otherwise it could end like so many projects. Makerere has identified DATAD as an active component in the **AFRICANA/SPECIAL COLLECTION SECTION**, which

houses Theses/Dissertations. We have also identified a PC and Scanner to Albert Cook Library which holds Medical theses, to start in-putting their data into DATAD.

?? Sharing DATAD.

Makerere plans to share DATAD experiences with other Universities in Uganda. These Universities formed a consortium (The Consortium of Uganda University Libraries – CUUL) in 2001, so these too should come aboard DATAD. This could eventually lead to participation of all these universities in archiving Ugandan digital library of theses and dissertations.

?? DATAD Local Terms – Standardization.

While in-putting data we found a lot of local words spelled differently by different people. This could cause problems in retrieving. We therefore suggest a need to standardize local words before using them as keywords.

Compiled by : Mrs. Dorcas Kigozi,
 Project Coordinator