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**An Assessment of the enabling role of Information Technology (IT) in Knowledge Sharing and Retention in Academic Libraries: A case of Makerere University Library**

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**MY  
DISCUSSION  
TODAY**



**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Introduction and background to the study
- Aim and Objectives
- Research methodology
- Findings and discussion
- Conclusion
- Areas for further study
- Implementation

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

### WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE?

Knowledge can be understood from:

The objectivist perspective - "an entity/commodity that people possess, but which can exist independently of people in a codifiable form"



Explicit knowledge

The practice based perspective - "what people know from their work activities or practices and is thus inseparable from an individual"



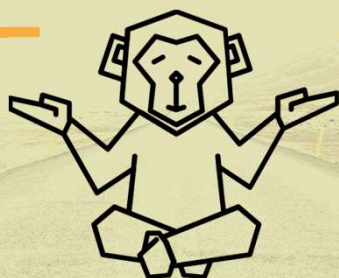
Tacit knowledge

Smith, 2001:315; Hislop, 2009:23



## Explicit

- Codifiable
- Impersonal
- Context independent
- Easy to share
- Can be stored in databases and repositories.



## Tacit

- Subjective
- Personal
- Context specific
- Difficult to share



## UNDERSTANDING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT



Knowledge management involves systematic control of knowledge resources through a series of processes:

- Creation
- Storage
- Sharing
- Utilization

Hislop, 2009:59

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

### IT AS AN ENABLER

Technology used to acquire, store, organize, and process data to a usable form in specified applications, and disseminate the processed data.

IT provides members of an organization with the ability to generate, store, share and rapidly access knowledge.

### KNOWLEDGE SHARING

The exchange of ideas, information and knowledge between individuals or groups of people.

An experience individuals go through when they pass on organizationally relevant knowledge to others.

### KNOWLEDGE RETENTION

Relates to continuity of knowledge.

Knowledge may be lost when experts are laid off, when they retire, when there is a high staff turnover, when there is a merger or acquisition.

As a result of knowledge loss, it is difficult for organizations to ensure continuity of business.

| Lopez and Alegre (2011:645)

# KM IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

"The new role of libraries in the 21st century needs to be as a **learning and knowledge centre** for their users as well as the intellectual commons for their respective communities"

Lee, 2005

## Makerere University Library

Makerere University library is strategically located at the heart of Makerere University. The university is one of the oldest and largest academic institutions in East Africa.

Its vision is to be "a centre of excellence in the provision of library and information services in Africa."

The library does not have in place any known knowledge management roles.

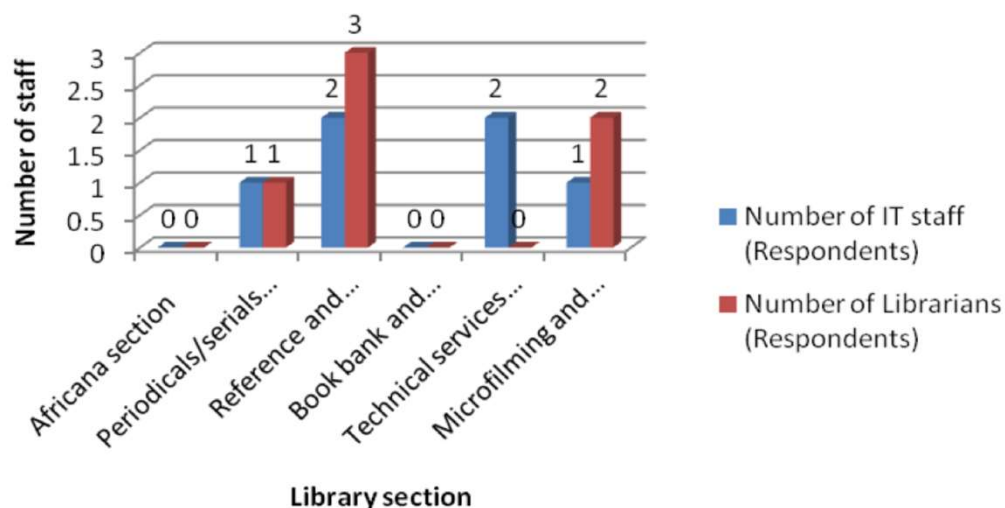


Musoke, 2010; Makerere University, 2013



## Research Findings

Section of operation for IT staff and librarians



Empirical findings

## Findings...

IT tools applied in knowledge storage included the institutional repository (IR), databases, backup servers in remote locations as well as cloud storage tools.

Staff share knowledge from trainings, workshops, seminars and conferences, new library policies, library strategic decisions, and important communication from superiors.

Conditions and incentives for KS include a knowledge dissemination policy and interactive networks recognition, training, a reward system and promotion.

IT tools that are used to promote a KS culture and retention included social media tools, intranet, library website and institutional repository, Virtual ILS.

Challenges include: inaccessibility of systems, system maintenance costs, and inadequate training in the use of IT systems, poor connectivity, staff attitudes, lack of IT equipment, fear of dependence and losing knowledge.

IT staff recommended skills for librarians - basic programming skills, data curation skills, database management skills, and end user management skills, networking technologies, cloud services, web content management.

Librarians revealed that they require more training in data entry, searching, system navigation, saving and retrieving data, user profiles' access, database management and special training in automation of libraries.

Recommendations include: formal recognition of KS and KR as well as sensitization, and continual staff training in the application of IT in KS and KR.



## Conclusion

Information technologies do exist in the library but their application in knowledge acquisition, storage, sharing and retention is limited due to a number of challenges among which is the informal recognition of KM initiatives

There is a relationship between IT and knowledge acquisition, storage, sharing and retention in the library but a lot remains to be done in terms of strengthening such a relationship.

The study recommends the implementation of a knowledge retention policy, establishment of a knowledge management section in the library, purchase of more IT equipment for library staff, establishment of knowledge sharing platforms, building IT knowledge bases for library staff, improving network access in the library and continual training of library staff.

## Areas for further research

- Carrying out a study between different academic libraries.
- Studying other knowledge management processes in the same context.
- Carrying out quantitative studies on IT as an enabler in knowledge management practices in academic libraries are areas recommended for further studies.



# IMPLEMENTATION?



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