Training in online search skills at Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania: the use of TEEAL and AGORA databases

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University of Dar Es Salaam Library Journal 10 (1&2) 2008

Abstract

TEEAL and AGORA databases form an important part of the electronic resources at Sokoine National Agricultural Library in Tanzania (SNAL). This paper presents strategies that SNAL has used to ensure that students, academic staff and researchers at SNAL develop effective online search strategies that help them make effective use of various electronic resources including TEEAL, AGORA databases and other electronic resources. Major training methods are the use of formal and informal Information Literacy (IL) programmes, seminars and workshops and other innovative strategies like developing online tutorials. Some of these strategies have not only been essential in imparting online research skills to library users but also they have been important as a marketing strategy for these resources. The paper also discusses challenges and opportunities that are presented with the use of these databases, particularly in the context of university libraries in developing countries. Recommendations on how to improve the situation are made.