

Open access and open source: considerations for agricultural academic libraries in promoting collaboration and sharing of information and knowledge

E. T. Lwoga, W. L. Chilimo

International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists (IAALD) Quarterly Bulletin, Vol. L1, No. 3/4. (2006), pp. 177-185 Key: citeulike:8003962

Abstract

This paper discusses how the open access (OA) and open source technology can be utilized by the African agricultural academic libraries to improve the collaboration and sharing of information and knowledge among agricultural researchers and other stakeholders. This study draws from the literature review, and various case studies to discuss the application of open source technology and OA concepts in fostering the sharing of information and knowledge. This paper observes that if used effectively, open source technology can provide a number of tools that can be used by the agricultural academic libraries to improve the sharing of information and knowledge among their users on OA basis. Such tools include the content management systems, journal publishing software etc. Since the application of OA movement is still very low in Africa, this paper urges the African agricultural academic libraries to adopt the open access archives (OAA) in order to increase the accessibility, visibility, interactivity and usability of African agricultural research, thus accelerating the world's research activity. By implementing the OA archives, the agricultural libraries can also benefit from other value added services, which include search engines that provide citation and indexing services (e.g. Google), blogs, discussion lists and wiki, etc. However, more consideration should be put on the following in order to increase the usage of OAA, which are: OA awareness programs, technical abilities, standards and institutional policies which should strongly be supported by institutions and research funding agencies.