

The development and implementation of a Reading List Management system as a tool for facilitating educational resource discovery: A case study of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

Thursday, 14 March 2019 12:10 (18 minutes)

Academic libraries are faced with the challenge of continually providing the knowledge resources needed to support teaching, learning, and research in the host institutions. These resources in whatever form they come must be organized, made discoverable and made easily accessible to the consumers in an effective manner while making it possible for the knowledge experts (librarians) and academics to manage the life cycle of these resources.

Reading List Management systems have been used by academic institutions to provide an organized and manageable way for academics and librarians to jointly publish knowledge resources and for students to find them. The Reading List Management system is essentially a technology platform that enables the creation of organized sets (or lists) of resources for academic programmes offered in an institution.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the use of the Reading List Management system as an educational aid by examining its development and implementation at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

In the beginning, a survey of the state of the library and academic research environment is given, with emphasis on the mechanisms used by academics and librarians to publish knowledge resources associated with programmes of study. The impact of this mechanism is discussed and evidence is then given to support the need for an improved mechanism for knowledge discovery. Subsequently, the idea of a Reading List Management system is presented and the case is made for why it would address concerns raised with the current mechanism. The study proceeds then to discuss in detail the procedures and processes involved in its planning.

One of the expected outcomes of the Reading List Management system is that it will facilitate the discovery of educational resources. The case is made for why resource discovery is important, how resource discovery traditionally works for the learner and why a platform purposely built for such a purpose is necessary. The discussion also shows how different a Reading List Management system is different from other resource discovery systems.

One of the expected outcomes of the Reading List Management system is that it will help refine and scrutinize what periodic resource acquisitions are made. It undoubtedly, therefore, will have an impact on the financial organization of the library and the intuition. This idea is discussed with the current situation at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology used to show how the economics of the system works out.

A brief overview of the technological infrastructure at the university is given with an analysis on how issues such as internet speed, network quality, outages etc. affect the delivery of services to academic researchers, particularly in the case of the Reading List Management system. The paper then proceeds to detail the technological preparations made for the reading lists Management system and the details of implementation.

There is also a discussion of the arrangements made for the rollout of the system, clearly showing the roles and responsibilities of students, academics, librarians and university management in the day-to-day use of the system.

To promote and guide the use of the system a reading List Policy was developed. The purpose of the policy, its adoption processes, implementation and review mechanisms are also presented and discussed.

Finally, some initial challenges with the development and implementation of the Reading List Management system are discussed in detail. Recommendations are given on how overcoming these challenges.

It is finally concluded that the adoption of a Reading List system at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology would serve the purpose of refining and organizing the how knowledge resources are organized and made accessible in aid of teaching, learning and research.

Keywords: reading lists, knowledge resources, library, educational tools, academic tools, reading policy,

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Session Classification: PLENARY SESSION I –Paper Presentations

Track Classification: Teaching and Learning