SAMORA MACHEL SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

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INTRODUCTION

The University of Zambia Library Service is comprised of the Main Library and three branch libraries. The branch libraries are:

a   The Medical Library which is situated at the School of Medicine. This library serves the Medical students, teaching staff, as well as other medical professionals.

b   The second is the branch library at the Institute of African Studies, which is one of the research wings of the University.

c   The Veterinary Medicine Library, which I represent.

I must admit that it is a bit difficult to discuss a branch of this Library Service in isolation from the other Units because almost any development in the other parts of the system tend to affect the other branches.

Functions like those of the Technical Services, are all done at a central point with the hope of maintaining consistency. However, it is the responsibility of each branch library to see to it that their work is done, and most of the input dealing with book recommendation is done at the branch level.

Membership of any branch of this system automatically allows the patron to use the other libraries.

THE VETERINARY MEDICINE LIBRARY

This Library was built as part of a larger project which established the School of Veterinary Medicine in 1986 with the cooperation of the Government of Japan.

The major objectives of the Veterinary Library are to serve the information needs of first and foremost, the teaching staff and students of the school in their academic pursuits. In addition the Library extends its services to the public at large and other institutions which have a bearing on veterinary research in the whole country.

THE LIBRARY

a   Stock

The collection currently stands at approximately 4 000 titles, including a textbook collection. Unfortunately, the book budget has been dwindling through the years to an extent that we now rely more on donations than our own resources. To this extent, the Japanese and British governments have been a great source of support through their JICA and ODA programmes. The University of Pretoria has been of great assistance to us and has so far given us two donations totalling 112 titles. We are really very grateful at this gesture.

Although the Veterinary Library used to subscribe to more than a hundred journal titles a few years ago; this has now been

reduced to only 50 titles due to financial constraints.

The Library has an audio visual collection consisting of video tapes and slides which are quite popular with the library users.

b Staff

The Library has an adequate staff in terms of numbers but there is a serious shortage of appropriately trained staff members.

c CD-ROM capability

The Veterinary Library started to offer a CD-ROM service in 1992. It has two PCs (IBM and AST 386), two printers and one CD-ROM player. Currently we have two databases, namely VET CD and BEAST CD. All of these run from 1973 to November 1994.

Apart from the above, the University of Zambia was one of the seven African universities chosen to participate in a 3 year CD-ROM pilot project funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The primary objectives of this project were to assess the ability of CD-ROM as a supplement of journal subscriptions and determine the real cost of CD-ROM technology and document the cost of document delivery so that African Institutions will be better able to evaluate the advantages of this technology.

Under the programme, the Library is receiving the following databases:

1 Compendix Plus
2 El Page One
3 Life Sciences Collection
4 Public Affairs Information Services
5 Wilson Applied Science and Technology Index
6 Wilson Social Sciences Index
7 ERIC
8 Social Science Citation Index

Currently, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is supporting the aspect of document delivery for this project. Document delivery has greatly improved since the University of Zambia has now been connected to the Internet.

The students and staff of the School of Veterinary Medicine have access to the above service.

d Computerization

The University of Zambia Library System has embarked on a computerization programme as a result of very generous financial assistance provided by the Finnish Government. The following operations have been targeted for computerization:

a Acquisitions
b Cataloguing
c Circulation control
d Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)
e Periodicals control
f Short Loan Collection (Reserved Book Collection)
g Internet connectivity

In order to automate the above operations the Library has already signed a Software Licensing Agreement for the purchase of Dynix Automated Library System from Dynix Incorporated of America. Based on the chosen software, the University library as procured and installed the necessary hardware. These include:

a File server (Compaq Proliant 4000 P5/90; which can be configured for up to 4 CPUs)
b 26 Wyse Dumb terminals, and
c 18 PC work stations.

For the above project to be successful, there is a need for retrospective record conversion. Instead of the Library attempting to do the retrospective record conversion using our own staff, we opted to hire a vendor to do it for us. We entered an agreement with Retro Link Associates, a subsidiary company of Ameritech Library Services. Retro Link has already sent a staff member to do on site imaging of our Library Official Self List (OSL) into machine readable records which will then be converted into Machine Readable Catalogue (MARC).

These will then be loaded into our bibliographic database. The formal launching of the computerized system will be done after loading the MARC format bibliographic database from Retro Link, which is expected to be mid November 1995.

The above development will benefit the Veterinary Library because:

a   The University administration is already putting in place a network which will connect all the schools and other wings of the University which will be known as UNZA net.

b   The University has formed a commercial company- ZAMNET - which controls the connectivity of the whole country to the Internet.

PROBLEMS

a   Finance

The inadequacy and sometimes the total lack of a library budget is the main problem which the library faces. Without a proper budget it is very difficult to make an effective plan for the growth of the library.

b   Staff

The lack of properly trained librarians especially with the advent of information technology is also a source of great worry.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing it is clear that our library system is trying to fulfill its objectives of meeting the needs of our users so that we foster the teaching, research and public service which are the main functions of the University of Zambia.

Lastly but not least, I would like to thank the University of Pretoria and more especially the organisers of the Conference for their generous offer which has allowed me to be with you here today.