Public Abstract

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Title:EXPLORING KENYAN WOMEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS WITH INFORMATION

In the alleged information society, providing access to ICT purportedly will enable people, in all walks of life, to actively participate across multiple realms of social, economic, and political life. However, ICT initiatives in Kenya have not necessarily promoted ideal participation in an information society. Emphasis on ICT in IL policy and initiatives has undermined research about what information people identify as relevant, and how and why people interact with information. The research has explored IL as the counterpart of information practice, or institutionalized information-related activity. Understanding information practices requires an understanding of the sociocultural and historical practices. A combination of content, phenomenological, and hermeneutical methods have been used to explore how Kenyan women university students interact with information in everyday life, including what they identify as relevant, how objects gain meaning in relation to each other, and how discourses emerge to enable meaningful communication. Findings have indicated the importance of people as sources of wisdom, interaction as a relevant process of cultural learning, the importance of physical proximity to a source, the preeminence of the book as knowledge, and the use of ICT in walks of life beyond educational and profession. Overall, findings have suggested the need for IL research and policy in Kenya to consider how a range of information practices enable information to be recognized and shared, in ways that create new ways of knowing.