Haramaya University Library and Information Services: Looking back to look forward

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Library trends; Paradigm shifts; Library and information services; University libraries; Future of academic libraries; Higher Learning Institutions; Ethiopia; Developing countries

Summary Over the last decade, a number of trends and paradigm shifts have been witnessed in academic libraries worldwide. This paper reports on the history and current status of an Ethiopian academic library, Haramaya University Library and Information Services (HULIS). It explores bold issues, trends, and paradigm shifts that have been accruing worldwide with respect to HULIS and attempts to envision HULIS in the not-too-distant future. Finally, it sets forth future directions that can serve as a road map to transform HULIS in particular and Ethiopian university libraries in general.

Introduction
Libraries are institutions of learning that strive to meet the information and knowledge needs of users. Paterson (1999) stresses that “A library is an investment in humanity in its progress and its struggles and its traditions” (p.1). From Alexandrian beginnings, academic libraries like Haramaya University Library and Information Services (HULIS) have evolved to their present state after many ups and downs. University libraries are responsible for providing relevant, comprehensive, and up-to-date information to diversified users. They are crucial for the future of the parent institution and for the nation as well.

There is an adage that library is the heart of a university because it supports the university’s triad missions: 1) teaching and learning; 2) research and community engagement; and, 3) outreach services. University libraries are indispensable to the functioning of universities and the achievement of their academic missions (IFLA, 2003). The history and mission of university libraries correlate with and support the history and mission of their parent university. In this regard, Stoica (1995) suggested that to integrate university libraries among the other goals of higher education, a proper strategy must be established. Haramaya University (HU) and other universities in Ethiopia have already prepared strategic plans that anticipate the likely integration of libraries with other elements of the parent Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs). Naturally, university libraries are involved in activities that are in tandem with the parent HLIs mission.

Universities are perceived as “enablers of the information society” (Phillips, 1998, p. 308). Academic libraries enable universities to produce knowledgeable and cultured
citizens that can transform their countries. There are numerous trends and paradigm shifts worldwide that help university libraries to recap the past, improve the present, and invent the future. By appreciating the past, university libraries and their parent HLIs can learn from successes and/or failures and bring about changes in the provision of library and information services. An understanding of trends helps to shape the future roles of university libraries like HULIS for the betterment of the university in particular and Ethiopia in general. The purpose of this paper is to explore the current situation, with the intent to reflect on the past and invent the future.

Higher Learning Institutions in Ethiopia

In this paper, terms like Higher Learning Institution, Higher Education, and University are used interchangeably. The terms Academic Libraries and University Libraries are also used interchangeably.

Higher Learning Institutions play crucial roles in the socioeconomic development of a country. They have a dual role of promoting economic well-being and social justice (Fisher, 2006). Higher education simultaneously improves individual lives and enriches wider society. It has the additional role of reflecting and promoting an open and meritocratic civil society (World Bank, 2000). Higher education in Africa is as old as the pyramids of Egypt, the obelisks of Ethiopia, and the Kingdom of Timbuktu (Tefera & Altbach, 2004). Ethiopia possesses a 1700-year tradition of elite education linked to the Orthodox Church. But secular higher education was initiated only in 1950 with the founding of the University College of Addis Ababa (Saint, 2004). In Ethiopia, the history of Higher Learning Institutions is more or less the history of Addis Ababa University and Haramaya University (founded in 1950 and 1951 respectively), as they are the oldest and biggest universities in Ethiopia. HULIS is in its infancy when it is compared with the establishment of European libraries.

Evolution of academic libraries

Academic libraries today are complex institutions with multiple roles and a host of related operations and services that have developed over the years. Yet their fundamental purpose has remained the same: To provide access to trustworthy, authoritative knowledge (Campbell, 2006). An increased access to Higher Learning Institutions has led in recent years to much greater prominence being given to the academic library’s role in supporting learning and teaching (Brophy, 2007).

Accordingly Skidas (1999) predicted that “The primary mission of academic libraries in the 21st century will be the same as it has been ever since ‘libraries’ came into existence: to supply students and staff with the information they need. ... That means that the classic function of libraries has not changed, but that the scope and the techniques to fulfill this function have broadened” (p. 7). Indeed, the format of content and the delivery mechanisms have been diversifying in response to the changing needs and information seeking behaviors of users. In this regard, in HULIS there is a shift from service-oriented to a user-centered approach.

Haramaya University: historical overview

Ethiopia is predominantly an agricultural country with about 85 percent of its people engaged in this business. Appreciating this fact, in the early 1950s there was a desire to transform Ethiopian agriculture. The country felt the need for scientific agricultural education and consequently an agreement called point IV was signed on May 15, 1951 between the Governments of Ethiopia and the United States of America for the establishment of agricultural institutions in Ethiopia under the United States Agency for International Development (College of Agriculture, 1980).

The current Haramaya University was initially named the Imperial Ethiopian College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts. At the beginning, the instruction, research, and extension programs were operated by a contract with Oklahoma State University in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development. In 1967, the college became a charter member of the Hailesellasi I University (now Addis Ababa University) and was renamed as Alemaya College of Agriculture (HERQA, 2008). HULIS, then the College of Agriculture library, became one of the eleven specialized branch libraries of the Addis Ababa University Libraries System (Hailesellasi I University, 1973). In 1985 the college was upgraded to the university level and was renamed as Alemaya University of Agriculture. In 1995–1996, with the opening of two new faculties, namely Faculty of Education and Faculty of Health, its name was changed to Alemaya University. In 2006 it was renamed as Haramaya University. Despite the many name changes over the years, the role of Haramaya University Library and Information Services has consistently been to support the triad missions of the parent university.

Increased access to Higher Learning Institutions in Ethiopia is impacting the overall activities of university libraries in various ways. Universities in Ethiopia are expanding greatly and Haramaya University is no exception. HU has grown from its first batch 11 students, to more than 14,000 students in its regular, continuing, and distance education programs today. Similarly, when it was founded in the early 1950s it was mainly meant for agricultural science; however, currently there are more than 105 different programs in different fields and at different levels: undergraduate, graduate, and PhD programs.

At a national level, during 1995–2003 alone, the annual intake of Ethiopian higher education increased from 3000 to 31,921 (Yizengaw, 2005). In 2009 the annual intake reached 74,000. According to the Ethiopian Annual Book, the student enrollment is expected to reach 110,000 in 2010 (Ministry of Information, 2005). A decade ago there were only two universities (Haramaya University and Addis Ababa University) in Ethiopia. All Higher Learning Institutions which were at a college level at that time were upgraded to university status. In 2005–2006, thirteen new universities were established. Today there are 21 universities in Ethiopia (Ministry of Education, 2007; Ministry of Information, 2005).

The university library is a gateway to information for students and staff in pursuit of teaching and learning. However, in the case in HULIS and other university libraries in Ethiopia, available library facilities have not kept pace with “massification” and increased enrollment (Mohamedbhai,
2008). The challenges of increasing enrollment need to be transformed into opportunities in order to address the ever expanding and changing information needs of diversified users.

Haramaya University Library and Information Services: then and now

In 1956, the library of the college of agriculture at Alemaya was housed temporarily in the lounge of the dormitory building since the library building was not completed (College of Agriculture, 1980). At that time it contained 8000 books, 43 journals and 3 daily newspapers; but, today HULIS has access to more than 50,000 e-journals and about 32 types of local and international newspapers and magazines. The library building was completed in 1961. At the beginning of the 1962—1963 school year, books and other materials was moved to the completed building which provided excellent study facilities for the entire college community. By that time, the library had a collection of over 12,000 books. Today it has about 200,000 volumes of books. On the other hand, when the facility opened, it had seating capacity for 230 users at a time. In 1978—1979, the seating capacity reached 627 users at a time. Currently, as a result of its expansion to 1113 m² (Haramaya University, 2000), the library can accommodate more than 3600 users at a time.

In the 1992—1993 academic year, the Graduate School Library started providing services in its own building. In the same year, the CD-ROM literature search service started. Similarly, CD-ROM services were introduced to Addis Ababa University Libraries System in 1991 with two CD-ROM workstations located at the Main Library (Gelaw, 1998).

At first, books were classified using Dewey Decimal Classification System. However, as the collection grew over time, the system of classification was changed to the Library of Congress scheme. Moreover, the voucher system which was previously used for the daily issues was changed to the brown (book pocket) circulation system starting in the academic year 1978—1979 (College of Agriculture, 1980). Currently, HULIS has fully automated circulation services.

Since the growth and development of a library is vital for effective teaching and learning in any institution of higher learning, the library had been given more attention by the university administration since its inception and numerous efforts have been made to acquire international grants to upgrade the library. Over the years, Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the British Council have been major donors. Moreover, even in the early days, HULIS served as a repository for the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). It also maintained an inter-library loan service with the Kennedy Library of Addis Ababa University and with other centers of similar nature. This undoubtedly served as a useful tool for library cooperation. In addition, it had arrangements with the international photocopy service of the lending Division of the British Library.

HULIS is not markedly different from other university libraries in Ethiopia. They are all more or less similar in their mission, purpose and level of technological applications. Addis Ababa University and Haramaya University have similar problems and concerns. Some of the issues, trends, and paradigm shifts that have been occurring worldwide also concern university libraries in Ethiopia. However, there are visible disparities between HULIS and the libraries of the 13 new universities which were established in 2005—2006. Currently, there are a total of 21 government owned universities and more than 60 private colleges in Ethiopia.

Trends and paradigm shifts in academic libraries in the information age

Change across all facets of society — including demographic, technological, and economic change — has the potential to greatly impact higher education and the academic library. As we move further into the 21st century, it is important to pay attention to the trends around us to inform our thinking about where institutions of higher education and their libraries are headed (ACRL, 2009).

Phillips (1998) stated that “changes in the library and information environment ... are certain to affect the future shape and form of university library provision” (p. 308). Similarly, cognizant of the ever changing trends and paradigm shifts in the academic libraries worldwide, it is not difficult to predict issues that will shape the future of university libraries in Ethiopia. This paper attempts to discuss, analyze and revitalize a broad spectrum of key issues, trends, and paradigm shifts in order to gain new insights for devising future directions. Such insights will enable HULIS and other similar university libraries in Ethiopia to keep afloat in the changing environment of academic libraries. The following trends and paradigm shifts are identified as being in line with the situation of HULIS:

- A shift from thinking of libraries as a space (physical building) to libraries as a social space.
- A shift from ownership model to access model.
- A paradigm shift in the philosophy and roles of library.
- A shift from library services to information services.
- A shift in the ultimate goal of libraries from merely creating informed citizens to producing communicative citizens.
- A shift from service-oriented to user-oriented services.
- A shift from library cooperation to library consortium.
- A shift from information famine to information overflow.
- A shift from information services provision to training provision.
- A shift from “here and now” to a more virtual information services provision that overcomes time and distance barriers.
- A shift from traditional library to automated library.

Issues and trends at HULIS

The future is uncertain and ambiguous; however, what we find in today’s trends is an objective pointer to the possibilities of the future (Rehman, 2009). As early as in 1931, Ranganathan in his five laws of library science dictated that “library is a growing organism.” Indeed, it is a system that has different but interdependent elements working together to achieve missions and roles that have emanated...
from the parent HLIs. In order to get clear and complete picture about HULIS, this section explores a range of issues and trends with respect to:

- Information resources: Printed versus Digital collections
- Ownership versus Access Model
- Information infrastructure
- Technology, particularly ICT
- Library Automation
- From library cooperation to consortium
- Restructuring: BPR is being implemented
- Library budget
- Library staff
- Library infrastructure
- Library buildings
- Partnership
- Respect and Attention
- Policies and Strategies
- Other General Observations

As a qualitative research, this study considers HULIS as a system and explores and identifies a number of pertinent issues and trends mainly to share common concerns and insights with other similar academic libraries found in Ethiopia. Moreover, it can identify potential areas that deserve in depth study.

Information resources: printed collections versus digital collections

Basically, academic libraries are established to function as information, education, and research centers (Opaleke, 2002). These are, and will remain, the legacy of academic libraries. With regard to the future of information resources in academic libraries, Curran (2002) stated that, although it is increasingly electronic and virtual, the academic library will continue to be a physical entity; the academic library’s existing print collections must continue to be stored on traditional shelves and made available. The printed format will not disappear as the digitization of respective works will not likely be completed instantly. A comparison can be made to the time Gutenberg invented printing, when everything had to be changed from hand written to print. It took two centuries and electronic conversion could take longer. In the least developed countries like Ethiopia it might even take a longer time, for the obvious reasons. The path for the future of Haramaya University Library and Information Services will not be unique because it shares insights with other academic libraries found in Ethiopia and in different corners of the world. In so doing, there will be opportunity for co-creation of values between and among stakeholders and partners.

In regard to information resources, HULIS will unquestionably maintain print collections in the short run. On the other hand, access to e-journals is on the rise and users have already started accessing them either from office or home. Thus, the number of users who used to visit the library to access e-information resources will decline gradually. This is what has been currently happening in HULIS. What is even more important is that the value of an academic library is not determined merely by the books on

its shelves but by the access to information it can provide (Curran, 2002). Montgomery (1993) articulated the future of libraries by stating “in the future, the information provision business will be even more competitive than it is today. Successful libraries will be good at catering to users. This will mean knowing users’ current and anticipated information needs and negotiating efficient and effective access on behalf of users with publishers, other libraries, and authors/creators (p. 28).”

Ownership versus access model

According to Kane (1999), for 2500 years the perceived success of a library has always been dependent upon its size; the bigger a library’s collection the greater its success. He further observed that in the last two decades of the twentieth century, the advent of the Internet enabled libraries to shift between the conventional ownership model and the current access model. He illustrated the philosophical differences basic to the ownership and access model as shown in Table 1 below.

The literature search for the last 15 years shows that the matter of owning vs. access has been addressed in the context of the evolving digital paradigm: print vs. electronic (Ameen, 2005). The use of information technology and access to electronic information networks is slowly transforming libraries from book centered to information centered institutions. Emphasis is shifting from book collection and storage to access and provision of electronic services (Chisenga, 2000). Therefore, as availability and access to e-information resources (mainly e-journals) increases, so does the availability and access to printed information resources. This trend informs us that HULIS will remain both an owner of print collections and a gateway for users to access e-information sources such as e-journals worldwide. In HULIS, ownership and access will go side by side, at least for the decade to come.

In connection with the ongoing paradigm shift, Ameen (2005) also stated that users will not always need to physically go into a library building and roam around the stacks to look for the desired material or to ask the librarian for assistance. However, they will still have to go into libraries because they cannot find all knowledge in digital form. Furthermore, in the developing countries libraries do not have enough resources to make available knowledge

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<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Access versus ownership: a comparison (adopted from Kane, 1999).</th>
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<td><strong>Traditional model</strong> (ownership)</td>
<td><strong>Contemporary model</strong> (access)</td>
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<td>The library as a warehouse of information</td>
<td>The library as a gateway to information</td>
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<td>The librarian as a collector of information</td>
<td>The librarian as a gatekeeper to information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bigger is better (emphasis on the size of a collection)</td>
<td>Availability is key (emphasis on the availability and delivery of information)</td>
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<td>The library as a “stand — alone” entity (with multiple comprehensive collections)</td>
<td>The library as a link in a network of shared resources</td>
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extensively in digital form. It can be said that, whether it is ownership, or access, or cooperation, the philosophy remains the same — benefit the users or clients with maximum access to a variety of information resources.

Progress in the formats of information delivery

The traditional role of libraries as centers for learning and knowledge is not challenged; however, their methods are under scrutiny, and the skills required for information professionals are evolving as a result (Stoddart, 2007). In this regard, in many Ethiopian universities and particularly in HULIS, the provision of e-information resources has evolved from diskette (early 1990s), to bibliographic CD-ROM (early 1990s), to CD-ROM which contain full-text information (mid–late 1990s), to Internet access (mid 1990s), to open access full-text e-journals (mid to late 2000s), to broadband Internet access (late 2000s), and to wireless Internet access (in 2009). Generally, the trend in information storage media shows an increase in storage capacity and quality, but its cost generally drops. Despite such motivation, Ethiopian University libraries could not seize this opportunity adequately.

Access is on the rise, but sustainability is in question

Currently, access to e-journals is increasing significantly. Consequently, HULIS is serving as a gateway to access more than 50,000 e-journals from different international open access initiatives. However, accessibility and sustainability issues of e-journals are not yet clearly addressed, mainly for two reasons. First, there is no adequate budget to maintain subscriptions of e-journals, so as to ensure sustainable access. Second, in Ethiopia as there is no library consortium (only a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed in 2004), it is impossible even to effect consortia purchasing which allow university libraries found in developing countries significant price reduction. Access to e-information resources is evidently on the rise, but sustainability seems not that much a concern for Ethiopian University libraries.

Information infrastructure

The first computer in HULIS

It was only in 1992—1993 that HULIS got its first computer in its history. The computer was meant only to provide literature search service using bibliographic databases like AGRICOLA, AGRIS, CAB Abstract, etc. The number of computers in HULIS was just seven in 1998. However, currently there are more than 270 computers for Internet services alone.

Currently, there is significant increase in the number of Internet connected workstations in the library. Despite such significant increase, when we compare Internet connected workstations found in the library with the ever increasing student enrollment, it is far from the minimum standard as the current ratio of Internet connected computers and users is about 1:47. As a result, only graduate students and final year undergraduate students have access to the Internet for an hour on a daily basis. In other words, availability and accessibility of e-information resources is inequitable among students or users. Therefore, there is a pressing need to quickly improve the existing ratio and serve the users in equitable way that they deserve to be served. An additional project is underway to make the HULIS graduate library a wireless zone for Internet connection. As a result, access to the Internet will be improved, as will the ratio.

Technology, particularly ICT

The pace with which technologies are changing impacts on the library services and the elements of the library system: information resources, library staff, library budget, infrastructure, library automation, organizational structure, library marketing, partnership, and policies and strategies.

On the other hand, unlike agrarian or industrial societies, in the information society the latest state-of-the-art technologies, innovated in developed nations, reach developing countries at a faster pace than its preceding societies. This has allowed academic libraries in developing countries to achieve many significant changes. As the technological advances are proliferating, there is a pressing need for a more nuanced understanding about the changing roles and philosophies of the university libraries and HLIs of Ethiopia.

HULIS and other university libraries in Ethiopia have changed from mere stores of collection of books to dynamic information centers. Technology alone will not bridge the information and knowledge divides (Khan, 2009) and it cannot bring about significant change in libraries; however, it could be a recipe for transformation if it is supported well with trained and motivated professional librarians and adequate budgets. If academic libraries like HULIS decide to invest in ICT, they must invest in the human element as the return enhances the overall transformation of the academic libraries in Ethiopia.

Library automation

In 2009 HULIS started providing automated library and information services, in part by employing more than 40 students as part of their professional practice — one of the best practices in the western countries.

From library cooperation to consortium

Since the Alexandrian library, libraries had been exchanging information materials through library cooperation because no single library can afford to provide their users with all that they need. HULIS cooperates with all university libraries in Ethiopia, including sharing information resources and librarians’ expertise, knowledge, and experience, particularly with colleges that provide technical and vocational education and training in agriculture, and thirteen newly established universities. There is no such library cooperation signed between HULIS and any other organizations.

Unlike many African countries, in Ethiopia there is no well-established consortium of any type, although there were different attempts to establish Consortium of Ethiopian Academic and Research Libraries on a national level. One such attempt was organized by Addis Ababa University.
Libraries System and ECA library (Economic Commission for Africa Library) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. However, due to various reasons, mainly lack of commitment and inability to sustain momentum of efforts, the consortium did not materialize. As a result, benefits like consortia purchasing and sharing of expertise are bypassing them.

Restructuring: BPR is being implemented

Currently, Business Process Reengineering (BPR) is being implemented in Haramaya University (HU) and its library. As a result, HULIS will redesign its services and reconfigure its facilities based on the new shared vision, mission and goals of HU and HULIS. HULIS is redesigning its information services and reconfiguring its facilities mainly to improve and expand its services for the betterment of the society. A new HULIS organizational structure which reflects the main activities from collection development to preservation will be designed not only to transform the conventional way of doing things but also to accommodate new and emerging library and information issues and trends adequately. Similarly, almost all universities in Ethiopia are implementing BPR mainly to change their traditional way of doing things.

Library budget

Budget for educational material is evidently on the rise, but no budget at all for the training of library staff

The central problem when one turns to higher education is no longer lack of recognition of the importance of library and information services, but one of the sheer expense of providing such services properly (Sturges & Neill, 2004), because everything the library does is underpinned by finance (Stevenson, 2000). According to the College of Agriculture (1980) in 1978—1979, the library budget was 155,551 Ethiopian birr ($12,345 USD). By 2009 the budget of HULIS had been $19,000,000 USD for educational materials (the purchase of books and journals) alone. However, the increasing student enrollment in Ethiopian universities is creating challenges even though the library budget is increasing. Over the last five years, although the budget for educational materials (books procurement and journal subscriptions) is increasing, there is no budget allocated to upgrade the knowledge and skills of professional librarians, particularly through long term trainings. In this regard, a compelling argument is that merely professional librarians, particularly through long term training, only two were library science diploma graduates. In 2009, HU has one staff member with a MSc and another one with a BSc, plus more than 86 permanent and temporary library staff. These figures illustrate that the HULIS is still short of qualified professional librarians, although the number of non-professional and temporary workers is on the rise.

There is also an acute shortage of paraprofessionals. Unfortunately, the status of paraprofessionals is not clear because they are neither academic staff nor administrative staff. Such indecision in recognizing their position not only serves to demoralize them but also has an adverse effect on recruiting new employees. As a result, failure to recognize their position has aggravated the existing shortage of paraprofessionals in the library. This is an issue about valuing professionals and trusting their roles as critical elements that can add value and bring about transformation in the library. Due to the acute shortage of professional librarians in Ethiopia, HULIS and Addis Ababa University libraries are recruiting computer science graduates to work in the libraries. This is a trend that presses for a philosophical debate as to whether having professional librarians or graduates from other related fields are appropriate in our existing local context.

Library infrastructure

Libraries can only have access to global information if the infrastructure is in place to enable them to do so (Chisenga, 2000). Naturally, infrastructure can be considered as a spearhead that helps university libraries to introduce and improve the provision of information services. The current local situation (such as ever climbing student enrolment, increasing budget for educational materials, etc.) and international trends (e.g. tremendous technological change,
and availability and accessibility of e-information resources) require HULIS to improve its ICT infrastructure and reconfigure some of the facilities and spaces to introduce new information services and improve the existing ones.

Library building

HULIS’s main library building was constructed more than 50 years ago, and annexes were built in the last five years to expand it. Currently, the construction of four new library buildings is underway. Praising such construction of new buildings, Lowy (2002) stressed that “the new buildings are a means to an end. But what goes on within the buildings - that’s what’s important” (p. 3). Thus, library buildings will curb many problems, beyond looking attractive. These expansions of library buildings in HU are a means to address the current ever-climbing student enrollment and to make available adequate space both for print collections and ICT infrastructure. In short, it is one of the means to achieving the ultimate mission of the university by solving existing problems and accommodating future needs of users.

Partnership (within and between university libraries)

Libraries are learning to adapt to the new imperatives of the 21st century and have recognized the role that partnerships and the importance of communities are playing in their new focus (Stoddart, 2007). HULIS is partnering with other departments in HU mainly to establish resource centers at college levels to provide library and information services adequately. However, in Ethiopia, libraries in general and academic libraries in particular have no network that support, for instance, the vision of the ministry of education and other related ministries like ministry of science and technology. Unfortunately, HULIS and many other university libraries in Ethiopia do not have a forum to participate in different library issues and other development issues of the country. They don’t have supportive relationships among themselves, except for exchanging and lending books to one another, and serving some external users from each others’ universities. Equally, the absence of Communities of Practice prevents the aspired relationships even though partnering is advisable to conduct information literacy training across different departments.

Respect and attention

Nowadays, HULIS has received respect and due attention from the concerned higher officials. However, paradoxically enough, five or so years ago, it was considered by some people as a dumping place for demoted and incapable workers from different departments and sections of the university. This made it difficult for university libraries to achieve the purpose of supporting the missions of their respective universities. The issue of respect and attention is about giving the right place and value that the library deserves, and higher officials of HLIS in Ethiopia should be expected to give due respect and attention to the university libraries if they want to get the best return on the investment in them.

Policies and procedures

HU has a strategic plan and ICT policy, including inter alia, to enhance HULIS to define the framework in which it provides library and information services. This helps HULIS to formulate its own strategic plan and ICT policy and other related policies within the broader framework of the university strategic plan.

Other general observations

Local solutions for local problems

Particularly due to the growth of HLIs in Ethiopia, university libraries in Ethiopia faced challenging situations because of lack of adequate space for users and information resources. However, for such problems and challenges, HULIS did not just talk about the problems; it also tried to address the local problems through local solutions. In this regard, to solve the reading space problem, HULIS addressed it in three ways. First, by adding more chairs and tables though the library’s standard is compromised. Second, by extending the library working hours from 13 h to 24 h a day, and third by constructing new library buildings and annexes.

University libraries and intergenerational development

Libraries, including university libraries, are, as Ranganathan said, “public institutions that serve the society.” University libraries are knowledge and learning institutions that collect, organize, manage, store, retrieve, disseminate and preserve knowledge and wisdom of all generations: past, present, and future to shape and build the image of the society and develop nations in a sustainable way. University libraries like HULIS are learning institutions that disseminate knowledge for the current generation and preserve it for the succeeding generations. Particularly, HULIS as an African or Ethiopian University library preserves much indigenous, historical and scientific information. Specifically, in Africa where there are not adequate libraries of all types, library services have been provided under the shade of tree (‘library without wall’) in most rural parts of the continent. Therefore, even if poverty drives that end, since time immemorial Africa has realized that the provision of library and information services (for that matter elementary education itself) is not something merely confined in a physical building. Africans have been serving their people in ‘a library without wall’ for centuries, though the world witnessed it more recently with the advent and proliferation of ICTs in a virtual library system in the 21st century.

University libraries and reading culture

“You are what you read” — anonymous

“You are what you read,” an old saying of western people, is true both at an individual and a national level. The university is a learning institution that generates and disseminates new knowledge, technologies, ideas and
Philosophies basically to bring about transformation at a societal level. To actualize this transformation, university libraries are levelers that make the playing field fair—“to be what you can be”—by making available and accessible printed and e-information resources and services to users. American President Thomas Jefferson aptly said “The leading nations are the reading nations.”

The lack of a reading culture in Ethiopia is among the challenges to overcome in reducing poverty. As a strategy, therefore, HULIS and other university libraries in Ethiopia should focus on creating a reading culture as one of its goals.

Unfortunately, what has been currently observed in many universities in Ethiopia, including Haramaya University, is a frustration that students (particularly undergraduate students) are mainly reading handouts prepared for the respective courses by lecturers. Evidence for this includes the information sources (case books, handouts, and their own lecture notes) that students are reading in libraries. For example, currently only a few students read reference and text books in the library, while the majority of students are reading handouts and their own lecture notes. Thus, a poor reading culture, plus "handout focused" reading habits, should be changed to develop students who read and have versatile knowledge. Ethiopian University libraries should work to have generations who have "encyclopedic knowledge" (who are versatile) rather than generations who merely have "bookish knowledge" (who are confined in their own subject areas).

**Ethiopian University libraries’ complementary roles**

Haramaya University and its library have been the only HULI and university library, respectively, that have served in the eastern part of Ethiopia for the last half a century. With no well-established libraries for the society to rely upon, HULIS had no other choice but to serve a more comprehensive role as a public, special, research, library, and depository library (for CGIAR research centers and various United Nations agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations). Similarly, except for Addis Ababa University (because there are many other libraries in the capital), almost all university libraries across Ethiopia are more or less serving their communities in the same way. University libraries like HULIS are playing complementary roles of social inclusion. Therefore, university libraries in Ethiopia, including HULIS, should set innovatively pragmatic objectives and forward-looking responsibilities, rules, and regulations that consider the ever-changing trends, paradigm shifts and diversified expectations of the parent HULIS’ actual users and potential users. HULIS has been undertaking such public responsibilities since 1973 (Hailesellasie I University, 1973). Accordingly, as agents of change, university libraries in Ethiopia should be considered as crucial in shaping and building informed and communicative citizens that, in return, will transform the country. As part of this role, HULIS and its librarians will need to focus on providing information literacy training in order to help users search for, find, manage, evaluate, and use information effectively and efficiently.

**HULIS and its geographical advantage**

HULIS’s success in filling the roles of many types of libraries is based on three factors. First and foremost, HULIS believes that academic libraries and other types of libraries have complementary roles which are geared ultimately towards creating informed and communicative citizens, and they are there to serve the public. Second, its rich and diversified collections (both print and electronic) have enabled HULIS to serve users from different corners of Ethiopia. Third, its physical location has favored HULIS to be the only library and information services provider in the eastern part of Ethiopia.

**Impetus for change**

A major impetus for change in HULIS has come from the inherent readiness to cope with the current growth in student population, to address the current trends and paradigm shifts in the academic library environment, and to optimize opportunities. So, what does the future hold for HULIS and other university libraries in Ethiopia? The future of HULIS and other academic libraries in Ethiopia is somewhat optimistic, based on visible signs that can lead to prosperous decades. Among the impetuses for change are:

- The government’s vision and commitment to transform university libraries into e-libraries. In this regard, the Ministry of Education has already started activities towards this noble goal.
- The concern of HU’s top officials and their unreserved effort to transform the library.
- The change imperatives for HULIS includes massification— the shift from elite to mass access to undergraduate education (Bundy, 2004).
- Ianuzzi (2000) emphasizes that Academic libraries must continue to redefine their role within the teaching and research missions of their universities. So does HULIS.
- Currently there are practical efforts to strengthen the Consortium of Ethiopian Academic and Research Libraries (CEARL), for which the Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2004.
- International Open Access Initiatives are bridging the gap that we have in accessing e-information resources (particularly e-journals and e-books).
- BPR is being implemented, and some processes will be reengineered to bring about a paradigm shift from service-centered to user-centered library and information services provision.
- A potential expansion of information infrastructure (particularly ICT) and wireless technology at HU. In the near future, HULIS will be a wireless zone on campus for Internet connection.
- Currently information literacy training is understood as a necessary component to create access and best use of e-information resources.
- Physical infrastructure upgrading is now visible. Currently, in addition to the HULIS main building, four new separate library buildings are being constructed for Law, Technology, and Veterinary Medicine faculties, and for female students. Female students have equal access as male students to the main library. In addition,
it is hoped that female students will be empowered by accessing their own library and information services.

- HERQA (Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency) of Ethiopia is conducting an internal assessment towards quality assurance that will enable HULIS and other university libraries in Ethiopia to maintain standards to ensure excellence in LIS.
- HU has a strategic plan and ICT policy. Thus, in order to achieve its supportive roles effectively and successfully, HULIS will also be in a better position to prepare its own strategic plan in line with HU’s main strategic plan.

These and other factors will define HU Libraries and Information Services’ strategy to cope with the future trends and paradigm shifts in the library and information environment around the world.

Summing up: sharing insights

The current general practices and insights in HULIS can be summarized:

- The raison d’etre of universities is to generate new knowledge and impart it for the betterment of the society. Accordingly, the very presence of university libraries like HULIS is paramount for the learning process.
- HULIS and other similar university libraries are at the forefront of the planned transformation in Higher Learning Institutions in Ethiopia. Respect and attention are needed from all stakeholders and partners to actualize the envisaged futures.
- In the last five or so years, visible signs of change are now discernible in HULIS.
- Yesterday HULIS was a traditional library; today it is a hybrid library; and tomorrow surely it will be a digital library.
- Crises always give opportunities. To convert the challenges of massification into opportunities, Ethiopian universities and university libraries must be the first to go for innovative, pragmatic and forward looking solutions.
- Since its founding, HULIS and many other Ethiopian University libraries found far from the capital, have been achieving their roles mainly to achieve social inclusion and inclusive development. This will help them to evolve to their emerging and expanding roles.
- In HULIS in particular and in Ethiopia in general, there was a tradition of library, but not library services. Today, we are changing from library services to information services.
- Though it is in a nascent stage, HULIS has been moving from collection to connection, and it is also moving from wired communication to wireless. However, HULIS is still a social place for human communication.
- The classic function of libraries has not changed, but the scope and the techniques to fulfill this function have broadened. Indeed, content formats and delivery mechanisms have been diversifying to meet the changing needs and information seeking behaviors of users. In HULIS there is a shift from service-oriented to a user-centered approach.
- Academic libraries are inevitably expensive to provide. Wherever they are in the world, they need to provide access to large quantities of costly publications, many of them imported, and they are likely to require elaborate bibliographic and related support services. Their staff must necessarily be highly trained. Because academic libraries are so costly, it is arguable that they are the type of library which suffers most damagingly from the poverty of African countries (Sturge & Neill, 2004).
- Library buildings are a means to an end. Accordingly, the new library annexes and buildings will be a solution (if not the solution) for the massification of higher education in Ethiopia.
- Due to the continued growth in student enrollment in Ethiopia, HULIS and other university libraries in Ethiopia have been struggling to address two basic issues: 1) to provide reading space for users, and 2) to create access to ICT technologies and information resources. The training of librarians has been ignored and many librarians are not equipped with the knowledge and skills needed.
- Librarians are indispensable, technology alone cannot be panacea.
- At least for the decade to come, HULIS will serve its users with both printed and e-information resources, and ownership and access models will go side by side.
- As BPR is implemented, the reform might bring a new organizational culture, which can help HULIS serve users effectively and efficiently.
- HULIS should use existing and new partnerships for the co-creation of values and the development of a culture of collaboration.
- Having a strategic plan geared towards the vision and mission of the parent institution will help university libraries to achieve their roles in a better way.
- Information literacy is a tool that HULIS and other similar university libraries in Ethiopia should optimize to best use the open access e-information, and above all to create informed and communicative citizens. As a philosophy, HULIS is working to produce communicative citizens, not only informed ones.
- We should not close our eyes to emerging trends and paradigm shifts. Identifying the problems is only half a solution, and university libraries in Ethiopia should focus on identifying solutions.

Conclusion

University libraries in Ethiopia are at a slightly different level of development; therefore, they can share new insights and can learn from their successes and failures. The envisaged transformations at HULIS and other university libraries in Ethiopia cannot occur on their own; rather issues, trends, and paradigm shifts must be explored and approaches identified to meet needs. Fortunately, libraries are transforming themselves by redefining library philosophies, revitalizing missions, and adopting tremendous technological changes that have been shaping and building the image of academic libraries worldwide.

HULIS is not receding; rather, it is moving progressively in the right direction in terms of achieving the right place and
value in the society. It is important to build on this and devise a road map for future directions to achieve the roles of serving the parent institutions and, ultimately, the nation itself. Respect and recognition are needed for Ethiopian University libraries to achieve this. HULIS and other similar university libraries in Ethiopia should try their best to win the hearts and minds of stakeholders and partners.

**Future directions**

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."

Alan Kay

It is clear that exploring key issues and discussing changing trends and paradigm shifts in academic libraries paves the way to setting clear future directions. To re-invent itself for the future, HULIS (and other similar university libraries in Ethiopia) should focus on the following points as future strategies:

**HULIS as a hub for learning**

HULIS should strive and work hard to become a hub for the teaching and learning, research and community engagement and outreach activities of the parent Higher Learning Institution, Haramaya University. Over time HULIS should transform itself into a learning center like those found in developed nations and to be the leader among university libraries in Ethiopia. At different times, the library is being named as information center, knowledge resource center, learning center, and learning hub, and others. Change in naming indeed reflects different philosophies and purposes that libraries are expected to serve the parent institutions in particular and, above all, the nation in general. HULIS is expected to unlearn some of its traditional activities and should continuously learn and change itself to cope with and fit with the ever growing multidimensional trends and paradigm shifts that have been occurring in the academic libraries environment. Finally, academic libraries need to promote a culture of knowledge-sharing, collective learning and collaboration (Jain & Mutula, 2008).

**HULIS as a Fast Response Library**

To be effective, libraries need to measure their performance rigorously against the expectations and real needs of their customers. The library of the future will need to be a customer sensitive, knowledge creating, and agile enterprise (Apostolous & Skiadas, 1999). Also, HULIS needs to be organized as a Fast Response Library that should value its users and respond fast to their ever changing information needs. As a Fast Response Library, HULIS’s old understandings about users and the nature and purposes of library should be replaced by new insights. HULIS should act quickly to learn to leverage the changing trends and paradigm shifts to the benefits of HULIS and its parent HLI.

**Future services and expanding roles**

The future services of HULIS go beyond the traditional library services. In other words, as a university library the future services of the HULIS should focus, inter alia, on three areas: 1) creating access to and ensuring the sustainability of e-information resources and services; 2) information literacy training provision; and 3) the provision of personalized information services on web 2.0 technologies.

"If you don’t know where you are going, you will wind up some where else."

Great Futurist Yogi Berra

It is impossible to build an informed and communicative society without libraries. Therefore, as a future direction, HULIS and other university libraries in Ethiopia should expand their roles and involvement in:

- cultivating reading culture of the society.
- preaching lifelong learning.
- achieving their complimentary roles (with public and national library) so as to achieve social inclusion and inclusive development.
- participating actively in national library agenda.

**Marketing library and information services**

In principle, libraries provide information services mainly in two ways: proactive information services and reactive information services. Specially, promotion of library’s information resources and services help both information providers (libraries) and information users. For academic libraries like HULIS, marketing libraries paves the way to serve users in a proactive manner and makes users able to identify available relevant information easily, thus saving their time.

HULIS can build on its experience in its information resources and services through different ways by: displaying new arrivals; sending newly acquired book titles accession lists and e-information resources (e-journals) via email and print formats to staff; posting information on notice boards in around campus; and, producing brochures to promote e-information resources (mainly e-journals). Also, recently HULIS developed its own website which is accessed locally. The existing library promotion focused on newly acquired information resources and services; and this can be expanded. In addition to promoting HULIS’s information resources and services, it must market the library’s role more widely.

**Public–public partnership and public-private partnership**

Ethiopia is working hard to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including achieving access to universal primary education. This should encourage the government to establish more universities (and indeed university libraries) to meet the needs of the younger generation. Unfortunately, it seems challenging if not impossible, to afford the same in the existing Ethiopian situation.

In order to share information resources and expertise, it is recommended that HULIS and other university libraries in Ethiopia build partnerships with different public and private university libraries within Ethiopia and across the continent, and above all with different libraries found in developed nations. In other words, HULIS should engage not
only in public—public partnership (partnership between and among public or government university Libraries), but also in public-private partnership (partnership between, for instance HULIS and other private university libraries). It is only then HULIS and other university libraries in Ethiopia can share information resources and services to cater to users’ information needs.

Information literacy

Information literacy is one of HULIS’s future strategies to make the best use of available e-information resources. As Curran (2002) clearly stated, libraries can provide access to collections, but students and others must learn how to best use the service. Libraries build capacity by promoting information literacy and providing support and training for the effective use of information resources (Nicholson, 2009). To support and attain the objectives of its parent HLI, HULIS should provide information literacy training to users and should work hard to constitute it as compulsory in the different programs and departments in the university so as to produce information literate and communicative graduates. It is not only the work of librarians, but it is a job that can be owned by the entire university community. According to Bundy (2004) the three key reasons why information literacy needs to be owned by the whole university community are: 1) information literacy is about learning how to learn in the information intensive 21st century; 2) the lifelong learning agenda; and, 3) the rapid obsolescence of content in professional first degree programs, making the knowledge of how to learn, and how to find, evaluate, and apply new information, more important for professionals and their professions.

Library as a social space — as a place for entertainment

The academic library as place holds a unique position on campus. No other building can so symbolically and physically represent the academic heart of an institution (Freeman, 2005). It is true that HULIS is not merely a physical building, but it is also a place for entertainment for students as they do not have other entertainment options in the vicinity of the university. In the future conventional libraries will be changed to flexible social space that ultimately concerns users’ needs. HULIS should change its philosophy and effort towards these needs. The notion of library as place remains important in both physical and virtual contexts. Increasingly, this sense of place serves strategically to further the development of new roles (Lougee, 2002). A flexible learning space which provides a hybrid of information resources, along with both collaborative and independent workspaces, is the 21st-century interpretation of the library as a social space (Bryant, Matthews, & Walton, 2009). Planners are thinking in new ways about how to design libraries as places for learning rather than primarily as storehouses of information (Davenport, 2006).

Own the change

Change is natural, although it is not easy. It is inescapable and can happen through evolutionary or revolutionary ways. HULIS as an academic library should always be ready either to initiate or to manage the emerging trends for the betterment of library and information services and thereby for the transformation of the parent university. For HULIS and other similar university libraries of Ethiopia, change is something that deserves management. In the past five or so years, many radical changes have occurred in HULIS that make it a hybrid library. As a hybrid library, it has already started transitioning from being a traditional library to becoming an ideal digital library, and is somewhere in the middle between the two.

Today, HULIS is not only a conventional library that is meant for spot reading and checking out of books (loan service), but, as it is situated in eastern rural part of Ethiopia 520 km away from the capital of Ethiopia, for students it is also a social place to establish interpersonal communication and relationships among themselves. In short, university libraries do not only strive to create informed citizens, but also to create communicative citizens. In addition to meeting persons physically in the library, by reading books and journals, we are communicating with the great minds of the writers. As a university library, HULIS is a place in which users, particularly students, communicate interpersonally, in a group, culturally and scholarly, within and between themselves.

HULIS’s aspiration to achieve equitable access to information

In a country like Ethiopia, university libraries are ideal information and knowledge centers. They are well organized information and learning centers that strive to serve as many and diversified users as possible. Therefore, in the future HULIS should focus on creating equitable access to information not only for the university population, but also for the public at large. In so doing, it can improve the quality of life of the people which in turn can have a great impact on society. It should then be recognized that libraries, above all, serve the society and build the nation. Libraries shape society and society shapes libraries.

HULIS should move towards these new roles and future directions and implement a number of strategies that take into account technological extremes: the existing local situations in Ethiopia and the ever changing global technological environment. As a strategy, HULIS should think of the application of a new concept called “Glocalization” which considers adequately the local situations within the umbrella of globalization. As learning institutions, sharing insights is beneficial, but we must also capitalize on the existing local situations. Usually blanket recommendations and prescriptions are not the remedy for the local situations.

References


