

# Support services for remote users in selected public university libraries in Kenya

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## **Abstract:**

The study was undertaken to explore the remote users of services available public university libraries in Kenya. Scarce literature was available locally on the subject of the study. Provision of quality and relevant information services to support teaching, learning and research remains a central objective of libraries in higher education world over. Higher education institutions in Kenya continue to experience unprecedented growth in student population against limited human capital and physical infrastructure, among the library services. This reality has prompted Universities to adopt different education delivery models; distant learning, e-learning, and part time modules to accommodate the extra numbers seeking higher education. Depending on the preferred module, the students can be categorized into three main groups: on-campus, off-campus and remote user groups. Higher learning standards require that all users to have equitable and inclusive access to resources. This study explores the nature and availability of support services and resources available for remote library users in public university libraries in Kenya. The research methodology adopted was a descriptive research design; where qualitative data was collected using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The findings revealed that public university libraries in Kenya have various forms of resources and services that can support remote user needs. However they face certain challenges that hinder the use of the available remote user resources and services in providing equitable access to information services to all its types of users. Key among the challenges was that remote users were not identified as a special user group in the libraries studied contrary to what the study grounded. The results of the study are discussed under three main thematic areas: services for remote users, facilities available for remote users, and policies and regulations that govern remote use of library resources. Equally included in the study are discussions, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings besides identified informational gaps for further research.