AUTOMATING LIBRARY SERVICES:
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.

BY
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ABSTRACT

Academic libraries especially in Europe and the U.S.A. have largely been computerized and this has helped increase bibliographic utilization and opened new avenues of services, e.g., in forming automated information networks. Computerisation has made savings in data input by integrating files that were physically separated and redundantly produced and yet has increased search capabilities due to the highly versatile way integrated computerized systems are able to manipulate information in functionally different files. Patrons are able to interact with the catalogues, a service that is not available in manual catalogues, and information becomes more accessible. This has also led to more flexibility in personnel assignments thus enhancing the library service.

The sheer efficiency of computerized service lies in the integration of files and also in their capability to manipulate data repetitively without getting bored or tired and always giving correct output if the input is right. This is the quality libraries have tried to exploit and found very valuable.

It is with this light that this study is taken with a view of analysing what automated service can do for the University of Nairobi Library Services or for any other library which is as big.
Chapter One attempts to give background information on the University of Nairobi and how it has developed into a conglomerate institution from very humble beginnings. It also analyses the objectives of the institution, its administrative structure and that of the Library system, and the responsibilities and powers of the Librarian.

Chapter Two describes in detail the existing systems in the library, and their constraints. The two chapters are the basis upon which the rest of the work is built. Chapters Three and Four discuss in detail the process of automating a library, the best way to select a computer system and its implementation. Chapter Five looks into the problems that have hindered the introduction of IT (Information Technology) in developing countries and options for consideration. Chapter Six deals with recommendations and conclusion. It is rather prescriptive but the suggestions given are but guidelines to be used for computer specifications which the author feels should be enhanced in the system the library develops and what it should strive toward.