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**A marriage in community of people, workflows and practices:
How Covid-19 pandemic propelled a blending of Inter-Library
Loans and Reference Desk services at the Botswana International
University of Science and Technology (BIUST)**

Ayanda A. Lebele

Botswana International University of Science and Technology, lebelea@biust.ac.bw

Galefete Leswadula

Botswana International University of Science and Technology, leswadulag@biust.ac.bw

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<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/iatul/2022/woc/9>



A marriage in community of people, workflows and practices: How Covid-19 pandemic propelled a blending of Inter-Library Loans and Reference Desk services at the Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST)

G Leswadula & A Lebele

www.biust.ac.bw

BIUST | *Driving Change*



- Contextualizing BIUST Library
- The case presented
 - **RQ1. How ILL & reference desk services blended for online document delivery service?**
 - **RQ2:How repurposed services fit into the global Post Covid 19 environment?**
 - **How library staff & users be can sustain the new predominantly net-based lending services?**
 - **RQ4. learning insights to inform advocacy for effective information sharing during emergencies**

- BIUST is a Public STEM university – since 2004; situated on junction of country's economic corridor. (ie key to educational & Economic Development)
- Operated from present location since 2014- Most structures are makeshift space (including library)
- FTE of 2000 students ; about 470 staff complement
- Library staff : 18 spread though 3 functional (Admin; Info- Support & Resource Management

High Level Initiatives Related to Information Support:

DELIVER RESPONSIVE LIBRARY SERVICES FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE	BUILD A HIGH PERFORMING TEAM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Implement user specific initiatives	Financial resource management strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Content Management Systems (Knowledge management)	Foster library partnerships and collaborations that enhance BIUST visibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Student life experience initiatives	Process Mapping & Documentation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Library resource management strategy	Compliance to regulatory bodies

Information Support Services

- Reference Desk
- Inter-Library Loan (ILL) Services
- User registration
- Orientation
- Faculty Liaison
- ILL Instructional services collection building and sharing;
- Serving as the needed conduit with all types of stakeholders

The case presented

- Adopts a critical realists' approach: explorative, descriptive with intent of service improvement
- Industry / service & performance report (with no pre-set Case study Questions)
- Review of related literature
- Deductions from a 2021 survey that yielded poor response

Case Questions

RQ1. How did BIUST library blend ILL & reference desk services into a context specific online document delivery service?

RQ2. How does the repurposed document delivery services fit into the global Post Covid 19 Pandemic teaching and learning environment?

RQ3. How can BIUST library staff and users be enabled to sustain the newly developed predominantly net-based lending services?

RQ4. What learning insights can be used to inform advocacy for strengthened library gatekeeping and licensing systems for effective sharing of information for continued research and scholarship during emergencies

RQ1. How did BIUST library blend ILL & reference desk services into a context specific online document delivery service?

- Services encroached into tradition Collection Development activities : eg
 - Switch from pay to read resources to OA/ free
 - Liaison with information service providers for repackaging content or to enable virtual access
- ILL & Ref Librarians in intranet, internet information sharing (transition into Marketing & systems librarianship)
- ILL & Ref through AskLibrarian became institutional and community communication conduits (for users, staff, information vendors)
- Support in users personal development & social support (e.g. managing fear, release if Covid information, guide to non-library related services etc

RQ1. How did BIUST library blend ILL & reference desk services into a context specific online document delivery service? (cont)

- Ref & ILL librarians in the forefront of “disaster management strategy” for safety of users & librarians. (e.g., ensuring no access to red-tapped print collections)
- Digital optimization of all other library services (e.g., online user registration; user guide, item renewals; instant short cataloguing; SDI, subject database services to show case e-books and e-journals,, Live Chat/Instant Messages, document delivery,
- Ref & ILL Librarians imparted Information literacy & Research skills; offered consultation services and search appointments for students and faculties
- Researchers requested for research support services (access to databases; citation indices; research management tools etc while students learning resources and textbooks; (similar to Zhou 2021: 9)
- Furthermore, lectures needed support in learning management systems; library staff in accessing institutional governance documents & process maps
- Library Introduced Service level agreements; turn around timer : *quicker inperson / online assistance to the users & set monitoring documents*

RQ2. How does the repurposed document delivery services fit into the global Post Covid 19 Pandemic teaching and learning environment?

- University shifted to blended learning landscape – Physical & Virtual
 - emergence of consolidated information/ knowledge infrastructure for ease of access and usage
 - Creative space: partitioning
 - Service / process maps

Echos Zhou 2021:5 observation of resultant digital transformation was characterised by technological & Organizational

- Shut down of library building did not translate to shut down of library services (similar to Zhou 2021:5 – China continued services while Italy suspended most services)
 - ILL immediately switched to strict electronic document delivery ; WhatsApp & Messenger featured in field that was predominantly email
 - Thin line between private & official space: personal phone numbers; emails, gadgets; etc
 - All time- Always learning : from fellow librarians; ILL partners & Users, service providers trained in introduced interactive user engagement solutions

- Organizational & cultural barriers
 - General prejudice / conservative view of online learning/ online library service as secondary– stereotypes about libraries in learning (Zhou, 2021: 10)
 - Limited technical infrastructure & devices for information access and sharing
 - Existing reading culture (preference of print & lack of digital competencies (even librarians not trained for online reference)
 - Copyright limitations; lack of supportive legislation & policies
 - Undefined/ not tested monitoring processes for users & staff supervision – (potentials for risks)
- Limited digitized learning content (Zhou, 2021)
- Limited funds

RQ3. How can BIUST library staff and users be enabled to sustain the newly developed predominantly net-based lending services?

- ❖ Library needs a digital transformation strategy for the new paradigm (recommended by (Zhou, 2021)(Virtual learning platforms)
 - Transformation of Processes; Business model & organizational culture (Kumbhar & Bidve 2016:14)
 - *Domain transformation*
 - *Enhanced Access to internet- “Information era”*
 - *more demand for computers and internet in library*
- ❖- *online User Education classes: for users & capacity building for librarians*
- ❖-

RQ4. What learning insights can be used to inform advocacy for strengthened library gatekeeping and licensing systems for effective sharing of information for continued research and scholarship during emergencies

- ❖ New strategies for content curation: *selection, organization and presentation of online content.*
 - digital library resources and services*
 - e-learning*
- ❖ Strengthened capacity on Web Technologies ; Use of different software for communication and share of information
- ❖ Support teaching and learning online through capacity building intervention(Tshekea & Chigwada, 2020:58). (including Continued Professional growth programs for library staff)
- ❖ Institutional policies to support/ protect encroaching into private space (eg late night requests; use of private gadgets/ emails/ phone numbers etc)
- ❖ *concerted efforts by institutional management on the procurement of adequate and state-of-the-art ICT tools*

Questions & Comments can be directed to :

Dr. Ayanda A Lebele

**Director, Library
Services**

Tel: (+267) 4931381
lebelea@biust.ac.bw

Mr Galefete Leswadula

Inter-Library Services

Tel: (+267) 4931394
leswadulag@biust.ac.bw