M- Agricultural information Services in Zimbabwean Libraries: Drawbacks and opportunities in facilitating access to information to agricultural production.

By

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Abstract

Generally, the Information and Communication revolution has pervaded every facet of human lives and agriculture is no exception. It is ironic that while electricity was lauded as one of the humankind's greatest invention embraced by many, in Africa and the developing world most rural communities still suffer from e-exclusion. However, the mobile telephony has reached where no other inventions might have reached and this has had a far reaching impact on communication, agriculture and food production. This paper seeks to explore the possibilities of mobile agricultural information services in Zimbabwe with a special focus on libraries and m-services. It will also explore how traditionally experienced smallholder farmers are utilizing mobile technology to access current information relating to the market prices of crops, banking services and weather patterns. It will further seek to explore how mobile -phone based services are providing small scale farmers opportunities to access market prices, negotiate better deals with traders and improve the timing of getting their crops to market. It will also investigate the strategies that libraries are employing to providing e-agricultural library services to small scale farmers in the rural areas. The mobile services sector and the library and information sector potential are matrixed to a potentially viable service for Zimbabwe with regards to increased agricultural production and food security. The writers will also seek to find out the extent to which Zimbabwe can utilize mobile services to promote access to agricultural information for small-scale farmers. The paper will also seek to find out the extent to which mobile technologies

are transforming agriculture amongst small scale farmers in Zimbabwe. The paper will highlight best practices with regards to the use of m-technologies to enhance the sharing and exchange of agricultural information services and realise Millennium development goals in the drive to eradicate poverty.

Key words: m-libraries; access to information; agriculture; virtual library; agrometereorology

Biography:

Collence Takaingenhamo Chisita is a Principal Lecturer and Researcher based at Harare Polytechnic's School of Information Sciences. He specialises in lecturing and researching on various subjects ranging from Use of ICT's in Information Management, Information Retrieval, Research, Knowledge Management, Records Management and Information Consultancy among others. Chisita has a keen and wider interest in the modern technologies of the Knowledge Age. Chisita is a holder of a Master of Sciences in Information Sciences, Bachelor of English and Communications, Higher Diploma in Information Sciences, Diploma in Public Relations and Communications. Currently, he is studying for a Doctorate on Information Science with a focus on Use of ICT's in enhancing knowledge exchange and sharing. Chisita is a renowned writer and speaker who has presented papers at various fora including Euro Africa Partnership for Research in ICT's, Promoting African European Research Infrastructure Partnerships (PAERIP), IFLA, among others. He is also a member of the Records Archives and Information Management of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Library Association and International Association of Sound and Audio Visual Archives.