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# Modern library services in developing world: An overview of Aga Khan University Libraries

Sadaf Shahid

*Aga Khan University*, [sadaf.shahid@aku.edu](mailto:sadaf.shahid@aku.edu)

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## *Modern Library Services in Developing World: An Overview of Aga Khan University Libraries*

*Sadaf Shahid*

### ***Abstract:***

Excellent library services are the backbone of any library. Keeping this in view the libraries are at Aga Khan University providing efficient library and information services to its users according to the present era of digital world. The purpose of this paper is to share the current and upcoming services of AKU libraries across all international campuses in three continents in the context of global developments in the field of library and information science; to motivate other libraries in the region to adopt such a resources and services. Aga Khan University libraries are committed to provide user centered services to its users; simultaneously traditional library services with modern library services according to the existing information age in supports of its user's research, teaching and learning activities.

***Keywords:*** 1. Electronic Reference Services—Libraries. 2. Aga Khan University Library—Reference Services

### ***Background:***

Aga Khan University is a private and autonomous university based on the principles of quality, access, impact and relevance, the university has campuses and programs in Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan and United Kingdom. Its facilities include hospitals, nursing schools, and medical colleges, Institutes for Educational Development, the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilization the Graduate School of Media and Communications, the East African Institute and the Institute for the Study of Human Development.<sup>1</sup>

Aga Khan University also runs an Examination Board and manages the French Medical Institute for Children in Kabul, Afghanistan. Faculties of Arts and Sciences are in Karachi, Pakistan in the planning phase and in Arusha, Tanzania will establish soon.<sup>1</sup>

Aga Khan University (AKU) has a network of ten libraries, though small in six countries of South Asia, East Africa and the UK. It's the only university in developing world that is providing health and education through its eleven campuses spread across six countries and three continents.

### ***Introduction:***

Aga Khan University Libraries are directed by Mr. Normand Demers. He is a first University Librarian appointed in 2008. University Librarian's Office is a responsible for overall management and development of Libraries and Learning Resources across AKU international campuses; office facilitates the creation of a network of AKU Libraries by maintaining AKU libraries' individual identity.<sup>2</sup>

## *Modern Library Services in Developing World*

Aga Khan University Libraries provide strong support to faculty, students and researchers for their study, teaching and research through a network of ten libraries. There are 49 employees altogether in ten libraries including 03 from University Librarian's Office. Each library is headed by individual library head. Following table lists the AKU Libraries with location and number of staff:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>No. of Staff</i>
Faculty of Health Sciences Library	Karachi, Pakistan	15
Institute for Educational Development Library	Karachi, Pakistan	04
Professional Development Centre Library	Gilgit, Pakistan	03
Professional Development Centre Library	Chitral, Pakistan	01
Faculty of Health Science Library	Nairobi, Kenya	08
Faculty of Health Science Library	Dar as Salaam, Tanzania	03
Institute for Educational Development Library	Dar as Salaam, Tanzania	02
Faculty of Health Science Library	Kampala, Uganda	03
Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilization Library	London, UK	06
Graduate School of Media and Communications	Nairobi, Kenya	01

Brief introductions of these libraries are as under:

### ***Faculty of Health Sciences Library, Karachi:***

The Faculty of Health Sciences Library has the best collection of medical literature in Pakistan, both in print and digital formats. It has access to more electronic resources than many universities in Europe or the United States. The primary objective of the collection is to provide current and up-to-date scholarly and scientific literature. Each year, approximately 1,000 new print books are added to the collection.

The library contains more than 28,000 books in print and provides online access to 100,000 eBooks. The library also houses 40,000 bound volumes of scholarly journals and has online access to 8,000 scientific journals available from 25 different online resources.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Institute for Educational Development Library, Karachi:***

The library at Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development provides resources to support the Institute's academic and research work.

The library provides a range of resources in print and electronic mediums to support teaching, learning and research activities of AKU-IED. Over 35,000 books, 250,000 eBooks and

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almost 5000 e-Journals from all over the world are available for academic or research pursuits. This also includes a large collection of reference books.<sup>2</sup>

***Professional Development Centre Library, Gilgit:***

Professional Development Centre, North (PDCN) Library, is the first educational automated library of Gilgit Baltistan-Pakistan, which is providing excellent services and facilities to fulfill the information needs of its users. Library provides resources to support the institute's professional programmes and is selectively open to others.

It has 250,000 eBooks and 21,000 books, selective thesis and subscribed well known and leading national and international educational journals with full-text access. A collection of reference books, audio-video cassettes, CDs/DVDs and an internal online digital system is also available to its users.<sup>2</sup>

***Professional Development Centre Library, Chitral:***

The library provides support to course participants, faculty, and educational researchers. The library has an audio-visual section having CDs, DVDs and audio/video recordings of educational programmes and activities.

The library has an over 8,000 books and subscribed 16 international journals and four national newspapers.<sup>2</sup>

***Faculty of Health Science Library, Nairobi:***

The library supports the functions of the University in realizing quality education and health care. The library has vast current resources in all formats to its users and proud to have rich collection in the health sciences area and will endeavor to make this a better collection and a point of reference for other institutions offering similar courses in Kenya.<sup>2</sup>

The library contains more than 11000 books, 21000 eBooks and maintains linkages with AKU library in Karachi and other libraries in Kenya for sharing resources.

***Faculty of Health Science Library, Dar as Salaam***

The library has an over 4000 books in print. In addition to this the library's educational resources include audio and video DVDs, CDs and VCDs with a fully equipped multimedia center. The library also has a collection of dissertations, educational reports and journal articles.

***Institute for Educational Development Library, Dar as Salaam:***

The library provides resources to support the Institute's academic and research work. It has an over 5,000 books in print. The library also subscribes databases like EBSCOHOST etc.

***Faculty of Health Science Library, Kampala:***

The library has an important role as a major partner in teaching, learning and research activities of the Nursing programmes. The FHS Kampala library complies with the rules and regulations for university libraries issued by the National Council for Higher Education of Uganda (UNCHE).<sup>2</sup>

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The Library has a collection of more than 6,000 books and other reference material.

### ***Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilization Library, London:***

The library aims to meet the teaching needs of the Institute's academic programmes and to build a significant and distinctive scholarly research collection on Muslim cultures and societies.

It also has a unique collection that does not duplicate the major collections contained in other libraries nearby.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Graduate School of Media and Communications, Nairobi:***

The library incorporates student resources with a selection of print and online books, journals, databases and media products relevant to journalism and communications disciplines.

This facility provides space for students to work independently and in groups and access to a wide range of digital content. It has more than 400 collections as it is a new campus established last year and library becomes operational in the year 2016.<sup>2</sup>

***Mission of AKU libraries*** "Aga Khan University Libraries network is committed to providing the University community with access to comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, information resources, in print and digital formats, in support of its research, teaching and learning activities."<sup>2</sup>

According to above mentioned mission; below are some services at Aga Khan University Libraries across three continents:

- Reference Services
- Lending Services
- Contents Alert Service
- Inter Library Loan
- Inquiries and Advisory Service
- Article Indexing
- Photocopy
- Mobile Library

Despite having the fact that University is in developing world, AKU libraries are providing advanced library services, through state-of-the-art systems.

- Learning Resource Centers
- Remote Access to Online Databases
- Information Literacy Sessions
- Term & Research Paper Assistance
- Indexing of Pakistani Journal Articles (in Faculty of Health Sciences Library, Karachi)

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With the help of Higher Education Commission Pakistan, Faculty of Health Sciences and Institute for Educational Development Libraries in Karachi are subscribing 25 databases. Apart from HEC support both libraries are subscribing 08 databases more.

AKU libraries in Karachi are also subscribing 25,000 eBooks which are accessible through campus-wide network. Users can also access to online resources through virtual private network (VPN) even they are off campus from anywhere in the world.

AKU Libraries in Karachi also have an eBook database “**eBooks Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)**” which allows a comprehensive and powerful search experience for 110,000 eBooks in Medical and Non-Medical disciplines.

Users of Faculty of Health Sciences Karachi Library can easily access all electronic resources on intranet where all e-Journals, Databases and e-Books are accessible, with also having a window of FHS PubMed search from where FHS library users can download over 06 million full text articles from AKU subscribed databases.

Libraries in East Africa are also subscribing many databases which include Health Internetwork Access to Research Initiative (HINARI) and the Programme for Enhancement of Research Information (PERI).

Institute for Educational Development Library Karachi also have intranet for their users from where users can easily access e-Journals, eBooks, databases and AKU’s Institutional repository (e-Commons)

In 2009 AKU Libraries adopted the Integrated Library System “SYMPHONY” and starts giving the services to its users through Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) before this Aga Khan University Libraries were using some off- the-shelf and in housed developed applications.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Features of Online Public Access Catalogue:***

- Search and locate all library resources across all AKU libraries
- Users can renew their material and change passwords and address through ‘*My Account*’ option
- Users can see *New Arrivals* of all AKU libraries for last seven, fifteen, thirty and sixty days
- Patrons can place hold on items in their own library which are currently on loan
- Through ‘*Knowledge Portal*’ patrons can access all online resources across all AKU libraries as well as access on online newspapers from USA, Pakistan and East Africa
- Patrons can easily search e-Books across all libraries through ‘*e-Books Only*’ option
- Researchers can easily make their bibliographies by selecting their required materials in different formats like in *EndNote*, *RefWorks* and *Zotero*
- OPAC also display the list of hottest title, author and subjects according to the number of issuance of specific item from all AKU libraries for their readers.

### ***Copyright services at AKU libraries:***

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To respect the intellectual property rights; AKU Libraries are also providing "Copyright Clearance Services" to their users across all campuses.

Copyright clearance staff helps the University to get permission for the use of such material. The staff guides faculty and researchers about local and international copyright laws.

### ***Institutional Repository of AKU (e-Commons):***

Aga Khan University Libraries also facilitates their faculty and researchers through institutional repository. Institutional repository is a collection of the intellectual output of an institution in digital form. <sup>4</sup>

The main objective of institutional repository is:

- to showcase institutional information resources including articles, dissertations, reports, conferences and other institutional publications
  - to provide platform to researchers for open access web publishing
  - to facilitates global readership to increase the profile and prestige of an institution
- Aga Khan University Libraries are using *Digital Commons by bepress* as an institutional repository.

AKU libraries are also providing research services to their faculty and researchers through **SELECTED WORKS**. It is a faculty profile platform in which institution can show globally; how much their faculty and researchers are publishing, and it is good for faculty and researchers to get recognition.

Librarians from each AKU library campuses collaborate with faculty to create their online faculty profiles to share academic work and measure impact.

### ***LibGuides:***

AKU libraries are going to provide another service to their users called *LibGuides*, which is easy to use, content management system used by many libraries across the world.

AKU Libraries didn't launch LibGuides yet. All the initial process has been done and Home Page template is ready and handed over to campus libraries to understand and make guides.

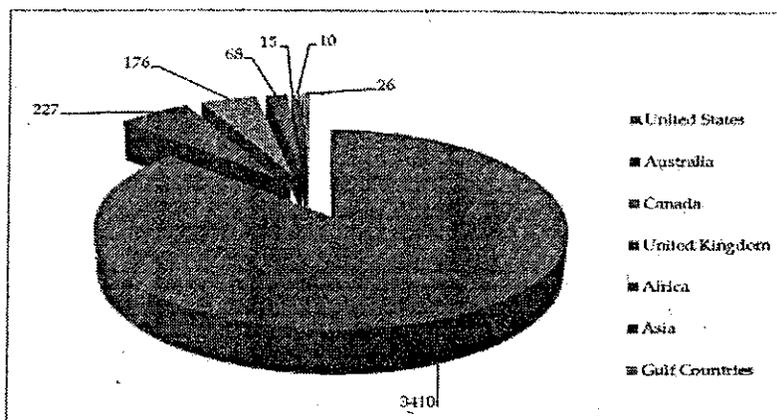
Once all the libraries done with this then AKU LibGuides will go live.

### ***Features of LibGuides:***

- Librarians can create content rich guides
- Easy to use interface
- Customizable profiles to connect librarians with users at point of need
- Make your guides attractive by easily creating an image slideshow, videos etc.
- Make your guides available on social media sites
- Update the original and it will update linked copies everywhere.

Add content to your guides from anywhere with our browser button  
Email Alerts/RSS Updates

There are approx. 4,800 libraries are using Libguides in the world.<sup>5</sup>



AKU Libraries are providing many services and resources to their users as I mentioned above; Portal on intranets, OPAC, Institutional Repository, Selected Works (AKU Researchers Gallery) and LibGuides etc.

With the aim of to facilitate the users; AKU libraries are thinking about one single searching interface from where users can search, locate and retrieve an information from all the above resources as each resource has separate interface yet.

To implement this initiative AKU Libraries are looking for a Discovery Interface.

*Discovery interfaces* are also called next generation catalogs which give an enriched web-based interface used by users including scholars and researchers. It also provides link resolver and an indexing, search and retrieval element.<sup>6</sup>

There are many open and proprietary source discovery products are available in the market, but it is not decided yet that which one will be opted by AKU Libraries as their scenario is different, they are comprised of ten libraries in three continents.

#### *Proprietary source discovery interfaces:*

- Primo and Primo Central from Ex Libris Group
- EBSCO Discovery Service from EBSCO Information Services
- Summon from ProQuest
- WorldCat Discovery Service from OCLC
- Enterprise from SirsiDynix
- Encore from Innovative

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*Some open source discovery interfaces include:*

Blacklight  
VuFind  
eXtensibleCatalog  
Franklin

### **Conclusion:**

Purpose of AKU libraries is to provide better services and resources to their end users through new systems in support to their learning, teaching and research.

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