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<a href="#">Home</a>	<a href="#">Table of Contents</a>	<a href="#">Titles &amp; Subject Index</a>	<a href="#">Authors Index</a>
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## Trends in electronic journal publishing in Africa: an analysis of African Journal Online (AJOL)

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to review the trends in electronic journal publication in Africa in relation to geographical representation, subject spread and language of publication and number of open access journals. The approach adopted for this study was to download the list of journals from the African Journal Online (AJOL) database. These journals were analyzed using tables and charts in relationship to the objectives of the study. This study shows that medical journals are more represented in the database than any other discipline and equally have more open access journals. More than ninety percent of the journals are published in English language while very few journals are published in African languages. Findings from the study reveal that there are very few African countries represented in the AJOL database. Only twenty-six African countries have their journals in the database with so many of them having not more than two journals. Nigeria and South Africa dominate the list of journals in the database. When African sub-region is considered West Africa contributes slightly more than half of all the other regions put together. Medical journals are more represented. In the present electronic environment, it is critical that African journal publishers respond to the need of publishing their scholarly outputs electronically to improve access and impact of their authors. The paper recommends that in order to enhance the visibility of African research outputs more journals publishers should be encouraged to join AJOL.*

### Keywords

*Open access journals; African journals; Electronic journals; Electronic publishing, Journal publishing; Scholarly communication; Publications; Scientific products; Bibliometrics; African Journal Online; Africa*

### Introduction

Research findings evidently determine the degree of growth in human knowledge. Communication of these research outputs is essential in establishing recent inventions and discoveries. Over the years, the journals, books, conferences and patents have played key roles in the scholarly communication process. Journals particularly, have for a very long time offered researchers opportunities of publishing their research findings without the rigorous processes one must go through before publishing them in books. [Bello](#) (2008) noted that the journals, which have existed since 17th century, have continued to play

pivotal roles in communication of primary research findings. According to Bello, scholars have increasingly continued to publish their works in journals to:

- share findings from research carried out, propagate improvements or expansion of current knowledge, there by pushing backwards the frontiers of ignorance;
- ascertain claims for research being done or staking the claim for being the best;
- carving oneself a niche in a particular area of new research which have been identified as a priority area to attract research grants; and
- publishing in order to gain promotion and in so doing perpetuating the "publish or perish" culture.

In Africa, the impact of the journals in the scholarly communication process has been underscored by [Adebowale](#) (2001a) in his argument that with the proliferation of universities and other academic institutions in Africa in the latter half of twenty century, the journals became the anchor in the dissemination of research findings among African researchers. Similarly, King cited in [Chan and Costa](#) (2004) have underscored the critical roles of the journals in the dissemination of scientific research findings as well as a means of measuring research outputs of individual scholars, institutions and countries.

These roles of the journal have been recognized by [Scott](#) (1998) when he defines journal as a form of communication among scientists and other scholars. He identified the following characteristics of the journal namely; journal must be peer- reviewed, archived, establishes priority in what it publishes and contains contributions that can be cited, retrieved and easily accessible anywhere in the world. Journal publishing is therefore a critical determinant of scholarly output of any place in the global academic environment. This is however not strange to African scholars and African libraries. Consequently, scholars in African strive to publish their primary research findings in reputable journals but these efforts from African scholars have often been stifled by several problems facing traditional journal publishing in Africa. These are the problems of sustainability, visibility, irregularity, management and poor journal distribution ([Ocholla](#), 2005; [Mabawonku & Aina](#), 2005; [Murray & Crampton](#), 2007; [Bello](#), 2008). While [Murray and Crampton](#) argue that researchers on African topics needs access to not only European and American sources but also to the publication outputs from Africa, [Bello](#) frowns that despite an enormous number of journal published in Africa today, majority of them are hardly accessible outside the institution where they are published leading to duplication of research and poor visibility of articles in such journals. Even when African libraries devote huge chunk of their yearly budget to acquire some of these journals, poor distribution networks and lack of their accessibility usually defeat the efforts of the libraries. These compound the problems of African researchers' inability to read publications from colleagues in and around the region. In line with this, [Adebowale](#) (2001b) had argued that "there is a marked division in the economies and politics of knowledge production and dissemination between the developed countries on one hand and developing countries on the other." The implication of this is that greater percentage of global publications are generated from the developed countries of North America and Europe while Africa and other developing countries remains consumers of the Euro-American generated knowledge. This has deeply contributed to problems of journal publishing in Africa for effective publishing is highly dependent on the industrial environment obtainable in the part of the world. The developed countries have more and better organized structures that will make publishing industries to flourish.

A related problem is that journal publication in Africa has dominantly been in print format and this has made their acquisition to be difficult by libraries for the cost is continuously increasing and the accessibility is usually difficult. According to [Rosenberg](#) (1997), journal publication in Africa and their acquisition has been disrupted by subscription price

increase, currency fluctuation, local economic troubles and general under funding of education and research in Africa. In relation to this, [Bello](#) (2008) has argued that print journals have their inherent drawbacks such as possible bias of peer review process, high cost of print materials and lack of accessibility. Perhaps one of the greatest drawbacks of print journals is the problem of accessibility, for example, [Meho](#) (2007) is worried that majority of the articles published in so many print journals are only read by the author and the reviewers. [Ezema](#) (2009) equally lamented on the uncoordinated nature of journals publication in Africa particularly as it concerns accessibility.

[Rosenberg](#) (2002) acknowledged the importance of printed journals in the dissemination of scientific and other scholarly information in Africa since most developing countries are still lacking access to the new technology required for electronic dissemination of scholarly information. Despite this need for printed journals in Africa, [Rosenberg](#) regrets that journal publications have been on the decline since most African University presses have become moribund. These developments have weakened the growth of research and scholarly publications in Africa and other developing countries of the world. In relation to this, [Murray and Crampton](#) (2007) identified the following challenges facing journal publishing generally in Africa: lack of relevant skills, language of publication, poor ICT infrastructure, economic constraints, maintenance cost of technology changes, among others.

These inherent problems of print journals are making many journal publishers shift from print to electronic journal publication or a combination of both. This change has been facilitated by the development of information and communication technology (ICT), which modifies the forms of communication used by scientific and academic community. The new information and communication technologies allow the exchange of updated and focused information making the knowledge of research projects being conducted all over the world and exchange of messages between peers possible. According to [Aparicio](#) (2009), the 1990s witnessed the speedy growth of electronic publishing in Europe and Africa.

Electronic journals have been defined as "any journal produced, published, distributed and received full text via an electric medium (the Internet)" ([Bello](#), 2009). Electronic scholarly publishing is currently changing the pattern of global scholarly publishing to the extent that [Adebowale](#) (2001a) fears that the death of print journal publishing is imminent. African countries are gradually accepting electronic journal publication with the advent of the Internet and other information and communication technologies.

The objectives of this study therefore are to:

- find out how many journals are included in AJOL;
- identify the geographical spread of these journals;
- examine the subject spread of these journals; and
- find out the languages in which these journals are published.

## Literature Review

Electronic journal publication is a new way of stimulating the production and dissemination of knowledge and its popularity has continued to grow since 1999s. However, it is regrettable that African countries have been finding it difficult to adopt this new method of knowledge production and dissemination as a result of poor ICT infrastructure in the region ([Rosenberg, 2002](#); [Aparicio](#), 2009). For this reason, the developments of electronic publishing vary from country to country and continent to continent. In order to encourage electronic journal publishing in Africa, [Aparicio](#) (2009) reported a number of projects, which have been put in place over the years. These projects

include the 1994 African conference on telecommunication held in Cairo, Egypt which proposed the creation of an African information network. Another project was the 1998 Paris workshop sponsored by International Council for Science (ICSU) and UNESCO under the auspices of American Association for Advancement of Science (AAAS) with the goal of examining the application of electronic method for scientific journal publication in Africa. In 2002, there was another training workshop at University of Ibadan supported by International Network for Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) through Programme for Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) and conducted by African Journal of Library Archives and Information Science (AJALIS) with the aim of encouraging researchers in preparation of text to be published in electronic formats. There have been other projects but one of the projects that has stood the test of time is the African Journal Online (AJOL) which was launched in 1988 by INASP with the major aim of providing access to scientific information both published and on-going in Africa, expansion of the knowledge held by African scientific community, and supporting the publication of African scientific journals ([Aparicio, 2009](#)).

According to Rosenberg (2002), AJOL project started formerly in 1998 and was restricted to only journals in science and technology published in English language within sub-Saharan Africa. Following this development, the tables of contents (TOCs) of 15 journals, starting with 1997 issues, were displayed on the INASP website, backed by a paid photocopy document delivery service from INASP. There was an evaluation of this pilot in early 2000 and findings show that AJOL had succeeded in raising the visibility of African journals (but whether the journals had been read and used remained unproven). Secondly, there was no service similar to AJOL in existence. In addition to this, AJOL needed to be continued for longer than two years, in order to assess its true impact (e.g. on generating additional subscription income). Finally, the service would be improved if *all* African-published scholarly journals were included, abstracts as well as TOCs were provided, and a keyword search facility plus the option to download full text were offered.

Rosenberg observed that the result of this evaluation necessitated the re-launch of AJOL in September 2000 with the following objectives:

- to provide access to research undertaken and published in Africa;
- to enable the results of research carried out in Africa to become more widely known and to increase knowledge about African scholarship;
- to strengthen the African academic publishing sector, by providing income through encouraging print or electronic subscriptions and through the purchase of single articles; and
- to assess the impact of using the Internet to promote African-published journals.

A new and further objective was:

- to hand over a sustainable and operating programme to an African host at the end of the three-year period.

The overall aim of AJOL is to include all journals published in Africa in the database making the table of contents of these journals available to researchers. This aim is being pursued vigorously for as at September 2001, 63 titles from 17 countries were already available ([Rosenberg, 2002](#); [Smart, 2004](#)). This number has so far increased dramatically. The criteria for joining AJOL have been articulated by Smart (2004) when he stated that participating journals must:

1. be scholarly in content and contain original research (in addition to other content);
2. peer review their content and have quality control standards;

3. be able to provide all content for inclusion on AJOL (tables of contents and abstracts) in electronic format (e.g., World files);
4. guarantee they have permission from the authors to allow AJOL to operate a document delivery service; and
5. be published within the African continent. This means that management of publishing strategy, any business development and production operation must be run from an African country.

This last point however, may be difficult to monitor because of globalization of scholarly publications, while statement about peer review and other vital permission must be taken on trust.

AJOL offers free access to the contents of African academic publications. The establishment of AJOL is a welcome development because the available literature is very positive about the future of electronic publishing in Africa. In a study conducted by Smart (2005), it was observed that African Journal Online (AJOL) services has provided a new platform for researchers in the global community to gain access to African scholarly journals which hitherto have made little or no impact in the international research community. In another development, Le Coadic cited in [Aparicio](#) (2009) believes that e-publishing has promising future because of the swift and continuous diffusion of articles, permanent access from any location and expanded possibility of research. Similarly studies that have been carried out on the need to improve access of researchers in developing countries to scientific information and databases have argued that e-publishing would bridge the digital divide between the developed North and the developing South ([Chisenga](#), 2002; [Letshele, & Lor](#), 2002). Another study by [Zainab and Nor](#) (2008) further stressed the relevance of electronic journal publishing in terms of improving the global visibility of journals in Malaysia. According to them the visibility of journals to a very large extent improves the quality and impact rating of the journals and authors who published in these journals. In line with this result, [Sangam and Prakash](#) (2006) believe that the increasing growth of scholarly information resources available in the electronic form and their management in digital forms is proving fertile ground for the development of sophisticated new services, of which citation linking will be one indispensable example. Through the citation linking important scholarly publication which ordinarily would have been buried in very obscure journals in Africa would be visible to the international scholarly community.

In addition to publishing journals electronically, the liberalization of access to the journals is another important method of enhancing the universal availability of information relevant to scholarly research. [Harnad](#) (2001), [Ouya](#) (2006) and [Jacso](#) (2006) in separate studies have argued that open access journals enhances the democratization of scholarly information and visibility of authors and publications. According to Harnad, researchers would maximize the impact of their research findings by making them public through publishing so that potential researchers in the same field would have easy access to them. [Ouya](#) added to this through a study which was meant to ascertain editors' awareness of the open access movement. The survey showed limited awareness of and understanding of open access. He therefore highlighted the need for more information about emerging publishing models and the open access initiatives in Sub Saharan Africa.

In a related development, [Esseh and Willinsky](#) (2009) identified the immediate and long term benefits of online journal publication in Africa. According to them the immediate benefits among others include management and publication of multiple journals, integration and indexing of African contents; while long term benefits include development of a training and support centers for scholarly publishing studies, increased African and global access, increased African participation in the global scholarly research

etc. While it is true that electronic publishing reduces the delay in scholarly communication process, ensure the visibility and accessibility of the journals, [Dix](#) (2004) argues that there is no difference between e-journals and that of print since the peer review process are similar. The only difference is on the process of communication where all e-journals use e-mail, making the time elapsed between acceptance and publication to be shorter than that of the print.

Electronic publishing is however not without its draw backs. A major problem of e-publishing according to [Letshela and Lor](#) (2002) is how to handle legal deposit in an electronic publishing environment since many countries have not updated their legal deposit laws to reflect issues pertaining to electronic publishing. Another flaw of e-publishing is the possibility of Internet connectivity in Africa where ICT infrastructure is generally poor. Similarly, [Asomoah-Hassan](#) (2009) has identified the following flaws of electronic publishing.

- Lack of standardization among publishers;
- Lack of knowledge about journal both in print and electronic formats;
- Very few journals have archived back issues electronically;
- There is inconsistency with the publishing market and the URL; and
- Reservation about the quality of e-journals for the purposes of promotion and retention of tenure ship.

Despite these draw backs, the popularity of electronic journal publication has continued to grow. Subscriptions to African journal online have been tremendous. As at July 2009, about 351 journals are included in AJOL, and several studies have reported the success of AJOL ([Esseh & Willinsky](#), 2009). A result, it becomes imperative to examine electronic journal publishing in Africa, using AJOL as a case study.

## Methodology

This researcher visited the website of [African Journal Online](#) and downloaded list of journals in the database of AJOL for the analysis. As at the date of this visit which was on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2009, there were three hundred fifty-one (351) journals listed in AJOL database. These journals were analyzed based on their geographical spread, subject coverage and language of publication. Simple statistical tables and charts were used to analyze the data generated from the list of the journals.

## Data Presentation

Data collected from the AJOL database are presented in tables and charts bellow for necessary discussion.

**Table 1: Geographical Distribution of Journal in AJOL**

	<b>Countries</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	Algeria	2	0.6
2	Benin Rep.	1	0.3
3	Botswana	2	0.6
4	Burkina Faso	2	0.6
5	Cameroon	6	1.7
6	Congo DR	1	0.3
7	Egypt	10	2.9
8	Ethiopia	14	4

9	Ghana	18	5.1
10	Kenya	20	5.7
11	Lesotho	1	0.3
12	Libya	1	0.3
13	Malawi	3	0.9
14	Mauritius	1	0.3
15	Nigeria	148	42.2
16	Senegal	6	1.7
17	South Africa	67	19.1
18	Sudan	2	0.6
19	Swaziland	4	1.1
20	Tanzania	12	3.4
21	Togo	1	0.3
22	Tunisia	1	0.3
23	Uganda	8	2.3
24	Zambia	1	0.3
25	Zimbabwe	10	2.9
26	Outside Africa	9	2.6
	TOTAL	351	99.9*

\* It is not up to 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 1 shows the geographical distribution of journals listed in AJOL. From Table 1 can see that only 25 African countries have their publications listed in AJOL. Out of these 8 countries have only a journal each. This means that almost a third of the countries have one journal each. Four countries, Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso and Sudan have 2 journals each, while one country, Malawi has 3 journals (0.9%) in the database. Only 8 countries have up to 10 journals listed in AJOL. Nigeria leads in the number of journals in the database with 148 journals (47.2%), followed by South Africa with 67 journals (19.1%). Kenya follows South Africa with 20 journals (5.7%) of the total number of journals while Ghana has 18 journals (5.7%). Two countries namely Nigeria and South Africa have more than half of the total journals in the database. Up to 10 journals listed in the database are from outside Africa.

**Table 2: Sub-regional spread of journals in AJOL**

S/N	African Sub-Regions	No.	Percent
1	Central Africa	7	2.0
2	East Africa	55	15.7
3	North Africa	16	4.5
4	Southern Africa	88	25
5	West Africa	176	50.1
6	Outside Africa	9	2.6
	TOTAL	351	99.9*

\* It is not up to 100 percent because of rounding.

**Figure 1: Pie chart of sub-regional distribution of journals**

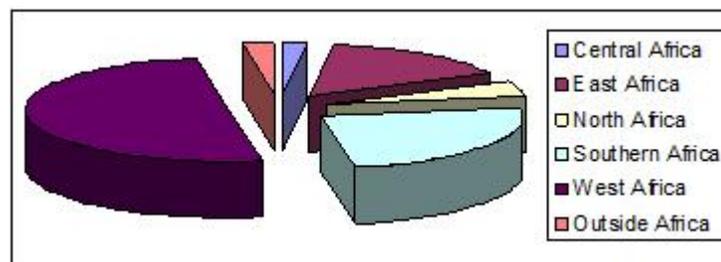


Table 2 and Figure 1 represent the sub-regional distribution of journals in AJOL. Data from the table shows that of the five sub-regions in Africa the list represented the database is Central Africa with only 7 journals (2%), while North Africa has 16 journals (4.5%) of the total number of journal in AJOL. West Africa has 176 (50.1%) of the journals (that is more than half of the whole journals in the database), while Southern Africa has 88 (25%). East Africa is in the third position with 55 journals (15.7%).

**Table 3: Distribution of Journals in AJOL by Discipline**

S/N	Disciplines	No.	Percentage	Open Access Journals	Percent of Open Access
1	Agriculture	48	13.6	3	6.25
2	Aquatic science	8	2.3	-	0
3	Arts/Architecture	6	1.7	-	0
4	Biological science	28	8	6	21.4
5	Physical sciences	15	4.3	-	0
6	Economics	22	6.2	2	9
7	Education	18	5	2	11.1
8	Environmental sciences	9	2.6	2	22.2
9	General sciences	18	5	4	13.7
10	Medicine	107	30.5	35	32.7
11	History	3	0.9	1	33.3
12	Religion	4	1.1	2	50
13	Political science/ Law	5	1.4	1	20
14	Library & Info science	11	3.1	-	0
15	Language & Literature	9	2.5	-	0
16	Philosophy	4	1.1	-	0
17	Sociology/ Anthropology	14	4	2	14.3
18	Engineering/ Technology	11	3.1	3	22.3
19	Veterinary Science	12	3.4	-	0
20	TOTAL	351	100	63	17.9

Table 3 shows the distribution of the journals in the database by discipline and also journals that have open access. From the table we can deduce that medical journals constitute greater percentage of the journals in AJOL with 107 (30.5%) followed by Agricultural with 48 journals representing 13.6%. Biological Sciences have 28 journals (8%) of the total journals while Economics has 22 journals or 6.2%. Both Education and General Sciences have 18 journals (5%) each, while Physical Science and Sociology/Anthropology have 15 (4.3%) and 14 journals (4%) respectively. Other disciplines that have up to 10 journals in the database are Veterinary Science 12,

Engineering/Technology 11, Library and Information Science 11. Other eight disciplines have less than 10 journals in AJOL.

The total number of open access journals in AJOL is 63 which constitute about 17.9% of the entire journals. Medical journals have more open access journals (35) than other disciplines followed by Biological Sciences (6), and General Sciences 4, while Agriculture and Engineering/Technology have 3 each. Economics, Education, Environmental Sciences, Religion, and Sociology/Anthropology have 2 open access journals each. History and Political Science/Law have 1 each. Seven out of the 22 disciplines have no open access journals in AJOL. In terms of the percentage in relation to the number of journals in each of the discipline, Religion has more with 50% followed by History (33.2%), Medicine (32.7%) and Engineering/Technology with 22.3%.

**Table 4: Languages of Publication of Journals in AJOL**

S/N	Languages of Publication	No.	Percentage
1	English	316	90
2	French	9	2.6
3	African Languages	5	1.4
4	English/French	15	4.3
5	German	2	0.6
6	Dutch	3	0.9
7	English/Arabic	1	0.2
	TOTAL	351	100

**Figure 2: Language of publication of journals in AJOL**

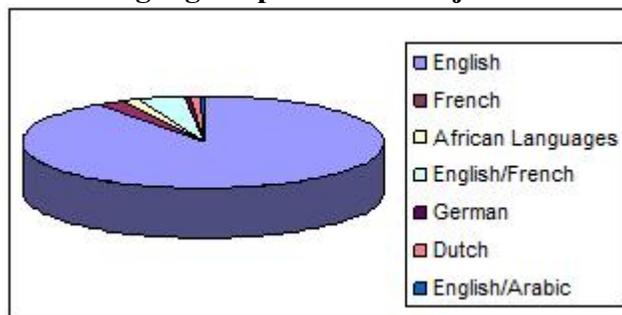


Table 4 and Figure 2 show the language of publication of journals in AJOL. It is clear from the table that the majority of the journals are published in English language. Of the total number of the journals in the database 316 (90%) are published in English while 9 journals (2.6%) are published in French language. Only 5 of the journals (1.4%) are published in African languages while, 15 journals (4.3%) are published in English and French languages. Other languages such as German and Dutch have 3 and 2 journals respectively while 1 journal is published in English and Arabic.

**Discussion**

The findings from the data generated through the AJOL database have a lot of revelation. In table 1 which shows the geographical distribution of journals held in the database, it is observed that out of about 64 African countries, only 26 countries were represented in AJOL. Eight countries out of the 26 have only a journal each, while another four countries have two journals each. This means that out of the twenty-six countries, 12 of them contributed only 16 journals. This revelation lays credence to [Bello's \(2008\)](#) worry that

even with so many journals in Africa only very few of them are accessible. Nigeria and South Africa lead in journal contribution to AJOL. Nigeria has nearly half of the journals in AJOL while South Africa has almost one-fifth of the whole journals in the database. In other words, Nigeria and South Africa contribute more than two-thirds of the journals in the database. Generally, contributions to AJOL are very low considering the amount of journal publication in Africa. This has far reaching implications in the visibility and accessibility of African scholarly publishing; for one thing, this development increases the digital divide already existing between the developed and developing countries, and for another, it reduces African's contributions to the global knowledge economy. The low level of Internet connectivity is complicating the problem of electronic journal publishing in Africa. Very little Internet access in some of these countries is usually limited by the low bandwidth and epileptic power supply in these countries.

When sub-regional distribution of journals in the database is considered, it becomes very clear that West Africa is leading with more than fifty percent of the journals in the database. This probably is because Nigeria, one of the countries in West Africa contributes heavily in the database. Southern Africa has about twenty-five percent of the contribution to AJOL, while Central Africa has the least. This suggests therefore, that Central Africa has low research productivity or perhaps the researchers and journal publishers in that region are not aware of AJOL as a database that can promote the visibility of their scholarly publications.

Findings also reveal that Medicine has the largest contributions among all the disciplines with some journals in AJOL. The contribution from Medicine is over thirty percent. It is therefore believed that the most researched field in Africa is the Medical Sciences. If this is not the case, one can then safely conclude that awareness of the existence of AJOL is more among researchers in the Medical Sciences than any other field. Another field with many journals in the database is Agriculture with about thirteen percent of the journals. One can therefore deduce from this findings that Africa publish more journals in the sciences than in the social sciences and the humanities because a closer look shows that Medicine and Agriculture contribute more than forty-four percent of the whole journals in the database. This is not surprising because AJOL first began with medical and scientific journals with the intention of making scientific research findings available to global scholarly community ([Rosenberg, 2002](#)). The lowest contribution is seen in the humanities specifically in history and religion. Humanities and Social Sciences contribute only about twenty-four percent of the whole journals. In the Social Sciences, Education and Economics have the highest contribution which implies that the two disciplines are the most researched in Africa.

It is also interesting to note that some of the journals in AJOL are open access. Medicine has more open access journals than any other discipline, followed by Biological Sciences. More open access journals are obtainable in the Sciences than the Humanities and the Social Sciences. This signifies that Medical Science journal publishers in Africa are more liberal with their publications than other fields. The reason for more open access journals in medicine and other science related disciplines could also be traced to the initial philosophy behind the establishment of AJOL as a database of medical and scientific journals in Africa. This probably gave early awareness to these scientific based journals. Seven disciplines have no open access journals at all. Incidentally, Library and Information Science belongs to this group without open access journals. The number of open access journals in AJOL is not encouraging considering, [Jacso's \(2006\)](#) and [Harnad's \(2001\)](#) remarks on the suitability of open access journals in the scholarly communication process. In addition to this, authors in the non open access journals lack citation impact in the global scholarly community and this equally affects the international ratings of the institutions of these authors.

The language of publication of these journals was also considered and findings reveal that the majority of the journals are published in English language. Few others are published in African and French languages, while only five of the journals are published in African languages. The implication is that most journal publishers in Africa do not consider publication of their journals using African languages. Other foreign languages which some of the journals appear in are German and Dutch. From the findings, one can safely conclude that the language of publication of journals in AJOL follows the colonial languages in Africa. With this development, the idea of promoting African languages is seriously suffering a set back and this will equally hamper the scientific and technological development of Africa as a people.

## Conclusion

Electronic journal publishing in Africa though still at its infancy has been widely accepted as one of the best methods of promoting scholarly publishing. It is imperative that the establishment of AJOL as a database of online journals in Africa has provided a good platform for enhanced visibility of research outputs in Africa. However, it is surprising that only very few countries in Africa have embraced electronic publishing judging from the number of countries in AJOL. For African countries to take their proper place in the global scholarly communication platform, the research outputs emanating from the continent can no longer be allowed to be buried in very obscure journals which lack international visibility. Some of these journals could compete favorably with many journals in other parts of the world if they are read by members of the global scholarly community.

The implication of this is that Africa should strive to improve the global visibility of their research outputs through acceptance of electronic journal publishing. Various countries should address this problem through an internal mechanism which encourages research and development in their countries and adopting current trends in publishing these research outputs. For this to be possible, African countries have to do a lot more in providing information and telecommunication infrastructures so that the Internet and other telecommunication facilities which propel research and development will be put in place. There is no doubt that electronic publishing and hosting of journals in AJOL can only be possible if there is an enabling digital environment. The epileptic power supply, low bandwidth of Internet connectivity and poor access to the Internet in most African countries have continued to widen the digital gap between the developed and the developing countries. These issues therefore require urgent attention if electronic journal publishing is going to thrive in Africa.

Journal publishers in Africa should as a matter of urgency introduce their journals into AJOL database as a way of globalizing and internationalizing the researchers and their works in these journals. Retrospective issues of these journals should be archived and uploaded into the database. More electronic journal databases should be developed in Africa so many more journals will be hosted in these databases. This will help in giving international recognition to more journals in Africa. It is also very important that African journals' publishers begin to have more open access journals. From the data generated, it is obvious that few of the journals in AJOL are open access journals. This is because open access journals provides enabling environment for improving citation impact of African authors and the global recognition and ranking of African universities.

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