

**EFFECTS OF COPYRIGHT LAW ON ACCESS AND USE OF INFORMATION IN  
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN KENYA (PhD Thesis)  
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**ABSTRACT**

The creation of an acceptable copyright balance between owners and users of information materials has brought a discourse on access and use of information from the global to the local sphere. This debate is anchored on the increasing demands by consumers of copyrighted products for free access and use of information resources. It is argued that copyright law has no space in the world of freedom and right to information access, while owners advocate for stiff and stringent copyright protection and implementation. Critical issues that have influenced access and use of information resources include excessive information protection, lack or limited user awareness of copyright law, narrow and vague scope of copyright exceptions and limitations, technological innovations and inadequate information materials. These challenges have continued to negatively affect university library users unabated. This study sought to investigate the effects of copyright on access and use of information in university libraries in Kenya, with a view of proposing ways and means of maximizing information use. The objectives of the study were to: ascertain the extent and purpose for which library users utilize information resources; determine levels of copyright awareness among university library users; establish the extent to which the Kenya Copyright Act (No.12, 2001) affects access and use of information resources; examine challenges users experience in access and use information resources; and make recommendations for improving access and use of information materials. The study used the copyright theory to explain the possibility of striking a copyright balance between owners and users. Library users (n=420) and Librarians (n=12) from 3 public and 3 private universities were selected to participate in the study using stratified simple random and purposive sampling. Mixed approach, survey and naturalistic designs and triangulation of research instruments were employed for the study. It was found that library users utilized information resources for different purposes; Users, (92%) were not aware of the copyright laws; there are effects of Kenya Copyright Act on access and use of information; and users experienced challenges in access and use of information. The study has generated new knowledge that is essential for improved library management; creation of copyright awareness; amendment of Copyright Act; and in solving challenges in access and use of information .The study recommends improved information organization and dissemination, creation of copyright awareness amongst library users and an urgent review of the Kenya Copyright Act (No.12, 2001) to adequately cater for the needs of both users and owners.

**Key Words: Copyright law, University libraries, Copyright Act**