



An e-Strategy for the South African Astronomical Observatory: A Case Study

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- Current status



SAAO / NRF background

- The South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO), a National Research Foundation (NRF) facility, is the South African national resource for optical/infrared astronomy.
- Its primary function is to conduct fundamental research in astronomy and astrophysics.
- It not only provides a world-class facility that promotes astronomy and astrophysics in Southern Africa, it also connects South African astronomical research to the rest of the world.
- The Library and Information Service (LIS) of the SAAO should be seen as an integral part of the facility as it provides the research staff with access to essential information and tools that allow them to function as informed professionals within their community.

Problem statement

- Given its unique context, what aspects would need to be included when developing an appropriate e-Strategy for the SAAO library?



Problem statement amplified

- What, according to literature, are the most important factors to consider when developing an e-strategy for a Special Library?
- What could be learnt from other astronomical libraries?
- What is the current status of the SAAO library – also within the broader NRF family?
- What are the explicit information needs of the SAAO researchers?
- What would be the implementation priorities at SAAO (with regards to technologies, collections and staffing)?

Research methodology

- Qualitative Approach
 - Comparative literature study
 - Focus group
 - Survey
 - Site visit to IUCAA (Pune, India)
- Strategic Analysis
 - PESTEL & SWOT analysis



Obstacles during the study

- Response from the focus group
- Responses of the survey
- Limitation to literature of Astronomy Libraries
- Internal organizational challenges



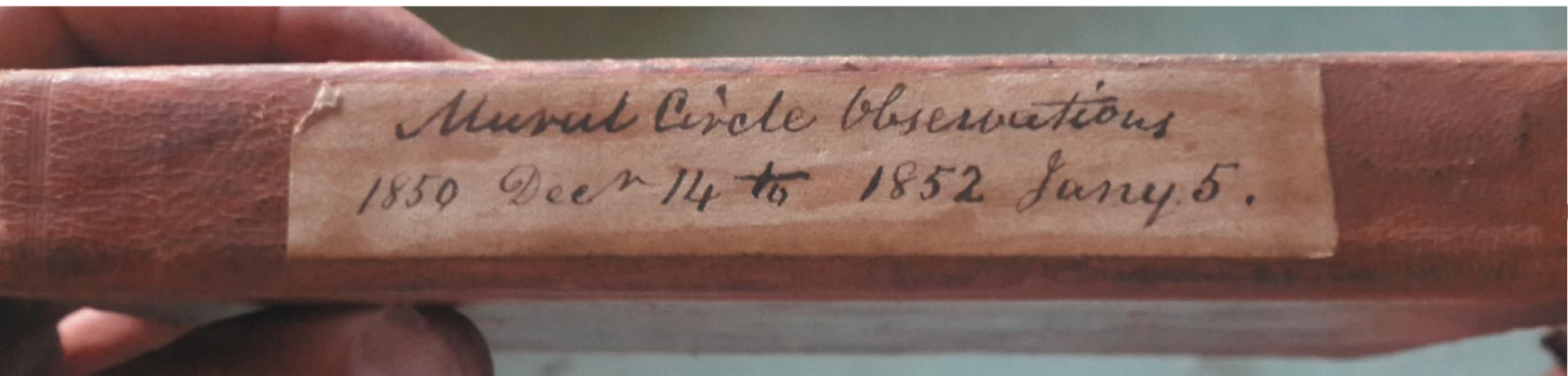
Findings

- Organizational challenges
- Expanding access to information resources
- Digitising historically valuable material
- Changing the reporting lines
- Funding resources
- Other aspects
- Future trends



Recommendation / Current status

- Expand access to information
 - Retrospective cataloguing
 - Organise & archive collections
 - Consortia agreements
 - Digitisation of collections

A close-up photograph of a book's spine, which is bound in reddish-brown leather. A small, rectangular, light-colored paper label is affixed to the spine. The label contains handwritten text in cursive script. The text reads: "Mural Circle Observations" on the first line, and "1850 Dec^r 14 to 1852 Jan^y 5." on the second line. The handwriting is dark and appears to be in ink. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

*Mural Circle Observations
1850 Dec^r 14 to 1852 Jan^y 5.*

Recommendation / Current status

- Centralised library service
 - Integrated Library System
 - Standardization of LIS within NRF
 - Shared e-resources



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Recommendation / Current status

- Develop ICT infrastructure
 - Standardised processes and procedures
 - Central point of access via one website
 - Standardised systems and tools
 - Cloud based services
 - Device neutral platforms



Recommendation / Current status

- Provide research support
 - Digital curation of LIS
 - Open access publishing
 - Altmetric measurements



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Recommendation / Current status

- Collaborate with Astronomy partners
 - African collaboration initiative
 - Global collaboration initiatives



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Thank You



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