



## Library Science

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# Managing Print and Non-Print Resources in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

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### ABSTRACT

In recent times, the traditional methods of providing information services are changing, and also, the performance of library tasks is undergoing a major change process. Libraries are thus being transformed from book centered to information centered institutions, and emphasis is shifting from book collection and storage to access and provision of electronic information services. Therefore this paper examined the role of Library as a way to develop and maintain collections of materials in all formats and to make the materials available to all users. The integration of both print and non-print resources into the library system in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will go a long way in providing necessary information to users. Availability of various forms of print and non- print resources and their effects were discussed in this paper. This paper discussed the challenges associated with managing print and non-print information resources in colleges of education libraries in Nigeria. The study concluded that for academic library to function effectively, they should collaborate with relevant institutions and adopt the best strategies that will enhance the management of print and non-print information resources for sustainable national educational development in the country.

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### Introduction

Academic libraries are also referred to as the nerve centers of institutions of higher learning where all academic activities revolved. Colleges of Education libraries contain textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD-ROM databases, internet/email, video, tapes/cassettes, diskettes magnetic disk, computers, microforms etc. These items are not only for education, enjoyment and entertainment of the tertiary institutions' libraries but also serve as a place for students to do independent work, use computers, audio-visual resources, to host special events, book clubs, research, recreation, teaching and for learning (Iyamu and Adunwa, 2004). The age -long role of the Library has been to develop and maintain collections of materials in all formats and to make their materials available to all users in the defined jurisdiction. While libraries would continue to collect materials in print formats for some time to come, this approach is now being supplemented with the provision of electronic access to the collection. Print and non-print sources of information need to be integrated to provide users with seamless access to information (Fatoki, 2007).

The present-day academic library services are focusing more on the area of digital, virtual or libraries without borders, all of which have transformed academic libraries and led to transition and transformation in the academic library environment. The transition and the transformation are accompanied with sophistication in the changing pattern in the information needs of users which is growing rapidly. Singh and Kaur (2009) reported that there is a paradigm shift from stand-alone libraries to library and information networks; from printed publications to digital documents; and from ownership to access. The transition is as a result of the impact of ICTs, the Internet which is affecting all types of libraries. Developments in ICTs have now offered academic libraries exciting and challenging

opportunities that required them to respond positively in all facets of their services and functions if they are to remain relevant in the 21st century. The digital revolution has dramatically changed the face of libraries in the 21st century.

Colleges of Education libraries in Nigeria are faced with enormous problems, notably that of lack of proper funding, erratic Internet services, lack of hardware and software and in most instances the non-availability of ICT devices and inadequate basic infrastructural facilities. Besides, there is difficulty in the importation of books and journals from abroad due to the rise in foreign exchange. This has deterred many academic libraries from acquiring current and relevant titles that will support the academic programmes of their parent institutions. Thus the efforts of most academic libraries in providing modern information services are thwarted by the existence of the identified problems whose genesis is that of inadequate funding.

Also IT literacy among academic librarians in many Colleges of Education libraries is still at the peripheral level. Nok (2006) observed that many staff of university libraries are not computer literate as such they find it difficult to cope with the requirements of the electronic age. Libraries have transformed into digital and virtual libraries where books and journals and magazines have changed into e-books, e-journals and e-zines. This has increased the global dissemination of information. Non-print resources (electronics) are easily accessible in remote areas and they assist libraries to solve storage problems and control the flood of information (Adebiyi 2005). The major advantages of electronic resources are integrity of the collection, availability around the clock, remote access, and multiple simultaneous users. Unlike print media and archival materials, electronic resources are unlikely to be misplaced, stolen or vandalized. They can be made available only during regular library hours except as simultaneous users.

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However, non-print resources can be destroyed by frequent power failures or hacking, therefore, almost all electronic resources providers maintain back-up files (Owajeme and Ogochukwu, 2011).

Though the relevance of hard copy information resources in the face of globalization is undisputable (Opele and Unegbu, 2012), the challenges of managing these huge print resources together with the non-print remains unexplored in Nigerian colleges of education. This is the main focus of this paper which is set to investigate those documented challenges and the way forward.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Dawn of Print Resources**

A library exists to serve its community and consequently the needs of all members of that community. Print resources include journals, dictionaries, encyclopedias, almanacs, yearbooks, tele-printer pages, continuous printed tapes, facsimile pages, computer printouts and radio photo prints memos. In Nigeria, where electricity supplies are inadequate and many lack access to computer databases, print resources seem to be preferable for the purpose of service delivery. Multimedia and computer based information has contributed to a great explosion of non-print resources in libraries. Almost every library user or visitor is a potential user of multimedia as well as of print materials. Libraries are in a hybrid situation, as they have to deal with all sorts of materials including print, audio-visual, and non-print or electronic resources. In recent times, the traditional methods of providing information services is changing as the performance of library tasks is undergoing a major change process.

While analyzing the role of library in modern society, Aina (2011) cited in Opele and Unegbu (2012) made reference to library as collectors and stewards of heritage, knowledge centers as well as public institutions where knowledge of the past, present and future are preserved for man utilisation. In an attempt to make library use more attractive to its clients, information professionals have adopted the principle of information repackaging which is an effective way of selecting useful information for user groups.

According to authorities in the field of information science, the overall objective of information repackaging is to fulfill user groups' specific information need and this is done by specific organizational procedures and by providing various indexes and search facilities in the library so as to put the consolidated information in a user-friendly and easy to search format. Hitherto, information is repackaged to facilitate dissemination, organization, communication and facilitate interactivity between user, knowledge base and technology.

While justifying the need for information repackaging for efficient use, Swank (2011) opined that repackaging of information makes information more understandable, readable, acceptable and usable particularly in hardcopy formats.

Libraries are thus being transformed from book-centred to information-centred institutions, and emphasis is shifting from book collection and storage to access and provision of electronic information services (Atinmo, 2000). Today, circumstances have changed in Nigerian libraries as information delivery processes have been enhanced through the use of improved ICT system. Mwamba (2002) posited that libraries have now been found to shift their focus of operation from being library-centered to being information-centered, from being an institution to being an information provider. The librarian now function as a skilled information specialist in all information related environments and uses new technology for the automation of library functions.

He now uses technology for the enhancement of access to and delivery of information not physically contained within the library. He also uses the library for networking with all types of information resources providers.

According to Olanlokun (2003), Nigerian libraries have come of age and the relevance of libraries is becoming increasingly clear at the dawn of the information age to perceptive elites. Undoubtedly, the changing trend inherent in the digital age is impacting positively on all facets of library and information services, and the Nigerian community is now aware of the role which the library can play in the information superhighway.

To Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), libraries before now, has been more oriented towards collection than access thus failing to transcend the traditional activities such as reference services, circulation, inter-library loan/exchange, photocopying, selective dissemination of information (SDI) and manual compilation of bibliographies.

The world over, one of the common barriers to the use of ICTs in the digital age is associated with information literacy. Information literacy is an art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure and its social, cultured and philosophical context and impact (Shapiro and Hughes, 1996). To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information (The American Library Association's Presidential Committee on Information Literacy, 1989). The digital age is characterized with enormous challenges as new innovations in ICTs are emerging. The skills to find, locate and use information from print sources, computer and other storage media are to be acquired. To acquire these skills, Nigerian librarians need education which is ICT-based. In the era of print resources, every space, such as schools, libraries, and community centres are used as primary location for accessing information for both adults and children (Mutula, 2008)

### **Non-print Resources**

The arrival of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has changed the role and position of academic libraries. Etim (2004) cited in Okon (2005) observes that the rapid pace of development in the field of information technology and the advent of networked information services have prompted a comprehensive review of the Library and Information Sciences (LIS) profession. The global trend is now characterized by a fundamental shift from traditional information environment to an e-environment where emphasis is placed more on the acquisition of e-resources such as e-books, e-journals as well as online databases.

Today, the contemporary practice in academic library services is being propelled by information explosion, and the inclusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in all aspects of library services. Kumar (2009) notes that academic libraries are changing dramatically by adopting new means of technology in all activities of print to e-environment where a variety of manual methods, are replaced by a computerized system which provides opportunity for online accessibility.

Libraries are now expected to provide users with a range of information and communication technologies necessary for retrieving information quickly from both immediate and remote databases, as well as creating a need for library cooperation and consortium initiatives (Okiy, 2005). Providing current awareness services to an ICT-driven target academic community requires

dynamic, innovative, timely and adequate communication technologies (Fatoki, 2005). Digital technology is of particular importance when information is to be gathered, stored, retrieved and evaluated (Kennedy and Davis, 2006).

Non-Print information resources are becoming more and more important to the academic community, the category of resources under this classification include a wide range of graphical representations such as photographs, drawings, diagrams, charts, graphs, maps etc that are becoming an increasingly important part of mediated communication of all types (Kumar and Kumar, 2006). As a result, Library users are no longer obliged to visit the library at regular open hours to meet all their information needs. Rather they may only need to search the library online catalogue, use of subject guide or database to access a citation from the Internet or access a full text article from web-based e-resources.

Accessing non-print information resources may also involve browsing an electronic journal, filling out an inter-library lending form, e-mail a reference question via the ask a librarian service or borrowing an e-book all by remote access (Ibrahim, 2004).

Nigerian libraries with access and those without access to information technology is actually narrowing, as the "Information Age" continues to expand the horizon through which information services are provided in libraries. This is one of the many challenges confronting Nigerian libraries and librarians as information technology sweeps the world. Many Nigerian libraries are now converting the contents of their print resources into electronic databases. Thus, increasing their dependence on technology. Unlike in the past, today, technology has provided opportunity for librarians in Nigeria to know how they can combine computer and communication technologies in the performance of library tasks. This confirms Williams and Sawyer (2003), assertion that, in the era of information technology, "we will have everything connected to everything" (referring to internet-based remote control devices) to regulate our libraries. Technology has brought about a completely different way of providing library services resulting to the development of new services (Gbaje, 2007). The Internet is now the dominant mode of information exchange in libraries in the digital age and as such it is no longer a luxury but, a necessity which Nigerian libraries must accept and adopt to close the digital gap.

Advances in ICT and globalization have enabled resource sharing and exchange of information for various purposes worldwide. This development has placed libraries in a most advantageous position that will enable them to serve the information needs of the global village. This brings into focus the concept of digitization as a means of globalization. However, it has become necessary for Nigerian libraries to make their intellectual collections available for global access via the Internet in order to fit into the new direction. Nigerian libraries need to digitize their scholarly and literacy materials for online access. According to Ikpahindi (2007), libraries are duty bound to acquire, preserve and disseminate information from whatever source.

The changing trend in the digital age has made it imperative for Nigerian libraries now to develop ways on how to manage access to materials available in electronic format and effectively share them, since the digital age has provided a platform on which they have to share their resources in the 21st century. ICTs have offered Nigerian libraries more efficient ways of acquiring, organizing, storing and disseminating or transmitting information. New information technologies which are integral

components in the shaping of information systems have the potential of changing the status quo of libraries (Mosuro, 2000). The information technologies found in Nigerian libraries today as a combination of computers, storage media and telecommunications. In other words, computers provide the processing, storage and retrieval capabilities of information in the library, while telecommunication provides the capabilities for the transfer and or communication of data (information) from one workstation to another in the library (Ajibero, 2002).

Oduwale, Oyewumi and Oyesiku (2002) established that one of the major characteristics of the information age is the growth of information services of various kinds in archives, libraries, museums and formal educational institutions which accounted for the bulk of what could be classified as information. Rahman (2002) also observed that the process of retrieval and dissemination of information services in libraries has witnessed a rapid growth because of the computer networks. Hence, Nigerian libraries can successfully manage the exponential growth of information with the help of this technology.

Lawal (2007) stated that, "academic libraries are faced with hybrid challenges of managing resources and are challenged to acquire the necessary skills." One challenge is the issue of disruptive behaviour for print and non-print resources. Womboh and Abba (2008) discuss the importance of access to collections in supporting the mission of the university. The researchers view the importance of good collections as a pointer to the need for safety and security for those collections. The rate at which materials disappeared from the university libraries cannot be overemphasized.

According to Ani, (2005), scandalous behaviours such as theft and mutilation, hiding library materials, refused to return overdue borrowed materials, drinking and eating in the library, among others have become a common occurrence in academic libraries, if this is not checked, it will lead to serious drought of information materials in the library. Most of the academic libraries in the developing nations including Nigeria, lack security measures which encourage users the opportunity to perform such immoral act. Aside this, library materials are not available in large quantity in some libraries. Moreso, most libraries do not have photocopy facilities for users in case of any need. In some cases, when available, incessant change in power supply does not give room for users to make copies of urgent materials needed. These among others tempt the users to engage in such disruptive act.

What appears to be more certain in the digital age is that, libraries will still have books, but films, tapes and other data-storage devices will be pushing for space. Information that would ordinarily not be made available on grounds of distance will reach users worldwide through computer-controlled information network otherwise known as Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC).

The world over, one of the common barriers to the use of ICTs in the digital age is associated with information literacy. Information literacy is an art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure and its social, culture and philosophical context and impact (Shapiro and Hughes, 1996). To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information (The American Library Association's Presidential Committee on Information Literacy, 1989). The digital age is characterized with enormous challenges as new innovations in

ICTs are emerging. The skills to find, locate and use information from print sources, computer and other storage media are to be acquired. To acquire these skills, Nigerian librarians need education which is ICT-based.

Despite the numerous advantages of non-print information resources, scholars have published that there are still issues envisaged as set-backs for Nigerian libraries to cope with. These setbacks include but are not limited to non-installation of computer networks (LAN) in libraries, inadequate ICT training programmes, provision of obsolete ICT facilities in libraries, inadequate provision of funds, poor electricity supply, lack of maintenance of ICT facilities in the libraries, lack of awareness of ICT potentials by library users, negative attitude of supervising authorities towards ICT facilities, high cost of maintaining ICT facilities, lack of proper planning for ICT in libraries, absence of knowledge of ICT implementation policies, installation of absolute ICT facilities in libraries, absence of policy to regulate standards in ICT installations and inadequate provision of ICT facilities in libraries.

#### Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper discussed the challenges associated with managing print and non-print information resources in colleges of education libraries in Nigeria. One barrier that college libraries face in the 21st century involves creating access to high-quality collections in both digital and print forms while reconfiguring existing space to allow for active learning and engagement, as well as study and research. The paper identified barriers to managing print and non-print information resources: inadequate funding, ICT illiteracy among others. It is hereby recommended that: head of colleges of education libraries in Nigerian should collaborate with relevant institutions and adopt the best strategies that will enhance the management of print and non-print information resources for sustainable national educational development in the country.

#### Further Discussion

For Nigerian academic libraries to provide the desired information services to their respective communities that will match the requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, emphasis should shift towards the following recommended direction:

- Academic libraries should explore more alternative sources of funding as over reliance on the government on funds that are not forthcoming may not provide the desired solutions.
- New initiatives are required in the form of consultancy services, marketing of information products as well as other income generating services.
- Committees of university librarians, and their counterparts in polytechnics and colleges should sensitize their respective institutions and administrators on the major role of academic libraries in teaching, learning and research activities in academic communities.
- More emphasis should be placed on the provision of online access and services such as OPAC, e-journals, e-books and networked information services.
- Improvement in ICTs such as the Internet, Intranet, hardware and software as well as Internet band with.
- The need for the Nigerian Library Association to be proactive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Improvement in ICT training for academic librarians
- Finally, government must realize the central role of academic libraries to national development which requires provision of more funds for academic library development in the country.

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