

## IMPACT OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES ON SERVICES DELIVERY AMONG LIBRARIANS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The study investigated the impact of electronic information resources on services delivery among librarians in university libraries in Nigeria. Electronic information resources or e-resources are those resources, information that are stored electronically and require electronic system or devices to accessed and used. The study discussed different models, identified various types of e-resources use by librarians, uses of electronic information resources, and challenges encountered by librarians. The study concluded that electronic information resources in university libraries has come to stay as a revolution in information services delivery. The study recommends that Federal allocation to the educational sector should be reviewed upward to ensure reasonable funds allocated to academic libraries, training of staff for technical know-how should be encourage by university management and provision of standby generator to curb erratic power supply. It is believed that addressing the identified challenges will reposition the use of electronic information resources in academic libraries for better service delivery in the digital age.*

**Keywords:** Electronic Information Resources, Service Delivery, University Libraries

### Introduction

A university library is a library that is attached to a university to serve in the teaching and learning needs of students and staff. The university library serves two complimentary purposes: to support the academic curriculum and to support the research needs of the university faculty and students, Singh and Kaur (2019); stressed that preservation and access to knowledge and information is the main mandate of academic libraries alongside the mission of their parent-institutions which is teaching and research.

The history of university libraries' development in Nigeria dated back to pre-independence time when the university of Ibadan and its library were established in 1948. Aguolu 1996 cited in Okorigbo (2016) pointed out that since independence in 1960, there has been an unrelenting upsurge in the establishment of educational institutions at all levels, especially university education. It must be realized that university libraries, being integral

academic ranks of the university, generally emerged simultaneously with their parent institutions. Hence, there are many university libraries as there are universities across Nigeria.

University libraries are at the forefront of providing information services to their respective communities. Scholars have emphasized on the crucial role of academic libraries in research and scholarship in institutions of higher learning. The university library performs those functions of organizing information and making it accessible to users.

Libraries are institution responsible for the collection, processing and storage of recorded knowledge for the purpose of consultation. According to Ajbola (2016), states that any nation or institution who wishes to participate in and profit from the advantage of the information revolution must seek to exploit the resources organized therein. Libraries have the major responsibility of making information resources available both print and digital to meet the information needs of users (Aina, 2014).

The emergency of electronic information resources has tremendously transformed information handling in university libraries and it has gradually become a major resource in every university library (Shuling, 2017). Electronic information resources or e-resources refer to digital information and materials accessed and utilized through various devices, such as computers, Smartphones, tablets and e-readers. These resources include e-books, e-journals, online databases, multimedia materials and other forms of digital content. The increasing popularity of electronic resources can be attributed to their accessibility, cost- effectiveness and efficiency.

Electronic information resources have revolutionized how information is accessed and shared, whereby impacting various domains such as education, research, healthcare and business. Konappa (2014) defined electronic information resources as sources of information that are held in a digital or electronic format. Electronic information resources can be accessed searched, or retrieved either by an electronic network or by an electronic data processing application.

However, Rashid (2021) defined electronic information resources as those resources in which information is stored electronically and which require electronic systems/devices and networks to access and use. Electronic information resources are provided in electronic form and these include, CD-ROM database, online databases, online journals, OPACs, internet and other computer-based electronic networks (Quadric et.al., 2014). The various types and forms of e-resources in libraries are; e-databases, e-journals, e-data archives, e-manuscript, e-maps, e-books, e-magazines, e-thesis, WWW, e-newspapers, e-research reports, and e-bibliographic databases (Ankrah & Aluase, 2018). The types of electronic resources that could be acquired in university libraries depend on the needs of the users, cost and complexity of the materials.

Consequently, Kenchakkamavar (2014) outlined the types of electronic information resources found in university libraries and they include; e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers, e-magazines, indexing and abstracting databases, full text database, statistical database, image collection, multimedia products, e-thesis, e-clipping, e-patents and e-standards. Some of the most frequently encountered types of electronic information resources use by librarians in university libraries are E-journals, E-books, Full-text (aggregated) databases, indexing and

abstracting databases, reference databases (biographies, dictionaries, directories, encyclopedias, etc). numeric and statistical database, e-images, and e-audio/visual resources (Ekhaguosa et al., 2021).

The extent to which librarians can effectively utilize these electronic information resources to access and organise information for users, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century depend largely on the level of their computer self-efficiency. A strong sense of computer self-efficacy of librarians can affect the extent as well as the way technology can be used in daily activities including in the protection of information systems, significantly changing both librarians' and the users; roles. If the librarians do not consider themselves competent in computer use, it implies that they lack confident and self-efficacy in utilizing computers effectively.

### **Electronic Information Resources**

The term “Electronic Information Resources” is a broad term that includes a variety of different model like e-journals, e-books, online databases, CD-ROMs, e-mail publishing, online public Access catalogues (OPACs). Etc. hence the term EIRs (Electronic Information Resources) means an electronic product that delivers a collection of data, be it text, numerical, graphical, or time based as a commercially available resources that has been published with the sole aim to be marketed for information dissemination (Rashid, 2021). The EIRs refer to those materials that require computer access or any other electronic devices. The EIRs may either be accessed remotely via the internet or locally. Padval et al., (2021) defined electronic information resources as resources that require computer access or any electronic product that deliver a collection of data, be it text referring to full-text base, electronic journals, image collections, other multimedia that has been published with the aim of being marketed. IFLA 2000 cited in Tariq and Zia (2014) defined electronic information resources as those materials that require access, whether through a personnel computer, mainframe, or handheld mobile device. They may either be accessed remotely via the internet or locally.

### **Types of Electronic Information Resources Used by Librarian in University Libraries**

The world becomes a world of technology and students, librarians and researchers are well aware of the use of these electronic information resources and librarians in university libraries to provide competitive library service delivery in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the use of these electronic information resources should be encouraged. Some of the most frequently encountered or managed electronic information resources in university libraries according to Rachid (2021) are:

- E-journals: E-journals are full-text journals that are accessible via the internet. It can be available free or as part of paid-for services. E-journals occupy a major share in e-publishing.
- E-books: E-books are portable literary works that can contain large quantities of readable textual information.
- E-databases: E-databases are collections of high-quality information for academic research. E-databases are an organized collection of information on a particular subject or multidisciplinary subject core.

- E-Newspapers: An electronic newspaper (E-newspaper) is also known as an outline newspaper or web newspaper which can be accessed via the internet.
- E-Theses & Dissertation: E-theses and dissertation (ETD) are an electronic version of the document that describes the scholarly work of a researcher.

Other forms of electronic information resources that are managed by librarians in the day-to-day services delivery of the library according to Kenchakkanarar (2014) include:

- Indexing and Abstracting: These are the reference sources that provide bibliographic information about the journal including abstracts of the articles.
- Reference Databases: These are many dictionaries, Almanacs, and Encyclopedias, which are available on the internet in electronic format.
- Statistical Database: A statistical database is a collection of data organized in a structured manner to facilitate statistical analysis and research. It typically contains a large volume of data from various sources, such as survey, census, administrative records and other data collection method.
- Image Collection: Image collection refers to the collection of a set of images for a specific purpose or application. It involves curating, storing and managing images in a systematic manner to enable easy retrieval and utilization. Image collections can range from personal photo albums to large-scale repositories used for research and advertising, or other purposes.
- Multimedia Products: Multimedia products refers to digital content that incorporates a combination of different media elements, such as text, images, audio, video, and interactive elements. These products are designed to deliver information, entertainment or educational experiences through various media formats and can be created for different purposes, including marketing, education, entertainment or communication.

### **Uses of Electronic Information Resources by Librarians in University Libraries**

The use and application of electronics information resources and other ICT facilities for service delivery in the library, university libraries especially are gaining wide acceptance among libraries and library users. Ekwelem et al., 2009 as cited by Nwafor et al., (2018) asserted that electronic information resources are information sources that are available and can be accessed electronically through computer network facilities, such as online library catalogue, the internet, the world wide web, digital libraries, government portals and websites.

Safahiem and Asemi (2018) asserted that computer literate librarians and those with high self-efficacy in the use of computer are able to communicate information more effectively when they know how to create and use Excel spreadsheets of PowerPoint presentation. Librarians can also reach easily beyond the boundaries of their communities when they are able to use HTML to create web pages so that they can publish their resources, articles, their opinion and document to the world, and these aforementioned achievements are connected to librarians with computer self-efficacy.

Electronic information resources are important to librarians because, they need to have access to timely, accurate and relevant academic information to relay to students especially in

direct questions, ready reference questions, specific search questions as well as long range questions respectively. Sahabi et al. (2020) asserted that provision of electronic information resources is needed and useful to librarians because they make information available, easier and provide faster transfer and accessibility than information accessible via printed media. Hence, librarians believe that electronic information resources are the answer to the expectation of the user in academic libraries.

Therefore, the management of electronic resources is common in Nigeria universities, while in Niger-Delta university for example, these resources according to Fyneman et al. (2014) are available at the college of Health Sciences and the main library, in River States university of science and Technology these resources are accessible both within and outside the university environment. Khan (2016) asserts that hundreds of thousands of monographic materials, journals, learning resources and databases among others are now available in electronic formats and these materials can be accessed from remote corners of a country, thereby increasing the use of information and efficacy of information services.

Librarians can access libraries' electronic information resources through a network of resources from the comfort of their own library without being physically present in the other library.

### **Challenges of Electronic Information Resources Use by Librarians in University Libraries.**

The advent of electronic information resources in the university libraries in Nigeria has transformed way information are accessed, processed and disseminated. University libraries always aspire to adopt and make use of electronic information resources to make their services delivery easily and satisfy the needs of users. In spite of this advantage presented by these resources in university libraries, there are factors that obstruct the effective use of electronic information resources in many university libraries in Nigeria. The major constraints are considered in this study. The findings of Krubu and Asowaru 2011 cited in Abraham (2021) revealed that inadequate training and retraining of staff by management, inadequate funding, epileptic power supply and lack of search skills are the major factors militating against the effective use of electronic information resources in university libraries. Amongst other, inadequate funding, capacity building, irregular power supply was found as stumbling blocks toward the use of electronic information resources. Similarly, Oghenefega et al. (2014) and Okojie and Okiy (2019), and Lucky et al., (2014) have identified the challenges of electronic information resources in university libraries as follows:

- **Funding:** Funding of libraries especially academic libraries is still nothing to write home about. This has really constrained academic libraries in embracing electronic information resources hence, this technological equipments are costly to purchase and install, thereby depriving information seekers the opportunities provided by these technologies.
- **Lack of Trained Personnel:** the underutilization of e-resources in the university libraries could be attributed to lack of technological expert and low computer self-efficacy which could hinder the zeal for making use of e-resources in the university libraries.

- **Erratic Power Supply:** The effective utilization of electronic information resources depend largely on effective and constant power supply. This is because the institution or external system that wish to operate these technologies should make adequate provision for constant electricity supply since the electricity corporation now known as PHCN or BEDC has become so epileptic. A generating set that could be as supplementary to BEDC or PHCN, the cost to fuel to generator is highly exorbitant. Electricity, which is an essential necessity for economic growth is lacking in Nigeria as a whole. Without electricity, it would be difficult to exploit the best that electronic information resources could offer.
- **Government Policy:** Policy structure of the government on the growth of any communication technology in a society depend on the degree to which policy makers recognize the importance of information communication technology in promoting a knowledge-based society.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, electronic information resources in university libraries have come to stay as a revolution in information service delivery. They are seen as a transformation of academic libraries from the conventional to computer-self-efficacy. There are quite a number of these electronic information resources that are utilized in university libraries like e-books, e-journal, e-databases, e-newspapers, e-theses and other forms of electronic information resources that are manage by librarians for services delivery in the libraries, like indexing and abstracting, reference databases, statistical databases and multimedia products. Therefore, if all these equipments are utilized effectively there will be a change in service delivery in university libraries in Nigeria.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the challenges and the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. The study recommend that highly electronic information resources should be provided to ensure up to date and efficient information services delivery in university libraries.
2. Authority concerned with the establishment of university libraries should provide substantial funds to all university libraries to enable them install electronic information resources technology for service delivery.
3. Government should allocate fund to improved information communication technology (ICT) infrastructure to university libraries including availability of computer equipment, database, network services, multimedia projector and uninterrupted power supply to the universities.
4. The university libraries should organise training and retraining of staff hence these technologies are constantly evolving and revolving.

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