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Enhancing the Acquisition Methods of School Library Resources in Nigeria through the Appropriate Information and Communication Technology [ICT] (Pp. 309-318)

Jegade, Olumakinde Richard - College Library, Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija-Epe, Lagos State.
E-mail: olumakindejegade@yahoo.co.uk

Towolawi, K.Oluwakemi - University Library, Bells University of Technology, Ota, Ogun State
E-mail:kemitowolawi@yahoo.com
Tel: 0805 752 1097; 0802 821 0464

Abstract

The Motive of any library is to collect, organize, preserve and disseminate information to their particular users. The information that is made available to users especially in school libraries is usually presented in form of printed text, graphics, sound, animation or still pictures etc. This presentation can be enhanced by the use of appropriate Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It has made it possible to handle information in a variety of forms. Information conveyed by speech, texture materials, pictures or tables of numbers can be dealt with easily. Modern technologies in libraries create a new forum for global information access. The objectives of this paper therefore is to highlight the various methods by which information and Technology can improve the acquisition methods of school library collection Nigeria.

Key Words: School Library, Collection Development, ICT

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology encompasses all forms of Technology use to create, store, exchange and use information in its various forms of business data, voice conversations still images, motion pictures, multimedia presentations etc.

It is viewed as a combination of computers and telecommunication systems to improve the quality of research, teaching, learning and communication through its gathering, processing, storing, connecting, analyzing data functions and dissemination of information.

Abdulahi and Haruna (2008) quoting Rorley maintains that ICTs promote the growth and development of Libraries in a number of ways. They are:

- (1) effective Dissemination of Services to users;
- (2) Provision of networking regardless of the distance; i.e distance collapser.
- (3) Simplifying many difficult or time consuming tasks to an extraordinary degree; i.e. time collapser
- (4) Provision of efficient ways to manage large amount of information; and
- (5) Easy access to bibliographic records and source materials among others.

The role of Information Service delivery is to support organizations, Institutions and research by facilitating access to the Library's extensive range of Information resources and Services (Omekwu, 2008). The aims of any Library therefore are to collect, organize, preserve and disseminate Information to users.

The Information that is made available to users is usually presented in form of printed text, graphics, sounds, animation or still pictures etc. Libraries themselves will have to acquire materials i.e. printed, Serials and Non-Print materials that will meet the need of their users. The methods by which these materials are acquired can be enhanced electronically.

Thus the objective of this paper is, to highlight the areas of acquisition methods that can be enhanced by the present day Information and Communication Technology.

School Libraries and its Components

School Libraries as defines by Alokun (2008) are Libraries that operates in Primary Schools, Junior and Senior Secondary Schools. They are usually a collection of books and audio-visual materials organized and housed in the school for the use of teacher's and pupils. The School Library collections are maintained with funds provided by School and through gifts and donations from Ministries of Education, Information Service centres, Philanthropic organizations and Parent Teachers Association.

The School Library is seen as the centre of the school learning programme and the foundation store of any modern educational structure. An adequate school library usually contains various books on all subjects of interest to the pupils and the teachers and should be maintained by a professionally trained teacher- Librarian.

Components of School Library

Alokun (2008) is of the opinion that school Libraries must consists of five major components

These components are:

- (i) Staff: These are people that work in the Library. (Libraries, Libraries Officers, Library assistants, Library attendants, clerks, Typist, Porter and cleaners.
- (ii) Building of Rooms: This houses Library collections, staff, users and furniture.
- (iii) Collections: These are books, serials and audio-visual materials kept in the Library for use.
- (iv) Furniture: Tables, Carrels and Shelves meant to be used in the Library.
- (v) Users: who are also referred to as readers', patrons? And or library clientele.

School Library Resources and their Roles in Educational Process

This statement sums up the value of Library resources in the school Libraries. Libraries resources are those materials made up of books, audio-visual softwares, realia, audio visual hardwares, and other pedagogical materials used in the teaching and learning processes. Library materials here are synonymous with educational resources learning resources or media resources. Fayose (1995) advocated for a multimedia approach to education. This approach requires a wide variety and plentiful supply of resources to encourage independent study so that young people from an early age will learn how to think so that their convictions and views can be formed as a result of active mental efforts. The collections of primary and secondary school Libraries must be rich and varied. It must cover all the subject areas of the school's curriculum as well as cater for individual interests and extra-curricular pursuits. The school library collection was further corroborated by Elaturoti (1998) to include all resources for different levels, such as beginner books, Fictions, non-fiction, Reference materials, books for the gifted/ fast or slow readers/ learners, and the retarded; picture books for the younger children, non-book materials and materials for teachers ..

Alokun (2007) also submitted that the collections of school libraries include printed materials such as books and serials such as Newspapers, Journals, Magazines, reference materials such as Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, handbooks, Directories, Yearbooks, Biographies, Atlases, Gazetteers, Almanacs etc. and Non-Print Materials such as (audio-visual materials) computers radio, Television, Charts etc.

These collections are essentials because they support the teaching –learning process, and develop independent reading habits and skills in Pupils. This will automatically lead to improving their study skill and enhancing of performance. It must be noted that the extent creativity, informality and knowledge-ability of pupils will be shaped by the boundaries of exposure to contents of the Library resources available in schools.

School Library Resources Acquisition Methods

Scott-Emmakpor (2002) relates acquisition methods to the various ways by which a Library build up its collection. It is concerned with the selection and acquisition of materials for an expanding collection and the decisions on the materials to be included in that collection.

Basically, there are 5 methods by which Libraries can acquire materials

- (1) Purchase
- (2) gift/Donation
- (3) Exchange/Inter-Institutional Cooperation
- (4) Bequeath
- (5) Legal Deposit

Of all the methods, only four is applicable to school Libraries, this is because it is only the National Library acquires materials through legal deposit. The four methods available for school Libraries include;

(1) Purchase

This is the commonest method of building up school Library collections. The larger percentage of Library resources is through purchase which could be done through publishing houses, bookshops, vendors etc.

(2) Gifts or Donations

These often come through individual, government and organizations. Sometime, the school Libraries receives cash donations for the acquisition of library materials..

(3) Exchange/Inter-Institutional Cooperation

A library can also build its collection by exchanging materials with other libraries with similar interest. Books, periodicals, etc non-print materials could be exchanged.

(4) Bequeath

Personal libraries of philanthropies, organizations are sometimes bequeathed out rightly to libraries as a result of death or as a means of contributing to the body of knowledge by “lovers of libraries”.These properties usually include Books, government publication and or authored materials and other relevant information materials.

(5) Legal Deposit

Some Library materials are acquired under legal Deposit. For example as acquired by the National Library. The legal deposit law stipulates that three copies of books published by author must be sent to the National Library as legal depository.

How Information and Communication Technology can enhance the performance of School Library Resources Acquisition Methods

Today, emerging technologies offer Libraries new and efficient methods for performing traditional collection development task. In fact, electronic publishing is fast changing the role of Librarians in building and acquiring library resources as well as providing access to such resources. The Internet, the World Wide Web have expanded and made available resources that were unimagined in earlier years to be accessible in these present days without any problem.

Computers have had a great Impact on acquisition processes in Libraries of developed countries of Europe and America and in some developing countries globally especially Nigeria. Books-in-print are now vailable not only on microfiche but also online. Similarly many Publishers' Catalogues and Bibliographies can be accessed via the online computers. i.e. through the use of CD-ROM and internet.

The objectives of acquisition of any Library resources include

- (i) To keep record of what to be ordered.
- (ii) To keep record of what is on order
- (iii) To select materials from various sources e.g. Publishers' Catalogue, Book-in-print etc
- (iv) To keep financial record or book budget
- (v) To keep records of gifts and donations from various philanthropists and organizations etc.

(ii) Selection of Resources

Traditional Sources used for the selection of print and non-print resources are now available in electronic formats. For example the Library Journal Digital is an online edition of Library Journal. It highlights acquisition methods for Librarians while book reviews cover all formats-books, audio, video, CD ROM, web and Magazine.

(iii) Acquisition

Acquisition is concerned with the sourcing of library books and other resources through purchase, gift, exchange and other means.

Gifts

Gifts can be either books or cash specifically meant to be spent on Library books. The initial book collection with which the University of Ibadan started off comprised several donations. Collection building by gifts has its own limitations against which the astute Librarian should guard. The first is the possibility of 'dead woods' especially in Science and Technology. Therefore, careful selection has to be made of only relevant titles while irrelevant ones and or the outdated editions are discarded or rejected, and at other times suggestions will be made for such donations to be sent to other institutions that may find them useful.

Today however, Information and Communication Technology, has made it easy to send compiled list of titles via E-mail to donor philanthropist and organizations that will donate materials to the Library or make physical cash available for the acquisition of library materials. Detailed profile and information material needs of the Library are to be sent to donor in addition to the above while Letters of acknowledgement and appreciation will be necessary as a *sine qua non* after receiving the donation via listserv.

Exchange/Inter institutional Cooperation

With the application of information and communication Technology materials in cooperating Library can be exchanged using online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and myriad of other information resources available through network connections. This indicates that the participating school libraries must have their materials on the net which can be viewed and shared by other libraries. Exchange of school library materials can also be done perfectly through teleconferencing. Teleconferencing involves an Internet Service whereby different techniques are used to allow people to discuss topics of mutual interest without being physically present in the same location (as a conventional meeting). Internet conference brings about tremendous saving on traveling, time and money.

Information and Communication Technology: Challenges for Library and Information Professionals

Jegede (2009) quoting Omekwu contends that both current and future information technology trends are enormously challenging. He then suggests a nine-point agenda for library and information professionals who will set the pace in the knowledge age. These are relevant here and therefore adapted to suit the professional repositioning which information professionals will

require in meeting the challenges of working in hi-tech information system environment of modern libraries.

- **Skills:** Apart from the professional training in librarianship and information work, the librarian who will make a difference in the hi-tech information system environment must acquire computer and internet literacy. Computer literacy deal with the knowledge of computer that is necessary to function in today's world, while internet literacy is an understanding of how to use the Internet to obtain information at each step of the problem-solving process and in the sharing of information
- **Sources:** The above two literacy levels will enable the forward-looking professional to access information source beyond the immediate confines of his own institution. Recently a team of state lawyers visited a law library in Nigeria in search of information resource control to prepare for the legal battle against Federal Government. Apart from newspaper cuttings, the libraries were unable to assist. But assistance was amply provided when a library staff searched the Internet and downloaded decided cases on resource control form Sri Lanka, Poland, etc.
- **Strategies:** Time, for instance, is of great significance while in the Web. Strategies that will yield optimal retrieval result in less time; that will provide access to knowledge institutions, networked resources and services will become increasingly necessary.
- **Services :** In the unfolding electronic environment, timely, accurate, precise but comprehensive service will distinguish the librarians who will retain the confidence of the clientele system and those who will lose it. Advertisement, it must be remembered, could attract customers, but only qualitative services would retain them. Library services will be more than bookish; they will have multimedia dimensions. Services will provide more than data and information; knowledge distillation and dissemination will be domain of service in the emerging modern libraries.
- **System Use:** Librarians who cannot use computer and Internet-based technology will become increasingly obsolete. The ability to manage both technology and information to provide access to

knowledge institutions and systems will be the hallmark of professionalism in the hi-tech modern libraries.

- **System Administration:** As more and more library institutions acquire hardware and software, as network connections increases, multimedia formats become part of the library's resources, the need for knowledgeable system administrators will increase. Library and information professionals who improve their competence in these areas will become the future system administrators in their institutions. The current practice of engaging system analysts/administrators with a background in computer science will decrease, as library professionals become the information technology analyst.
- **System Maintenance:** Technologies like any other tools do break down. While it is not being advocated that the librarian should become a "Jack-of-all trade", the forward-looking professional should be able to know why his computer switched off; why dial-up is difficult or why network communication is problematic. Such maintenance knowledge will enable him to communicate on the same frequency with the system supplier/engineer.
- **System Networking:** The phenomenal growth of the Internet has earlier been described. Within institutions, there is also intranet system. A basic understanding of network principle is essential for optional access and utilization of network resources. Institutions that are part of the global network will have strategic advantage over those who have no knowledge.

System Development: The current shift from data and information management systems to knowledge-based systems provides a serious challenge to the information professional. As knowledge custodian, he must come on board the train of change. As hi-tech information systems evolve, he must contribute to follow the evolutionary process. This contribution is vital because when the Librarian's professional and practice environment becomes predominantly digital and electronic, the librarian will be there to link-up the seekers with the sources through user-friendly systems and services. He will be there to make the difference!

Conclusion

The present and future development in Information and communication technology and its application to Library Services are vital issues that every Library must embrace. The pace of developments is fast and their presence dynamic and demanding. ICT are library friends and not foes. They should be received rather than resisted or rejected by Libraries, in order to provide effective and accurate services. Pupils in school libraries should have access to these facilities from their primary school orientation so that they can grow with it and become a force to reckon with technologically wherever they find themselves in future.

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