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The use of Electronic Resources and Services by Academic Librarians of Ahmadu Bello University Library

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Abstract

The study adopted a case study method. The population of the study consisted of the professional librarians at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria library complex. The available records in the office of the university librarian showed that there are one hundred and fifteen (115) professional librarians constituting the library staff. These 115 Librarians constitute population of the study. The instruments used for this study was questionnaire and oral interview of the professional librarians in the library complex. Out of one hundred and fifteen questionnaires distributed, one hundred (100) copies were duly returned. This gave a response rate of 88.2%. The data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentages. The findings reveal among others that computers, database, flash drives and Internet service are the major e-resources that are available in the library studied. It reveals further that Ahmadu Bello University Library Complex subscribes to eleven (11) online databases that can be accessed from their MTN net library and their Information Service Centre. The academic librarians in the complex are aware of availability of electronic resources and services mainly through library websites, lecture and lecturers. Erratic supply of power and unstable network are the major factors that hinder the use of e-resources. Academic librarians use e-resources on daily bases to enhance their job performance. The study recommends that librarians should participate in a range of educational activities apart from their routine tasks. Academic librarians should be involved in research activities, training and retraining of staff.

Keywords: *Electronic resources, use, academic librarians, staff training,*

1.0 Introduction

In the past two decades the trend towards making information available online has accelerated. In an effort to provide the information that patrons require, libraries must take advantage of developments in information technology and advanced

communication to enable them provide services that today's society both need and expect. Electronic resources are defined as those electronic information resources and services that users access electronically via a computing network from inside the library or remotely to the library. Okiki (2011)

describes electronic resources as “a material (data or programme) encoded for manipulation by a computerized device or a connection to a computer network”.

Electronic resources, according to Omotayo (2010), include websites, online databases, e-journals, e-books, CD-ROMs, Audiovisuals/multimedia, etc. Electronic services include, email-based services, bulletins board for libraries, online public access catalogues (OPACs) portal, gateways and the Internet. Dadzie (2009) stated that digital information is changing the role of librarians from a person who students ask for assistance in finding information in a place called a library to someone who needs to provide services and instructions regardless of place, time or format. A librarian or information professional must be able to actively participate in the educational process rather than gathering information and disseminate it to the public through workshops, orientations, training, etc. They must ensure that there is effective and efficient flow of information from the generators to the users of information in the digital environment.

According to Sharma (2009) the use of electronic resources and services by academic librarians to retrieve valuable information resources in libraries will show the extent to which users of digital resources are achieving their goals in doing assignments, teaching and research. One of the goals of the library in the electronic age is to provide information and services that will fulfill the patrons' needs and this is formed Torma and Vakkari's (2004) observation as stated in Yunana (2011) that the availability of relevant electronic resources affects how frequently scholars use them. According to Eteng and Ntui (2009) and Madu and Pam (2011) the provision of electronic resources varies among disciplines. They are most available in the sciences and medicine and least in the social sciences and humanities.

Based on the inestimable values of electronic resources and services in performance of different academic tasks, it is expected that academic staff in Kashim Ibrahim Library complex and, of course, other Nigerian universities library academic staff should make good use of these technologies to perform their private and official assignments without restriction or reservation.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The librarians role has changed rapidly in recent years, in response to new forms of information and new methods of teaching and learning student learning demands a greater variety of teaching skills and the explosion of electronic information resources from Compact Disk Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) to the Internet requires continuous updating of knowledge and skills of librarians in the library complex. Users' expectations of the ability of a library service to deliver high quality services are growing. Linked to users demand for services is the influence of electronic resources and services, student for example, are becoming more computer literate and the academic library environment has changed substantially in the increased variety of technology used for service delivery. The librarian has become more of a consultant in information services and many users want to conduct some of their searches from their own workstation. What is the level of availability of these resources in Ahmadu Bello University Library Complex? How competent is the Academic Librarian in the field of electronic resources and services? This work intends to investigate the use of electronic resources and services by Academic Librarians in Ahmadu Bello University Library Complex.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the use of Electronic Resources and Services by Academic Librarians in Ahmadu Bello

University Library Complex and highlight the importance of transporting their services to the online environment. The study also identifies some problems and challenges faced by academic librarians in the complex in coping with the use of electronic resources and services vis-à-vis providing their patrons with effective and efficient online information services.

1.3 Research Questions

What types of electronic resources and services are available to the Academic Librarians in Ahmadu Bello University Library complex?

1. How are Academic Librarians made to be aware of the availability of electronic resources within the complex?
2. What factors hinder the use of electronic resources and services by Academic Librarians in the complex?
3. What is the extent to which electronic resources and services are used by Academic Librarians in the library Complex?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study reveals the extent to which Academic Librarians in the complex use electronic resources and services. Its findings also reveal some of the challenges faced, such as lack of appropriate data bases/mechanisms and sociological, time, funding, and human factors are some of the few challenges faced that will be addressed by the study.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The major limitation of the study is the number of librarians studied which was small compared to the number of academic librarians in Nigerian Universities' libraries, this will affect the generalization of the findings.

2.0 Literature Review

The use of electronic resources has permeated all strata of human activities and it is gaining prominence in the performance of academic activities in academic environment of which library is part of, electronic resources has revolutionized the way librarians live, communicate and seek operational information in and out of library environment. Many scholars and authors have given different definitions of the concept of electronic resources.

Odufuwa (2006) examined existing electronic information resources and posited that the emergence and use of information technology in the centuries is the most significant development affecting scholarly communication. In a study conducted by Nwachukwu (2005) he found out that electronic resources and services are sought after not only by undergraduates, but by every student at all levels of tertiary institutions. For this reason, academic librarians should have knowledge of electronic resources and services to be able to serve their patrons needs at all level. According to Okojie (2007), Howe (2009) and Ugwu (2009) they indicated that electronic resources collection in a library include:- websites, data bases, electronic journals, electronic books, CD-ROMs, DVDs, audiovisuals and multimedia, dissertations and students projects. While electronic services include:- mail based, Bulletin boards for libraries, OPAC, Portal/Gateways. In a similar research conducted by Ukpebor (2011) he stated that librarians must develop the competencies to carry out effective searches M CD – ROMS, OPAC, on the web and other electronic data bases. Ibrahim (2004) views an important factor that influences the use of electronic resources when they are provided as user's awareness of their availability in the library.

Corroborating the statement of Ibrahim, Omekwu (2008) asserts that the best way to create awareness for their availability in

libraries is to provide greater publicity on each new resources as it is acquired. In his observation, Nwachukwu (2005) opined that availability of electronic resources and services depend on the availability of funds as well as the demand for their use. Omotayo, (2010) discovered that inadequacy of facilities is another problems faced by users of electronic resources and services, thereby leading to congestion in libraries. Spite of all these problems, the use of electronic resources and services by Academic Librarians and by extension, other members of the university community is very encouraging.

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted a case study design. The population of the study consisted of the professional librarian at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria library complex, Zaria. The available records in the office of the University Librarian showed that there are one hundred and fifteen (115) professional librarians. These librarians were used for the study. The instruments used for the study was questionnaires and oral interview of professional staff in the library complex.

Out of the one hundred and fifteen (115) copies of the questionnaire distributed, one hundred copies were duly returned. This gave a response rate of 88.2%. The data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentages.

4.0 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This chapter deals with the analysis of data collected through the use of questionnaire administered and interview conducted and discusses the findings on the use of electronic resources and services by Academic Librarians in Ahmadu Bello University Library complex. The data gathered were analyzed using tables, frequencies and percentages to present data. The chapter is further organized according to the research questions of the study.

4.1 Response Rate

One hundred and fifteen (115) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to all academic librarians in the university library complex. Out of these, one hundred (100) were returned on completion, which represents 88.2% response rate.

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate

Libraries	Questionnaire Administered	Questionnaire Returned	Percentage of questionnaires returned
Kashim Ibrahim Library (K.I.L)	57	57	49.5
President Kennedy Library (P.K.L)	10	8	6.9
Institute for Agricultural Research Library (I.A.R)	7	5	4.3
Medical Library	7	5	4.3
Centre for Islamic and Legal Studies Library	3	2	2.6
Division of Agricultural Library	8	6	5.2
Law Library	1	1	0.8
National Agricultural Extension Research Liaison Services (NAERLS)	1	1	0.8
L.Tee Ray Back Library	6	4	3.4
Public library	3	2	2.6
Faculties / Departmental Libraries	12	9	7.8
Total	115	100	88.2%

Table 2: Gender and use of electronic resources and services in Ahmadu Bello University Library complex

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	61	53.0
Female	54	47
Total	115	100%

Table 2: shows that 61 (53.1%) male academics staff uses electronic resources and services, while 54 (46.9%) female academic staff use electronic resources and services for both academic and private purposes. Based on this analysis, it could be deduced that more of male academic staff use electronic resources and services than female academic staff in the university library complex under study.

Table 3: Working experience and the use of electronic resources and services in Ahmadu Bello University Library Complex.

Working Experience	frequency	Percentage (%)
Experienced academic staff	45	39
Less experienced academic staff	70	61
Total	115	100%

The analysis in table 3 shows that 45 (39%) respondents indicate that they are academic staff with enough working experience, while 70 (61%) respondents indicated that they are academic staff with less working experience. Based on this analysis, it could be concluded that academic staff with less working experience are more than academic staff with enough working experience. However, working experience should not be a factor in the user of electronic resources and services because those staff with less working experience are graduate of library and information science where they must have been trained in electronic librarianship.

Table 4: Availability of electronic resources

Library complex	Computers	CD-ROM	Flash Drive	VCD/DVD Player	Internet Service	Electronic BKS/Journals
Kashim Ibrahim Library						
President Kennedy Library		x		x		
Institute for Agriculture Library		x				
Medical Library		x		x		
Lee-T Library		x		x		
Lee-T Library		x				
Division of Agriculture Colleges Library		x		x		
National Agricultural extension research liaison Services		x		x		
Law Library		x		x		
Centre for Islamic and legal studies library		x		x		
Faculties/ Departmental Libraries				x		
Total	100%	10%	100%	30%	100%	100%

Key:- Available Electronic resources
 x Not available electronic resources

Table 4: shows the types of electronic resources available in the library complex. Result revealed that computers are available in all the ten (10) libraries in the complex represents 100%. CD-ROM is only available in the main library, i.e. Kashim Ibrahim library, represent 10%. Flash drive is also available in all the ten (10) libraries in the complex represent 100%. VCD/DVD player is available in three (3) libraries of the complex represent 30%. Internet service is available in all the ten (10) libraries in the complex represent 100%. While electronic books/ journals is available in all the ten libraries represent 100% Based on the result above, with computers and good internet connectivity, flash drive and a well managed database, electronic resources and services can be well enhanced.

Table 5: Academic Librarians awareness of the availability of electronic resources and services within the complex

Awareness of electronic resources and services					
SN	Awar eness Options	Response			
		Yes		No	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Library Websites	95	82.6%	20	17.3%
2	Lectures/lecturer	90	78.2%	25	21.7%
3	Workshop	75	65.2%	40	34.7%
4	Seminars	70	61.8%	45	39.1%
5	Friends	40	34.7%	75	65.2%
6	Circular	20	17.3%	95	82.6%
7	Library Bulletin	10	8.6%	96	91.3%
8	Notice Board	8	6.9%	97	93%
9	Opac	6	5.2%	98	94.7%
10	Reference Desk	2	1.7%	99	98.2%

Table 5 indicates that library websites is the main means of creating awareness of electronic resources and service with a responses of 82.6% followed closely is lecturers in the library schools where each of the librarians graduated with responses of 78.2%. However, workshops and seminars with responses of 65.2% and 61.8% respectively created publicity for the awareness of e-resources and services. Reference desk, OPAC and notice board are the list means of creating awareness of availability of e-resources and services with responses of 1.7%, 5.2% and 6.9%

respectively. This result reveals that Ahmadu Bello University Library complex has a library home page, accession Register, list of registered members of academic staff, users group, Kubani institutional repository and above all in-house training for staff to understand availability of e-resources and services which target the young academic librarians. The implication is that availability and awareness of the existence of e-resources and services by academic librarians in the complex will lead patrons to use digital resources very frequently.

Table 6: factors that hinder the use of electronic resources and service by Academic Librarians in the complex

S/N	Constraints	Responses			
		Yes	%	No	%
1	Erratic Supply of power	100	100	-	-
2	Unstable network	106	92.2	9	7.8
3	Lack of enough computer	80	69.6	35	30.4
4	Lack of computer literacy	35	30.4	80	69.6
5	Poor communication network	45	39.1	70	60.9

Table 6 shows that a lot of factors hinder the use of electronic resources and services by academic librarians under study. The analysis show that 100% responses indicated that erratic supply of power is the major factors that hinder the use of electronic resources and services. It will also be seen from the analysis that 92.2% responses indicated that unstable network also hinder the use of electronic resources and services. Another 69.6% responses indicated that lack of enough computer hinder their use of electronic resources and service. Although

staff are encouraged to buy their personal laptops to complement the effort of the university supply of computers to the library complex; however, lack of computer literacy with 30.4% responses and poor communication network with 39.1% responses are not serious factors that hinder the use of electronic resources and services in the complex. The finding of the study corroborates earlier studies made by Edom (2007) Ekoja (2007) who reported in their various studies that erratic power supply, unstable network and high cost of ICT facilities affect the use of electronic resources and services.

Table: 7 Extent to which electronic resources and services are used by Academic Librarians in the complex.

Libraries in the complex	Frequency of use									
	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Never		No Response	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
K.I.L	54	46.9	3	2.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
P.K.L	6	5.2	2	1.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
I.A.R	4	3.4	1	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medical Library	4	3.4	1	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
CILS	2	1.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DAC	6	5.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Law Library	1	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NAERLS	1	0.8	1	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
L-TEE	3	2.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public Library	2	1.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Faculties/ Departmental Library	9	7.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	92	78	8	5.2	-	-	-	-	-	-

Result in table 7: revealed that 92 (78%) of Academic Librarians used electronic resources and services on daily bases while 8 (5.2%) indicated that they used electronic resources and services on weekly bases. The finding shows that most of the respondents used e-resources and services on daily bases because of their academic status and the axiom of “published or perish syndrome” in university system in Nigeria. The implication is that availability and awareness of the existence of E-resources will lead patrons to use digital resources in the library very frequently.

5.0 Summary of Findings

Findings of the study show the followings:

More of male academic staff uses electronic resources than their female counterpart.

There is more of less experience academic staff than their experienced academic staff.

Computers, database, flash drive and internet service are the major e resources that are available in the library studied.

Ahmadu Bello University Library complex subscribes to eleven online databases that can be used in their MTN net library.

The academic librarians are aware of availability of electronic resources and service mainly through library websites and lecture/lecturers.

Erratic supply of power and unstable network are the major factors that hinder the use of e-resources.

The academic librarians under study use e-resources on daily bases to enhance their job performance.

Conclusion

The study found that on the average, academic staff in the library complex are

quite satisfied with the use of electronic resources and services available to them within the system, but they believe that much can still be done to carry them to the next level hence electronic resources and service are dynamic in nature, there is need for constant upgrading of their knowledge and services that are provided because the academic librarians are service provider, they can best serve their users if they are up-to-date and up and doing so that they can offer their best to their respective clientele within the system and outside the university system.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the followings are recommended for improved provision and use of electronic resources in university libraries.

Librarians should participate in a range of educational activities apart from their routine tasks, facilitate learning and encourage staff to share and give ideas as these attempts will help the libraries attain the best out of their staff.

Academic librarians should be involved in research activities so that they understanding the needs of the library users when doing research. The role of the library as a place of learning and of access to information is as valid as ever.

Training and retaining of academic staff is very important. Attending conferences, seminars and workshop, this will afford them the opportunity to interact with professionals and colleagues through this way improve their knowledge and skills.

The use of training tools has been found to be effective in training library Academic Staff, some of these training tools include in – house training manual, software programmes, and self instruction and vendor annuals.

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