



Users and Digital Information Resources at Benson Idahosa University Library, Benin City

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ABSTRACT

The study was set to investigate users and digital information resources at Benson Idahosa University Library, Benin City. The study dwelt on access to digital information resources, where digital information resources are mostly accessed, skills possessed in accessing digital information resources, benefits accrued to digital information resources, and challenges of using digitized information resources. The study adopted a descriptive research design using a questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The sample of the study is 99 and this was based on the availability of students in the library as of when the study was carried out. Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. Findings revealed that digital information resources are easily accessible to users, the majority of users do not possess the required skill for accessing digital resources, users benefit greatly from the use of digital information resources, and also there are a lot of challenges faced in the use of digital resources some of which are, lack of electricity, lack of adequate skills, etc. The study concluded that digitization of information resources is very relevant to the users and recommended that there is a need for regular training of the users to enable them to take advantage of the information resources.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: December, 2019

Received in revised form: February, 2020

Accepted: March, 2020

Published online: September, 2020

KEYWORDS

Users, digital, information resources,
university Libraries

INTRODUCTION

University libraries are currently using technologies to carry out their activities. This is to ensure easy and fast access to resources and services. Institutions are expected to digitize their information resources because it is one of the ways to achieve the aim of setting up the institution. (Hirtel, 2001). According to Hirtel (2003), the current increase in the use of information is intended to move library operations and services away from traditional manual means of library operation. Kumar (2009) noted that there is a dramatic change in libraries, most

especially those attached to higher institutions of learning, through the choice of information communication technology in every aspect or part of information resources such as books and non-book materials. He further explained that all forms of work usually done by man have been taken over by computer which brings about online accessibility. Therefore, it is very important for Nigeria, as a country, to embrace this technology and make its input through to the world for global accessibility. In order words, digitization of materials in libraries, especially libraries attached to higher institutions of learning, is very



necessary to ensure being part of the global world (Ikpahindi, 2007). Information centres, as well as libraries, are now converting analogue materials into a digital format for collection, use and distribution, create a digital version of content including books, journals, manuscript, photograph and analogue audio and video. They also provide services that include making digital publications accessible on the web that will be easy for the user to manage and preserve. In this modern age, digitizing information resources is a way of ensuring that information resources are preserved or maintained (Tsebe, 2005; Gaston, 2008; Masakazi, 2009). In order words, digital Information Resources(DIRs) are those information resources that were in print form, but currently found in the non-print form (soft copy) and are accessible through computer machines and other corresponding ICT tools(Obaseki, Umeji & Krubu, 2010). Digital Information Resources(DIRs)includes music's, games, stories, articles from magazines, published journals and books, encyclopaedias, pamphlets, cartographic materials and other published resources that are in soft copies. They also often include sound animated graphics, pictures and movies. (Nwabueze Urhiewhu 2015).

There are various points where clientele can access digital information resources. According to Tariq and Zia (2014), students prefer the World Wide Web (www) resources for different educational and research purpose. In order words, students prefer the use of the World Wide Web to other means of accessing digital information resources. James-Gilboe (2005) also stated that one can also access digital resources using the internet and then use the search engines to locate specific items within the text file.

Accessing digital information resources demand users to be technologically inclined. According to Rana

(2009), the only way to be sure that we are in a modernized country is to be technologically inclined because that is the only modernized way of accessing information. This means that the information in its widest form will be accessible to everyone irrespective of their locations if users are knowledgeable or are skilled. That is when information is digitized and the skills to access it is lacking, such information becomes useless. But when the skills needed to access digitized information is there, it becomes useful. Hence Okiy (2005) expressed that with the invention of technology, quick retrieval of information is needed from libraries in any location. And this could be achieved through skills acquisition. Campbell (2006), stated that there are lots of ways in this technological age to ensure equity of access, space for learning, producing metadata, teaching literacy skills and converting analogue to digital for global accessibility. Chingono, Moyo and Rotich (2015) opined that information literacy skill is a very important part of deciding in this global world. It enables people to know the needed information, the quality of information needed, retrieval process, analyzing the information and been able to keep the desired information for future use. Rafique (nd) also stated that information literacy skills include the ability of an individual to know when there is need for information, identify, navigate, locate, retrieve and organize the information to address difficulties.

Digital information resources are advantageous to universities because of the numerous benefits attached to them. One of such benefits, according to Tsebe (2005), is the accessibility of information resources to users in their various locations and at their convenience both in the city and in the remote area. Shiri (2003) in the same way stated that users have access to a large amount of digital information wherever



they are and whenever they need it. Digital information resources are easily accessible to all instead of a group of users. It also allows users to search for collections rapidly and comprehensively from anywhere at any time. In order words, it makes them invisible to be visible. (Nwabueze Urhiewhu 2015). Digitizing is sometimes presented as a panacea for problems of access and preservation. In order words, with digitization, visibilities can be universalized. That is, improved visibility comes with improved accessibility, not just to the digitized resources but also to the original materials (Neubauer, 2000). Shibanda (2001) stated that digital information provides round the clock availability, multiple access to information, space utilization and added value to the digitized resources. That is, digital information resources ensure that information in the local form goes global while the information in the global gets to the local. Ndakalu (2014) also stated that digital information can easily be shared and made available to everybody, which is now a great improvement in print libraries that requires expensive duplication of material in different locations.

Despite the numerous benefits attached to digital information resources, there are also challenges to the use of digital information resources. These challenges are a shortage of computers, unreliable internet connections, poor information technology infrastructure development (Omeluzor, Akibu, & Akinwonye 2016). Ajibili and Gana, (2013) also spelt out some of the challenges as which are irrelevant information, the need to filter the results from a search, download delay, failure to find information,

inadequate or lack of search skills, high cost of access, inaccessibility of some electronic resources, difficulties in navigating through electronic resources, inadequate computer systems, slow internet speed and poor network service, frequent power failure, poor internet connectivity. The study of Igbo and Imo (2014) on electronic information resources sharing and networking among University libraries in Nigeria revealed that lack of electronic information resources with a mean (3.96), and insufficient bandwidth for easy access to the Internet with mean of (3.45) among other were hindrances to digitized information resources.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study

1. Access to digital information resources
2. where digital information resources are mostly accessed
3. skills possessed in accessing digital information resources
4. benefits accrued to digital information resources
5. Challenges of using digitized information resources.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design using a questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The population of the study consisted of all registered users of the library. The entire population which is 99 was used as a sample for the study because of the small size of the population. Data were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Access to digital information resources

Access to digital resources	Number of Responses	Percentage
Yes	76	76.8
No	23	23.2

Table 1 shows that 76 (76.8%) of the respondents indicated that they have access to digital resources while 23 (23.2%) indicated that they do not. This reveals that majority of the respondents are accessible

to digitized resources. This finding corroborates the report of Shiri (2003) that users have access to a large amount of digital information wherever they are and whenever they need it.

Table 2: Where digital information resources are mostly accessed

Response option	Agree		Disagree		Undecided	
Online database	89	89.9	9	9.1	1	1
Websites	92	93	4	4	3	3
Institution web page	24	24.2	69	69.7	6	6.1
Search engines	89	89.9	4	4	6	6.1

Table 2 reveals that 92(93%) of the respondents indicated that they have access to digital information resources via the websites, 89 (89.9%) access digital information resources through the online database and search engine, while 24(24.2%) access digital information resources through their institution's web page. This shows that majority of the users access digital information resources

through the internet. This finding is similar to the observation of James-Gilboe (2005) who found that one can access digital resources using the internet and then use the search engines to locate specific items within the text file. In other words, the institution web page has low access. This could be as a result of the ineffectiveness of the institution page in accessing information.

Table 3: Skills possessed in accessing digital resources

Skills	Agree		Disagree		Undecided	
	Response	%	Response	%	Response	%
Ability to navigate	93	93.9	-	-	6	6.1
Ability to identify & retrieve	90	90.9	6	6.1	3	3
Ability to construct logical term	88	88.9	9	9.1	2	2
Ability to organize	62	62.6	31	31.3	6	6.1

Table 4 shows the ability possessed by users in accessing digital resources. A total of 93(93.9%) of the respondents indicated that they can navigate information, 90(90.9%) can identify and retrieve information, 88(88.9%) could construct logical terms while 62(62.6%) of

the respondents indicated that they possessed the ability to organize digital resources. This revealed that the majority of the students have the necessary skills to navigate information. This is an indication that most of the students can make adequate use of digitized information



resources. This is in line with the study of Chingono, Moyo and Rotich (2015) that information literacy skill is a very important part of deciding in this global world and as

such, individuals should acquire the needed skills for retrieval process, analyzing the information and be able to keep the desired information for future use.

Table 4: Benefits derived from the use of digitized information resources

Benefits	Agree		Disagree		Undecided	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Availability of information	99	100	-	-	-	-
Easy to access	96	97	3	3.0	-	-
Increased preservation	91	91.9	8	8.1	-	-
No geographical boundaries	89	89.9	6	6.1	4	4.1

Table 4 shows the various benefits the respondents derive from the use of digital resources. A total of 99(100%) of the respondents indicated that digital resources enhance the availability of information, 96(97%) indicated that digital resources are easy to access, 91(91.9%) increased preservation, while 89 (89.9%) of them agreed that digital information resources have no geographical boundaries in its use. This is an indication that digital resources

are of great benefit to users. This is justified by the report of Shibanda (2001) that digital information provides round the clock availability, multiple access to information, space utilization and added value to the digitized resources. Neubauer (2000) observed that when a collection is digitized, there is improvement invisibility that comes with it, not just to the digital resources but also to the original materials.

Table 5: Factors militating against the effective use of digital information resources

Factors	Agree		Disagree		Undecided	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Poor power supply	82	82.8	15	15.2	2	2.0
Inadequate electronic resources	79	79.8	12	12.1	8	8.1
Poor internet connectivity	92	92.9	7	7.1%	-	-
Lack of user education	89	89.9	7	7.1	3	3.0
Unavailability of some digitized resources	90	90.9	5	5.1	4	4.0
Inadequate skills	4	4.0	95	96	-	-

Table 5 reveals all the factors affecting the use of digital information

resources. A total of 92(92.9%) of the respondents indicated lack poor internet connectivity as a problem in using digitized



information resources. 90(90.6%) face the problem of unavailability of some digital resources, 89(89.9%) lack of user education, 82(82.2%) poor power supply, while 79(59.2%) of the respondents are faced with the problem of inadequate electronic resources. On the other hand, 95(96%) disagree to have the problem of skills in accessing digitized information resources. This revealed that majority of these respondents are skilled in accessing digitized information resources, they also face problems of poor internet connectivity, unavailability of digital information resources, lack of user education, power supply and inadequate electronic resources.

CONCLUSION

This research work has been able to establish the fact that digital information resources are very important to Students of Benson Idahosa's University. It can be concluded that digital information resources are very relevant in several ways which include simultaneous access to information, fast and easy access, round the clock availability, saves the time of users, does not have geographical boundaries and it decrease storage space. To an extent, there are some challenges faced in the use of digitized resources such as lack of adequate skills. There is a need for regular training of students and other users on access and use of digital library resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be adequate training for users of the library.
2. More electronic resources should be acquired to encourage more use of digital resources in the library.
3. The university library should make sure that current and up-to-date resource are made available for easy access by users.

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