
INTERNET AS A CATALYST TO LEARNING AND RESEARCH: IT'S USAGE BY LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE STUDENTS OF
ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA UNIVERSITY, BAUCHI NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper was conducted in order to ascertain how the use of internet can be a positive catalyst to learning and research to students of library and information sciences ATBU, Bauchi. Cross sectional survey design was used using structured questionnaire and administered for data collection. The questionnaire was designed, keeping in view the objectives of the study. The target populations for the study were male and female students of library and information sciences. Random sampling technique was used for questionnaire distribution. One hundred and thirty (130) questionnaires were administered to the respondents. Some were dully returned. The data obtained were analyzed using Microsoft excel (spreadsheet programme). The study reveals among other things that 80 (81.63%) students admitted that internet improves their academic pursuit and are satisfied with the use of internet and the kind of information available on the internet. The study also reveals that, majority of the students uses the internet to prepare their assignment/seminars and to retrieve educational information respectively.

Key words: internet; learning and research

INTRODUCTION

The advent and emergence of internet has become interestingly popular and brought about beneficial development to higher education in so many ways, particularly in making information resources available and accessible in almost all subject fields of endeavors. Many traditional libraries and archives have attempted to revolutionize and keep up with new technologies by developing internet based libraries call digital libraries (Jeng, 2009). Internet provides more

opportunities for users to access a variety of information resources. In recent years, the internet which is the back bone of information delivery has greatly influence the way knowledge is transmitted by making learning and research to happen quickly. Via internet the speed of learning and research has become vital differentiator for institutions and individuals in the pursuit of knowledge and more especially in conducting research.

Ample evidences have shown the relevance and rationale of internet in the process of learning and research, especially in the developing world of today. Commenting on that, Kamba (2011) lament that, internet have changed the way humans interact with information in terms of its origination or creation, selection, acquisition, preservation, storage as well as its delivery. As long as there is an internet connection available within the library and the user has an appropriate access device, the requested information can be accessed from anywhere at any time. Moreover, in so doing, internet has introduced learning especially distance learning to new dimensions and serving as catalyst to learning and research (Blandford, 2006). Similarly, Wang (2007) Further lament that, internet has been identified as the enabler for individuals and institutions to keep up with changes in the global world of academia that now occur in digital era and it is one of the most significant recent developments in the information system industry. The internet e-learning solutions facilitate the delivery of the right information and knowledge to the right people at the right time. Agbonlahor (2010) also indicated that, the adoption and use of internet in higher institutions could bridge and facilitate access to un-limited and current information for learning and research irrespective of geographical locations and time. Therefore, the use of internet in

African schools' could provide college and university students, lecturers and researchers the opportunity to bridge the knowledge gap between them and their counterparts in developed countries of the world.

ABOUT ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA UNIVERSITY, BAUCHI

According to Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Handbook (2007), the university was established in 1981 following the attempt of the federal government of Nigeria to revolutionize technology in the country as one of the 3rd generation universities. The university resides in the state capital of Bauchi state, North Eastern Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Initially it was a full fledged university of technology. In 1984 it was merged with Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria as a college of technology and by 1988 regains its full fledged status of university of technology and was named after the first prime minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. The university was set-up to achieve the following objectives among others:

- i. To encourage the advancement of learning among all of people by running courses of technology, instruction and providing other facilities for the pursuit of learning in all its schools (faculties).

- ii. To encourage and promote scholarship and conduct research in all field of human endeavor and technology.

The growth of knowledge and the increasing number of qualified candidates seeking admission in to few available courses have necessitated the need for expansion of higher education in the country. This invariably denotes the need for expansion in information dissemination and the need for increase in personnel to handle the situation. It is a result of this need that the University Senate in 2005 established the Library and Information Science Course in the then School of Technology Education and the degree classification is B.Tech. Library and Information Science (B.Tech.LIS).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Internet is designed and created for users to use. Modu (2008) affirm that, "users and their information needs are central to all internet, internet centers or otherwise, but lack of functional and available internet services remains an issue of worry, students in Nigerian universities and higher institutions have been associated with under utilization of such available internet resources". Similarly, Ikoro (2004) stated that, accessibility to information resources is sometimes faced with problems either in getting connected or retrieving information in developing countries especially

Nigeria. He further stressed that, despite the fact that, in some of Nigerian universities internet resources and services are to some extent at the students' disposal, but their usage does not yield successful outcomes due to erratic power outage impediments, slow and failure of network, restrictions and barriers placed on access which retard information retrieval and utilization among students of Nigerian universities.

Despite all these problems however, little has been done in the examination and identification of these problems associated with the internet usage, as most of the research heavenly lies on the development and provision of internet by neglecting its users and usage. It is against this background in particular, the study intend to examine the internet as catalyst to learning and research and its usage by Library and Information Science Students of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi (ATBU).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- a) To know the awareness and use of internet by library and information science students of ATBU Bauchi for learning and research.
- b) To study the frequency of using the internet by library and information science students of ATBU Bauchi.

- c) To know the purpose of using the internet by library and information science students of ATBU Bauchi.
- d) To know the extent on which internet use improves academic pursuit of library and information science students of ATBU Bauchi.
- e) To identify the level of satisfaction in using the internet by library and information science students of ATBU Bauchi.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Concept of Internet as a Catalyst to Learning and Research

University education is geared towards the production of a complete intellectual's capable of independent learning and research. prior to the advent of information and communication technology (ICT) in the use of internet for acquisition, processing and dissemination of information, university research, teaching and learning were restricted to physical information document due to materials available to students' institution library or by extension, those materials made available through inter- library lending. However with globalization through the internet, Carbo (2003) informed that, the world is shrinking resulting to immediacy of information. Thus, multimedia resources

can be created, and information can be communicated instantaneously via internet as a catalyst to learning and research. The mode of acquiring and disseminating information for university education changed from physically available prints to internet e-materials with virtual reality. As a result of that, Akintunde (2002), asserted that any attempt to have meaningful academic communication can be successful only by the use of ICT through internet which serves as catalyst bridge that presents information in real time and space.

Lecturers, students and researchers spend most of their time in cyber café, internet centers or in the other available university internet community centers, at times they risk travelling a further distance to transact one business or another on the internet. These members of the university community use the internet for the resources it provides which according to Ikoro (2002), include e-mailing, world-wide-web browsing, telephoning, news and discussion/chart group, face-book, YouTube and twitter resources. Using those resources available on the internet, according to Cisse (2004), serves as a catalyst among students and researchers that will disposed to maximum information access and communicate at world level. Thus they can debate democratically and freely while being exposed to happenings in their fields of activities as well as other subjects.

Awareness and Use of Internet

A study conducted by Chifwepa (2003) on awareness and use of internet discovered a high use of internet by staff of the University of Zambia where 35 out of 37 staff made use of internet. Their major motivation for such use was awareness (82.91%); usefulness (80.05%); free access to information software (71.4%); and ease of use (68.6%). In Nigeria, Jagdoro (2004), in his own research ascertained that 45.2% of graduate students access the internet at cyber café in the university where only 8.2% used the library internet facilities. A greater percentage (38.24%) did that only on monthly basis where 39.7% spent one hour on each visit. Therefore when users are made to know and aware with the existence of internet they can as well make good use of the internet maximally.

Purpose of Using Internet

The development of academic excellence cannot be fully achieved unless we embrace the global revolution that is available through internet. Ample evidences have shown reasons behind using internet for improvement of learning and research. Akinola (2009) studied the purpose of using internet by lecturers and students in Faculty of Education in Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) and University of Ibadan. His findings

revealed that majority of the respondents from both universities use internet with the purpose to update knowledge, 35.4% from UI while 36% respondents from OAU. One out of every four lectures and students from the universities make use of internet for their research works. Other purposes for using internet include; writing of papers and assignment, reading and for preparing examination and class lectures.

Contribution of Internet to Academic Excellence

It is not erroneous to conclude that man is now in the computer or electronic age. This was evidently portrayed in the bid to answer the why, what, when and how questions which prompts man to search through different sources of information (internet inclusive) to satisfy his curiosity. Of all the information sources, the internet remains formidable and exceptional. As an indispensable information seeking source, internet can be access across the globe and are maximized to benefit its users (Okogwu and Nnam, 2013). Accordingly, Eze and Uzigwe (2012) lamented that, internet provide access to quality education and equity in educational opportunities for those otherwise would have been denied. In essence the use of internet produces richer learning outcomes compared to education without the use of ICTs, these roles have been streamlined and harnessed through the use of internet service delivery.

Level of Satisfaction in Using Internet

The realities of the present information age as result of the evolution of information and communication technology (ICTs) has brought about radical changes in teaching, learning and research. This has invariably resulted to overwhelming satisfaction in internet-based information services so much so that the role of the internet has been redefined to key into the opportunities provided by technology to reshape information provision in line with the expectations of the new information society. Mayo (2004) lamented that internet make users to have a level of satisfaction in terms of providing services and support as well as facilitating access to electronic information resources and providing value-added support services structures for effective use of these resources.

METHODOLOGY

Cross sectional survey design was used using questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed, keeping in view the objectives of the study. The target populations for the study were male and female students of library and

information science, therefore random sampling technique was used to draw sample of the study from the population. One hundred and thirty (130) questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were returned and studied. The data of the research were analyzed with the help of Microsoft excel (spreadsheet programme) using simple percentages and frequencies.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULT

The study was presented and analysed using tables, simple percentage and frequencies based in relation to internet usage in Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. Personal information of the respondents regards to awareness level and usage, frequency visit to internet (digital centers), the purpose of using the internet, the extent in which internet usage can improve their academic pursuit, problems faced by respondents while accessing and use of internet as well as the level of satisfaction in using the internet.

Table 1: Use of internet for learning and research

Use of internet	Frequency	Percentage
Use	98	81.66%
Not use	22	18.33%
Total	120	100%

The table above reveals respondents use of internet for learning and research. Ninety eight (98) respondents representing (81.66%) of the total respondents use internet for their learning and research. The remaining 22(18.33%) respondents are not using internet for their learning and research. The

implication here is that, majority of the respondent are using the services of the internet to achieve their academic pursuit. As such, we are going to consider the 81.66 percent of the respondents that are using the internet as active users.

Table 2: frequency of using internet

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	6	6.12%
Once in two days	8	8.16%
Twice in a week	34	34.69%
Once in a week	25	25.51%
Twice in a month	6	6.12%
Once in a month	10	10.20%
Occasional only	9	9.18%
Total	98	100%

Table 2 above reveals the frequency and the time gap of use of internet by respondents. It has been revealed that 34(34.69%) respondents use internet twice in a week, 25(25.51%) respondents use internet once in a week, 10(10.20%) respondents use internet once in month, 9(9.18%) respondents use internet occasional

only, 8(8.16%) respondents use internet once in two days. The remaining 6(6.12%) respondents use internet on daily basis. The implications here is that, all of the respondents admitted that they do frequently visit internet but on different occasions in terms of frequency gap.

Table3: Purpose of use of internet resources and services

Purpose of using internet	Frequency	Percentage
To prepare assignments/seminars	21	21.43%
Get educational information	18	18.37%
To know current information	16	16.33%
Sending and receiving e-mail	9	9.18%
Accessing e-journals	14	14.29%
Social media meet new people	13	13.27%
Others	7	7.14%
Total	98	100%

Table 3 above reveals the purpose of use of internet that, 21(21.43%) respondents use internet to prepare assignment and seminars. Followed by 18(18.37%) respondents use it to get educational information, 16(16.33%) respondents use it in order to know current information, 9(9.18%) respondents use the internet to sends and receive e-mails, 14(14.29%) respondents use the internet to access and retrieve e-journals. 13(13.27%) respondents use internet for social

media e.g. to meet new people. Finally, 7(7.14%) respondent reveals out that, they use it for games, music or chatting. The respondents prove that almost all the students use internet information for educational purposes while relative number uses it for social media like news and sports respectively. Akinola (2009) attests that many student and lecturers used the internet for educational purposes.

Table4: Does the use of internet improve your academic pursuit?

Internet use and academic improvement	Frequency	Percentage
Great improvement	42	42.86%
Improve	30	30.62%
Less improvement	8	8.16%
Undecided	8	8.16%
No improvement	10	10.20
Total	98	100%

Table 4 above reveals the level of academic improvement usually derived in using internet. 42(32.86%) respondents lament that using internet brought about great improvement to their academic well being. Followed by 30(30.61%) respondents have also lament improvement. 8(8.16%) records less improvement to their academic pursuit in using internet, in which all the three categories of respondents above laments improvement totaling 88(89.8%). While

8(8.16%) remain undecided wither use of internet improve or not improve their academic pursuit. The remaining 10(10.20%) of the respondents laments no any improvement in the use of internet. The result indicates that almost all respondents yielded positive response that use of internet improves their academic excellence. Considering the percentage shows only 10.20% laments non improvement of their academic well being.

Table 5: Satisfaction with the available information on internet

Satisfaction level	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfied	80	81.63%
Not satisfied	18	18.37%
Total	98	100%

Table 5 above reveals that 80 (81.63%) of the sample respondents were satisfied with the use of internet and the kind of information resources available on the internet web and 18 (18.37%) of the respondents were not satisfied. This shows that majority of the library and information science students of ATBU, Bauchi are satisfied with the use of internet in pursuance of their academic activities. The level of respondent's

satisfaction with the use of internet was generally high. This finding relates with the findings of Nikam (2007), which identified high level of user satisfaction regarding the use of internet as a factor of the general marginal use. Therefore, whenever a user finds what he/she is looking for within a possible time, he/she will be satisfied.

FINDINGS

- The study reveals that the majority 98(81.66%) of the students have an internet awareness and are using internet for learning and research.

- That all of the 98 (100%) of the respondents frequently use internet with disparity gap as 34(34.69%) laments frequently use two times a week. Followed by 2.51% use internet once in a week.
- It was also reveals that, 21.43% laments that preparation for assignment / seminars is their purpose of using internet, while 18.37% for educational information, 16.33% for current information, 14.29% for accessing e-journal and 9.18% for sending and receiving e-mails and 13.27% for social media respectively.
- That as high as 42.86% laments great improvement in their academic pursuit in using internet, 30.62% laments improvements, while 8.16% also laments less improvement, 8.16% remain undecided. The remaining 10.20% laments no any improvement respectively.
- Majority 80(81.63%) of the students were satisfied with the use of internet and those who were not satisfied indicated that lack of organized information was the major source of dissatisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The below recommendations will help in improving and use of internet service delivery among the library and information science students to pursuit their learning and research activities in ATBU, Bauchi.

- It has been revealed from the study that lack of organized information on the internet was the reason for the dissatisfaction. Hence university staff handling the digital centers should be trained and motivated to guide students in a better ways.
- Providing more functional computers will help greatly.
- The internet access and service should be made free to all students without putting any barrier.
- Extension of training, workshops and seminar on the use of internet.
- The timing of student access to the internet should be extended.
- Providing internet access to all faculties of the university.
- Provision of alterative and reliable power supply.
- Finally the study reveals that students are satisfied with the internet available information

resources. Hence there is a need to improve internet connectivity and coverage.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that internet is one of the most ever positive revolutions that happened to the educational growth and development world over. Internet changed the way humans interact with information in terms of its origination or creation, selection, acquisition, storage and delivery. More importantly, internet is the backbone that has greatly influenced the way knowledge is transmitted in which exponential growth of knowledge has made it imperative for learning and research to happen quickly (Modu, 2008). The study reveals that maximum users are satisfied with the use of internet and the kind of information available on the internet. The present study was conducted in order to ascertain how an internet be a positive catalyst and enabler to library and information science students' academic pursuit and especially in the field of learning and research.

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