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A SURVEY OF USERS' PERCEPTION AND USE OF ICT RESOURCES IN KENNETH DIKE LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perception and use of ICT resources in Kenneth Dike library by postgraduate students of the university of Ibadan. The survey research design was adopted and 208 postgraduate students participated in the study. Data collected were analyzed using SPSS and results revealed that the use of ICT facilities to support learning and research in Kenneth Dike Library by postgraduate students is low, irregular and ineffective as majority of users lack adequate ICT awareness training and support to use ICT facilities available in the library. The study suggested that it is essential that active steps be taken to ensure that those who can most benefit from higher education are not further marginalized as majority of the users cannot access, use and receive support for ICT enabled learning in the university. The study recommended that Nigerian academic libraries should operate the manual system alongside the computerized system in order not to sideline the majority of staff and students who cannot access the computer until conversion is completed and fully appreciated by all library users.

Key words: IT perception, Attitudes, IT awareness, Kenneth Dike Library

INTRODUCTION

Information explosion necessitated the introduction and use of information communication technology (ICT) for information generation, management and dissemination in libraries. With the introduction of ICT in libraries, activities that were considered impossible in the past or those that were hampered by time and distance are now being performed with ease. New activities have emerged and new ways of doing old things more effectively and cheaply have also come to light. The most commonly cited advantages of information and communication technologies, according to Barraket and Scott (2001) are that they overcome the tyranny of distance by providing remotely accessible learning opportunities and new ways of interacting with fellow students and staff, and the tyranny of fixed class times by providing greater opportunities for students to 'learn in their own time'.

But After embracing information technology, the library field has become flooded with nascent thoughts, ideas and applications. In other words, the use of ICT changed the entire scenario of the library and produced different new names for it such as electronic library, digital library, virtual library also called library without walls. In the process, library resources have moved ahead from simply being bibliographic to e-document, e-resources, e-books and e-journals etc. Along with these changes,

many new services have been introduced into the library world that the whole role of the library is evolving into something new.

The growing use of ICT to support learning and research in Nigerian university libraries offers both new possibilities and new challenges for facilitating access and equity for all users. Among the challenges facing the libraries as a result of the new technology and its repackaging effects on information, are the urgent need to carry the end-users along by creating awareness in the minds of the library users about the changing face of information resources, teaching users to develop the right attitudes to ICT and the management of access to information facilities in order to ensure even distribution of opportunities, serious and effective use of ICT resources. Evans (1979) has earlier noted that one of the main apprehensions of early advocates of educational computing in higher education tended to centre on the concern that students may fall too deeply 'in love' with the computer to the detriment of other aspects of their intellectual development. The fact that students may not be inherently disposed to use ICT effectively during their studies is now a cause for concern.

Literature Review

Encyclopedia Britannica 2005 defines Technology as "the means or

activity by which man seeks to change or manipulate his environment.” While this definition has been criticized by observers who point out the blurring lines between scientific inquiry and technological activity, it is highly significant to information technology in terms of its use in the Library. American Library Association (1983) defined Information technology as the “application of computers and others technology to the acquisition organization storage, and retrieval and dissemination” of information.

With the introduction of ICT to library services, it has been suggested by Comedia (1993) that libraries are trying to become “all things to everybody” delivering traditional core services such as book lending and transforming into ICT learning centres within their communities. However, some researchers have argued the perception that ICT access points automatically belong to libraries. They have equally argued that the libraries may not always be best placed to tackle some issues such as level of user comfort with the technology and training needs. In view of this, Davies (1993) has argued that the Issues of time, cost, quality of the technology and the environment in which it is used, as well as more ‘qualitative’ concerns of privacy, safety, conviviality and ‘ease of use’ are all crucial mediating factors in people’s ‘access’ to ICT. Thus sites such as libraries are not necessarily best

physically designed for facilitating public ICT access (Lentz *et al.* 2000). As Rogers (2001) concluded, shared facilities ‘can provide the public access function, but they need adequate computer facilities, adequate access time per user, and help desk facilities which are not [always] available’.

In a study of users’ awareness and access to ICT facilities in UK public libraries, Cole (1998) has identified evidence of a “wide and desperate group of library users who in turn displayed a variety of attitudes towards IT”. The study revealed that although attitudes were generally positive towards the use of computers, people were concerned that without regular access to computer and other ICT facilities, they would not be able to keep abreast of latest developments in technology. The study identified public libraries as one of the viable options of access to ICT.

Barraket and Scott (2001) noted that while access to front end infrastructure was identified as a significant issue in itself, another factor affecting students’ use of ICT for educational purposes was level of information literacy. George and Luke (1995) have defined information literacy as “an awareness of kinds of information available, possible sources of this information, and the means of locating and retrieving it. Linked to a deeper understanding of the information required in relation to existing knowledge”. They point out that

information literacy is an important enabler, essential to the pursuit of knowledge, both within and outside formal education spheres, in the information age. In another study carried out at the University of Ibadan, Department of computing to investigate why students do (and do not) make use of ICT in the university; Selwyn (2003) supported the argument that information literacy is a basic necessity to accessing and using ICT facilities. He opined that information literacy must be added to the other literacies because students must be information literate to stay up-to-date with any subject in the information age.

It is agreed by many authors that the most immediate influences on individuals' engagement with ICT are economic and material. On a day-to-day basis the economics of using ICT is a crucial and on-going mediating factor, with some commentators seeing being a computer user primarily in terms of people "taking individual responsibility for the economics of getting on-line" (Haywood, 1998). As Murdock *et al.* (1996) argue, material resources and economic capacity play central role in determining (i) whether people use ICTs and then (ii) the nature and subsequent patterns of that use. The economics of gaining access are, therefore, an obvious prohibitive factor to students using ICT. The high cost coupled with a high technological 'churn' (i.e. constantly increasing specification) make using

technology, for most people, a costly business.

More recent research carried out by Sheffield University and Somerset Training and Enterprise council identified confused perception of public library service (Lilley and Usherwood, 2000). The study found that members of the public were "led to believe inaccurately that a member of staff would guide them step by step 'through' an initiative" tagged "computers don't bite" created by the BBC and available in many public libraries. The research also found that a "book based perception" of the library services persist in spite of the changing perceptions and higher expectations in terms of the provision of new technology which were also evident. However, Slawsky and Fleming, (1997) have noted positively that the internet is a reality and an appealing technology. They further argued that putting a computer on someone's desk doesn't eliminate the need for information technology specialists and making the Internet available on users' desktops doesn't eliminate the role of information specialists. Meaning ICT users should be provided with technical assistance.

Having the requisite skills and knowledge to use a technology are obvious factors underpinned by an individual's experience of, and attitudes towards, using technologies. From an intuitive point of view the link between

technological experience and technological disposition would seem obvious, as the more a behaviour is performed, the more that attitudes about it can be formed and reinforced. Todman and Monaghan (1994) suggest that individuals' initial experiences with computers, if favourable, tend to result in more positive affective attitudes. Literature search has established that libraries are increasingly becoming important locations for accessing ICT facilities to support a wide range of activities. However the library may not be the best place to tackle some issues such as users' comfort with the technology and training needs.

ICT FACILITIES AND SERVICES AT UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

The Kenneth Dike Library University of Ibadan subscribes to a number of databases including ERIC, Humanities Abstracts, and Life Sciences Abstracts, Applied Science and Technology Abstracts and Social Science abstracts. Other databases are donated by the CTA, namely the CAB Abstracts and Tropag & Rural. Also covering medicine and health sciences is the MEDLINE, which is available at the College of Medicine library. The Library has an established Local Area Network (LAN)/Intranet of about thirty computer systems, on which the library resources are administered. Public access computer terminals are available to access CD-ROM databases and other locally

available online resources like the eGranary library. The eGranary from the Wider net project, Iowa, is a collection of over one and a half million documents (full text journals), books with audio and graphics that have been downloaded from the world wide web (www), with copyright permissions obtained.

Internet connectivity is available through the University's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Unit. The University of Ibadan has an aperture terminal (VSAT) connection through a private Internet Service Provider (ISP) to the Internet. This connection has a capacity of 256kbps uplink/1Mbps downlink. All thirteen (13) faculties and colleges on the University campus have wireless links through bridges and radio antennas however optical fiber cabling is proposed to network the distant facilities to the university (Fatoki, 2004). The Library is a working node on the campus network. Presently, the access to Internet within the university is regulated and prospective users are expected to subscribe through the ICT unit of the University. A fixed rate is charged for Internet access subscription by staff, which is deductible directly from the subscribers' monthly salaries. A subscriber is assigned an email address (in the ui.edu.ng domain), a user name and password to gain access to the Intranet and Internet (Fatoki, 2004). The library provided a few computer systems for internet access to the library staff,

lecturers and postgraduate students on request. Undergraduate students are currently not disposed to this facility (Fatoki, 2004).

Despite universities' expenditure over the last two decades, on computer resources and other ICTs to automate academic libraries in Nigeria, it is glaring that students' and teachers' actual use of ICT remains, at best, inconsistent and ineffective. The use is far below expectation. Users seem to have aesthetic view of ICT and more often than not use them as such. Although successful case studies and examples of 'best practice' abound within the educational technology literature, at a general level the use of ICT in higher education in Nigeria can best be described as sporadic, uneven and often 'low level'. More so, ICT in higher education has been described as a 'service subject', which many students do not engage with in a sustained manner (Reffell & Whitworth 2002). And, as Rowley (2003) has observed, students make a low level use of electronic information systems.

The picture of sporadic use of ICT in Kenneth Dike library, University of Ibadan undermines the substantial efforts that have been made over the past twenty years to ensure that ICT use does permeate all aspects of higher education in the university. The crux of this research is that without an understanding of the social contexts of ICT use in higher education from staff and students

perspective, little will happen to challenge the current attitude of sporadic and often mediocre use of ICTs in Nigerian higher education. While noting that attitudes are often seen as being important in determining the successful implementation of ICT in libraries, this study seeks to examine users' perception of ICT as this will help to define their general attitudes to ICT.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. point out the main purpose for which postgraduate students use ICT in university of Ibadan library;
2. examine the perception of users on the location of ICT resources within the university community;
3. examine if awareness services offered on ICT resources is sufficient to propel effective use in University of Ibadan library.
4. identify the major barriers and hindrances to accessing and effectively using ICT resources in the library.
5. examine their feelings about asking for technical assistance in the library
6. determine if service charge and limited access time prevent them from making effective use of ICT

This study will help establish the need to develop plans and strategies for sustainable ICT development and use in Nigerian academic libraries.

Methodology

This study is targeted at postgraduate students because as at the time of this research, the library provided computer systems with internet access to postgraduate students on request. Undergraduate students were not allowed access to computer facility. Statistical data collected from Management Information System (MIS) of the University of Ibadan in May 2006, indicated that the university has a total of four thousand one hundred and seventy-one (4171) postgraduate students. Using systematic sampling procedure, one

person was selected from every 20 persons in the population. Thus two hundred and eight postgraduate students (208) were selected for this study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Nine structured questions were put forward to investigate respondents' perception and use of ICT in the university library. Two hundred and five questionnaire were retrieved and after data sorting, two hundred, representing (96%) were found valid for analysis. Results were presented in table using frequency and simple percentage.

Results and Discussion

This table presents the categories of respondents who are library users.

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Mphil/Ph.d	47	23.5%
Masters	102	51%
Postgraduate diploma	44	22%
No response	7	3.5%
Total	200	100%

From the table above it is glaring that majority of respondents are masters' degree students. This is followed by Mphil/Phd and postgraduate diploma students. These categories of library users are expected to exploit electronic resources as well as printed resources in the library for research purposes.

Table 2: Main Purpose of Using ICT

This table highlights the various purposes for which respondents use ICT in the university of Ibadan library.

Purpose of using ICT	Frequency	Percentage
(1) To support course of study	88	44%
(2) Leisure and general enjoyment	62	31%
(3) Independent learning and research	13	6.5%
No response	37	18.5%
Total	200	100%

The table indicates that majority (44%) of the respondents use ICT to support course of study. This is followed by respondents who use ICT for leisure and general enjoyment and respondents who use ICT for independent learning and research.

Table 3: Users Perception OF ICT Use in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan

Within the University of Ibadan Community, the library should serves as an important ICT location. The Table below, using a five Likert type scale measurement: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), shows respondents' opinions of ICT use in the university of Ibadan library Nigeria

What is your opinion about the following statements?	SA	A	UD	D	SD	No response	Total
1. The library could be an important location for accessing and using ICT resources	108 54%	47 23.5 %	5 2.5%	8 4%	12 6%	20 10%	200 100%
2. Awareness training offered in the library is adequate to facilitate effective use of ICT resources.	25 12.5%	8 4%	24 12%	47 23.5%	81 40.5 %	15 7.5%	200 100%
3. Notice board information on the availability of resources is hardly enough to create awareness for effective use of ICT resources in the library	68 34%	63 31.5 %	12 6%	25 12.5%	8 4%	24 12%	200 100%
4. Lack of adequate information literacy can hinder effective use of ICT resources in the library	37 18.5%	68 34%	27 13.5%	40 20%	12 6%	16 8%	200 100%
5. Lack Of skills and technical-know-how hinder access and effective use of ICT in the library	56 28%	51 25.5 %	8 4%	33 16.5%	36 18%	16 8%	200 100%
6. Inadequate facilities and frequent electricity failures are major barriers to effective use of ICT resources in the library	88 44%	49 24.5 %	3 1.5%	12 6%	28 14%	20 10%	200 100%
7. I don't use ICT in the library because I feel embarrassed asking for technical assistance	26 13%	28 14%	13 6.5%	68 34%	45 22.5 %	20 10%	200 100%
8. service charge and limited access time cannot prevent me from using ICT in the library	36 18%	71 35.5 %	20 10%	13 6.5%	24 12%	36 18%	200 100%
9. I cannot improve upon my skills without regular use of ICT or access to training on it	51 25.5%	54 27%	19 9.5%	12 6%	28 14%	36 18%	200 100%

The study observed that the university of Ibadan library could be an important location for accessing and using ICT facilities. But access and effective use is hampered by inadequate awareness of their availability in the library. The study found that notice board information is sufficient to create awareness on the availability of ICT resources. It is also a fact that most library users are deficient in information literacy. The study revealed that poor levels of information literacy could have been

responsible for lack of confidence to access available ICT resources. Since there is no systematic ICT training offered in the library, most users agreed that lack of skills and technical-know-how hinder effective access and use of ICT. The study proved beyond reasonable doubt that inadequate facilities and frequent electricity failures are major hindrances to effective ICT use in the library. Nevertheless the study found little evidence to suggest that embarrassment from technical help desk assistants, service

charge and limited access time were part of the reasons for respondents' refusal to use ICT. Result from the study suggests the need for users to have reliable access to ICT facilities in the library in order to improve their skills. More evidences from the study has indicated that users cannot improve upon their skills without regular use of ICT or access to training on it

Discussion

The opinions expressed in this study suggest that the sporadic use of ICTs in the university of Ibadan library is primarily as a result of structural circumstances which prevent users from otherwise making effective use of ICTs which are relevant and useful to their lives. The predominant picture from the survey data shows lack of awareness training, access and support for users who make low level use of ICTs. Some of the key access issues identified by respondents as impacting upon them are lack of skills and technical-know-how, lack of adequate information literacy and lack of awareness training. Most of the respondents agreed that notice board information on the availability of resources is not enough to create the level of awareness for effective use of ICT resources in the library. The study points to inadequate facilities and frequent power outage as the major barriers to effective use of ICT resources in the library. The study's results showed that embarrassment from (technical assistance) staff and financial cost are not necessarily responsible for avoiding ICT in the library.

The study revealed that most students, obviously aware of the importance of ICT in their future employment are interested in using ICT. But being bounded

by a number of structural factors they are not able to use ICT effectively. Some of these underlying factors may be within the capacity of the individuals to change. For example the issue of ICT skills acquisition, an individual may develop the required skills by going for training outside the university as many have done. But other underlying factors such as social economic forces may go beyond individual intent (Powell, 1987).

Conclusion

University of Ibadan introduced ICTs in its service to enhance information service delivery and improve the research capacity of the university through effective use of ICT resources by staff and students. But the research findings have shown that the state of users' awareness, access and use of the available ICT resources in university of Ibadan library is very low and as such, cannot propel effective and serious use for academic excellence. The research findings therefore, suggest that it is essential for active steps to be taken to ensure that those who can most benefit from higher education are not further marginalized as they seek to access, use and receive support for ICT enabled learning in universities. University libraries in collaboration with course providers and other support services have a key role to play in ensuring the effective delivering of integrated services to support the development of ICT in all university graduates and staff. In trying to address the issues of low-levels of student engagement with ICT in the university, the study recommends that library orientation should go beyond familiarizing students with the library. It should incorporate information

literacy, computer training, and training in library software. The system librarians should be ready to work with faculties and departments in identifying electronic information needs related to their disciplines. The library should acquire more computer systems for CD-ROM information services, on-line and Internet work stations. It should also have electricity power generator to back up the university power system. Computer study and information literacy should be incorporated in the curriculum of the general studies program (GSP) of university of Ibadan.

Giving the fact that most libraries in developing countries are trying to level up with others in developed countries in the use of ICTs, there is always a rush to convert to electronic information system without adequately counting the cost, and in the process the traditional or manual systems are dismantled. Findings have shown that only a minority staff and student population (library users) can make adequate use of ICTs at their disposal. It is on this basis that this study is suggesting that academic libraries should operate the manual system alongside with the computerized system in order not to sideline the majority of students who are still not computer literate until conversion is completed and fully appreciated by all library users. As the digital age unfolds, the central challenge for Nigeria higher education is to develop the total intellectual, cultural and creative capital of the country. A crucial element of this challenge is to ensure that technology based flexible information delivery service is available to serve the diversity of our university communities, so that all may benefit from the opportunity of the information age.

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