The Need for Digitization of Special Library Materials in Nigerian University Libraries — J. U. Igbeka and Christopher O. Ola

Abstract

Digitization as a method of preservation is now a global phenomenon and the new trend in managing library information materials and content, especially precious ones. This paper positions Nigerian university libraries within this global context; identifies the benefits and parameters for digitizing special library materials; and investigates the pattern of usage of the special collections in Kenneth Dike Library (KDL), University of Ibadan, with the aim of establishing their suitability for digitization. The records of consultation of Africana, Publications Ordinance and Theses collections from 2004 to 2008 were surveyed. The record of foreign requests of Africana materials was also studied. A qualitative analysis of data using frequencies and percentages shows that, in spite of the general challenges of digitization, it is desirable to digitize the special collections in KDL. However, it is recommended that before embarking on digitization, a digitization programme should be drawn up with detailed prioritization mapped out. The KDL digitization project should start with digitizing the abstracts of the Theses collection.

Introduction

The effectiveness of information technology is apparent in all human endeavours. It improves every day and increases in its importance, versatility and ability to provide accessible and useful information to users.

In its 'Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co–operation' in 1966, UNESCO posited its preparedness to "spread knowledge, to stimulate talent and to enrich cultures to enable everyone to have access to knowledge, enjoy the arts and literature of all peoples, share in advances made in science in all parts of the world, and contribute to the enrichment of cultural life."

Today, literature is replete with documentation of the advances in technology and the changing architecture of the theory and practice of librarianship. Information and communications technology (ICT) is growing so drastically that the delivery of library service is no longer the exclusive domain of library professionals but of all those who wish to make information and/or information carriers visible and accessible to the widest audience. Perhaps the greatest challenge in this regard is posed by the possibilities inherent in the exploitation and use of the Internet.

Multimedia technology and information management techniques have combined to make knowledge management and transfer quite exquisite. Even more, the synergy of digital technology and Internet access has created the possibility of virtual exhibitions which is fast transforming knowledge with its concomitant impact on instruction and knowledge preservation.

Digitization of information materials is the process of converting analogue information to a digital format (Feather and Sturges, 1997). It is one of the newest methods of managing information resources in the new information age, whereby information technology has assisted in making information accessible to people even in their homes. Traditional library materials in the form of books, papers, manuscripts, documents, etc. are converted into electronic formats. Images (such as

photographs or maps) are converted into digital representations using some type of scanning device (or digitizer) so that they can be displayed and manipulated on a screen.

Digital institutional resources such as theses, manuscripts, special monographs, research papers, or images are of very high value to academic institutions. According to Carr (2000), cooperation, automation and the building of the digital library — all for the enhancement of service delivery in support of teaching and research — are the principal drivers that will shape the collective future of libraries as suppliers of information to the scholarly world.

Fast progress in digitization depends on two major factors: qualified IT staff and availability of central funds. Building a consortium of a few university libraries could be a good start to provide an example for further co–operative projects and actions. This could lead to the digitization of vast library collections and the development of a union catalogue (Neubauer, 2000).

Benefits and Reasons for Digitization of Special Library Materials

Digitization is sometimes presented as a panacea for problems of preservation and access. There is no doubt that digitization is a preservation method. Obsolete or antiquated documents, objects and other materials are digitized in order to limit direct access to the original so as not to wear them out. There are many benefits of digitization:

- The greatest single benefit of digitization has been a tremendous increase in the use of digitized materials. For example, if special collections are made available in the library or on the Web with appropriate metadata and software, they will be utilized more by researchers (Hirtle, 2001).

- There is also the improvement in visibility. The concept of visibility is synonymous with the concept of availability. Original resources may only be available at a location depending on age and rarity. With digitization the visibility can be universalized. With improved visibility comes improved accessibility, not just to the digitized items but also to the original materials.

- Another major advantage is that it makes possible research that could not otherwise be easily done. At the Kentucky State and John Hopkins Universities libraries, staff and scientists have been able to scan and link images to transcriptions of texts, making it possible to track and see variants online (http://rose.mse.jhu.edu/) through hyperlinks. At Tufts University, researchers are combining eighteenth century texts, images, and geographic information systems to build an interactive atlas of eighteenth century London. Digitization can therefore generate new and exciting research opportunities.

- Digitization also helps to reduce the handling and use of fragile or heavily used original materials and creates a "back up" copy for endangered materials.

- In the developed world, national libraries and other research libraries are engaged in major projects to digitize significant collections reflecting the history and culture of their respective countries. Probably the best–known example is the American Memory Project of the U. S. Library of Congress, which comprises more than seven million digital items from over 100 historical collections (Neubauer, 2000).

- Some inevitable developments have occurred as a result of increase in the pace of digitization. Electronic access most likely will replace most uses of printed paper copies. Observations carried out by Hirtle (2001) showed that reading and not the analysis of the physical nature of the artifact is the primary motivation for using material in special collections. A study also conducted at the University of Toronto of users of online resources

showed that three quarters of the people who used copies of books online found them more useful than print originals (Hirtle, 2001).

Many university libraries therefore have embarked on the process of digitizing some of their library materials. This is in accordance to the findings of Chowdhury and Chowdhury (2000) that most of the digital library projects in the world are championed by higher education institutions or related research projects, national libraries, archives and museums.

Selection Criteria for Digitization of Library Materials

No institution can afford to digitize everything it owns; therefore, selection criteria are important when considering digitization of library materials. The selection has to be considered in such a way that it will assume that not only issues like the value of the selected materials and interest in its content are considered, but also demands concerning technical feasibility and institutional requirements.

The following are often considered before any library embarks on a digitization project:

1. **Intellectual Justification:** Does the intellectual content of the material warrant the digitization process?

2. **Copyright:** What is the copyright status of the materials to be digitized?

3. **Demand:** Are the materials needed by everyone in such a way that they can only be found in very few libraries, yours included?

4. **Relevance to the institution:** Do the materials meet the goals and objectives of the institution? Would it be of financial benefit to the institution?

5. **Metadata:** Is metadata creation feasible? The material being considered for digitization must have detailed cataloguing or descriptive data for metadata creation to be feasible.

6. **Preservation is a necessary criterion:** Does the library want to preserve these materials?

7. **Storage:** Is there enough space to keep the information sources especially if they are recurring or regularly published materials?

8. **International recognition:** Are the information sources or the items in them often requested by users both within and outside the library (including international users)?

Defining the Problem

The introduction of digital libraries in Africa has prospects for improving educational standards, delivery of library and information services, and the creation of an informed society (Ojedokun, 2000; Magara, 2002; Rosenberg, 2005; Chisenga, 2006). Much of the scientific research output from Africa is in the form of grey literature; that is, unpublished information and knowledge resources, such as research reports, theses and dissertations, seminar and conference papers. The digitization of some of these materials could enhance visibility and availability of these materials. Fatoki (2007) reported that out of 28 institutions surveyed in Nigeria, seven of them have begun digitizing some of their information resources — like abstracts of theses, newspapers, manuscripts and Africana collections (see Table 1). This is only 25 percent, which is quite low.

Table 1: Digitization Programmes in Nigeria Institutions.
Note: Culled from Fatoki (2007).

Institution	Number of Institutions Surveyed	Number of Institutions with Digitization Programmes	Type of Resources Digitized
Federal university libraries	14	5	Abstracts of theses, newspapers, manuscripts, African collections
State university libraries	8		
Private university libraries	4	1	Newspapers, past question papers
National library	1	1	Newspapers, past question papers
National archives	1		Newspapers

It is therefore necessary that other universities and institutions in the country should commence digitization programmes.

Purpose of the Study

Special library materials are usually collections selected for specific purposes to meet specific needs. These collections are special categories grouped together and different from conventional materials usually found in the library. Depending on their mandate and policies, different libraries have different types of special collections. Most public libraries house materials such as artifacts and artwork that are of heritage and cultural importance. Research and university libraries house collections with academic and research values. For example, the Kenneth Dike Library houses Africana collections and other special collections that include theses, maps and manuscripts, rare books, and non–book materials with historical significance. Therefore the objective of this study is to investigate the possibilities and requirements for digitizing the Africana Collections in Kenneth Dike Library with a view to enhancing and increasing their visibility and utilization. The collections include Africana monographs, Publications Ordinance (P.O.) materials, and theses.

Methodology

The patterns of utilization of some of the materials obtained from records of usage of theses, P.O. and Africana materials from 2004–2008 were studied. The data collected were analyzed by

qualitative analysis using frequencies and percentages. From these, some recommendations were made.

The Africana Section of Kenneth Dike Library: Historical Background and Composition

The Africana Section of Kenneth Dike Library is where the bulk of research materials relating to Africa are kept. It is a part of the closed–access section of the Library. The creation of the Africana Section was initiated by Professor John Harris, the founding librarian of the University of Ibadan Library, now the Kenneth Dike Library, and other major contributors and initiators like Henry Carr and the late Herbert Macaulay.

The Africana Collection is made up of publications on Africa by Africans and publications by foreigners about Africa. Special interest is focused towards Nigeria in terms of education, politics, culture, tradition, religion, technology, commerce, history, etc.

In 1950, the University of Ibadan Library became a legal depository institution under the Publications Ordinance, which conferred the status of a National Library on the library. This is in accordance with the Copyright Law mandating all Nigerian authors to deposit at least two copies of their publications with the University of Ibadan library as legal deposit. The Africana Section is comprised of the following:

1. **The Publication Ordinance Monographs** (which are textbooks), **Publication Ordinance Serials**, (which are magazines, journals, newspapers) and ephemeral materials like coronation papers (*e.g.*, Obas' Coronation, Chieftaincy titles, etc).

2. **Government Documents:** These consist of publications by the Government of Nigeria such as gazettes, reports (commissions and panels reports) and publications by governments of other countries and organizations such as the World Health Organization, World Bank, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNICEF, UNDP, etc.

3. **Newspapers:** The newspapers are stored in boxes or tied up and arranged chronologically on a monthly basis. They include very old Nigerian newspapers and current ones, namely: *West African Pilot, Eastern Nigerian, Guardian, Comet, Daily Star, Daily Poet, Nigerian Observer, Daily Sketch, Nigerian Tribune*, etc.

4. **Africana Journals:** These include publications of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Geographical Society of Nigeria, and some journals from religious bodies. Most of these are solicited by various departments in the University, e.g. Institute of African Studies, Religious Studies Department, etc.

5. **Theses (PhD):** As part of KDL policy, only PhD theses are kept in the Africana Section of the Library. They are housed separately in this section. At the time of this study was carried out, there were 3,192 theses. The PhD theses are usually brought to the library from the Postgraduate School.

6. **Staff Publications** are also stored in the Africana section. Examples of these are inaugural, university, postgraduate, and valedictory lectures.

7. **The Africana Monographs (Textbooks):** These are books written by Africans or about Africa, and are acquired and kept exclusively in closed access to be consulted only in the library. The policy in KDL is to keep at least one copy of such books in the Africana section while other copies (if applicable) are sent to circulation, faculty and departmental libraries, and other sections of the Library.

Results

An observation of the records of requisition of some of these materials (Africana, P.O., and theses) and their utilization could help support the fact that they should be digitized for better and faster search and appropriate utilization by users of the Library.

Tables 2–5 show the comprehensive number of consultations of Africana and P.O. materials. Table 6 shows offshore and foreign requests for Africana Collections, and Tables 7–12 show the comprehensive rate of thesis consultations from 2004–2008.

Africana and Publication Ordinance Consultations 2004

Table 2: Comprehensive Rate of Africana Consultations, January–December 2004.											
Month	Post–Graduate		Undergraduate		Staff		Library Staff		Others		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
January	87	58.78	38	25.67	5	3.337	1	0.675	17	11.48	148
February	80	45.19	32	18.07	10	5.64	30	16.94	25	14.12	177
March	55	39.28	31	22.14	18	12.85	11	7.85	25	17.85	140
April	32	55.17	14	24.13	4	6.89	2	3.44	6	10.35	58
May	42	77.70	8	14.8	4	7.40					54
June	30	68.18	7	15.19	1	2.27	3	6.81	3	6.81	44
July	96	67.75	35	23.97	3	2.05	7	4.79	5	3.42	146
August	105	61.40	41	23.97			4	2.33	21	12.28	171
September	71	50.0	38	26.76					33	23.23	142
October	75	82.41	8	8.79			3	3.29	5	5.49	91
November	72	62.6	23	20.0	1	0.86			19	16.52	115
December	95	47.0	65	32.17					42	20.79	202
Total	840	56.45	340	22.84	46	3.09	61	4.09	201	13.50	1,488

Table 3: Comprehensive Rate of Public Ordinance Consultations, January–December 2004.											
Month	Post–Graduate		Undergraduate		Staff		Library Staff		Others		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
January	53	51.96	40	39.20	4	3.92	3	2.94	2	1.96	102
February	51	48.57	33	31.40	8	7.61	1	0.95	12	11.42	105

Month	Post-Graduate		Undergraduate		Staff		Library Staff		Others		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
March	55	41.04	33	24.60	14	10.44	9	6.71	23	17.16	134
April	44	69.84	9	14.28	3	4.76			7	11.11	63
May	43	86.69	8	15.38					1	1.92	52
June	16	66.66					4	16.66	4	16.66	24
July	59	63.44	30	32.25					4	4.30	93
August	52	57.77	24	26.66			5	5.55	9	10.0	90
September	31	33.69	28	30.43	3	3.26	3	3.26	27	29.34	92
October	36	83.72	2	4.65			2	4.65	3	6.97	43
November	25	35.71	17	24.28	6	8.57	10	14.28	12	17.14	70
December	85	51.82	28	17.07			6	3.65	45	27.43	164
Total	550	53.29	252	24.41	38	3.68	43	4.16	43	14.43	1,032

Africana and Publication Ordinance Consultations 2006

Table 4: Comprehensive Rate of Africana Consultations, January–December 2006.											
Month	Post-Graduate		Undergraduate		Staff		Library Staff		Others		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
January	35	71.42	8	16.32	2	4.08			4	8.16	49
February	41	48.23	14	16.47	12	14.11	12	14.11	6	7.05	85
March	200	92.1	11	5.06					6	2.76	217
April	30	73.17		7.31	8	19.51					41
May	24	72.7	3	9.09					6	18.18	33
June	24	54.54	6	13.63	6	13.63	4	9.09	4	9.09	44
July	11	84.61	2	15.38							13
August	17	44.73	5	13.15	6	15.78	2	5.26	8	21.05	38
September	22	43.13	15	29.41	4	7.84	4	7.84	6	11.76	51
October	11	36.66	4	13.33	5	16.66	3	10.0	7	23.33	30
November	28	62.22	10	22.22					7	15.55	45
December	40	54.05	13	17.56	5	6.75			16	21.62	74
Total	483	67.08	94	13.05	48	6.66	25	3.47	70	9.72	720

Month	Post–Graduate		Undergraduate		Staff		Library Staff		Others		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
January	25	60.97	10	24.39			2	4.80	4	9.75	41
February	10	23.80	12	28.57	5	11.90			15	35.71	42
March	16	48.48	7	21.20	4	12.12	2	6.06	4	12.12	33
April	22	48.80	14	31.11	6	13.33	2	4.44	1	2.22	45
May	12	57.14	3	14.28					6	28.57	21
June	24	70.58	4	11.76	2	5.88	4	11.76			37
July	42	59.15	22	30.98					7	9.85	71
August	66	51.96	32	25.19	3	2.36	13	10.23	13	10.23	127
September	80	58.39	29	21.16	7	5.10	8	5.83	13	9.48	137
October	64	64.0	4	4.0	7	7.0	6	6.0	19	19.0	100
November	84	60.43	27	19.42					28	20.14	139
December	46	46.46	23	23.23	3	3.03	2	2.02	25	25.25	99
Total	**491**	**55.23**	**187**	**21.03**	**37**	**4.16**	**39**	**4.38**	**135**	**15.18**	**889**

Table 5: Comprehensive Rate of Public Ordinance Consultations, January–December 2006.

Off–shore/Foreign Requests of Africana Collection

Table 6 shows some of the materials from the Africana section requested by library users outside the country. Requests come from Canada, Singapore, United States, Europe, etc. These are just few examples. The materials are usually mailed to the requesters (some users prefer to pay for the cost of postage while others come for the items themselves). Sometimes it is difficult to find some of the materials requested by this group because the materials are not always well organized or properly shelved.

Table 6: Off–shore/Foreign Requests of Africana Collection.
Note: These requests are often pre–paid before they are sent to clients.

Name & Address of Institution	Details of Work Requested
Libraifac Bvba, Naamestraat 48, 3000 Leuven, Belgium	*Mental Health in Africa*, edited by O. A. Erinosho.
Head, Reprographic Science Dept. Central Library, National University of Singapore, 10	Emenyonu, E. N., *Political Freedom and Land Ownership: Weep Not Child*, pp. 106–116.

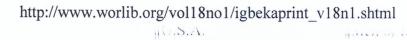|	
Kent Ridge Crescent, Singapore 0511	
Center for Research Libraries. Acquisitions Dept. 6050 South Kenwood Ave, Chicago, IL 60637 U.S.A.	Awolalu, J. O. "Sacrifice in Yoruba Religion." (PhD, 1971)
Pret Entre Bibliotheques, Universite de Montreal, Cp6128 — Suic "A" — Montreal H3C 3J7 Canada	Banjo, L. A.: "A Constructive Study of Aspects of the Syntactic and Lexual Rules of English and Yoruba." (PhD, 1969)
Interlibrary Loan Librarian, University of Pennsylvania Libraries, 3420 Walnut St. Philadelphia, PA 19104–6277	Flegel, E. R.: *Lose Blatter aus dem Tagebuch meiner Haussa-Freunde und Reisegefahrten.*
Luigi Collavin, VIAS. Pellico 18 30175 Nargtuera — Venezia Italia	*ORITA*, Vol. 4 no. 1 June, 1970. Idowu E. B. "Challenge of Witchcraft."
BLDSC Boston Spa, Wetherby, West Yorkshire U.K. LS237BQ England	Ladipo, Dura. *Oba Koso (The King Does not Hang).* Translation by Robert G. Armstrong.
Interlibrary Service. John M.Olin. Research Library, Cornell University Libraries, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853, U.S.A.	Laotan, A. B. *The Torch–bearers: or old Brazilian colony in Lagos.*
Statsbibliotekel, State University Library, DABL (Danish Loan Centre) DK–8000. Aarus C. Denmark.	Epega, D. O. *The Mystery of Yoruba Gods.*
Ms F.W. Pritchett. 9 Rosement Drive, Little Rock Arkansas 72204 U.S.A.	1. Ike, Akwaelumo. *The Origin of the Ibos* 2d ed. 2. Ike, Akaelumo. *Great Men of Iboland.*
Director General Porim, Institute Penyelidikan Minyak Kelapa Sawit, Malaysia Peti Swat 10620, Kuala Lumpur.	Mbagmi, T. C. "The Oil Palm Economy in Ngwaland Eastern Nigeria." (PhD, 1971)

Table 7: Comprehensive Rate of Thesis Consultations, January–December 2004.

Month	Post–Graduate		Undergraduate		Staff		Library Staff		Others		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
January	915	74.25	150	12.17	32	2.59	12	0.97	125	9.98	1,232
February	990	71.22	174	12.51	68	0.43	68	4.81	90	4.89	1,390
March	954	0.040	100	4.23	28	1.18	40	1.69	1,237		2,359
April	1,032	85.43	38	3.14	12	0.99	23	1.91	103	8.52	1,208
May	1,114	93.80	5	0.42	1	0.08	0	0	67	5.64	1,187
June	706	78.20	0	0	0	0	2	0.02	14	1.55	902
July	1,156	88.70	82	6.29	0	0	10	0.76	55	4.22	1,303
August	1,339	92.60	63	4.35	7	0.48	6	0.41	31	2.14	1,446
September	1,159	90.33	48	3.74	6	0.46	0	0	70	5.44	1,283
October	852	......	16		2		0		4		874
November	745	89.10	41	4.90	3	0.35	2	0.23	45	5.38	836
December	835	86.08	66	6.80	0	0	18	1.85	51	5.25	970

Table 8: Comprehensive Rate of Thesis Consultations, January–December 2005.

Month	Post–Graduate		Undergraduate		Staff		Library Staff		Others		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
January	480	67.98	43	6.09	0	0	9	12.74	74	10.48	606
February	687	81.98	121	14.43	0	0	6	0.72	24	2.86	838
March	655	90.59	23	3.18	9	12.45	8	1.11	28	3.87	723
April	721	88.24	29	3.50	1	0.12	1	0.12	65	7.90	817
May	731	92.40	24	3.01	0	0	2	0.25	40	5.0	797
June	648	89.50	12	1.60	3	0.41	0	0	61	8.40	724
July	931	89.40	64	6.10	6	0.57	0	0	40	3.84	1,041
August	1,104	92.40	44	3.68	2	0.16			44	3.60	1,194
September	1,315	93.60	56	3.90	2	0.14	3	0.21	28	1.99	1,404
October	936	96.60	29	2.90	0	0	0	0	3	0.31	968
November	782	92.20	54	6.36	0	0	2	0.24	10	1.17	848
December	627	93.30	27	4.01	0	0	0	0	18	2.60	672

Table 9: Comprehensive Rate of Thesis Consultations, January–December 2006.											
Month	Post–Graduate		Undergraduate		Staff		Library Staff		Others		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
January	778	90.0	46	5.35	16	1.86			19	2.21	859
February	921	94.90	24	2.47	7	0.72			18	1.85	970
March	797	96.60	117	2.06					11	1.33	825
April	599	97.39	8	1.30	4	0.65	4	0.65			615
May	540	91.80	30	5.10	5	0.85			13	2.21	588
June	656	96.47	10	1.47	3	0.44	0	0	11	1.60	680
July	600	84.15	97	13.60	4	0.56	0	0	12	1.60	713
August	1,078	96.25	19	1.69	2	0.17	9	0.80	12	1.07	1,120
September	1,138	87.40	85	6.53	29	2.22	4	0.30	45	3.45	1,301
October	704	87.89	28	3.49	7	0.87	10	1.24	52	6.49	801
November	78	84.60	89	9.59	7	0.75	5	0.53	41	4.41	928
December	650	81.14	66	8.23	20	2.49	13	1.62	52	6.49	801

Table 10: Comprehensive Rate of Thesis Consultations, January–December 2007.											
Month	Post–Graduate		Undergraduate		Staff		Library Staff		Others		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
January	640	80.50	66	8.30	24	3.31	13	1.53	52	6.54	795
February	333	50.22	32	4.32	4	0.60	9	1.35	285	42.38	663
March	1,263	86.56	96	6.57	11	0.75	17	1.23	71	4.36	1,459
April	1,219	85.54	104	7.29	13	0.13	18	1.26	71	1.91	1,425
May	510	78.70	93	14.35	2	0.30	8	1.23	35	5.10	648
June	320	85.56	31	0.28	10	2.57	2	0.53	11	2.90	374
July	693	81.52	84	9.39	10	1.17	2	0.21	60	7.36	849
August	729	90.55	28	3.17	13	1.51			35	4.34	805
September	694	91.31	33	4.34			2	0.26	31	4.07	760
October	584	83.0	62	8.70	21	2.34	11	1.50	34	4.77	712
November	750	89.07	40	4.75	9	1.0	14	1.56	29	3.44	842

| December | 259 | 98.35 | | | | | 3 | 1.14 | | | 262 |

Table 11: Comprehensive Rate of Thesis Consultations, January–December 2008.

Month	Post–Graduate		Undergraduate		Staff		Library Staff		Others		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
January	634	75.60	138	16.46	30	3.57	33	3.93	3	0.36	838
February	744	68.50	143	13.16	43	3.95	53	4.88	103	9.48	1,086
March	752	62.35	226	18.70	65	5.38	74	0.33	119	9.86	1,206
April	752	66.66	226	20.03	65	5.76	4	0.35	99	8.77	1,128
May	740	66.36	176	15.78	57	5.11	46	4.12	96	8.60	1,115
June	636	69.40	192	20.96	28	3.05	38	4.14	22	2.40	916
July	761	75.57	126	12.51	42	4.17	15	1.48	63	6.25	1,007
August	563	53.60	312	29.70	62	5.90	29	2.76	84	0.80	1,050
September	564	68.78	123	15.0	31	3.78	14	1.70	58	7.01	820
October	389	67.80	68	11.86	13	2.26	14	2.44	89	15.53	573
November	661	65.90	129	12.8	33	3.29	41	4.09	138	13.70	1,002
December	322	58.70	106	19.34	10	1.82	7	1.27	103	18.79	548

Table 12: Overall Total of Theses Consulted from January to December, 2004–2008.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
January	1,232	606	859	795	838
February	1,390	838	970	663	1,086
March	2,359	723	825	1,459	1,206
April	1,208	817	615	1,425	1,128
May	1,187	797	588	648	1,115
June	902	724	680	374	916
July	1,303	1,041	713	849	1,007
August	1,446	1,194	1,120	805	1,050
September	1,283	1,404	1,301	760	820
October	874	968	801	712	573

November	836	848	928	842	1,002
December	970	672	801	262	548
Total	**14,810**	**10,632**	**10,201**	**9,594**	**11,289**

Analysis of Results

The years 2004 and 2006 were arbitrarily chosen for African monographs and P.O. materials since appropriate records were kept. Africana books were not consulted during certain times of the year as can be seen from the table due to a workers' union strike.

In Tables 2 and 3 of Comprehensive Rates of Africana and P.O. Consultations in 2004, one can infer that postgraduate students utilized the Africana collections more than other categories of users — 850 titles (56.45 percent) in a year and 550 of P.O. materials (53.29 percent). A total of 1,488 Africana books was consulted that year and 1,032 P.O. materials were also consulted and utilized in the same year.

Altogether, a total of 2,500 texts were consulted from this section of the library in 2004. It was in the months of April (10.34 percent) through June (6.81 percent) that the fewest consultations were recorded. This is due to vacation periods and public holidays at these times.

In both cases, postgraduate students and researchers consulted the texts most (840 for Africana materials and 550 for P.O. materials).

The number seems to decrease in 2006, though they were still heavily used and at the same rate. Postgraduate students consulted the highest number of books: 483, or 67 percent Africana, and 491 P.O. materials. This is followed by undergraduates, 194 and 187 respectively, and then others.

A total of 720 Africana books and 889 P.O. materials were consulted. Thus, 1,609 texts were consulted from this section of the library in 2006.

Theses, as can be seen in tables 7–12, are more in demand than the Africana books and the P.O. materials. There are 3,192 theses stored and available in this section.

An accurate record has been kept from the year 2004 to present. The postgraduate students requested more of these materials than any other materials in this section of the library, more than any other group of users. For example, about 915 (74.25 percent) of theses were requested by postgraduate students in January 2004 as compared to 150 (12.17 percent by undergraduates, 35 (2.59 percent) by staff and 125 (9.98 percent) by other users. In November 2005, for example, 782 (92.2 percent) of the theses consulted were consulted by postgraduate students consulted as compared to 54 (6.36 percent) by undergraduates.

It is important to note that a thesis can be consulted repeatedly. It is the frequency of usage and requests that is being recorded, not the different titles used. An overall total of 14,810 in 2004; 10,632 in 2005; 10,201 in 2006; 9,594 in 2007 and 11,289 in 2008 were utilized or requested by postgraduate students (See Table 12).

These numbers show that theses were very popular among the researchers.

Discussion

How then does the collection in the Africana Section of Kenneth Dike Library meet the 'selection criteria for digitization' mentioned previously in this paper?

Given the standard criteria for digitizing library materials, can we reliably affirm that Africana and other selected materials in KDL should be digitized? It becomes imperative that these materials should be digitized for the following reasons:

- The Africana Section of the KDL is located in the innermost section of the Research Library and books can only be brought to users by the library staff. Users/researchers are not allowed into that area of the library. They can only consult the catalogue, copy the call marks and submit them to the library staff at the reference desk to search and obtain the materials for them. In a few cases, the material may not be found as it might not have been properly shelved.

- The P.O. materials and even the Africana books are most often left on the trolleys due to limited number of staff; in some cases some P.O. materials may not have been catalogued or classified.

- In some cases, researchers and even library staff do not know many of the materials in the Africana Section.

- The section is not well lit either and this affects the search of information sources by the library staff. This becomes worse when there is a power outage, as the section becomes very dark and the library staff is not able to search or collect information sources for users at all.

All these inhibit accessibility of some of the most needed materials in the Africana section and thus meet the reasons for digitization as discussed earlier.

- The Africana materials and P.O. materials have intellectual justification, else they would not have been requested by researchers.

- The copyright status of the texts/monographs is not questionable. They are guaranteed as already discussed. The Publication Ordinance guarantees this and the other means of acquisition of the Africana materials have been stated above.

- The materials are also relevant to the institution's goals and objectives as they are of great educational benefits to the students. They sometimes even provide financial benefit to the library as can be seen from the requisitions made by outside users, especially from foreign countries (See Table 6). If and when the materials are digitized, appropriate charges would be made for the information provided.

- The Africana and P.O. materials and theses are not fragile. Most of them are newly published or acquired. They are current materials with current information; therefore, the physical nature and content of the materials are not questionable.

- The creation of the metadata of these materials is feasible since catalogue records of the materials are available. The reconversion of the records to machine–readable data will not be very difficult.

- The materials are also of international repute, based on requests made from other parts of the world as can be seen in Table 6.

- Storage facilities for the materials are not enough. More space is needed especially for the P.O. materials. A lot of chaos can be seen when one visits the section, and there is a

tendency of not knowing where to begin to put materials or to instill order. Newspapers, which are also stored in the section, help to create a state of entropy.

Digitization will make easy the accessibility of these materials. Organization would be enhanced; speed of finding materials and productivity in terms of research would be increased. These materials will acquire more prestige, for if a collection is unique or nationally or internationally important (see tables), but only available to a limited number of researchers, digitization can bring popularity to it and make it world–acclaimed. The institution will also acquire enhanced visibility and publicity.

Challenges

As desirable, beneficial and important digitization is, it is not without its challenges, especially in developing countries, like Nigeria. These challenges and inhibiting factors include:

- Lack of commitment by library managers. It has been observed that most of the older generation and older librarians appear not to be well disposed towards digitization as compared with the younger generation. Furthermore, it is assumed that most of the older generation are still leaders of most libraries. Therefore, the younger generation will require a lot of assuring and strong arguments to convince the older ones to accept the need of digitizing some of their library materials. For any new technology to thrive and succeed, the operators must be convinced of its importance and essence. Computerization suffered drastically from library and institutional heads who never believed in the computerization project. Thus, institutional and library managers must be convinced that digitization is of significant value especially for research and scholarship.

- Lack of funds to procure equipment and software. This is of paramount importance. At present, the public–owned Federal University Libraries are allocated a meager ten percent of university overhead cost, which amounts to a very paltry sum that can hardly cover maintenance costs of physical facilities. Digitization projects are not inexpensive, and the library management should be ready to commit significant funding to it. There are organizations and multinationals prepared to support digitization projects. Such organizations can be approached. The choice of appropriate hardware and software among the myriads available in the IT market is essential. Presently, there are different types of scanners and optical character recognition (OCR) devices with varying capabilities. Some cost a lot but are very efficient. Some are suitable for handling certain types of digitizeable materials. For instance, the Book–eye digital machine is capable of handling books but not suitable for fragile documents. Care should be taken in choosing the hardware and software, taking cognizance of available funds and resources.

- Deciding on the digitization model. It is also important that appropriate decisions regarding the digitization model be taken. It is necessary for the library management to be knowledgeable about the available items and the digitizeable items. Will it be cost–effective or beneficial to handle digitization? Should it be done in-house or contracted out to an organization with relevant credentials, or even involve a consortium? These questions are of utmost relevance before embarking on a digitization project.

- Expertise and IT infrastructure. The implementation and sustainability of digitization require the expertise of relevant IT personnel who will be responsible not only for implementing the project but also for maintaining it. They will also need to train some personnel who will be responsible for teaching how to use the equipment, and how to carry out the process of digitization themselves. Digitization is a process and it has to continue once it is started. The library must be ready to give enough incentives to retain qualified

personnel. The necessary infrastructures and utilities such as electricity and energy supply should be put in place. An enabling environment for the devices used for digitization should be created.

- Copyrights. Digitizing an item means altering the format of someone else's intellectual product and, in doing so one must respect the ownership right of the producer. In view of this, libraries should go the extra mile in identifying the owners of such materials. The Copyright Law can be very problematic *vis–à–vis* digitization because the existing laws in the country do not yet cover this. This is of utmost importance to librarians, and it could slow down the process of digitization, especially when the copyright issue of a material is raised.

Recommendations

- Professional staff and paraprofessionals should be employed, with their job specifications made known to them especially as regards organizing the materials. Shelf–reading should be carried out every day.

- Computers should be procured and the process of retrospective conversion and metadata compilation should begin.

- An Online Public Access Catalogue should be established.

- The digitization process should be carried out by experienced professionals.

- Air conditioners, proper lighting and staff offices should be made available to help change the image of the Africana Section.

- The materials to be digitized should be prioritized. From the data of usage, theses are the most requested and consulted. Thus, the process of digitization should start with abstracts of theses followed by other materials in the Africana Section.

Conclusion

Digitization is one of the newest concepts in librarianship. Optical character recognition, scanning and photocopying are activities that aid librarianship. Digitization is just an advanced step from these. An interface that makes the material being copied editable and possibly textual is introduced. The more we embrace new technology, the more we prospect in our desire and mandate to satisfy our clients.

Digitization of materials will help show the world the type of information available in Africa. This will enable the library to export information to users outside the country at a faster rate since it will be available online.

As desirable, beneficial, and important digitization is, it is not without its challenges, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria. These challenges and inhibiting factors include a lack of conviction by the library managers, lack of institutional support, lack of funds, lack of adequate hardware and software for innovation creation, lack of required expertise, inadequate IT infrastructure, and lack of utilities like electricity.

Despite all these, it is becoming imperative that for any library to improve its collections' availability, visibility and usage, it must necessarily go the way of digitization.

Information is power. The Africana Section of Kenneth Dike Library could be considered as containing information in form of explosives that need to be exploded but have no fire to ignite them.

Digitization of these materials will help explode and spread this information to everyone, thus helping to make Africa the producer of indigenous information and knowledge, thus empowering Africa within the global information sphere.

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