

Chapter 55

The Use of Electronic Library Resources in Nigerian Universities: A Review of the Literature

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ABSTRACT

A number of studies have focused on the use of e-libraries, drawing numerous conclusions about the use and challenges facing e-libraries. This article therefore presents a review of the literature on the use of e-libraries in universities with a particular interest in Nigerian institutions. The article examines the concepts and the antecedents of electronic libraries. The review shows that a number of approaches have been used to assess the use of e-libraries, and that computer self-efficacy has an impact on the performance while technological innovation, by extension, enhances the satisfactory use of electronic library systems. In addition, the review underscores the fact that there are few studies that pay attention to the satisfactory usage of electronic libraries in Nigerian universities. The article thus concludes by restating the important roles those e-libraries play in information service delivery. Recommendations for further studies on the mode and modalities with which effective training is conducted especially in the area of information search skills are made.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the traditional libraries placed prominently on storing and preserving the physical items, particularly books and periodicals. The passivity of traditional libraries to physically-assembled information in one place, where users must physically be in the library to use it could be viewed as one of its shortcomings (Reddy, Ager, Challappa, Croft, Davis-Brown, Mendel & Shamos, 1999). In this regard, the traditional library, otherwise referred to as the physical library, is driven by a focus on physical items, spaces and presence. The priority over such a library is the housing and protection for the past, current and future print collections (Reddy, et al., 1999, in Leeder, 2013). As a result, Latimer and Niegaard (2008) observed that most library buildings were, and still are, large, intimidating, but frequently unwelcome.

The introduction of ICT to information provision, sharing and management in libraries means that library stakeholders have to adjust their positions and actions regarding the method of creating, publishing, distribution and use of the available information in order to retain their relevance. As stated by Akintunde (2004), libraries worldwide had undergone a significant metamorphosis from purely traditional manual service delivery system to a more dynamic technology driven system. Since the noticeable problems of the literature explosion from the 1970s, it became imperative for the world over to devise ways of facilitating the storage and the flow of information, in an acceptable quality, within and outside shores.

These developments posed challenges to the provision and delivery of electronic information resources in Nigerian universities. The challenge of e-readiness of the libraries and parent institutions towards digital users, include lower level of awareness, erratic power supply, among others. Despite these challenges, the integration of technology into library services, according to Zaid and Oyelude (2012), has made the use of e-libraries encouraging in Nigerian university libraries. This has resulted for the remarkable change in nature, frontiers and organization of information.

The extent to which e-libraries are used to achieve the tripartite roles of teaching, learning and research of academic institutions has prompted a number of researches and scholarly publications, hence, this review. In this review, the following subtitles were considered; antecedents of the electronic library, related studies on the use of e-libraries, related studies on e-library use in Nigeria with a view to identifying a gap for further studies.

ANTECEDENTS OF THE ELECTRONIC LIBRARY

The concept of the electronic library dates back to the publication of foreseer scientists, Vannevar Bush and J.C.R. Licklider identified and pursued the goal of advanced technologies toward knowledge sharing as a fundamental means for advancement (Candela, Castalli & Pagano, 2011). While Bush in 1945 created a device in which an individual stores all his books, records, and communications, and was mechanized so that it may be consulted with exceeding speed and flexibility, Licklider in 1965 realized that computers were getting to be powerful enough to support the type of automated library systems that Bush had described. He wrote on how a computer could provide an automated library with concurrent remote use by divergent users through access to a common database. Research and development activity on e-library use started in the early 1990s, with the internet explosion, which had created unique potential for the discovery and delivery of human knowledge. This has unlocked the idea that electronic collections can be made available to diverse users over a common platform. This means that the e-library is crucial for

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