

Chapter 2

ICT Waste Management in Federal University Libraries in Nigeria: A Survey Report

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on assessing the management of ICT wastes in three federal university libraries in Southwest, Nigeria, namely Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; and Federal University Oye-Ekiti. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all library personnel in the three libraries. Using purposive sampling technique, a questionnaire was administered on eight library personnel from each of the three libraries. The study discovered that the libraries generate high-to-moderate levels of ICT waste, and several methods were available for managing such waste. It was also revealed that they experience several challenges relating to ICT waste management in the libraries. The study recommends the need to provide documented policy, infrastructure, and funding for ICT waste management. The study is original in the sense that empirical data generated by this study may assist policy makers in drafting ICT waste management policy, specifically targeting university libraries.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries, especially those in academic institutions, are known globally for depending on current information management technologies to drive their resources and services provision. In addition, academic libraries are mostly research libraries and make use of Information and Communication Technology

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(ICT) equipment and facilities to manage information. The use of ICT cuts across most sections and services offered by these libraries. However, with the increase in the trend of ICT usage in libraries, there is certainty of generating wastes from such use over time. ICT wastes can be described as computer and its peripherals or similar digital communication devices and their peripherals that reached their end of life (Askarzai, 2011). Such wastes may include computer monitors, mother boards, power-packs, printers, CPU, UPS, keyboards, projectors, scanners, mice etc. Liebmann (2015) recognizes ICT wastes as part of electronic wastes which is undoubtedly the fastest growing type of wastes today as there is great increase in the global use of ICT devices. Such accumulated wastes will, over time, constitute not only environmental hazards to the work place, but also health hazard, as long-term exposure to them can result into some health challenges (McAllister, 2013). This may in turn affect the health and job productivity of the library personnel.

Furthermore, Adebayo, Ahmed and Adeniran (2018) point out that the application and use of ICT is indeed a boost to engendering effective and quality library services as it assists many librarians to use their ICT skills to reach out to library users, especially those in remote areas. Therefore, with such increase in the use of ICTs in libraries, generally, it is expected that more wastes will be generated and there will arise the need to manage them appropriately. Having a suitable policy for ICT wastes management in the library will not only guarantee a hazard free working environment, but may improve job productivity of the library personnel. Therefore, the need to conduct study on ICT wastes management in university libraries became imperative as the use of ICT by libraries will continue far into the future.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for any university library to function effectively in this era of globalization without the use of ICTs. ICT use is required and efficacious to effective library service delivery. However, extant literature and personal observations of the authors have shown that ICT/e-waste management in organizations like academic libraries call for serious attention as many libraries continue to struggle about their management (Luther, 2010). The level of ICT wastes generated on daily basis keep increasing; while there may not be proper measures in place to dispose them off properly. In addition to taking up spaces that could be used for other productive tasks, ICT wastes constitute health and physical hazards to work environment (Manish and Chakraborty, 2019). It is important, therefore, that university libraries and by extension, parent institutions should have standard policy for managing ICT wastes. In the absence of such a policy, the situation becomes further worsened as library personnel are not properly guided as to what to do thereby exposing themselves to short and long-term hazards which may subsequently affect their job productivity.

Since the use of ICT facilities and resources are to continue far into the future, then, there is need to assess the current situation of ICT waste management in libraries to project what the future of ICT waste will be and the impact it will have on job productivity of library personnel. Thus, the study sought to evaluate ICT wastes management in Nimbe Adedipe Library, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Ogun State; Hezekiah Olusanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Osun State, and Federal University Oye-Ekiti Library, Nigeria.

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