Chapter 4
Library Digitization:
Values and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Digitization is the process of converting a non-digital document to a digital document that can be accessed, processed, and used on a computer. Digitization plays valuable roles in libraries. It helps with preserving library documents, enhancing wider access to library documents, helps with curbing plagiarism, helps with promoting global visibility of the parent's institution, and helps with reducing cost of purchasing library books. Despite these benefits, there exist some universities that are yet to embark on library digitization. This chapter discusses the values of library digitization and some challenges that intending libraries might face when embarking on library digitization. The chapter in addition discusses digitization workflow and gave some recommendations on library digitization best practices.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries anywhere in the world renders all kinds of services to people. Such services include but not limited to reference services, current awareness services, document delivery services, referral services and so on. According to Ikenwe and Adegbilero (2014) library is a repository of knowledge and a dynamic social institution. It is an indispensable resource centre for reliable information. Aina, as cited in Ikenwe and Adegbilero (2014) emphasised that a library is concerned with the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of recorded information for the purpose of reading, studying and consultation.

One of the functions of library is to make provision for high quality scholarly collections in print and non-print forms to satisfy the information needs of library users but there is a limitation to what print information resources libraries can acquire due to financial constraints and difficulty in finding them. Moreover, books consume a large amount of spaces in the traditional libraries. This becomes a problem to library users when the library does not have catalogues for its collections as they will have to roam to find their needed information resources in the library. Digital libraries have been able to overcome these challenges through the help of the Internet and cloud storage devices which makes it possible for information resources to be stored online in digital forms and accessed by library users where ever they are. In addition, digital libraries made it possible for researchers to have access to varieties of information resources at ease and in the fastest possible time. According to Xie, Joo, and Matusiak (2020), upgrades in information and communication technologies and the widely acceptance of computer networks, have led to the establishments of digital repositories which provides easy access to scholarly works. Digital repositories encourage student's authentic inquiry learning by providing easy accessibility of online resources which makes it possible for students to enjoy a ñexible learning environment.

In a research conducted by Okeji and Adebara (2020), it was reported that digital services which provides easy access and wider access to information resources is an important service every library should provide to its users so as to ensure the information service delivery goal of every library is met. Owusu-Ansah et al. (2019) explained that digital collection is a vital library repository which aids scholars have easy access to information resources. Zirra et al. (2019) stated that digital collection is an avenue of solving information shortfall in the African region. Malik and Ameen (2020) also opined that digital collections help individuals with easy access to newly published or newly written scholarly works which might not be available in traditional libraries. Where the digital collections and repositories are available in the library, maintaining and promoting there usage is an important exercise the library should embark on in order to ensure there sustainability for future use. Moreover, digital documents are important documents every library should have. Digital documents are stored in institutional repositories and databases. These databases are made available to users who need the contents in them for research purposes. The contents in digital repositories are either born digital or must have passed through a process called library digitization.

Library digitization is referred to as the act of converting a paper document to a digital document. It has become a common practice in libraries due to its role in preserving and enhancing access to documents (Fabunmi, Paris, and Fabunmi. 2006). Libraries are digitising their collections with the intent of preserving them for longevity. Due to limited space and underutilization of library resources, libraries are digitizing their resources to create wider access and utilization of their resources. Examples of some of some library digitization projects are; Digitization project by Digital Public Library of America which digitizes information resources from different universities in America; New York Public Library has a digitized collection of over 800,000 which ranges from pictures and illustrations; Google Book Project is also an example of digitization projects in the world. The Google Book Project has digitized over 13 million book titles and, in the world, (Zieliński, 2014). Similarly in Nigeria, some tertiary institutions such as University of Ibadan, University of Jos, Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Obafemi Awolowo University have embarked on digitization of their library collections Ajuwon...et.al (2020).

Despite the benefits of library digitization, some libraries most especially libraries in third world countries are yet to see the need to digitize their information resources. In Nigeria for instance, with the highest number of institutions when compared to other African countries (Oguche, 2018), has only 34 active institutional repositories as indicated on OpenDOAR website (OpenDOAR, 2022). The country

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