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May 2010

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Availability and Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Six Nigerian University Library Schools

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Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have taken a central position in all spheres of human endeavor. Their roles in societal development have been considered pervasive. In fact Karisiddappa (2004) asserts that “for a sustainable development of a nation, today ICT has become essential knowledge to every nation and more so to the developing nations”. This clearly indicates that ICTs now serves as backbone for societal development in all ramifications. Information and Communication Technology are now applied to all fields of human endeavor.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a term that has various meanings. Some scholars see it as a term that encompasses a lot of activities involving the acquisition, storage, processing and dissemination of information through the use of appropriate software and hardware designed for that purpose. Wirsy and Shafack (2002) have defined Information Technology as: a broad-based term that encompasses the gathering (acquisition) organization (packaging), storage and retrieval (dissemination) of information that can be in textual or numerical (books, documents), pictorial and vocal forms (audio-visual) or a combination of all the above (multi-media), using a combination of computers and telecommunications (telephony). Womboh and Abba (2008) notes that ICT and Information Technology (IT) are similar concepts that can be used interchangeably. According to them IT implies communication and therefore the two terms are synonymous. Information and Communication Technology have a positive effect on library profession and should therefore be embraced by Nigerian Library Schools just as their counterparts in other parts of the world.

Literature Review

LIS Education in Nigeria

Nigeria is the cradle of library and information science (LIS) training in West Africa. Librarianship training in Nigeria started at the Institute of Librarianship at the then University College Ibadan (now University of Ibadan) in 1959. The training was at the leadership level because it was started at a graduate level, and it produced the first set of indigenous librarians for West Africa (Aina, 2007). The Ibadan LIS school was established with the assistance of the Carnegie Corporation of New York after Harold Lancour's report of 1957. The establishment in 1959 of the Institute of Librarianship at Ibadan with its initial enrollment of six students in 1960-1961 session marked the beginning of Information education programs in Nigerian Universities (Nweke, 1995).

The establishment of the second school of Librarianship in Nigeria was preceded by the famous F.A. Sharr's report on the library needs of Northern Nigeria. According to Mohammed (2008) the 1963

F.A. Sharr's report on library needs in Northern Nigeria gave birth to the establishment of the second LIS school in Nigeria in Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria in 1965 to educate and train librarians at the undergraduate level as opposed to that of Ibadan 's Postgraduate Diploma level.

After the establishment of the first two library schools in Nigeria, other library schools were subsequently opened in various universities in Nigeria. Igwe (2005) notes that the end of the 1980s saw the establishment of several library schools in Nigeria awarding qualifications up to the Ph.D level. Thus there are a number of university-based LIS schools in Nigeria.

Information Technology in LIS Education

Advancement in Information technology has brought about tremendous progress in university education across the globe. This is because it has brought about dramatic and dynamic changes in the global system of education to which LIS education belongs. Olatokun (2007) who quoted Jacobsen (1998) observes that ICTs are rapidly affecting the way university education is delivered and research conducted. They are also currently being used effectively in higher education for information access and delivery in libraries, for research and development, for communication, and for teaching and learning. Similarly Igwe (2005) has noted that the advent of the electronic mail, PCs on every desk, the Internet and its application to education have produced amazing results.

Today Information and Communication Technologies are integral part of LIS practice and training at the global level. Mohammed (2008) asserts that "Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), particularly the Internet, Intranet and other network technologies have continued to impact positively on the methodologies of library and information service delivery, education and training of information providers as well as the information needs and seeking behaviour of the information seekers and users".

Daniel (2000) affirms that Information Technology (IT) can be described as the main grand hero of the century. Driven by extreme courage and unlimited ambition, IT replicates itself like a virus sweeping and overshadowing everything on its path. Today, the siren of the Information Technology is been heard loud and clear and in every sphere of human endeavor.

Information Technology in Library and Information Science Schools in Nigeria is a recent phenomenon. Mohammed (2000) observes that the history of Information Technology in Nigerian Library and Information Schools cannot be divorced from the state of the art of computer education in the country when the Federal Government decided to introduce computer in the country, particularly at the higher educational institutions. In line with this Dike (2000) notes that if Nigerian libraries and librarians are to be relevant in this information age, surely they must join the Information Technology revolution and fully incorporate IT in both theory and practice.

Methodology

Survey research methodology was used for the study. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The six library schools studied were: Abia State University Uturu; Ahmadu Bello University ; Zaria, Bayero University, Kano ; University of Ibadan ; University of Maiduguri ; and University of Nigeria Nsukka. Two set of questionnaires were used for the study (i) 6 questionnaires for heads of Library Schools which were all retrieved and used for the analysis (ii) 65 questionnaires were administered to 65 academic staff in the six Library Schools out of which 51 copies were returned and used for the analysis. The data collected were analyzed by means of percentages.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Information Technology Available in Each Library School.

S/N	NAME OF LIBRARY SCHOOL	Computers	CD-ROM	Internet	On-Line Database	E-mail	Microfilm	Microfiche	Video Tape	Audio Tape	Slide Projectors	Others
1	Abia State University, Uturu	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-
2	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-
3	Bayero University, Kano	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	-
4	University of Ibadan	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
5	University of Maiduguri	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
6	University of Nigeria Nsukka	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-

Key: + Available, - Not Available

The findings in table 1 shows that a number of ITs are available in the six library schools studied. They include computers, CD-ROMS, Internet, e-mail, microfilm, microfiche, video tape, audio tape and slide projectors. Of particular interest is the fact that known of the Library Schools has On-line data bases.

Table 2: Use of IT in the Library Schools

S/N	NAME OF LIBRARY SCHOOL	Individual use by lecturers	Individual use by students	Whole class theoretical teaching	Small group theoretical teaching	Whole class practical teaching	Small group practical training
1	Abia State University, Uturu	-	-	-	-	-	+
2	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	+	+	-	-	-	-
3	Bayero University, Kano	+	+	+	-	+	-
4	University of Ibadan	+	+	-	-	+	-
5	University of Maiduguri	+	-	+	+	+	+
6	University of Nigeria Nsukka	+	-	-	+	-	+

The above table shows that all the six library schools studied used the acquired ITs for various purposes notably for education and training. The respondents were asked to indicate the specific uses by which the ITs are made available. Findings indicate that Ahmadu Bello University, Bayero University, University of Ibadan, University of Maiduguri and University of Nigeria Nsukka Library Schools had their technologies used individually by lecturers; while for individual use by students the data indicated that Ahmadu Bello University, Bayero University, and University of Ibadan responded that their students used the ITs available individually. Other uses of the ITs in the Library Schools include whole class theoretical teaching, small group theoretical teaching, whole class practical training as well as small group practical training as indicated by the table above.

Table 3: Extent of Interaction with IT in the Library Schools

S/N	NAME OF LIBRARY SCHOOL	0-2 hours daily	2-4 hours daily	Once in a week	Once in a month	Others	Frequency	Percentage
1	Abia State University, Uturu	0	2 (40 percent)	1 (7.7 percent)	0	2 (15.3 percent)	5	10.9 percent
2	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	2 (15.3 percent)	3 (60 percent)	0	0	0	5	10.9 percent
3	Bayero University, Kano	4 (30.7 percent)	0	2 (15.3 percent)	2 (100 percent)	4 (30.7 percent)	12	26.0 percent
4	University of Ibadan	4 (30.7 percent)	0	4 (30.7 percent)	0	1 (7.7 percent)	9	19.6 percent
5	University of Maiduguri	0	0	4 (30.7 percent)	0	3 (23.0 percent)	7	15.2 percent
6	University of Nigeria Nsukka	3 (23.0 percent)	0	2 (15.3 percent)	0	3 (23.0 percent)	8	17.4 percent
	Total	13 (100)	5 (100)	13 (100)	2 (100)	13 (100)	46	100 percent

Table 3 shows that Bayero University, Kano Library School has the highest number of interacting hours with the ITs with 26.0 percent, followed by University of Ibadan with 19.6 percent; while University of Nigeria Nsukka Library School has 17.4 percent; University of Maiduguri Library School ranked fourth with 15.2 percent; while Abia State University and Ahmadu Bello University Library Schools had 10.9 percent each. It can be observed from the above data that majority of academic staff in the Library Schools use the available ITs on a daily basis, which could be as a result of their indispensability to the present day LIS training and education.

Conclusion

Information Technologies are integral part of LIS Schools the world over. This is because of the changing nature of library education and training that has been affected by developments in ICTs which brought about dramatic changes in the new information age. Library Schools in Nigeria have to some extent some IT facilities which they use for a variety of activities. However, there is the need for the acquisition of more ICTs because the existing ones seems not to be adequate especially the Internet facility. Also more state of the art ICTs are needed. Consequently therefore, the sponsoring authorities of the Library Schools should provide more funds for IT acquisition in the Library Schools. The Library Schools themselves should strive to get more alternative sources for IT availability since they have become an indispensable resource for library and information science training and practice.

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