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Challenges of Collection Development of Electronic Resources in University Libraries in South East Nigeria

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Abstract

This study surveyed the challenges of collection development of electronic resources in university libraries in South East Nigeria. The descriptive survey research method was adopted for the study with population of 86 respondents. The instruments for collection of data were questionnaire and interview. Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using simple statistics (mean). The findings revealed twelve challenges that affect collection development of electronic resources in university libraries in South East Nigeria. They all have mean values ranging from 2.51 to 3.05 and are above the cut-off point of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale. The study also revealed cost as a major challenge of collection development of electronic resources The study recommended that the university libraries in South East Nigeria should have an upward review of the library budget in order to attain to the cost of electronic resources and for the regular training of staff on new skills for electronic collection development; they should also take drastic action of acquiring electronic resources through consortium to maximize profit and discount; and the libraries understudy should improve their internet bandwidth for better access to the network.

Keywords: University Libraries, Electronic Resources, Collection development, Challenges of Collection development.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary university system, the resources of any university library are built on electronic resources to complement the print resources. University library is defined by Reitz (2004) as a library or library system established, administered, and funded by a university to meet the information, research, and curriculum needs of its students, faculty, and staff. These libraries are the focal point of interest in all institutions of learning across the globe without which the institutions will not stand. University libraries have been widely recognized as indispensable repositories of useful information, and indeed, the 'heart' of the university system. Arguably, it is a futile effort to establish a university system without a library, given that the mission and vision of education generally will be a far cry and elusive.

The central aim of university libraries is to collect, preserve and disseminate information to users for teaching, research and learning. In addition to the university's traditional functions of teaching, research, and learning, it has the functions of pursuit, promotion and dissemination of knowledge; provision of intellectual leadership; manpower development; promotion of social and economic modernization; promotion of intra- and inter-continental and international understanding. University libraries are built to complement mainstream academic exercise and extracurricular activities of the university which include teaching, research, and publications, conservation of knowledge and ideas and extension services. They direct their activities towards the actualization of these objectives. One of such activities is the acquisition of information resources.

University library acquires collections in broad terms of quantity and quality in the form of prints and electronics to support the teaching, learning, research and recreational purposes, (Weber and Flatley 2008). These resources include books, journals, abstracts, audio and video

CDs and other electronic resources such as databases, online databases, web resources, e-journal, e-books which have been introduced by the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). University libraries as service organizations, exist to achieve the objectives of their parent institutions that established them. These objectives can only be achieved through an effective provision of information to the right person at the right time especially with the emergence of information and communication technology.

With the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), electronic resources that can be accessed by university libraries are of different types and formats. The electronic resources come in the form of digital which can only be accessed with the use of internet aided by computer and made available to the library. The rapid growth of (ICT) has given rise to the evolution of several new terms like paperless society, e-resources, digital library. Words like digital content, an electronic library containing e-journals, e-books, journal consortiums, open access, digital library, Digital Rights Management (DRM) all have become simply buzzwords along with the traditional analog or print resources in the present library system (Chaudhuri, 2012). This implies that traditional university libraries now lack the wherewithal to meet present-day information needs of patrons. The increasing digital environment or global community, which is characterized by the wide application of electronic resources in information storage and retrieval, has resulted in a total overhauling of the traditional library system in various universities. Mansur (2012) posits that the introduction of ICT, the Internet and particularly the World Wide Web has brought a dramatic improvement in virtually every human endeavor, including collection development practices. For instance, an activity or a task that used to take some hours to do is now just a mouse click away. He further stated that the publishers of these e-formats do not remain behind; they take advantage of these

applications to a large extent by exploring and exploiting (tapping) the treasure house of electronic resources.

Electronic resources are described by International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) (2012) as those materials that require computer access, whether through a personal computer, mainframe, or handheld mobile devices. They may be accessed remotely via the internet or locally. The concept of electronic resources encompasses the following: e-zine, e-text or e-book, abstracting and indexing databases such as MEDLINE, e-journal, locally loaded databases, e-library, CD-ROMs, websites, among others. According to Sadeh and Ellingsen (2005), an e-resource is a package of e-journals or a database of abstracts and indexes that include the full text of some or all articles referenced by the indexes. Electronic resources also include products that aid in resource access for users, namely, A-Z lists, Open URL, servers, federated search engines, resources that provide full-text content such as publishers' electronic journal content, journal content platforms like Project Muse or JSTER and content aggregators such as EBSCOhost's Academic Search Premier and proxy servers or other authentication tools (Bothmann & Holmberg, 2008). With electronic resources, users can have multi-access to the resource at a given time. Information resource can be browsed, extracted and integrated into other material and references can be cross-referred between various publications.

In considering the advantages of electronic resources, Mansur (2012) reiterated that electronic resources are pertinent because of their easy usability, readability, budgetary aspects, speedy accessibility and easy backfile access. Furthermore, electronic resources have become very important these days as they are up-to-date, multi-dimensional and directional in nature and also can be accessed as well as used anywhere, crossing all geographical boundaries. Such resources add value to all spheres of human activities. Sharma (2009) submits that the

importance of electronic resources have convinced many libraries to move towards digital electronic resources, which are found to be less expensive and more useful for easy access. Electronic resources have been contributing greatly to research activities and many researchers have commended the advantages of electronic resources over other formats of information. These aforementioned advantages have called for electronic collection development.

With the above numerous advantages as advanced by electronic resources, the effective collection development of electronic resources has some challenges which are not currently experienced in the developed countries. Libraries in the developing countries are challenged by a lot of factors which range from poor funding, poor communication system, lack of Information and Communication Technology and qualified librarians. Yacob in Obidike and Mole (2015) revealed that inadequate computerization, inadequate infrastructure, and inadequate human capacity were some of the major challenges towards the use of ICT in an educational institution in Botswana. In Nigeria, with the poor technological development and apathy on libraries, university libraries are faced with a lot of challenges in building their collection with electronic resources. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the challenges the university libraries in South East Nigeria face in developing electronic resources.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

With the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), libraries have strived to remain relevant through the provision of electronic resources. This is mostly observed in university libraries where library users highly use the library for extensive research. And in providing these services, the libraries are exposed to challenges that were not necessarily experienced in the course of developing prints materials. This study, therefore, set to examine the

challenges of collection development of electronic resources in university libraries in South East Nigeria.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to examine the challenges of collection development of electronic resources in University libraries in South East Nigeria. The specific objective of the study is to identify the challenges facing electronic resources collection development practices of university libraries in South East Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTION

One research question was derived from the objective of the study was formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the challenges facing electronic resources collection development practices in university libraries in South East Nigeria?

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Electronic resources as a new concept that emerged as a result of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have been seen described in different ways by different authors. According to Bavakenthy, Veeran, and Salih (2003), electronic resources are resources in which information are stored electronically and are accessible through electronic systems and networks. 'E-resource' is a broad term that includes a variety of publishing models, including Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs), CD-ROMs, online databases, e-journals, e-books, internet resources, Print-on-demand (POD), e-mail publishing, wireless publishing, electronic link and web publishing, etc. In this context, the term primarily denotes "any electronic product that delivers a collection of data be it in text, numerical, graphical, or time based, as a

commercially available resource". Tsakonas and Papatheodorou (2006) see electronic information resources as information resources provided in electronic form, and these include resources available on the Internet such as e-books, e-journals, online database, Compact Disk Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) databases and other computer-based electronic networks, among others.

In addition, Reitz (2004) defined electronic resource as "material consisting of data and/or computer program (s) encoded for reading and manipulation by a computer, by the use of a peripheral device directly connected to the computer, such as a Compact Disk Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) drive, or remotely via a network, such as the Internet." According to her, the category includes software applications, electronic texts, bibliographic databases, institutional repositories, websites, e-books, collections of e-journals, etc. Electronic resources not publicly available free of charge usually require licensing and authentication.

Similarly, Tsakonas and Papatheodorou (2006), see electronic information resources as information resources provided in electronic form, and these include resources available on the Internet such as e-books, e-journals, online database, Compact Disk Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) databases and other computer-based electronic networks, among others. Electronic resources according to International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) (2012) are those materials that require computer access, whether through a personal computer, mainframe, or handheld mobile device. They may either be accessed remotely via the Internet or locally. Some of the most frequently encountered types are e-journals, e-books, full-text (aggregated) databases, indexing and abstracting databases, reference databases (biographies, dictionaries, directories, encyclopedias, etc.), numeric and statistical databases, e-images and e-audio/visual resources

In a study of electronic resources carried out in the University of Chicago as cited by Oyedapo and Ojo (2013), the following forms of electronic resources were identified to include continuing resources (serials), integrating resources (websites & Databases), e-books, government publications. IFLA (2012), Shukle and Mishra as cited in Igamoh and Duro (2012) enumerated the frequently used electronic resources in the library as e-books, books in electronic format, e-Journals, publication issued at regular interval and available electronically, e-Reference Books/database: electronic reference books or materials like biographies, dictionaries encyclopedias, etc and e –audio/ visual resources, e- images, numerical and statistical databases, indexing and abstracting databases.

Electronic resources usually consist of e-books, e-Journals, articles, newspapers, thesis, dissertation, databases and CD-ROMs, which are likely to be the alternative to the print media. Emerald, Ebsco, Scopus are some of the examples of online databases. All updated information is published in these electronic resources. The adoption of electronic resources in libraries continues to grow because of the advantages attached to their use. They include, the quickest method of access to information in comparison to other traditional methods, its updating is easy for the producers and beneficial to users, it is also economical compared to traditional collection, it is also economical in terms of space, it requires no physical space, it is flexible and can be formatted to suite users, its access, and use may not be location or time specific, it is easily searchable (Shukla and Mishra 2011, and Balanque, 2012)

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Collection development has become a very popular term in the library world especially when a library is working for a balanced collection that will serve library users need. It includes everything that goes into acquiring resources, including selection, ordering, and payment. Collection development serves as a foundation upon which other library services are built. It is the systematic building of a library collection based on meaningful data rather than subjective choice. It is the process of accessing the strength and weaknesses of a collection and then creating a plan to correct the weakness and maintain the strength. The process of collection building includes the selection of current as well as retrospective materials and the evaluation of the existing collection observed Kumbar and Hadagali in Igiamoh and Duro (2012). Zijl (1998) sees collection development as the selection, maintenance, acquisition and evaluation of information sources in libraries. Mosher (1982) observed that collection development is a process that should constitute a rational documented program guided by written policies and protocols and should reflect, in a sense, a contract between library users and staff as to what will be acquired, for whom and at what level. Collection development as defined by Seetharama and Ambuja cited by Igiamoh and Duro (2012) is a communication tool for management, librarians, users and other libraries; a detailed outline of collecting levels; a description of collection development responsibilities; and budgeting tool that helps librarians decide where to place resources. Furthermore, Elaturoti (1995) sees collection development as the process of assessing the strength and weaknesses in a collection and then creating a plan to correct the weakness and maintain the strength.

Gabriel (1995) defined collection development as a term representing the process of systematically building library collections to serve study, teaching, research, recreational, and other needs of library users. According to Mansur (2012), collection development is the

selection, acquisition, and processing of library materials in varied formats meant for users' current needs and their future requirements. He further highlighted the process of collection development to include selection and deselection of current and retrospective materials, planning of coherent strategies for continuing acquisition, and evaluation of collections to ascertain how well they serve users needs.

CHALLENGES OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN LIBRARIES

Collection development of electronic resources present a number of challenges not encountered with the development of traditional analog materials and it is advisable for the library to develop clear policies and processes for the collection development of such resources. Yu and Breivold (2008) revealed that with the various types of e-resources such as electronic books, electronic journals, reference sources, and full-text databases, each one is unique and is considered separately during the selection process. Selection criteria for e-resource pose challenge to the librarians. In case of print material, they have to evaluate the price, contents, layout etc. But in the case of e-resources, the librarian has to assess its subject relevance, the authenticity of information, its usage and accessibility, pricing, vendor reputation, and many more technical factors, reiterated Benny (2015).

Similarly, Yu and Breivold (2008) observed that the discovery of e-resources is challenging due to a rapid increase in the availability of e-resources. Selection of an e-resource requires more interaction between various library departmental staff, such as technical services for legal and access issues, technology for compatibility, and reference/public services for training and ease of use, hence waste a lot of time. Also, the negotiations between library purchaser and licensor vendor can be time- consuming and complex.

The challenges of electronic resources collection and management in libraries are the problem of user training, technological up-grading, financial constraint, IT skill manpower, perishable citation: online if website changes, Universal Resource Locators (URLs) citations disappear, authentication, etc. (Behera & Singh 2011, Balangue 2012). Similarly, Dhanavandra & Tamizhchelvan (2012), observed insufficient bandwidth which usually leads to network fluctuation and sometimes slow speed in the process of downloading resources. Also, Chisenga (2004) reported that lack of funds, lack of qualified ICT personnel, erratic power supply led to the non-availability and under-use of ICT facilities resulting in low ECD standard.

There is lack of perpetual access to e-resources. A majority of e-resources is licensed for a limited time reiterated Yu and Breivold (2008). Thus, at the end of the license period, if the selector decides to cancel the subscription, it results in a loss of access to the content. It is critical to check access to the resource on regular basis and follow up with the provider in the case of loss of access, which requires special staff having technical skills and knowledge.

In a related development, the content of the resources may change over time and require periodic review by the selectors. This requires a continuous evaluation process by the selectors, which is a time-consuming job. Duplication and availability of content from various sources add confusion to users as well as to the selectors.

Furthermore, Agim (2015) disclosed that inadequate budget adds challenges for selectors in making decisions for renewal of e-resources. Budgetary allocation to the educational sector in Nigeria has always fallen far short of expectation. This affects the ability of Nigerian tertiary institutions to cope with the fast-growing trends in electronic resources acquisition. Most libraries do not systematically receive additional funding to maintain and develop electronic

collections; it becomes difficult to add new resources within limited budgets. Goehner (1992) compares the costs involved in the acquisition of printed document and their counterpart in electronic format. He says that it costs heavily in the initial stages to install the hardware and software to make full advantage of electronic resources.

As more and more of a library's acquisitions budget is devoted to e-resources, selectors often have to curtail the purchase of monographs or cancel some print subscriptions. Due to an increase in the demand of users for e-resources, selection becomes more user-driven.

In addition, Abbey (2001) reiterated that the greatest problem in acquiring proprietary electronic resources is that libraries seldom if ever acquire them outright. Rather, they enter into licensing agreements that grant term-limited access to them. He further revealed that given the high prices of many of these sources, librarians must spend increasing amounts of time on the economics of acquisition and licensing rather than on content issues. Another problem observed by Abbey (2001) is difficulty involved in the track of the use of e-resources to determine their value for current patrons. Because libraries do not archive electronic resources, only current users can be considered. One does not consider the future research value of e-journals in the same manner as one considers that of print serials.

According to Vashishth (2011), the main problems in building a collection in e environment are quotation system, cost factor, the rate of library discount, unorganized book trade and remainder books. He also pointed out that lack of ICT infrastructure, inadequate collection, and lack of the mechanism for training library personnel are other major problems being faced by librarians. Johnson (2009), reiterated that selection and acquisition of e-resources add complexity

to the interactions of collection librarians and acquisitions staff for many reasons. Many e-resources are expensive and may require special approval processes.

Research Method

The study was a descriptive study that examined the challenges of collection development of electronic resources of government-owned university libraries in South East Nigeria established before 2010. These challenges are observed by librarians in building electronic resources in university libraries in South East Nigeria. The study covered only government-owned university libraries in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. They are the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Federal University of Technology Owerri, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umuahia, Enugu State University of technology, Abia State University, Uturu, Imo State University Owerri, Anambra State University (Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University) and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The study was conducted in four federal government and five state government-owned university libraries using questionnaire and structured interview as instruments of data collection.

The respondents were all the librarians in collection development, serials and e-library (digital libraries). All the 86 librarians of the e-library, serials and collection development units in the state and federal universities libraries in South East Nigeria were used for this study. All the librarians were used since the number was manageable. The questionnaire items were administered and collected personally by the researchers to ensure maximum return and correctness by visiting the units of the university libraries used for this study. Data collected were tabulated and analyzed using simple statistics (mean).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the challenges facing electronic resources collection development practices in university libraries in South East Nigeria?

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The data providing answers to the above research question are presented in table 1 below

Table 1: Responses to the challenges faced by your library in electronic resources collection development practices.

		Name of institution									Overall
		MOUA	NAU	FUTO	UNN	ABSU	ASU	EBSU	ESUT	IMSU	$\bar{x}$
		$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	N=86
		N=6	N=8	N=23	N=16	N=8	N=6	N=8	N=8	N=3	
1	Cost of acquisition of E-Resources	3.17	3.25	2.96	3.13	3.50	2.67	3.13	2.63	3.00	3.05
2	Problem of how to apply usage statistics to a cancellation decision.	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.81	2.38	3.50	3.13	2.75	3.00	2.93
3	There is lack of perpetual access to e-resources.	3.17	2.63	2.83	2.63	3.13	3.67	2.38	3.25	3.33	2.90
4	Poor network access	3.00	2.13	3.04	2.38	3.13	2.67	2.75	3.38	3.33	2.83
5	The discovery of e-resources is challenging due to a rapid increase in the availability of resources.	2.67	2.75	2.87	2.69	3.25	2.50	2.63	2.88	3.33	2.81
6	Duplication and availability of content from various sources add confusion to users as well as to the selectors.	2.50	3.50	3.35	2.50	2.75	2.83	2.38	2.38	1.67	2.81
7	Librarians spend increasing amounts of time on the economics of acquisition and licensing rather than on content issues.	3.00	2.88	2.61	2.44	3.63	3.17	2.00	2.75	2.33	2.71
8	It is difficult to follow up with the provider in the case of loss of access.	3.00	3.00	2.57	2.63	3.00	3.00	2.13	2.25	2.00	2.63
9	It is difficult to check access to the resource on regular basis.	2.83	2.75	2.52	2.56	2.38	2.67	2.25	2.75	3.00	2.58
10	Continuous evaluation process by the selectors is a time consuming job.	2.50	2.88	2.39	2.63	2.63	2.83	2.38	2.63	3.00	2.58
11	Special staff having technical skills are required	3.00	2.75	2.39	2.31	2.88	1.50	2.88	2.88	3.33	2.56
12	Periodic review by selectors is time	2.83	3.00	2.30	2.63	2.38	2.33	2.75	2.13	2.67	2.51

consuming.											
Grand Mean	2.89	2.88	2.74	2.61	2.92	2.78	2.57	2.72	2.83	2.74	

Keys: SA-Strongly Agree A- Agree D-Disagree SD- Strongly Disagree

The data presented in table 1 shows the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the twelve (12) items of challenges faced by university libraries in South East Nigeria in collection development of electronic resources had mean values ranging from 2.51 to 3.05 which are all above the cut-off point of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale. The above findings indicated that the respondents agreed that all the twelve (12) identified items in the table are challenges faced by university libraries in South East Nigeria in e-resources collection development practices.

Also, the overall mean showed that cost of acquisition of e-resources (mean = 3.05) is ranked highest, while a periodic review by selectors is time-consuming (mean = 2.51) is ranked lowest as challenges faced by the library in e-resources collection development practices.

The interview responses from the nine studied university libraries emphasized so much on the cost which are in three forms; equipment and network infrastructure cost, cost of subscription, staffing training, and development as challenges facing electronic resources collection development practices. Also reported is the university libraries inability to meet up with the deadlines in subscription and renewal, hence leads to loss of access to the e-resources, In addition, erratic power supply, low internet bandwidths also are challenges facing electronic resources collection development practices among university libraries in South East Nigeria.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study on research question one (1) revealed the challenges encountered by the university libraries in building electronic resources. They include that the discovery of e-

resources is challenging due to a rapid increase in the availability of resources, it is difficult to check access to the resource on regular basis, it is difficult to follow up with the provider in the case of loss of access, special staff having technical skills are required, there is lack of perpetual access to e-resources, the duplication and an availability of content from various sources add confusion to users as well as to the selectors, periodic review by selectors is time consuming, continuous evaluation process by the selectors is a time-consuming job, librarians spend increasing amounts of time on the economics of acquisition and licensing rather than on content issues, problem of how to apply usage statistics to cancellation decisions, poor network access, cost of acquisition. These findings are in agreement with the study carried out by Behera and Singh 2011, Yu and Breivold (2008) on the challenges of electronic resources collection and management in libraries which are the problem of user training, technological up-grading, financial constraint, perishable citation, and lack of perpetual access.

The findings on the cost of acquisition is in agreement with the study by Goehner (1992) who compares the costs involved in the acquisition of printed document and their counterpart in electronic format. He says that it costs heavily in the initial stages to install the hardware and software to take full advantage of electronic resources. The findings on cost of acquisition agreed with the works of Mansur (2012) who observed that the developments in the e-resources market and technology are happening so fast, that there is a need for continuous staff training and professional development among librarians and computing specialists.

These findings are in agreement with the study by Vashishth (2011), who emphasized that the main problems in building collection in electronic environment are quotation system, cost factor, rate of library discount, unorganized book trade and reminder books. He also pointed out

that lack of ICT infrastructure, inadequate collection, and lack of mechanism for training library personnel are other major problems being faced by librarians.

The findings of this study are in agreement with the work of Chisenga (2004) on the use of ICT in ten Anglophone African public libraries. His findings reported that lack of funds, lack of qualified ICT personnel, erratic power supply led to the non-availability and under-use of ICT facilities resulting in low electronic collection development standard. The finding of this study also supported the works of Mole & Obidike (2016) whose work revealed that inadequate funding for automation which is also at infancy level, poor technical knowhow, lack of higher bandwidth in Internet connectivity and lack of sound administrative policies and guidelines as challenges of electronic resources collection development practices.

The interview responses from the nine university libraries studied also stated that low internet bandwidth, poor funding, inability of most library staff to use computers and epileptic power supply were some of the factors militating against electronic resources collection development practices in university libraries. The low internet bandwidth is connected with poor funding.

Electronic resources collection development should not be seen from the platform of the prints as it is complex and requires much time to understand the licensing policies and other related information concerning the electronic resources collection development practices.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Collection development of electronic resources in university libraries is the need of the period especially with the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It has been revealed from the study that university libraries in South East Nigeria are posed with a lot of challenges in building electronic resources. In the light of the present study, the following recommendations are made for smooth collection development of electronic resources in university libraries in South East Nigeria.

- The university libraries in South East Nigeria should have an upward review of their budget in order to attain to the cost of electronic resources and for the training of staff that will handle the electronic collection development.

- This upward review of the libraries budget on electronic resources will enhance continuous renewal of electronic subscription and to avert the loss of access to electronic resources.

- The university libraries in South East Nigeria should take the drastic action of acquiring electronic resources through a consortium to maximize profit and discount.

- The library should provide an alternative supply of power to support the library in the provision of energy needed for building electronic resources.

- Libraries should indulge in regular training of their staff on the technical skills, business, and negotiation skill.

- The libraries understudy should improve their internet bandwidth for better access to the network.

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