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Countering the Impact of ICT Advancement in Nigeria

According to a recent trend, ICT development is expected to expand in many countries outside of the US through the placement of new technology. This prediction is good news for the land of Nigeria, as they are embarking upon the 2030 sustainable initiative to transform their region's economy. The impact of such changes, however, often produce implications for marginalized citizens. With the expected advancement of online businesses as a result of this expansion, the need to possess necessary literacy skills will be critical to ensuring one's economic success. The lack of such literacy skills, however, is expected to play a role in producing tension among those who must now develop "new patterns of information use" (International Federation of Libraries, 2018). Moreover, there are implications for all stakeholders. To counter the effects of this impact, libraries and informational professionals will need to 1) develop ICT skills and competencies, 2) use technology as a way to enhance library and information services delivery, 3) educate the community, 4) prepare the next generation, all of which, will result in 5) bridging the potential gap.

Population

Nigeria is considered mostly "an agriculture driven economy" with the majority of its population working in farms (Pandey & Tiwari, 2014, p. 56). 20 % work in the service industry, while other sectors amount to around 10 %. Nigeria is plentiful in "oil and natural resources" (Pandey & Tiwari, 2014, p. 56). As expected, there is already a large gap that exists between the rich and poor. A staggering 10 % of the population holds 90 % of the revenue, while 90% percent of the population is seeming thriving on the 10 % which remains. "People from the creamy layer of society have wells full of oil and money" (Pandey & Tiwari, 2014, p. 56). There is

a massive difference between Nigeria's "household economy and nation's economy," of which, both are challenging (Pandey & Tiwari, 2014, p. 56). The everyday individual is often out hustling for ways to gather money for oneself and family. Adults are expected to provide for the family's population by working as a unit to ensure needs are met. Citizens have been compelled to enter lives of crime.

Nigeria is made up predominantly of three tribes, including 1) Hausa, 2) Yoruba, and 3) Igbo (Pandey & Tiwari, 2014, p. 56). These three make up more than 70% of the population, while 368 other tribes make up the remaining 30%. "There are more than 250 languages spoken in Nigeria; however, English is considered to be the official language" (Pandey & Tiwari, 2014, p. 56). Nonetheless, about half of the population cannot speak English. Notwithstanding, every tribe has its language, which they prefer to use among themselves. Nigerian culture is as over 2000 years, and what makes it stand out is the uniqueness of its culture.

According to Forbes, the country of Nigeria states that the 2030 sustainable initiative has "come at an opportune time...as they are committed to long-term development and poverty alleviation through job creation" (Jadesimi, 2015). According to the International Federation of Libraries, however, one of the expected trend developments will most likely impact the ways that citizens "can successfully own, profit from, share or access information in the future" (International Federation of Libraries, 2018). In response, the creation of online businesses is expected to flourish as the country continues advancing in ICT infrastructure. Without an intervention governed by libraries and library professionals, the divide in the economy will only get wider resulting in the rich getting richer while the poor get poorer.

Personal Development of ICT Skills

One implication regarding the increased use of technology will involve the awareness of how “mobile access to digital content products from a broader range of devices weakens the traditional concept of ownership based on static rights to content in one location” (International Federation of Libraries, 2018). Ultimately, patrons will expect that library professionals can show them how to use various forms of technology, including cell phones, laptops, and stationary computers. It will then be imperative for librarians to be abreast on the new types of personal technology available on the market, as well as office and business machines. Professionals should demonstrate competence with using the equipment and applications available in the library, including, scanners, computers, fax machines, voicemail, and more. Moreover, one should possess “a combination of skills, knowledge, and behaviours related to library technologies.”

Using Technology as a Way to Enhance Library and Information Services Delivery

Another impact related to the new technology expansion is the expectation of a certain quality of service with the utilization of advanced equipment. Moreover, with the advancement of information and communication technology (ICT), libraries and professionals will need to take note of the fact that there will be more requests for digital-related services. Due to the increase of technology, more significant numbers of people will be using “the Internet as a primary source of information, often relying on books as a last resort due to issues of time and money” (Ayoki, 2015, p. 502).

Libraries are now being designed to facilitate access to more patrons in the use of public computer facilities. Therefore, it will be imperative that “librarians undergo additional training

to be well equipped to handle queries related to modern research techniques and online resources” along with traditional duties (Ayoki, 2015, p. 502). Academic libraries will be expected to manage more efficient “catalogs, archives and records” due to the use of computerized operations (Ayoki, 2015, p. 502). Overall, the implementation of such ICT advancement is expected to produce a seamless circulation desk experience for the patrons.

Educating the Community

Demands for literacy education will increase as patrons pursue ways to stay afloat in a potential widening of the already widened economic and digital divide. Thus, new technologies will eventually replace old systems, as well as traditional means of employment. Importance will be placed on educating patrons on how to use the software, applications, and online business tools. Even more, how to create business letters and resume formatting.

The need to teach Information literacy will become necessary as a result of the ICT advancements in public and private libraries, “a development that makes information users to increasingly become overwhelmed by and frustrated with the quantities of information available” (ADELEKE, 2015, p. 128). Digital expansion will be the catalyst in causing others to make valuable decisions, achieve set goals, and be relevant in this era. Overall, it is vital to possess proficiencies for identifying, accessing, evaluating, and using information effectively and efficiently.

As patrons begin to acknowledge “the academic and socio-economic values of information literacy,” they will start to see value in the library’s offerings on literacy. (ADELEKE, 2015, p. 128). Professionals are expected to adopt various approaches to impart information skills to the public. Aside from the usual tasks involving collection management, librarians will

be expected to “furnish advice and instruction for patrons to gain knowledge of the best library resources and to be able to use them intelligently and in proper order” (ADELEKE, 2015, p. 128).

Overall, collecting data or doing a swot analysis has the potential to “expose the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of forming an information literacy program in the library” (ADELEKE, 2015, p. 128).

Prepare for The Next Generation

“Children of the present age are born into the world that is highly driven by Information and Communication Technology (ICT)” (Kayode & Olaronke, 2014, p. 119). Experimentation towards skill proficiency in ICT technology occurs when one is big enough to handle things. “There is need, therefore, to provide ICT-learning experiences that can aid their holistic development” (Kayode & Olaronke, 2014, p. 119). To do this, librarians can form partnerships with primary teachers to teach them “about the roles of ICT in children’s development” (Kayode & Olaronke, 2014, p. 119). Overall, library professionals and instructors can assist in facilitating “children’s cognitive, physical and social-emotional development, and as well sustain children’s interest in learning” (Kayode & Olaronke, 2014, p. 119).

In Nigeria, elementary education is provided cost-free for all youth. These schools are located throughout the country in many different areas. “Average Basic Literacy is close to 70%” (Pandey & Tiwari, 2014, p. 56). Upon graduation, children tend to find ways to hustle the money to cover the moderate expenses of attending high school. The numbers of enrolled high schools, however, usually decrease to “one-third of the total” of elementary school attendees (Pandey & Tiwari, 2014, p. 56). Advancement to Tertiary education is even more expensive;

however, those who can usually prefer schools outside of the region. Thus, information literacy remains a challenge, in that the idea of offering tools to life-long learning is often thwarted.

Bridging the Gap

Currently, there is much disparity over the financial divide among Nigerian citizens. The idea of spreading it further as a result of the expansion of new technologies does not offer any solace. However, finding ways to acclimate future generations on the use of technology, as well as by providing literacy education, can further stop the implications of economic and educational decline.

“As first step to bridging the gap, Nigerian librarians must accept one basic fact which is, ICTs are enablers of innovation in the managerial and operational processes in libraries” and the economy” (Nkanu & Okon, 2010, p. 1). Aside from this step, libraries and information professionals can 1) develop ICT skills and competencies, 2) use technology as a way to enhance library and information services delivery, 3) educate the community, 4) prepare the next generation, all of which, will result in 5) bridging the potential gap. The rest will be up to the citizens of Nigeria.

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