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Introduction

Michael Okpara University of Agriculture was established in 1994 and has courses and programs in agriculture, other sciences, and management. The university has seven colleges and two schools (postgraduate studies and general studies). The university also has a continuing education centre, which runs part-time diploma, degree, and postgraduate programmes. It draws faculty and students from all over the country and beyond. Using laboratories, research farms, libraries, and the Internet, faculty and students engage in research in frontline areas, with national and international collaboration. The profile of the university is as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Profile of University Library, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike

Year Established	1994
Library Collection	Monographs - 18,088 volumes
	Academic Journal Titles 100 (excluding e-journals)
	Other periodicals (eg Newspapers, news bulletins, etc) 674
	No of monographs/off prints many, mainly donated
ICT Facilities	Online subscriptions AGORA, TEEAL, EBSCO-HOST
	Functional Computers - 10
	Functional Printer - 3
	TEEAL CD-ROMs - 460
	World Development Sources CD-ROMs 10
	International Agric research Library CD-ROMs 16
	CD-ROMs in other subjects…107
	Internet Connections Points 7
Library Staff	Professionals/academic Librarians 7
	Para-Professionals 9
	Administrative/Technical Staff 6
	Junior Staff 24
	Total 46
User Population	Students: Pre-Degree 1,000
	Undergraduates 5,000
	Postgraduate 900
	Part-time 1,800
	Total 8,700
	Staff: Academic 224
	Non-Academic 278
	Junior 601
	Total 1,103
Opening Hours	Monday - Friday 8.00am - 10.00pm
	Saturday 9.00am - 1.00pm
	Sunday/Public Holidays Closed
	Vacations:
	Monday—Friday 8.00am - 4.00pm
	Saturday Closed

Internet Services at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike

MOUANet, a Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) sponsored project, is a cybercafé that provides Internet services on campus. The CBN sponsored the construction of the building, equipment, furniture, and computers. It was established to provide Internet services to the university community and users from neighboring communities. The cybercafé became operational and accessible in June 2005. Services

include e-mail, Internet browsing, website design, bill processing, training, consultancy, and other similar services.

The clientele is students, staff, and other member of the university community, which include staff spouses, and their children, wards, and other dependents. Users also come from neighboring communities, which include the Umudike campus of the Abia State University, and National Root Crop Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike among others.

The cybercafé system has 70 computers. Thirty are located at the cybercafé, while the remaining 40 are offices in colleges and departments, including the university library, which at present has 10 computers, with plans to provide at least 30 more, all linked to the cybercafé for remote access. In addition, the university acquired and distributed over 356 desktop and laptop computers and printers to staff at a subsidized rate and 24 months installment payment deductible from staff salaries each month.

The Internet service provider is Dilat Communications, in partnership with Sharon Technologies, all located in Israel. The Internet speed is 256 uplink by 128 downlink, with data traveling at 128*128 kilobyte per second (kbps). The Internet solutions in use are dial-up, radio wave, and Very small Aperture Terminal (VSAT). The radio in use is the RG 346 Intersky Gateway model, which decodes transmissions from the hub station in Israel. While the radio was built by Sharon Technologies; the Internet service is being provided by Dilat, hence the partnership. The bandwidth is the bustable type, which means it can be increased, enlarged, and/or upgraded depending on use and demand. The 30 computers in the cybercafé are networked cat 5 cable topography. The computers in the remote locations such as the colleges and departmental offices are also wired with cat 5 cables but linked to the cybercafé center with point to point radio wave.

The cybercafé operates from 9 am to 9 pm, with or without power supply by Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), because it has its generator and is also connected to the university generator. The university generator operates from 9 am to 3 pm.Without power by PHCN, the cybercafé generator supplies power to the cybercafé from 9 am to 11 am, then when the university generator is turned on, the cybercafé uses it until 3 pm, when the University generator is turned off. It returns to its own generator till 6 pm.

Two types of billing systems are in use: pre-paid and post-paid. The pre-paid system is for students and other non- staff, and post-paid is for staff. The students and non-staff buy a ticket for 50 naira, which is used for one hour. The post paid billing system has a 300 naira per month access charge and 54 naira per hour charge, which is deducted from salary monthly.

The cybercafé is doing well, and staff can now browse the Internet from their offices. There are still problems, however. One problem is that when there is no power from PHCN or the university, staff cannot use the cybercafé connection from their offices, while the cybercafé is using its own generator. The cost for staff is high, because registered users pay 300 naira monthly access charge whether used or not, in the addition to charges for actual usage.

Literature Review

A review of the literature reveals that lecturers and students are the most frequent users of the Internet, which they use mostly for research and educational purposes. A study of Internet use by 2,500 teachers from public and private schools in the US was conducted by Becker (1998). The study revealed that 90 percent of teachers had Internet access at school, while 59 percent had access at home. Sixty-eight percent used the Internet to find information for preparing their lessons, and 62 percent used search engines to find information. Findings by Bavakutty and Salih Muhamad (1999) reveal that students, research scholars, and teachers use the Internet for study, research, and teaching at Calicut University. Manmart (2001) found that the Internet is used by academic staff as a tool for teaching preparation,

research, and academic work. Manmart further reveals that the use of Internet and knowledge of its advantage are significantly correlated with the age of the academic staff as well as their knowledge, skills, and experience in using computers and the Internet.

Kumar and Kaur (2006) report on the results of a survey of Internet use, which also provides information about the benefits of Internet vs. print documents. Panda and Sahu (2003) conducted a study of the engineering colleges of Orissa. The study reveals that a majority of the colleges use the Internet to provide online demonstrations. Jagboro (2003) conducted a case study of Internet usage in Nigeria with a particular reference to Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. The study reveals that the respondents use the Internet to access research materials and for email. The study concluded that the use of Internet for academic activities would improve significantly with more access in departments. Igun (2005) examines levels of Internet skill, and how the influence of the Internet on research. The study found that the Internet skills were low and that the Internet had no significant influence because the university does not have a functional and comprehensive Internet and university-wide information system.

In a survey of the role of the Internet on education, innovation and global living standards carried out by Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA) (2001), 74 percent of subjects believed that educating students via a virtual classroom will provide more students with greater opportunities to learn, 87 percent say that the Internet will have a positive effect on improving education, 69 percent say that the Internet will play a sizeable role in improving educational systems so that the children and adults can get the best education regardless of their economic background and geographical location, and 93 percent say that the Internet will be valuable in providing students with greater access to libraries, information and teachers around the world. Overall, the research findings by PSRA affirm that universal access to the Internet would bring about enormous benefits and improvements to the educational systems because of the Internet's unparalleled ability to spread knowledge and disseminate information.

The impact of the Internet on research was the focus of study by Adogbeji and Toyo (2006). The findings of their study revealed that 100 percent of respondents have access to the Internet and they use the cybercafé outside campus. The study also found that the Internet contributed significantly to the ease of research of the academic staff through downloading materials.

Objectives of the Study

The study generally aims to analyze the Internet use by the academic staff at the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. Specific objectives are:

1. Investigate how respondents acquired Internet skills.
2. Assess respondents' experience in the use of Internet.
3. Determine the frequency of Internet use.
4. Determine the amount of the time spent on the Internet.
5. Investigate the most frequently used cybercafé.
6. Investigate reasons for using the Internet
7. Determine Internet services frequently used.
8. Investigate Problems with using the Internet
9. Investigate the impact of Internet on information seeking
10. Assess satisfaction with Internet use.
11. Investigate whether the Internet can replace the library?

Methodology

Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to 200 subjects during a meeting. One hundred twenty completed copies of the questionnaire were returned.

Results

Table 2: Responses by Gender

Gender	No	%
Male	96	80
Female	24	20
Total	120	100

As shown in table 2 above, 96 (80%) of respondents were male, while 24 (20%) were female.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

Age Range	No	%
21-30	12	10
31-40	24	20
41-50	60	50
51 and above	24	20
Total	120	100

Half the respondents are 41—50 years old, while those 31—40 and 51 and above were 24 (20%) each.

Table 4 Internet Skill Acquisition Method

Method	No	%
Self Study/Instruction	66	55
From Colleagues/Friends	36	30
Training from the University	12	10
External Sources	24	20
*Total	138	115

More than half acquired their Internet skill through self study/instruction, while 36 (30%) learned from colleagues/friends. Only 10 (12%) acquired skills from the University.

Table 5: Internet Skill Rating

Rating	No	%
Very High	30	25
High	24	20
Average	42	35
Low	24	20
Total	120	100

More than one third rated their Internet skills as average, while a slightly smaller number rated theirs very high. A further one fifth rated theirs as high and while one quarter rated theirs as low.

Table 6: Internet Use Experience

Years of Experience	No	%
Less than 1 year	24	20
1 year	12	10
1-2 years	24	20
2 years and above	60	50
Total	120	100

Half the respondents have two years or more of experience.

Table 7: Internet Use Frequency

Duration	No	%
Daily	24	20
2-3times a week.	30	25
2-3 times a month	48	40
Once a month	18	15
Total	120	100

The largest portion (40 percent) use the Internet 2-3 time a month, with only 20 percent using the Internet daily.

Table 8: Time Spent on Internet

Time	No	%
Less than 1 hr. a week	30	25
2—4 hrs. a week	54	45
5—6 hrs. a week	12	10
7—9 hrs. a week	12	10
10—20 hrs. a week	12	10
More than 20 hrs a week	----	--
Total	120	100

Nearly half the respondents use the Internet 2-4 hours a week.

Table 9: Most Frequently used Internet Facility Location

Location	No	%
University's cybercafé	36	30
At home	12	10
cybercafé outside the University	72	60
Total	120	100

More than half the respondents use Internet facilities located outside campus, while 30 percent use the Internet facilities (cybercafé) inside the campus. Only 10 percent use Internet facilities at home.

Table 10: Reasons for Using the Internet

Reason(s)	No	%
Research	60	50
Entertainment	----	--
Education	54	45
Communication	36	30
*Total	150	125

Nearly all the respondents use the Internet for research and education. Only 30 percent use it for communication, and none for entertainment.

Table 11: Most Frequently Used Internet Services

Services	No	%
E-Mail	66	55
WWW	72	60
Search Engines	42	35
FTP	6	5
Archive	6	5
List Serve/Discussion Groups	6	5
Bulletin Board Services	12	10
Frequently Asked questions	6	5
Chatting	1	0.83
*Total	223	

Sixty percent of respondents use web resources, while more than one half use e-mail and more than one third search engines.

Table 12: Problems of Internet Use

Problems	No	%
Slow Internet Access Speed	66	55
Longtime to view/download Web Pages	36	30
Difficulty in finding relevant Information	42	35
Privacy problems	--	--
Internet Connectivity always off	6	5
*Total	150	

Problems identified included slow access speed, difficulty finding information, and trouble loading pages.

Table 13: Impact

Impact	No	%
Use of the Library Traditional Library Decreased	48	40
Dependence on the Internet/Electronic Library Increased	30	25
Expedite the research process	48	40
Improve professional competence	60	50
*Total	186	

Half of respondents claim that it has improved their professional competence and 40 percent indicated that it has expedited their research process. Forty percent indicated that it has reduced their use of the traditional (paper based) library.

Table 14: Satisfaction

Satisfaction Level	No	%
Fully satisfied	24	20
Averagely satisfied	18	15
Least satisfied	48	40
No comment	30	25
Total	120	100

Only 20 percent of respondents were fully satisfied with campus Internet services.

Table 15: Can the Internet Replace the Library

Responses	No	%
Yes	18	15
No	102	85
Total	120	100

There is overwhelming agreement that the Internet cannot replace the library.

Discussion and Recommendations

The study found that only 10 percent had received Internet training from the university. The Internet skill of a majority was rated average. Only 20 percent use the Internet daily and only 10 percent spent 10-20 hours a week on the Internet, while a majority spent 2-4 hours a week. A majority of respondents use the Internet facilities outside the university and mainly for research and education. Problems encountered include slow access speed and difficulty in finding relevant information.

The use of the Internet has led to decreased in the use of the traditional library facilities but only 20 percent were fully satisfied with the Internet facilities. A large majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the Internet can never replace the library.

Recommendations

1. The university administration should as a matter of urgency put create programmes and infrastructures to train its staff on ICT with particular reference to the use of Internet facilities.
2. Staff should be encouraged to the Internet facilities on campus, which will justify the large investment
3. Efforts should be made to increase the speed of the Internet access and shorten the time it takes to view and download web pages.

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