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Summer 8-11-2022

## Prospect and Challenges of Electronic Information Resources Usage by Distance Learning Students of Ibadan University

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Salami, Mudasiru and Adedokun, Iseoluwa, "Prospect and Challenges of Electronic Information Resources Usage by Distance Learning Students of Ibadan University" (2022). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 7364.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study investigated the prospect and challenges of Electronic Information Resources (EIR) usage by Distance Learning Students of University of Ibadan. The use of EIR for traditional and distance learning cannot but be looked into. The world is changing at a faster pace and new innovative ways are important in delivering good, quality and sustainable education.

The results of the study show the negative attitudes of students facing many challenges at the Distance Learning Centre towards the usage of Electronic Information Resources (EIR); they also have positive hope towards the prospect of using Electronic Information Resources (EIR) in the six departments sampled. Students complained of not having full access to Electronic Computer at the DLC, University of Ibadan, and advocated for the provision of student cybercafé/ICT Center at the DLC, University of Ibadan. Students also stated that there should be adequate electricity power supply, provision of good Internet Services and Distribution of Personal Laptop Computers for online interactive class [OIC] and Portable Android Tablet [PAT] loaded with e-books and e-journals that can be accessed both Online and Offline to students at affordable price. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire and personal observation. Questionnaire was basically used to collect data on prospect and challenges of Electronic Information Resources (EIR) usage by Distance Learning students of Ibadan University. Only 288 students could be gathered across the six Departments at the faculty of Education, University of Ibadan.

Keywords: Electronic Information Resources, Distance learning, E-library, Computer.

## **INTRODUCTION**

‘Electronic Information Resources otherwise known as Electronic Resources (ERs) is a global platform for information delivery, especially in the teaching and learning environment’ Liasu (2022). Electronic information resources are resources in an electronic format for total satisfaction of users. It includes any hardware or software intended for storage transmission and use of information as well as the digital content files that may be stored, transmitted or used with hardware or software. This definition includes electronic mail, voice systems, local databases, externally accessed databases, internet, CD-ROM, DVD, Video, recorded magnetic media, digital movie or photographic files, or other digitized information. The purpose of Distance Learning Programme is to provide opportunities for the range of students who otherwise may not have the opportunity to attend a conventional University. These sets of students are usually the working class students who may not have enough time to spare for the conventional university programme due to the schedule of their job but are still interested in furthering their education.

The first university in Nigeria – The University of Ibadan was established in 1948 and it was started as a college of the University of London to provide opportunity for Nigerians to have access to university education. The university authority sought for the approval for the External Studies Programme from the National University Commission (NUC) on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1986 and was subsequently approved on self-financing. In order to keep pace with global development, the name of the centre was changed from Centre for External Studies to Distance Learning Centre in 2002. Since Inception, the Centre has graduated 9,287 students.

Apart from the manual books and journals; Kenneth Dike Library, the main library of the University of Ibadan Library System, with a collection of over a million, provides access to campus printed collections and electronic resources for the regular and the distance learning students. Some of the resources include Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), CD-ROM information database, Online books and Journals, Internet Archives, Information Porters Reference Materials, using all these facilities, the Distance Learning Students of the University of Ibadan enjoy the rich learning materials that are unequal in the country. The services of this Library provide full support for distance learners away from the campus especially through the internet facilities.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Availability of electronic information resources refers to readily accessible to information in electronic format with little or no stress to the library user. Availability of electronic information resources in the library is not just enough, users must know of their existence to be able to use them effectively; and to put to use what is available, users must possess requisite skills that will enable them to exploit these resources and services. Availability of electronic information sources relates to the provision for and inclusion of the resources in the collection of the libraries at the disposal of users in academic institutions. Electronic resources provide access to authoritative, reliable, accurate and timely access to information (Ternenge, 2019). Also, electronic resources reduce pressure on academic libraries for physical storage space for books and journals and provide unlimited access to users (Lefuna, 2017). “The use of electronic resources for distance learning programme involves provision for and deployment of e-resources in conducting problem-solving research by the students and other users of the library. This also reflects how readily accessible electronic resources are presented to the members of the university community for the purpose of learning, teaching and research. Availability at any time of the day; hyperlinks to other resources; huge information reservoirs; quick information; various search options; easy citations; ease in uploading and updating; ease

in storage and dissemination; flexibility; time, space and cost are not major hurdles; ease of archiving are also importance of information resources as noted by (Tekale and Dalve 2012).

Research is an important aspect of the learning process that is mandatory for every student in the Nigerian higher education system (Anyim, 2020)

‘Recently, online databases are used extensively in every facet of human life. This includes its use in academic institutions where they are extensively used to support core institutions activities which are academic, research and consultancy. It is one thing for an academic institution to have online databases (or to subscribe to online databases) but it is another thing to ensure that staff and students in a particular institution can easily and conveniently access those online databases. For academic institutions to fully benefit from their subscriptions to online databases they should have sound and capable ICT infrastructures in place that can facilitate access and use of online databases. ICT infrastructures are a must in the fulfillment of training, research and consultancy for the higher learning institutions’ (Victor 2019).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a technological implication that empowers procedures identified with planning, sparing activity and going of data, mutually with the interrelated strategies, organization, and execution (Lekopanye, 2015). ICT grants the following, sparing, preparing, assembling and conveying of information. It incorporates new specialized apparatuses like workstations, copied, scaled-down electronic devices and other media transmission devices and so on. Obsolete mechanical devices, similar to a recording framework for putting away documents and archives, manual highlight instruments, printing and care drawings, are additionally coordinated into "ICT." (Aleke, et al., 2011; Imran and Gregor 2005; Juma et al., 2016; Van et al., 2016). ICT is regarded as a technology on the global level that allows us to communicate effectively and efficiently and to help us better deal with data.” (Nassar, 2019).

“Electronic information resources are regarded as important tools for providing library services to users especially in the digital age. Electronic information resources still need to be selected, acquired, described and effectively managed for utmost utilization by the growing number of library users. Therefore, EIRs are referred to as any source of information encoded and made available for access directly or remotely through the use of computer and other electronic devices accessed via the internet and the CD ROM resources since they too can be accessed online. In words of Manjunath (2013), EIRs (Electronic Information Resources) means “an electronic product that delivers a collection of data, be it text, numerical, graphical or time based as a commercially available resource that has been published with a sole aim to be marketed and for information dissemination. “However, the management of electronic information resources raises a new set of issues for libraries particularly in developing country

like Nigeria, but these issues can still fit within the classical theoretical framework of collection development and management. EIRs still need to be selected, acquired, processed or catalogued, preserved and made available for use by the user community, but most importantly in a radically different way from traditional print materials. The type of collection management issues raised by EIRs will of course, vary between libraries in Nigeria depending on their individual missions. These issues can only be addressed effectively if examine from the theoretical framework perspective.” (Auwal, 2021).

“Making electronic information resources and services available for use by students and other users are very vital despite all these challenges, access to electronic information resources such as databases, electronic journal (e-journal), electronic book (e- book) alerting services, special collections, CD-ROM, online reference tools needs to be made accessible by libraries for these, improves the quality of teaching and research (Lee, 2008). Electronic information resources (EIRs) is very vital to library users. They come in different formats as a result of the fast growth of Information Communication Technology (ICT). Students, researchers and staff members of institutions supports their teaching, learning and research programs by the effective utilization of EIRs. EIRs consist of various non-print and non-paper based materials which are used to retrieve and disseminate information. These resources include the compact disk, Read Only Memory (CD-ROM), online Databases, digital versatile disc (DVD), internet/www and virtual collections contained on the web.” (Wagwu, 2019).

Electronic resources can be accessed through remote networks from information providers or locally mounted by a consortium or one of its member libraries. According to IFLA/FAIFE (2007) these are “materials that are computer controlled, including materials that required the use of a peripheral (a CD ROM player) attached to a computer; the items may or may not be used in the interactive mode.” Electronic resources are defined as being publicly available information resources, which can be accessed through a personal computer. These include commercially produced resources such as bibliographic databases accessed online or through CD-ROM, electronic journals, electronic books as well as resources that are freely available through the Internet especially to higher education institutions or to the public in general. University libraries provides electronic access to a wide variety of resources to the user community, ranging from e-books, e-journals, online database, and CD-ROM databases to other computer –based electronic networks, among other (Yahaya, 2018).

### **Population**

The study was conducted using sample of Two hundred and eighty eight (288) students of Distance Learning Student of The University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

## Findings

### RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What are the different types of electronic information resources available in DLC?

**TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION TABLE OF AVAILABILITY OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES (EIR) LIBRARY AT DLC**

AVAILABILITY OF EIR IN LIBRARY AT DLC			
S/N		Frequency	Percent (%)
1	NOT AVAILABLE	202	70.1
2	NO RESPONSE	4	1.4
3	AVAILABLE	82	28.5
	Total	288	100.0

Table 1 above shows that 202 (70.1%) of the respondents said that EIR is not available at the library while 82 (28.5%) said that EIR is available in the library.

**TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION TABLE OF AVAILABILITY OF CAFÉ AT DLC**

AVAILABILITY OF CAFE AT DLC			
S/N		Frequency	Percent (%)
1	NOT AVAILABLE	163	56.6
2	NO RESPONSE	1	0.3
3	AVAILABLE	124	43.1
	Total	288	100.0

Table 2 above shows that 163 (56.6%) of the respondents said that CAFÉ is not available while 124 (43.1%) said CAFÉ is available.

**TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION TABLE OF AVAILABILITY OF COMPUTER CENTRE AT DLC**

AVAILABILITY OF COMPUTER CENTRE IN DLC			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
1	NOT AVAILABLE	54	18.8
2	NO RESPONSE	3	1.0
3	AVAILABLE	231	80.2
	Total	288	100.0

Table 3 above shows that 231 (80.2%) of the respondents said that computer centre were available within DLC while 54 (18.7%) said it is not available

**TABLE 4: DISTRIBUTION TABLE OF EIR AVAILABLE IN LIBRARY AT DLC**

EIR AVAILABLE IN DLC THIS LIBRARY			
		Frequency	Percent (%)
1	COMPACT DISC ROM	3	1.0
2	COMPUTER	152	52.8
3	ELECTRONIC INFORMATION PORTALS	1	3
4	ELECTRONIC JOURNALS	1	.3
5	ELECTRONIC BOOKS	1	.3
6	INTERNET FACILITIES	8	2.8
7	NO RESPONSE	122	42.4

	Total	288	100.0
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**TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION TABLE OF EIR ELSEWHERE**

AVAILABILTY OF EIR ELSEWHERE			
S/N		Frequency	Percent (%)
1	NOT AVILABLE	43	14.9
2	NO REPONSE	13	4.5
3	AVAILABLE	232	80.6
	Total	288	100.0

Table 5 above shows that 152 (52.8%) of the respondents said that computer were available at DLC; 8 (2.8%) said internet facilities were available; 1 (0.3%) said that electronic information portals, electronic journals and electronic books were available respectively while 122 (42.4%) gave no responses. Table 5 shows that 232 (80.6%) said that EIR were available elsewhere while 43 (14.9%) said EIR were not available elsewhere.

**TABLE 6: DISTRIBUTION TABLE OF PLACES WHERE EIR IS AVAILABLE**

EIR PLACES WHERE IT IS AVAILABLE
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S/N		Frequency	Percent (%)
1	ADMISSION OFFICE	6	2.1
2	CYBER CAFÉ	35	12.2
3	DLC COMPUTER ROOM	18	6.3
4	FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT	4	1.4
5	KENNETH DIKE LIB. CAFÉ	62	21.5
6	NO RESPONSE	92	31.9
7	OFF CAMPUS	27	9.4
8	STUDENT UNION BUSARY	17	5.9
9	U.I. MOSQUE CAFÉ	6	2.1
10	U.I. ICT CENTER	21	7.3
	Total	288	100.0

Table 6 above shows that 92 (31.9%) did not give any response about where EIR is available; 62(21.5%) said it EIR is available at Kenneth Dike Library Café; 35 (12.2%) said EIR is available at Cyber Café; 27 (9.4%) said EIR were available off campus; 21(7.3%) said that EIR is available at UI ICT Centre; 18 (6.3%) said that EIR was available at DLC Computer room; 17 (5.9%) said that EIR was available; 6 (2.1%) said that EIR was available at Admission Office and UI Mosque Café respectively while 4 (1.4%) said that EIR was available at Financial department.

**TABLE 7: DISTRIBUTION TABLE OF RESPONDENTS ACCESS TO AVAILABLE EIR**

RESPONDENT'S ACCESS TO EIR			
S/N		Frequency	Percent (%)
1	NO ACCESS	104	36.1
2	NO RESPONSE	24	8.3
3	HAVE ACCESS	160	55.6
	Total	288	100.0

Table 7 above shows that 160 (55.6%) said they had access to available EIR while 104 (36.1%) said they had no access to available EIR.

## RESEARCH QUESTION 2

**What is the level of computer knowledge of Distance Learners?**

**TABLE 8: DISTRIBUTION TABLE SHOWING THE LEVEL OF COMPUTER LITERACY OF RESPONDENTS IN DLC**

RESPONDENT'S COMPUTER LITERACY			
NO		Frequency	Percent (%)
1	ILLITERATE	14	4.9
2	NO RESPONSE	13	4.5
3	COMPUTER LITERATE	261	90.6
	Total	288	100.0

Table 9 above shows that 261 (90.6%) that they were computer literate while 14 (4.9%) were not computer literate.

**TABLE 9: DISTRIBUTION TABLE OF RESPONDENTS WHO UNDERGO COMPUTER TRAINING IN DLC**

RESPONDENT'S COMPUTER TRAINING				
S/N		Frequency	Percent (%)	
1	NOT UNDERGO TRAINING	50	17.4	
2	NO RESPONSE	2	0.7	
3	UNDERGO TRAINING	236	81.9	
	Total	288	100	

Table 9 above shows that 236 (81.9%) of the respondents said that they had undergone training while 50 (17.4%) did not undergo training.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Library**

The finding of this study as it could be seen from the distribution table 1 number 1, 2 and 3 with values of 70.1%, 1.4% and 28.5% shows that there is no a particular library for distance learning students at distance learning centre, 1.4% percent of the students that were investigated did not respond to the question, 28.5 percent responded to the availability of library while 70.1 percent responded that there is no library but through proper observation by the researcher who conducted the research, he was able to found out that there was no library at the centre for student to read.

### **Cyber cafe**

The finding of this study could be seen from the distribution table 2 number 1, 2 and 3 with the percentage of 56.6, .3 and 43.1 shows that there is no cyber cafe for distance learning student at the distance learning centre 56.6 percent of the respondents responded to not available, .3 did not respond while 43.1 responded to available, but through proper observation by the researcher he was able to detected that there was no cyber cafe at all at DLC.

### **Computer centre**

The finding of this study could be seen from the distribution table 3, number 1, 2 and 3 above with the percentage of 18.8, 1.0 and 80.2, 18.8 responded to not available, 1.0 did not respond while 80.2 percent responded to availability, while from personal observation by the researcher he was able to found that there was a computer centre at the distance learning centre.

The finding of this study could be seen from the distribution table 4 showing the electronic information resources available at the distance learning centre with item number 1, 2, 3,4,5,6 and 7 with the values of Compact Disc ROM 1.0%, Electronic Computer 52.8%, Electronic Information Portals .3%, Electronic Journals .3%, Electronic Books .3%, Internet Facilities 2.8% and no response 42.4%, through the proper investigation the available electronic information resources are electronic computer, CD-ROM, Electronic information portals and internet facilities.

### **Availability of EIR elsewhere**

The finding of this study could be seen from the distribution table 5 showing the availability of electronic information resources elsewhere with number 1, 2 and 4 with the values of 14.9%,

4.5% and 80.6%, 14.9% responded to not available, 4.5% did not respond while 80.6% responded to availability of Electronic information Resources elsewhere.

### **Places where EIR can be found**

It could be seen from table 6 showing the places where electronic information resources can be found apart from distance learning centre with item number 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 with the value of 2.1%, 12.2%, 6.3%, 1.4%, 21.5%, 31.9%, 9.4%, 5.9%, 2.1%, 7.3% about 2.1% made mention of Admission office, 12.2% mentioned of cyber cafe, 6.3% DLC computer, 1.4% DLC financial department, 21.5% cyber café at Kenneth dike library, 31.9% did not respond 9.2% off campus, 5.9% SUB 2.1% cafe at U.I. Mosque, 7.3% ICT center U.I.

### **Access to those EIR available**

Study from the table 7 shows the access to electronic information resources elsewhere with number 1, 2 and 3 having the value of 36.1%, 8.3%, 55.6% about 36.1% have no access to and many of the were those who made mention of those administrative offices, 8.3% did not respond, 55.6% are those who have access to EIR in such places like cafe at the Kenneth dike library, U.I. ICT center, cafe at the U.I. mosque, Students Union Bursary, cyber café off campus.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

### **Computer knowledge**

Study from the distribution table 8 shows the computer literacy with number 1,2and 3 with the value of 4.9%, 4.5%, 90.6% about 4.9% percent are computer illiterate 4.5% did not respond to the question while 90.6% are computer literate

### **Computer training**

Study from distribution table 9 presents data on respondents undergo the computer training with number 1, 2 and 3 with the value of 17.4%, .7% and 81.1%. 17.4 % of distance learning student did not undergo any computer training, .7% did not respond and 81.9% receiving training.

## **CONCLUSION**

The research reveals the availability of computer centre with functional electronic computers, CD-ROM, electronic information portals and internet facilities. The students confirmed that they have access to electronic information resources (EIR) at Kenneth Dike library, U.I ICT centre, café within the university campus. The distance learning centre (DLC) lack a standard library and cybercafe for the use of the distance learning students. It was also established that a

great number of the distance learning students have computer knowledge and have undergone one form or the other computer training.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

DLC should make all other electronic Information Recourses available like e-books, e-journals, Library Database and e-Archives at electronic Library which will be located at the centre for students. This will solve the problem of infrastructures and it will enhance the students learning environment to be able to meet up with other distance learning students across the globe.

Distance Learning Center Organizes Training for those students who are Computer illiterates for optimum utilization of those EIR available at the Distance Learning Centre.

Use of electronic Boards, projectors should also be encouraged and Electronic Computer for class interaction between the teachers and students of various educational levels should also be encouraged by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Distance Learning Centre should engage in distribution of laptop computers by selling them to those students to pay in installment, this will improve their research works, Assignments and taking the lecture note, it will also assist them to search the internet at their own pace because there will be no need to go to any cybercafé in their remote area once they are connected to the internet.

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