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Isaac Echezonam Anyira
Western Delta University Library, anyiraisaac@yahoo.com

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Isaac Echezonam Anyira
Head, Technical Services
Western Delta University Library
Oghara, Delta State, Nigeria

Introduction

Inadequacy of current and relevant information for teaching, learning and research had been the bane of university education in Nigeria (Okonofua, 2008). Efforts had also been made to improve the situation through interlibrary loan and document delivery services, but the challenges persisted (Adika,2003). It was in this light that the Internet was introduced into the educational system to bridge the prevailing information gap (Okonofua, 2008). The Internet began in 1969 as ARPANet (Advanced Research Project Agency Network) by theUS Department of Defense to share military intelligence and research with university sources. The Internet has since the 1990s become a widely-used civilian tool for communication, research, entertainment, education, advertisement, etc. (Hinson, 2006). The Internet has become integral part of university education as it plays an undisputable role in meeting information and communication needs of staff and students.

The Internet has made it possible for scholars at different locations on the globe to exchange ideas on various fields of study and also allows students and lecturers to communicate both within and across international borders (Luambano and Nawe, 2004). The history of Internet accessibility and use in Nigeria started in 1991 when a few pioneering groups began to offer limited e-mail services (Eshekels Associates, 2001). In July 1995, the regional information network for Africa (RINAF) commenced Internet services at the Computer Science Department of Yaba College of technology, and through the Nigerian postal service (NIPOST), in a collaborative effort with Rose Clayton Nigeria Limited (Adomi, 2005). The Internet services at that time included email, telnet, and gopher. Internet users had to pay for both access and usage for sending and receiving e-mail messages, with the billing system being based on the length of message being sent. Most of the Internet service providers (ISPs) then operated a store-forward messaging system using unix-to-unix copy protocol (UUCP) (Adomi, 2005).

The world wide web (WWW) became available in Nigeria in 1996, while full Internet services became available in 1998, and number of NCC (Nigerian Communications Commission) licensed Internet service Providers rose to over 150 by 2001 (Adomi, 2005). With an estimated total population of over 140

million people (National Population Commission, 2006), Nigeria is the most populated black nation in the world, with Internet hosts as low as 1,094 (Adomi, 2005). In late 2003, Nigeria had a total of 750,000 Internet users and 60 users per 10,000 inhabitants representing 0.5 percent of the population (ITU, 2004). Nigeria had a total of 853,000 PC's and 0.71 pc's per 100 inhabitants as at 2003 (ITU, 2004). As a matter of fact, Adomi (2003) stated that the first cyber café in Delta State was set up in 1999, and by 2001, there were nine (9) of them and by 2003, there were 18 of them. This number has increased tremendously. The history of the Internet has long been linked to university education. This is because the adoption of the Internet in university system has intensified access to information and communication by providing un-reserved access to e-mail messages, web boards, online services, e-publication and so on.

Western Delta University Oghara (which is a private University in Delta State) was approved by the federal government in 2007. The university however, did not admit students until 2008. The institution currently has 564 students drawn from the colleges of Natural and applied sciences and social and management sciences. There are 57 academic staff and 85 non-academic staff in the university (WDU staff payroll, 2010; WDU Student List, 2010).

Internet services became available in the university in 2009. Though the service was slow and unreliable, it was also restricted to the administrative division of the institution until January, 2010, when the service improved slightly and became available to staff who have personal laptops and were given access codes by the ICT department. This study therefore, seeks to investigate the accessibility and use of Internet services in the university.

Literature Review

Staff and students of African Universities often lament the lack of current materials held in university libraries, and in consequence, efforts are continually made to improve the situation (Adika, 2003). Measures put in place to solve the prevailing problem include the introduction of inter-library loan and document delivery services. However, Adika (2003) noted that these efforts could not solve the problem of lack of access to current information for all faculty and students. As a result, many universities began to provide Internet access to their staff and students to foster educational activities of research, instruction and literature searching and to serve as a source of information to meet other needs (Hannah, 1998).

According to Nwagwu et al (2009) the Internet serves as a source of information for literature review, authors' search, subject search, and research. In another instance, Adeogun (2003) reported that the convergence of computers and telecommunications technologies has made possible the activities which were considered impossible in the past. Those activities include information retrieval and transfer which were hampered by time and distance.

With wider Internet connectivity, universities in developing countries are now beginning to tap the many opportunities offered by today's information societies by providing the platform to locate, download, and share world knowledge and learning materials (INAS, 2003).

The Internet has emerged as an important component in academic institutions as it plays a pivotal role in meeting information and communication needs of institutions (Luambano & Nawe, 2004). According to them, the Internet makes it possible to access a wide range of information that is up-to-date. The Net enables scholars and academic institutions to disseminate information to a wider audience through hosting websites and search facilities (Luambano & Nawe, 2004). Furthermore, students and lecturers can communicate via the Internet irrespective of geographical boundaries. Distant learning has also been

facilitated by the Internet (Luambano & Nawe, 2004).

Similarly, Rehman and Ramzy (2004) opined that the Internet has established a place in the personal and professional lives of researchers and scholars through their daily use of the Net for serious work and personal communication. Owing to this, Lazinger et al (1997) revealed that the Internet has transformed information access, use, exchange and application for university academics and other professionals.

It was also reported that overwhelming majority of faculty members use Internet resources frequently (Ciolek, 1999). Even Luambano & Nawe, (2004) pointed out that the installation of the Internet at the University of Dar es Salaam changed the learning environment by facilitating access to a wide range of journal databases in various academic disciplines. It provides them with full-text journal articles, abstracting and indexing services, scholarly literature etc. in a study conducted by Ojedokun and Owolabi (2003), it was found that lecturers perceive the Internet to be useful for research and teaching than the university library.

Moreover, libraries which have been hard pressed to meet the rising cost of printed journals, found their burdens eased somewhat by cheaper access to a vast range of electronic journals accessible on the Internet (Lund, 1998). With the Internet, academic researchers and students can obtain information which previously would have required trip to a specialist library (Lund, 1998). Furthermore, Lund (1998) observed that since the introduction of the Internet, there has been a steady growth of online courses and the advent of “virtual University”, which is a phenomenon that is transforming the whole concept of distance education. Specifically, Adomi et al (2004) posited that the Internet is very important to university students in Nigeria because it enables them to have access to timely, accurate and relevant information.

However, Adomi et al (2004) stated that if Nigerian universities are unable to adopt and utilize the Internet as teaching and research resource, that there is the danger that the digital divide between the developed and developing countries will grow even wider. But with Internet resources available and accessible, university students and faculty can obtain information which the library cannot provide from their shelves (Adomi et al, 2004). Similarly, Yumba (1997) observed that the Internet provides lecturers with access to colleagues through e-mail, powerful search facilities (engines), access to large and growing number of online journal and electronic databases on various subjects. In addition, Chan and Fu (2009) noted that Internet searching helps university students to boost their intellectual development and job preparation.

Research Questions

This study focused on the accessibility and use of Internet services in Western Delta University Oghara. The research questions are:

1. To what extent is the Internet accessible to the staff and students of the university?
2. To what extent does the point of Internet access influence its use?
3. What factors motivate the use of the Internet in the university?
4. What is the Internet used for in the university?

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to investigate the accessibility and use of Internet services in Western Delta University Oghara. The specific objectives are:

1. To discover how accessible the Internet is in Western Delta University Oghara.
2. To determine how point of Internet access can influence its usage.
3. To examine the factors that motivate Internet use.
4. To find out what the Internet is used for by the staff and students of the university.

Methodology

The survey approach was used in this study. The university consists of 564 students, 57 academic staff, and 85 non-academic staff. This figure excludes the foundation programme students. 50 percent was chosen with a random selection from each category. That is a total of 354 respondents consisting of 282 students, 29 academic staff, and 43 non-academic staff. Data were collected with the questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by an extensive review of literature and with assistance of 5 academic staff to identify the study's variables of Internet accessibility and use. Out of the 354 questionnaires distributed, only 240 were returned. That is, 68% return. Data were analyzed using frequency count and percentage.

Data Analysis

Data having been collected through the use of the questionnaire were analyzed using tabulated frequency count and percentage, and the findings were presented by use of descriptive statistics.

Table 1: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
female	90	37.5
male	150	62.5
Total	240	100%

From table 1, it could be observed that 150 (62.5%) of the respondents are male while 90 (37.5%) are female.

Table 2: Respondents designation

Designation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	160	66.7
Academic staff	30	12.5
Non-academic staff	50	20.8
Total	240	100%

Data analysis in table 2, showed that 160 (66.7%) of the respondents are students, 50 (20.8%) are non-academic staff, and 30 (12.5%) of them are academic staff. This means that there were more student respondents, followed by non-academic staff, and then the academic staff which has the lowest number of respondents.

Table 3: time spent in the university

Months/years spent	Frequency	Percentage
1-11 months	90	37.5
1 year	10	4.1
2 years	40	16.7

0ver 2 years	100	41.7
Total	240	100%

Table 3 revealed that 100 (41.7%) of the respondents have spent over 2 years in the university, while 90 (37.5%) of them had spent between 1 and 11 months, but 40 (16.7%) had spent 2 years, and 10 (4.1%) had spent 1 year in the institution. From table 3, it was discovered that majority of the respondents have spent over 2 years in the institution.

Table 4: number of times of Internet use since coming to the university

Number of times	Frequency	Percentage
20 times and more	130	54.1
15-19 times	55	23
10-14 times	40	16.6
5-9 times	10	4.1
1-4 times	5	2
0 times	-	-
Total	240	100%

Table 4 showed that 130 (54.1%) of the respondents have used the Internet either 20 times or more since they came to the university, 55 (23%) of them have used the Internet between 15-19 times, 40 (16.6%) of them have used the Internet between 10-14 times, 10 (4.1%) of them have used the Internet between 5-9 times, 5 (2%) of them have used the Internet between 1-4 times,. Thus, majority of the respondents have access over 10 times since coming to the university.

Table 5: how accessible is the Internet

Months/years spent	Frequency	Percentage
Very accessible	30	12.5
Slightly accessible	100	41.7
Not accessible	100	41.7
Not accessible at all	10	4.1
undecided	-	-
Total	240	100%

Table 5 contains analyzed data on respondents' access to the Internet. While 100 (41.7%) of the respondents said that the Internet is slightly accessible to them, another 100 (41.7%) of them said that the Internet is not accessible to them. However, 30 (12.5%) of the respondents agreed that the Internet is very accessible to them, but 10 (4.1%) of them said that it is not accessible at all. There is an equilibrium of the respondents who said that they have slight access to the Internet and those that said that they do not have access to the Internet. However, only a minority said that they do not have access to the Internet at all.

Table 6: point of Internet access

Point of access	Frequency	Percentage
Personal laptop	200	83.3
Cybercafé	220	91.7
University's Internet facility	10	4.1
Friends/ colleagues laptops	50	20.8

The data in table 6 shows that 220 (91.7%) of the respondents make

use of the Internet in cyber cafés, but 200 (83.3%) of them access the Internet through personal laptops. 50 (20.8%) of them however, access the Internet through their friends/ colleagues laptops, while 10 (4.1%) of the respondents access the Internet through the university's Internet facility. It becomes clear at this point that majority of the respondents access the Internet in cybercafés or through personal laptops. Only 4.1% of the respondents make use of the university Internet facility.

Table 7 effect of point of access on frequency of usage

Point of access influences frequency of usage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	100	41.6
Agree	98	41
Undecided	19	8
Disagree	20	8.3
Strongly Disagree	3	1.2
Total	240	100%

Table 7 above shows that 100 (41.6%) of the respondents strongly agree that the point of access influences Internet usage, while 98 (41%) of them also agree. However, 19 (8%) were undecided, but 20 (8.3%) disagreed. 3 (1.2%) strongly disagreed. There is the likelihood that those who have Internet access through their personal laptops or at home and offices would use the Internet more frequently than those who access the Internet via cyber cafés at long distances.

Table 8: motivations of Internet use

Motivation	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate materials in the library	228	95
Nearness to cyber café	200	83.3
The Internet contains more information	200	83.3
The Internet is more convenient to use	205	85.4
Availability of Internet in the university	15	6.2
Free access to the Internet	20	8.3

Table 8 shows that 228 (95%) of the respondents use the Internet due to inadequacy of library materials, 205 (85.4%) of them use the Internet because it is more convenient to use, but 200 (83.3%) of them use the Internet because there are cyber cafés around, and because the Internet contains more information accordingly. However, 20 (8.3%) of them use it because they have free access to the Internet, while 15 (8.3%) of them were motivated by the availability of Internet facility in the university. This means that majority of Internet users were motivated by inadequacy of library materials compared to the Internet and also because the Internet is more convenient to use. Thus Internet use was not motivated by the availability of Internet facility in the university, but absence of important materials in the university library's collection, as well as closeness of cybercafé where users may walk to without paying additional transport fare.

Table 9: what the Internet is used for

Reason for Internet use	Frequency	Percentage
Send and receive mail	198	82.5
Browse for information to write assignments	200	83.3
For information to supplement course materials	204	85

To gather information for literature review	130	54.1
To publish articles	140	58.3
For current awareness/ update knowledge	90	37.5
To register courses and enroll for exams	200	83.3

Table 9 shows that 204 (85%) of the respondents use the Internet to obtain information to supplement their course materials, 200 (83.3%) of them use it browse for information to write assignments, and to register courses and enroll for exams, 198 (82.5%) of the respondents use it to send and receive electronic messages, 140 (58.3%) of them use it to publish articles, 130 (54.1%) of them use it to gather for information for literature review, while 90 (37.5%) of them se it to up-date their knowledge or for current awareness.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is limited Internet access in the university. Majority of the staff and students do not have access to Internet facilities as a result of ineffectiveness of the university's Internet infrastructure and the lack of distribution of the limited services being offered.

Majority of staff and students access the Internet via cyber cafés and personal laptops of which they have to pay for access. Only a handful of them use the Internet through the university facility. The implication of this is that majority of them who do not have Internet access through personal laptops go to the cyber café occasionally and only when the need is severe. Thus, the point of access influences the frequency of Internet usage.

Majority of staff and students use the Internet because the library lacks adequate materials. Thus Internet users are motivated by the adequacy of information on the Internet and the convenience that Internet usage offers. Internet usage is not motivated by the availability of Internet facility in the university. Staff and students use the Internet to gather information to supplement course materials and write their assignments. Majority of the students use the Internet to enroll for online examinations, and staff use it for distant education. Most staff also use the Internet to publish research papers and also to gather materials for literature review.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, a number of issues have to be urgently addressed so that staff and students world avail themselves of the benefits accruing from Internet use. To start with, the university library and the ICT Laboratory should be provided with Internet facilities in order to increase staff and students level of Internet access. Thereafter, staff offices and lecture halls should be linked so as to ensure full Internet access in the university. The computers to be provided should be recent models and the telecommunication facilities should be the high-speed models. More bandwidths should be sought so as to provide faster access that will save much of the users' time and be a source of motivation to users. A maintenance programme should be put in place in preparation for regular maintenance, up-grading and repairs. Adequate security measures should also be put in place to ensure that only authorized users have access to the services. Efforts should also be made to prevent misuse, attacks and theft of facilities. Staff and student should also be provided with opportunities of formal training to acquire skills on effective Internet use.

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