

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)

Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

---

11-2011

## Universal Bibliographic Control of Publications in Nigeria: The Journey So Far

Anthony Agena Igbashal

*University of Agriculture Makurdi, Nigeria, igbash@yahoo.com*

Jessica Aheman Agoh

*The Library, University of Agriculture Makurdi, Nigeria*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

Agena Igbashal, Anthony and Aheman Agoh, Jessica, "Universal Bibliographic Control of Publications in Nigeria: The Journey So Far" (2011). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 650.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/650>

<http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/>

## ***Library Philosophy and Practice 2011***

ISSN 1522-0222

# Universal Bibliographic Control of Publications in Nigeria: The Journey So Far

[Anthony Agena Igbashal](#)

The Library  
University of Agriculture  
Makurdi, Nigeria

Jessica Aheman Agoh  
The Library, University of Agriculture  
Makurdi, Nigeria

## Introduction

Accessibility and use of written, printed and published records have become more imperative than ever before. It is natural, under normal circumstances that librarians should be inclined to suppose that greater orderliness in the production of bibliographic services would meet the demands of readers especially researchers. This calls for a pattern of effective recording and arrangement which result from systematic listing of the records of human communication. Researches on bibliographic control are essentially descriptive. They involve compilation of a defined set of materials (books, manuscripts, maps, audio-visual materials, serial, etc) so that they may be described, analyzed, classified or codified. Individuals, institutions, nations, and international bodies have made several attempts and great efforts to list all that is written on the face of the earth. Associations, nations and international organizations have held conferences to explore means of effective bibliographic control. According to Linder (1959:105) "from about the middle of the 19th century to the time of the world war 1, there was a strong resurgence of interest in universal bibliography the universal catalogue or international bibliography". After the world war 2 (1939-1945), Nigeria has made some concerted efforts towards this direction which will be discussed here.

## Progress Made in Nigerian Bibliographic Control

Harris (1959) was the first to make an attempt at compiling a list of those works which give information about Nigeria. The book was last published in 1969 in its fifth edition. The list has 83 pages with index. Conover (1959) published the first attempt to compile a bibliography of Nigerian constitutional development since 1821. This bibliography has 1204 entries and an author index.

Dipeolu (1966) has another bibliography with 130 annotated bibliographical entries. The study is classified by subject with a preceding general section. It also has published literary catalogues and general and special bibliographies on Africa as a

whole.

The same year Lockwood (1966) published *A Guide to Nigerian Official Publications*. This is the most substantial work of its kind, and covers publications issued by the Nigerian government from the establishment of the British Colonial Administration in Nigeria in 1861-1865 and the amalgamation of Nigeria North and South Protectorates in 1914. The second part of this guide covers publications of the Federal and Regional Nigerian governments from 1944-1965 and the Southern Cameroon governments. Besides these, were the British documents relating to Nigeria and the British Cameroon. The guide also contains documents produced by the League of Nations and the United Nations on the British Cameroon. It has 2451 entries and there is an index mainly to subjects at the end of the bibliography.

Ogunshye (1969) also explores the problem of bibliographic services in Nigeria, noting the lack of any comprehensive general retrospective bibliography. She also notes the lack of depository provision, lack of coordinated bibliographic activities, and government's apathy towards libraries.

Ita (1971) compiled the first comprehensive work covering anthropological, archaeological, linguistic, and relevant historical and sociological writings on Nigeria. It is divided into two parts: the first part deals with Nigeria in general while the second part concentrates on materials on various ethnic groups. The bibliography has 5,411 entries comprising books, pamphlets, and periodical articles. It also has indexes.

Aguolu (1973) was the first to compile a comprehensive general bibliography in the humanities and the social sciences. It is a pioneering individual effort worth commendable, to provide Nigeria with such a comprehensive and substantial retrospective bibliography from the turn of the twentieth century to 1971. The author has taken time to select publications without which repetitions especially in newspapers and magazine publications will not be impossible. According to Aguolu, the comprehensiveness is in its representation of items on books, periodical articles, theses and dissertations, pamphlets, official publications, conference papers and directories. Some materials on Agricultural economics are also included as they are related to economics in particular. Arrangement shows two main sections: 1 African, II Nigeria. Each section is subdivided into two main parts: Reference and Subject. These also have subdivisions. The bibliography has over 6,000 entries. Sources consulted for its compilation are listed towards the end of the work. It also has an author index.

Stanley (1975:193) appears to have continued from where Lockwood left when she published her bibliography that follows Nigerian constitutional development, covering the publications of the Nigeria's central government, the four regional governments (January 1966 –May, 1967), and the twelve state governments (June 1967-December, 1973). It has 2,660 entries with many bibliographical details including an author name index.

The most effective and the most comprehensive bibliographic control for Nigerian publication came about with the enactment of Publication Ordinance of 1950. The aftermath was the emergence of Nigerian Publications: 1950 -1952 (1953). It was being compiled by the University of Ibadan library and published periodically with annual cumulative by the Ibadan University Press from 1953 to June 1970. The book here meant "every part of division of book, newspapers, magazine, review, gazette, pamphlet, and sheet of letter press, sheet of music, map, plan chart or table, separately published". The Eastern Nigeria Publications Law of 1955 and the Western Nigeria publications Law of 1957 both specify that two copies of every published book be deposited at the University of Ibadan. While the Eastern Nigeria Publications Law differs by four copies that of the Western Nigeria stipulates two copies to be deposited at each of the Eastern and Western premier offices respectively. Since the Northern Nigeria Publications Law of 1964 repealed the 1950 Publications Ordinance but did not specify any central depository place

except the Kashim Ibrahim Library at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaira for the Northern States, the Ibadan University Library continued to compile and publish the Nigerian publications until June 1970 when it was superseded by National Library Decree 29 which was enacted in 1970 and came into force on the 1st June 1973 (1970) and it established a body to be known as the National Library Board. Two of the major functions of the Board were to make recommendations and to give advice on library development or organization to any department authority and to be responsible for the development of the National Bibliography of Nigeria and National Bibliographic Services.

According to Stanley (1975) this is the most comprehensive single National Bibliography of Nigeria. The bibliography now lists materials received under the decree of 1970 mainly in English and vernacular languages. It made the National Library of Nigeria, Lagos (now Abuja) the new depository centre which now compiles and publishes the bibliography. Since 1976, it has been arranged in Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) order instead of alphabetically by author.

## A Review of Research on Bibliographic Control in Nigeria

Amosu (1965) has the first comprehensive record of theses and dissertations researched on Nigeria and by Nigerians at home and abroad. According to Aguolu (1973) the bibliography has 489 numbered entries classified by subject with author and subject indexes.

Odeinde (1969) compiled a list of theses and dissertations, 1964-68. Although the bibliography is short (only thirteen pages), it was a good supplement to Amosu's list described above. It is classified by subject. Entries are arranged alphabetically by author and it has an author index.

Achema (1972) compiled a bibliography on the geology of Nigeria. It is the only unanalyzed bibliography, though annotated, accepted in place of a thesis in the Library Science Department of Ahmadu Bello University. Well annotated, the bibliography has 559 entries. It has an author index and subject index

In his Doctoral Dissertation on Geographical Literature on Nigeria, 1901-1970: a bibliometric analysis, Aiyepoku (1973) analyzed the output of Nigeria's geographical literature statistically in terms of distribution of literature output by subject, authorship, format of sources publishers, journals, periodicals and other characteristics. The study sheds light on the characteristics of geographical literature on Nigeria for the period covered by the study.

In his Bachelor of Library Science Project on "Bibliometric Study of Library Literature on Nigeria, 1950 -1973" Afolabi (1975) also analyzed the literature statistically in terms of amount of literature produced each year, periodical output to the literature, authorship output and format of publications. He also came up with useful findings. The study determined the core periodicals and authors' contribution to the literature, dominant format of publication and the distribution of the literature output over time.

Toye and Odeinde (1979) compiled another bibliographical abstract titled "Abstracts of Theses and Dissertations: 1964 -1975. It is another attempt to cover all theses and dissertations awarded at the University of Ibadan since it became autonomous in 1963 and awarded its first postgraduate degrees in 1964. The arrangement is alphabetical by subject. It has very good abstracts to each entry. There is author index and subject index.

In 1983, Adetoyindo and Popoola (1983) compiled a bibliography of theses in the field of education. Entries are arranged alphabetically by the author's surname. Alphabetical arrangements are sub-arranged according to subjects also in alphabetical sequence. The bibliography has an author index, and Institutional

index.

In a concise and straightforward study of 371 final year undergraduate library science project titles, submitted to the department of Library Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Afolabi and Mohammed(1984) found that the public library was the most discussed library with 88 (25.50%), Kaduna was the most researched state of the then 19 states of Nigeria with 155 (38.08%). Library Services was the most researched subject with 92 (23.95%).

Another important work is by Ofori and Amune (1984), who compiled a bibliography entitled of Nigerian dissertations and theses in science and technology, 1895 -1980. The bibliography, though unannotated, is comprehensive and has the intention of embracing all theses and dissertations on Nigeria in both foreign and Nigerian universities since 1895. The first volume of the bibliography, which is on science and technology, has 2,122 entries. It has author and subject indices.

Nweke (1985) discovered that Oyo State, the state where the library school is located, was the most researched of the 19 (now 36) states with 42.65%. Nigeria was the most researched country with 14.71%, the public library was the most researched library) (24-43%). Of the higher degrees taken, the MLS was the most common, with 97 (63%).

Ezeji (1985) compiled a list of theses and dissertations submitted to Ahmadu Bello University from 1962 to 1978. The bibliography has 502 entries. Each entry has a good abstract. Entries are arranged alphabetically by faculties. Each faculty is subdivided into departments. The bibliography has subject distribution guide and an author index,

Loho (1985, 1991), compiled an important bibliography on the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. The work has two volumes: volume one covers the period 1960-1980 with 2,543 entries with full annotation and well-prepared author and title indices. Volume 2 covers the period 1981-1986 with 1,125 entries. The bibliography is fully annotated with author and title indices.

Mohammed (1987) compiled a bibliography covers all these and dissertations submitted to Nigerian universities from 1960-1985 in all subjects including library and information science offered at degree programs in the then thirteen Nigerian universities. The bibliography is less comprehensive since it does not include entries on Nigeria from foreign universities. The bibliography has 313 pages.

Akoh (1992), in her analytical study of postgraduate theses on Agriculture, MLS theses submitted to ABU Zaria 1979-1990, noted that Kaduna State was the most discussed state with 23 (10.55%) of theses produced. Zaria area in Kaduna State was the most discussed area. Sorghum was the most discussed crop with 15 (6.91%) followed by maize with 9 (4.15%), cotton, and groundnut with 8 (3.69%).

Igbashal (1994) compiled a bibliography of 695 theses and dissertations in library and information science from 1963-1992 and found that Oyo state of Nigeria was the most researched geographical area with 206 (29.94%), while library use and users emerged the most studied subject area with 138 (15.45%). Academic libraries featured were the most investigated type with 223 (32.45 %). The MLS was the most pursued degree with 651 titles (92.34%) and 1991 had the highest number of titles--88--representing 12.48% within three decades.

Again, Loho and Orkar (2005) compiled another bibliography on 'Agricultural Extension in Nigeria 1970-1990: an annotated bibliography'. This is one of the timeliest publications at the University of agriculture, Makurdi, Nigeria, where extension work is highly pursued. The bibliography covers a period of twenty years of published work with 675 entries and an author index.

## Food for Thought on bibliographic Control in Nigeria

In the past three decades, there appears to be a decline in interest on bibliographic control activities in Nigeria amongst the elite since the National Library of Nigeria took over the job of compilation, it appears all was well. But this is far from being true

One obvious reason was the non-compliance of the Nigerian publishers to the National Library Decree (1970) published in 1973. The methods of collecting and gathering the publications had some limitations. The publishers (and printers) were required to deposit rather than sell the publications to the depository centers at their own cost and this has proved impracticable and few publishers complied with this decree since there were no incentives to encourage depositors. The trouble taken and the cost of sending ten copies of each published work to depository center as stipulated by the decree was enormous and discouraging and publishers agreed in principle but not in practice; therefore, the law backing this arrangement was not practically enforced in the true sense of the law. No punishment is meted on the defaulting publishers. The Road Safety Corps Members in Nigeria do actively met instant punishments on breakers of traffic rules and regulations. It is not a hidden thing to see criminals being prosecuted by the court of law in Nigeria. But it is very difficult to see any publisher being accosted, outlawed and prosecuted for failing to comply with the Nigerian Legal Deposit Law. If the law is not enforced, perhaps, publicity might help achieve a great deal of success.

But the law may be enacted and even published while many publishers and printers still express shock and surprise on hearing and learning that they are expected to furnish depository centers with copies of every work they print or publish. It is argued that the law has not received enough publicity to sensitize publishers and printers to comply with the law. Besides, the strategy for publicizing depository laws, decentralization of the depository centers could become the answer.

If depository centers had branch offices in every state capital in the federation and large cities in the Nigeria the existence of the law would, not only have been publicized, but would also have made their job simpler and straightforward but whereas, this has made bibliographic control of publications rather half-hazard. The impression created is that only a few publications emanate from Nigeria.

Nigerians print and publish a lot of materials in every city and town. Every metropolitan and city is decorated with printing presses and publishing houses. The elites, especially the rank and file of the academia, the press, researchers, and other writers patronize them with high quality manuscripts for printing and publishing. According to Oladele (2010) there are, presently a total of 178 federal, state and private universities in Nigeria with publishing culture, but the number of publications (books, journals, theses, dissertations, magazines, bulletins etc ) are not recorded by depository centers because most of them remain popular within the targeted audience and a few bookshops. The job of bibliographic control is mostly performed by librarians who tend to concentrate on what is available in their libraries rather than what is available in the printing presses and publishing houses. They believe that bibliographic control is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the book and publishing industry and librarians are custodians of the only selected few. The country depends much on what is offered by the developed world.

Developed countries are eagerly searching to know and acquire what is published by the under-developed countries of the world while Nigeria and indeed the under-developed countries neglect to collect and organize much of the rich publications they have. They tend to reason that the web could solve the problem of lack of local publication. But the fact still remains that what they get from the web depends largely on what they put on the web.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The job of bibliographic control of publications should not be left in the hands of librarians alone. It should be tackled by all and sundry, i.e., the authors, printers, publishers, librarians, the governments and all that is involved in information and book industry.

The idea of National Union Catalog embarked upon by the National Library of Nigeria should be amended such that the compilation of catalogs for monographs, serials, theses and dissertations, newspapers, non-print and other materials should be handled by separate units. The separation will ensure that no material is left out but is captured by the control agencies. These will promote the comprehensiveness of each bibliography produced.

All 36 state capitals and all federal universities should be made depository centers for all published works. Where there is no federal university in any state, the state university or state library should become the depository center for that state. Decentralization will create proximity to these depository centers which will encourage all authors, printers and publishers and other stakeholders to double their efforts towards the success of the bibliographic control project.

Each bibliographic compilation center should be networked with the National Library of Nigeria, well funded and structured to meet the challenges of the task ahead. The networking and indeed, the computerization of the National Bibliography of Nigeria is still at infant stages and project has suffered setbacks due to lack of properly trained personnel to perform the various technical, administrative, intellectual and other skills inherent in the computerization process including programming, systems analysts, key punches and librarians with the required training in library automation. These measures will surely improve bibliographic control activities in Nigeria.

## References

- Achema, J.A. (1972). *The geology of Nigeria: An annotated bibliography*. Zaria: ABU.
- Adetoyindo, H.A., & Popoola, E.A. (1983). *Theses and Dissertations on Nigerian Education up to 1980*. Lagos: Library Services Ltd. 195p.
- Afolabi, M. (1975). *The literature of librarianship in Nigeria, 1950 -1973: Bibliographic and documentation study*. BLS Project Zaria Department of Library Science, A.B.U.
- Afolabi, M., & Mohammed, Z. (1984). Subject and Geographical Analysis of the final year Undergraduate Library Science Project. *Library Scientist* Vol. 11 p.39-41.
- Aguolu, C.C. (1973). *Nigeria: A comprehensive bibliography in the humanities and the social sciences. 1900-1971*. Boston: G.K. Hall.
- Akoh, J.A. (1992). *An analytical study of postgraduate theses on Agriculture submitted to ABU Zaria 1979-1990*. Zaria, Department of Library Science, A.B.U.
- Aiyepoku, W. (1973). *Bibliometric and a documentation characteristics of geographical literature of Nigerian 1901-1970 PhD Theses*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan
- Clapp, W.W. (1950:17). *The Unesco/Library of Congress, Bibliographical Survey, Bibliography Services, their present State and possibilities of improvement*. Washington DC: UNESCO. p17.
- Conover, H.F. (1959). *Nigerian Official Publications 1869-1959: a guide*. Washington DC: Library of Congress.

- Dipeolu, J.O. (1966). *Bibliographical Services for Nigerian Studies*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Ezeji, J. (1985). *Ahmadu Bello University Thesis and Dissertation Abstract 1962 - 1978*. Zaria ABU.
- Harris, J. (1969). *Books about Nigeria: A selected reading List*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Igbashal, A.A. (1994). Quantitative Analyses of Master's and Doctoral Theses and in Library and Information Science on Nigeria 1963-1992.
- Ita, S.A. (1971). *Bibliography of Nigeria: a survey of anthropological and linguistic writings from the earliest times to 1966*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Linder, L.H. (1959). *The Rise of Current Complete National Bibliography*. New York: Scarecrow Press.
- Lockwood, S.B. (1966). *Nigeria Guide to Official Publications*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress.
- Loho, S. (1985, 1991). *Liberation struggle in Southern Africa (1960 –1980): A Bibliography*. Zaria: Department of Library Science. ABU Vols. 1 & 2.
- Loho, S., & Orkar, D. (2005). *Agricultural Extension in Nigeria, 1970-1990: an annotated bibliography*. Makurdi: Francis Sulemanu Idachaba Library.
- Mohammed, Z. (1987). Twenty-five years of higher education in Nigeria: a bibliography of theses and dissertations submitted to Nigerian Universities 1960 - 1985. –Zaria: ABU. 313p.
- Nigeria. Federal Government of (1953). *Nigeria Publications Decree : 1950-1952* Ibadan: Ibadan University Press. P. ix.
- Nigeria,: Federal Republic of (2007) National Population Commission. Official Gazette. 2006 census.-Lagos: Federal Republic of Nigeria. 94 (24) p B182.
- Nweke, K. M. C. (1985). Analytical Study of Ibadan Library School Higher Degrees Dissertations/Theses titles 1973-1982. *Nigeria Libraries* 21(2): 39-49.
- Odeinde, Sam (1969) Theses and Dissertations accepted for higher degrees 1964 -1968. p 13. in Aguolu C.C. (1973): 67.
- Ogunsheye, F.A. (1969). Problems of Bibliographic Services in Nigeria. *Nigerian Libraries* 5(2): 62-68. in Pearson, J.O., & Jones. R. (eds.) (1970) *The bibliography of Africa: An International conference on African Bibliography held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 4th-8th December, 1967, London*.
- Oladele, S.M. (2010). *Universal Current Affairs for Exams, Aptitude Test, Quiz, Interview, and General Knowledge*. Makurdi Choice Ventures: 26-28
- Schneider, G. (1930). *The Theory of History of Bibliography*. Translated by R.R Shaw. New York: Columbia University Press. In Linder, L.H. (1959). *The Rise of Current Complete National Bibliography*. New York: Scarecrow Press.
- Stanley, J.L. (1975) *Nigerian Government Publications. 1966-1973: A Bibliography*: Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press: 193.
- Toye, B.O., & Odeinde, S.O. (1979). *Abstract of Ibadan University Theses and Dissertations: 1964 -1975*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Library 633p.