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## A Survey of the Use of Electronic Resources in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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**A Survey of the Use of Electronic Resources in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi  
Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile – Ife, Nigeria**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The paper discussed the impact of electronic information resources as an enabler of research activities in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was used to survey the opinions of the researchers who are the regular users of the library under study.

The study showed various electronic information resources available and the degree of its utilization by the researchers and postgraduate students. There is a significant influence of level of availability of electronic information resources on utilization [ $F(3,79) = 10,337, P < 0.05$ ]. The study also revealed that only 6.0% of respondents use e-resources frequently thus, the usage of e-resources is still very low in the university community. Consequently, it was recommended that the library should organize teaching of information literacy skills through user education programmes.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Information has been universally accepted as a key resource. Some scholars have equated information with factors of production. Popoola (2005) asserts that information is an economic resource which behaves similarly to capital and labour and that an investment in information increases productivity. Information may be enshrined in any format, be it print, electronic or by any other means capable of being used as message. It is inevitable in any feasible development, academic, business, or otherwise.

One of the major developments in libraries and information system in the past two decades is the advanced spread of electronic information sources, services and networks mainly as a result of development in information and communication technology. Oketunji (2008) submits that information explosion coupled with recent developments in information and communication technology, has resulted in the proliferation of electronic information resources. Electronic information resources have gained ground around the globe; it affects every facet of human endeavour.

The importance of electronic resources cannot be over emphasized, in the recent times, it has radically changed the activities of academic libraries and research activities in all Universities and Research Institutions. Researchers are working regularly with internet resources and search engines, and using e-mail as a normal form of communication. E-resources have brought radical changes in the way information is gathered, stored, organized, accessed, retrieved and consumed in all libraries of the world especially academic libraries. Many academic libraries are shifting from print to electronic sources. They acquired various electronic databases for different discipline to be relevant in the society. The overall objectives of academic libraries is to contribute to the teaching role of the parent institutions, to support learning and research activities, to stimulate creativity and intellectual development and acquisition of knowledge (Nwalo, 2000) Hezekiah Oluwasanmi library adheres to these objectives and much has been invested into this area of the libraries' collection. It is the mission of the library to support and enrich the educational programme of its parent institution (Obafemi Awolowo University) by providing library resources,

services and facilities to meet the teaching, learning and personal development needs of its community. The technological application of the library has reached appreciable stage in the recent time. In fact, it is one of the academic libraries in the country that has invested much in the library automation and databases subscription. The reason is not far fetched, the library enjoys grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which makes it possible for the library to go thus far. Ajayi (2007) enumerates the facilities in H.O. Library as follows:

Website <http://library.oauife.edu.ng> (a link also available from OAU NET)

An online public Access catalogue (OPAC) which is being developed continuously

- Remote on-line access to the OCLC's World Cat and LC catalogue
- Online database
- E- library with 50 PCs and peripherals for faculty use in progress
- Digitization of Obafemi Awolowo University post graduate theses.
- Digitization of daily newspaper collections. The e-resources available in the library are also supplemented by many other privately owned cybercafés the University campus.

It is obvious that the library has much to offer its patrons to support teaching, learning and research activities. It is in the light of this that the study seeks to assess the impact of e-resources on research activities in the library.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study is significant on the following basis.

- The findings will serve as a basis for the Library administrator to agitate for more library funds to subscribe for more electronic information resources.
- The study will enhance the information provider's knowledge and understanding of e-resources that will meet the needs of their patrons.
- The data generated from this study would assist researchers to be aware and appreciate electronic resources as an enabler of research activities
- The findings will also serve as a data bank and intellectual sources for future research.
- The findings will help researchers in the utilization of resources available in the academic libraries.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Academic libraries all over the world are gradually shifting resources from print to digital collection in order to serve their institutions better. E-resources are constantly influencing the way in which researchers in the university communities go about their research activities. The internet, databases and the World Wide Web help them to overcome geographical limitations associated with the print media. Not only that, the time lag between production, publication and delivery of print media has been drastically reduced. It is obvious, that print medium is increasingly giving way to the electronic form of materials.

The question one should ask do e- resources have any effect on the research activities in universities and research institutions? It is in the light of this that this study examines the impact of e-resources as enabler of research activities in a typical academic library using Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University as a case study.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Libraries, information and documentation centres in Nigeria have various forms and packages of e-resources in institutions of higher learning, research institutions, companies, industries and other similar organizations. Nwalo (2000) states that the overall objective of academic libraries is to contribute to the teaching role of the parent institutions, to support learning and research activities, to stimulate creativity and intellectual development and acquisition of knowledge. This was corroborated by Aina (2004) and Mabawonku (2004) respectively. It is imperative for academic libraries to acquire relevant information materials and make them readily available for use by the potential library users.

The advent of information communications technology has brought about drastic changes in the information system. Information in electronic format was created with the advent of the computer. Little wonder Ojedokun (2007) describes electronic formats of information sources as computer technology media in which information is retrieved. Thus, to make effective use of electronic resources one must be versatile in the usage of computer and available search engines. He further gave examples of information sources in electronic formats as follows: Online Catalogue, also known as Online Public Access Catalogue, Online Proprietary databases, Compact Disk – Read only memory (CD-ROM) and internet. According to AACR Revision 2002; 2003, update Electronic resources defined “Material (data and /or programs) encoded for manipulation by a computerized device. This material may require the use of a peripheral directly connected to a computerized device (e.g. CD-ROM drive) or a connection to a computer network (e.g. the Internet)” Internet is the remote access while Disks and CD-ROM are direct access to electronic resources. High level skills are vital in the use of electronic based information resources. In a study of e-resources carried out in the university of Chicago the following types of e-resources were identified:

- Continuing resources (serials)
- Integrating resources (websites & Databases)
- E-books
- Government publications
- Below are some brief descriptions of the types of electronic resources which are available through the Obafemi Awolowo University library.

The library subscribes to notable multidisciplinary academic databases such as: JSTOR, Hinari etc.

- Online Public Access catalogue (OPAC)
- Reference sources

- e-books and texts
- Reference books  
Dictionaries
- Factual databases
- CD-ROM
- Internet

E-resources available in the library are similar to what is obtained in the University of Chicago library.

Iweha (2005) describes internet as the forerunner of ubiquitous global web of digital communication that uses an intricate web of computers connecting billions of people. The internet is a platform that enhances digital divide and digital solidarity at the same time, depending on the dexterity of the navigator.

According to Screekumar (2005), E-journals offer a range of potential advantages to libraries and end users; multiple in-built searching facilities, multimedia capabilities and reduced storage concerns. This affirmed the view of Aina (2004), that “electronic publishing has become important to libraries because of the escalating costs of print materials” In the same vein, Sharma (2009) submits that the importance of e-resources have convinced many libraries to move towards digital e-resources, which are found to be less expensive and more useful for easy access. This suggests that the trend now in the information sector is that, there is a gradual shifting from print resource collections to electronic resource collections in academic libraries in Nigeria.

Thornton (2000) asserts that the increased availability of information over the internet along with the ubiquity of the web means that our users are moving towards the digital library, whether we like it or not. Contrary to this view, Adebisi (2004) in his study found out that the internet has not eliminated demands for books but rather has given rise to a new format called the virtual library. This was also corroborated by Mshelia (2004) who based on similar findings with Adebisi (2004) recommended that print media should Operate alongside electronic media, that is, maintain the traditional book and journal collections and services and providing links between the two because of threats facing the e-library. Aina (2008) highlighted some limitations such as having to rely on equipment hardware and software which may become obsolete, less permanent; incompatible software, such as different software interfaces for different systems.

In spite of these limitations, e-resources are favoured by users around the globe. Sukula (2008) asserts that the amount and variety of information content in electronic form is growing and at the rate it is expanding, some believe that all information will eventually be electronically accessed. This is affirmed by Ajayi & Akinniyi (2009) who Submit that the advantage posed by the internet service ensured that explosion of information is not a waste because the technology has created easy access to vast information all over the world. E-resources have been contributing greatly to research activities and many researchers have commended the advantages of e-resources over other formats of information. Tenopir (accessed 2010) reported that faculty members benefit maximally from e-resources available to them. Many of

them were of the opinion that e-resources have made it considerably easier to locate the material they need for their work, serve as an essential research tool, time saver conveniences, increase work quality and many more are the benefits enjoyed by using e-resources.

Sukula & Sukula (2010) opine that the change is basically of physical form where information content is increasingly being captured, processed, stored and disseminated in electronic format. Thus, this study seeks to ascertain the impact of e-resources as an enabler of research activities in a typical academic library using Obafemi Awolowo University as a case study.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study are to:

1. examine the types of electronic resources that are available in the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library OAU, Ile-ife.
2. identify the types of e-resources used by researchers in the library
3. determine the level of utilization of electronic information resources by researchers in Obafemi Awolowo University.
4. examine the factors which inhibit the use of electronic resources.
5. determine the effect of electronic resources on research activities.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**The following research questions guided the study:**

1. What are the types of electronic resources that are available in the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library?
2. What are the types of e-resources used by researchers in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library?
3. What is the level of availability of e-resources in the library under study?
4. What factors inhibit the use of e-resources by researchers in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library?
5. What are the effects of electronic resources on researchers' activities in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out at Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State. It was a descriptive survey. Researchers and postgraduate students who are both students of OAU and other institutions who use the postgraduate and research area made up the study population. Undergraduate students were excluded from the study. Data was collected using questionnaire instrument. 100 questionnaire was applied to postgraduate students using research sections of the library which include: Africana section, Serial/postgraduate Section, E-library and Reference Section. Three weeks was devoted for the administration and retrieval of the questionnaire.

Of the 100 questionnaire, 83 were completed and returned giving a response rate of 83% and a dropout rate of 17%. The data collected was collated and stored in an IBM compatible computer and analysis was carried out using SPSS version 15. The study adapted The National Electronic

Library of Finland \_User Questionnaires for Universities. It is structured into five (5) sections covering all aspects of the research questions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

**Table 1: Socio demographic characteristics of Respondents,**

		Frequency	Percent
<b>Institutions</b>	OAU ILE-IFE	71	85.6
	UI IBADAN	7	8.4
	UNI BENNIN	4	4.8
	AAU EKPOMA	1	1.2
	Total	83	100.0
<b>Sex</b>	Male	53	63.9
	Female	27	32.5
	No response	3	3.6
	Total	83	100.0
<b>Age</b>	21 to 30yrs	38	45.8
	31 to 40 yrs	30	36.1
	41 to 50 yrs	13	15.7
	No response	2	2.4
	Total	83	100.0
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	52	62.7
	Married	28	33.7
	No response	3	3.6
	Total	83	100.0
<b>Qualification</b>	B.Sc./BEd./ B.L.S.	33	39.8
	M.Sc./M.L.S	42	50.6
	Ph.D.	4	4.8
	No response	3	3.6
	Total	83	100.0
<b>Years of Experience</b>	1 to 5yrs	57	68.7
	6 to 10yrs	13	15.7
	11 to 20 yrs	6	7.2
	21 to 30 yrs	4	4.8
	No response	4	4.8
	Total	83	100.0

Most of the respondents (85.6%) were derived from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, 8.4% from UI and 4.8% from University of Benin while 1.2% came from Ambrose Ali University. Most of the respondents (45.8%) were in the age group 21 to 30yrs while 36.1% belong to the age group of 31 to 40 yrs and 15.7% belong to the age group of 2.4%. however, 2.4% of the



respondents did not indicate their ages. In terms of their gender, 63.9% were male respondents while 32.5% were female. However, 3.6% of the respondents did not indicate their sex. Of all the respondents 62.7% were married while 33.7% were single and 3.6% did not indicate their marital status.

**Table 11: Availability of electronic resources in the library**

To examine the types of electronic resources available in the library, the respondents were asked to give types of electronic resources that are available in library. The results are as shown in Table 11 below.

C S/ N	Resources	Readily Available		Available		Unavailable		Undecided		No response		RSI
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Electronic Journals	23	27.7	35	42.2	8	9.6	10	12.0	7	8.4	0.598
2	e-books	16	19.3	35	42.2	15	18.1	8	9.6	9	10.8	0.506
3	Reference books	39	47.0	28	33.7	6	7.2	1	1.2	9	10.8	0.699
4	Dictionaries	45	54.2	25	30.1	2	2.4	1	1.2	10	12.0	0.747
5	Reference databases	19	22.9	29	34.9	11	13.3	14	16.9	10	12.0	0.518
6	Factual databases	12	14.5	31	37.3	14	16.9	14	16.9	12	14.5	0.450
7	CD-Rom	18	21.7	26	31.3	13	15.7	15	18.1	11	13.3	0.486
8	e-mail	36	43.4	26	31.3	5	6.0	6	7.2	10	12.0	0.667
9	Internet	37	44.6	28	33.7	3	3.6	4	4.8	11	13.3	0.687
10	OPAC	18	21.7	20	24.1	7	8.4	21	25.3	17	20.5	0.462

Table II shows that Dictionaries are the most readily available resources in the library, with the highest RSI value of 0.747. Also 54.2% of the

respondents indicated that Dictionaries were readily available, 30.1% claimed that they are available while only 2.4% stated that they were not available and 12% did not produce any response to this item. This is closely followed by Reference Books (RSI = 0.599) and Internet (RSI= 0.687). The least readily available resource in the libraries were Factual databases with the least RSI values of 0.450 and OPAC (RSI = 0.462).

It is obvious that an appreciable number of e-resources are made available for the library patrons, yet more are required to meet the need of the patrons especially the researchers. This implies that academic libraries are to shift from print media to electronic media to serve its users better. The study has an affinity with Finelib study where most of the respondents considered availability to be 'good' at least, and thought that the resources on offer covered at least 60% of the resources they needed. However, more electronic information is still needed.

**Table III: Utilization of electronic information resources**

To ascertain the types of e-resources used by researchers in the library, respondents were asked to indicate the types of e-resources they use. The results are presented in Table 111 below.

C	Resources	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Not at all		No response		RSI
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Electronic Journals	15	18.1	22	26.5	7	8.4	1	1.2	38	45.8	0.361
2	E-books	16	19.3	23	27.7	10	12.0	0	0.0	34	41.0	0.376
3	Reference books	27	32.5	21	25.3	14	16.9	0	0.0	21	25.3	0.494
4	Dictionaries	34	41.0	26	31.3	5	6.0	0	0.0	18	21.7	0.618
5	Reference databases	16	19.3	19	22.9	11	13.3	1	1.2	36	43.4	0.349
6	Factual databases	15	18.1	21	25.3	11	13.3	0	0.0	36	43.4	0.349
7	CD-Rom	16	19.3	17	20.5	12	14.5	0	0.0	38	45.8	0.329
8	e-mail	26	31.3	22	26.5	7	8.4	0	0.0	28	33.7	0.490

9	Internet	37	44.6	18	21.7	2	2.4	0	0.0	26	31.3	0.590
10	OPAC	21	25.3	12	14.5	10	12.0	0	0.0	40	48.2	0.349

Table III: Indicated that Dictionaries are the most frequently used resources in the library under study will the highest RSI value of 0.613. Also 41% of the respondents indicated, that they used-Dictionaries everyday, 31.3% claimed that they used them weekly while only 6% stated that they used dictionaries monthly and none of the respondents said they have not been using dictionaries although 21,7% of the respondents did not produce any response to this item. This is closely followed by Internet (RSI = 0.590) and Reference Books (RSI = 0.494). The least frequently used resource in the library is CD-ROM (RSI = 0.329), Factual databases (RSI = 0.349) and Reference databases (RSI = 0.349). Electronic resources are not much used by the faculty and postgraduate students.

However, e-resources have dramatically changed the trend in research activities. It is high time for researchers to develop both traditional literacy skills and information technology skills. The reason being that, it will enable an individual to use computers, software applications, databases and other technologies to achieve a wider range and variety of academic, work-related and personal goals. This study corroborates that of Sukula and Sukula (2010), who asserted that information technologies are now widely adopted in libraries which permit people to do their work in different and better ways.

**Table IV: Level of Utilization of Electronic Information Resources by researchers**

To determine the level of utilization of electronic information resources by researchers in Obafemi Awolowo University, the respondents were asked to rate the degree of use of each of the resources. The results are presented in Table 1v below:

	Frequenc v	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulati ve
Valid Non-use	9	10.8	10.8	10.8
Seldom Use	28	33.7	33.7	44.6
Fair use	41	49.4	49.4	94.0
Frequent use	5	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	83	100.0	100.0	

Table IV: shows that most of the researchers only make a fair use of electronic resources in the libraries as 49.4% make fair use of the electronic libraries. Only 6% use the resources frequently while 33.7% seldom use the resources and 10.8% do not use them at all.

The degree of use of e-resources used in the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi library is still very low. Only 6.0% of the respondent use the resources

frequently which is very low. This implies that availability of resources does not mean utilization. The respondents should be encouraged to make use of e-resources made available to justify the huge amount of money being spent to acquire the e-resources. This finding is in agreement with the findings of similar studies on students access, usage and awareness of electronic information resources. (Ojo and Akande, 2004)

**Table V: Inhibiting factors affecting effective use of electronic resources**

To examine the barriers to effective use of electronic resources, the respondents were asked to identify constraints to the use of electronic information resources and the results are presented in the Table V below.

Barriers considered by the researchers	Yes		No		RSI
	f	%	f	%	
Lack of information retrieval skills	51	61.	32	38.6	0.807
Difficulty in finding relevant information	52	62.	31	37.3	0.813
Slow access period	51	61.	32	38.6	0.807
Lack of internet access	50	60.	33	39.8	0.801
Frequent power outage	57	68.	26	31.3	0.843
Cost of access to internet is too high	44	53.	39	47.0	0.765
Lack of relevant electronic resources in	48	57.	35	42.2	0.789

Table V above, showed that the most common inhibitor to the use of e-resources identified by the respondents is "frequent power outage" with an RSI value of 0.843. it also shows that the largest proportion of the respondents (68.7%) considered this as a major barrier while only 31.3% stated that it is not. This is closely followed by "Difficulty in finding relevant information", "Lack of information retrieval skills" and "Slow access period" with RSI values of 0.813, 0.807 and 0.807 respectively. The least inhibitor as identified by the respondents is "Cost of access to internet is too high" with the least RSI value of 0.765. It is obvious from the findings that the major constraint is power outage. This has the highest percentage of 68.7%. The other inhibitors are in the area of finding information through the internet and databases. This is where the library under study should proffer solution to, by organizing workshops and training on information literacy skills for their patrons, especially the researchers.

**Table VI The effect of electronic resources on research activities**

To ascertain the effect of electronic resources on research activities, possible effects were presented to the respondents in the questionnaire and their responses were given a descriptive analysis and the results are presented in table VI below.

s/	Identified	Considera		To some extent		Not At all		Don't know		No response		RSI
		F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Made it easier find the need in my	46	56.4	23	27.7	3	3.6	2	2.4	9	10.8	0.786
2	Made it easier get hold of material I	44	53.0	25	30.1	1	1.2	5	6.0	8	9.6	0.777
3	Extended the range in my work Available that is	42	50.6	27	32.5	4	4.8	4	4.8	6	7.2	0.786
4	Made it easier to keep up development own field			21	25.3	3	3.6	4	4.8	6	7.2	0.810
5	Improved my work	53	63.9	18	21.7	2	2.4	3	3.6	7	8.4	0.822
6	Inspired new thinking/ideas	42	50.6	30	36.1	1	1.2	3	3.6	7	8.4	0.792
7	Shifted (broadened) focus of my	30	36.1	33	39.8	10	12.0	3	3.6	7	8.4	0.729
8	Reduced my working time	32	38.6	30	36.1	12	14.5	3	3.6	6	7.2	0.738
9	Reduced the amount of browsing of Libraries	37	44.6	19	22.9	13	15.7	6	7.2	8	9.6	0.714

Table VI: it can be seen that the most considerable effect availability of e-resources was reported to have had on researchers performance was in the area of "improved work quality" as this was the most popular view among respondents. It has the highest RSI value of 0.822 and was identified as possessing considerable effect by the largest proportion of the respondents (63.9%). This was closely followed by "Made it easier to keep up with development in my own field" with an RSI value of 0.810 and identified as considerable by 59% of the respondents. The least popular effect was that it "reduced the amount of browsing of resources on the library with the least RSI value of 0.714" and was identified by 44.6% of the respondents. E-resources have brought dramatic changes in the research activities. They have improved the resources available and used by the respondents. Thus, this study has close affinity with the study of Tenopir(2008) on the value of E-resources (faculty comments) Fin Elib respectively.

## CONCLUSION

Information and communication technologies have greatly increased the volume of electronic information resources around the globe. Electronic information resources are becoming indispensable by all and sundry. It has been a tool to accomplish life endeavors in all fields. Students, researchers and administrators have embraced electronic resources to support their study and work.

It is obvious that libraries and information centres are gradually shifting from print to electronic resources particularly in tertiary institutions around the globe. If the electronic information resources are available in the tertiary institutions it will tremendously improve work quality and facilitate research more than using print media.

It can thus be concluded that e-resources are an inevitable tool for both libraries and potential library users and it is imperative for all stakeholders, libraries, information centres to provide relevant and accurate electronic resources for their patrons and potential library users

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Consequent upon the findings of this study the following recommendations are being made:

- All electronic information resources should be adequately organized and made available for easy access.
- There should be training and retraining of library staff and faculties on how to maximize use of e-resources available in the library
- There should be more provisions of information technologies that will facilitate information search.
- There must be qualified hands to handle all information technologies e.g. Technologist and computer engineers.
- The whole library collection should be computerized in order to render quick services to library patrons especially the researchers. Librarian should strategize on how best to showcase e-resource collections of the library in order to attract more patronage and hence be more relevant in this information

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