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Introduction

There has been a tremendous growth in the use of the Internet and the World Wide Web for finding and sharing information. The Internet originated from government and academia and spread to business and industry (Shelley, 2002). University scholarship includ teaching, learning, and research, which are built around information production, translation, and transmission. The Internet can be an enabler of scholarship, facilitating acquisition, creation, and ready access to digital content.

The University of Ibadan (UI) community has increasingly invested in digital infrastructure, including Computing, Information, and Communication Technology (CICT) and human and other support infrastructure, as well as training. CICT has penetrated various aspects of the UI academic enterprise including research, teaching and learning, and administrative support services. The institution climbing is a ladder of CICT-enabled change, ultimately making the Internet readily accessible to staff and students for scholarly activities. It is imperative that the institution continue to exploit the potential of advances in Internet and WWW technologies, with best practices in support services. The perception of the Internet as an enabler of scholarship by members of the academic community has a bearing on the extent to which the technology is maximally exploited for the advancement of scholarship. Given that the quality of postgraduate programme contributes immensely to the quality of scholarship in an institution such as the UI, it is of paramount importance to encourage full participation of postgraduate students in harnessing Internet and WWW as an enabler of scholarship.

This study sets out to answer the question, what is the perception of the Internet as an enabler of scholarship among the postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan? Related sub-questions are: from the students' viewpoint, the extent to which the availability of Internet enhances learning and teaching, whether the use of the Internet can enhance research, and whether there is any significant relationship between the use of the Internet and student performance.

Literature Review

The Internet is a powerful and efficient tool for searching, retrieving, and disseminating information, with a significant impact on nearly all professions. The Internet can be consulted and like a reference resource, but it is broader and more dynamic. It also provides a means of scholarly communication. The Internet offers an immense repository of information, but knowledge cannot be applied meaningfully unless students are guided in accordance with Rogoff's "apprenticeship in thinking" (cited in Brunning, Schraw, Norby & Ronning, 2004).

Information literacy is highly desirable in this knowledge economy and should be taught in every discipline. It is imperative that students acquire 21st century skills, including being able to find information that is relevant and reliable (Lim, 2004).

Callison (2002) describes computers as the "latest in a long line of innovations that have changed the way humans interact with the world and with each other." Moreover, those with technological skill are now making many decisions about education. There are now many sources of online education or e-learning, including many degree programs and free tutorials. This has made it possible for more people to access educational opportunities and training (Imhonopi & Urim, 2004).

Library automation improved access to information and web-based library systems have made another improvement (Morris, 2004). Communication is also much better and faster because of email, chat, and so on (Imhonopi & Urim, 2004). The Internet has provided a new kind of marketplace to sell products and services. Internet news groups provide access to valuable information from resources located all over the world (Minkel, 2004).

The major rationale for school Internet access is the support it provides in teaching a current and relevant curriculum. Some teachers believe that Internet access in schools should also be available for recreation, since recreational reading is a part of all media center collections. Responsible teachers supervise students who use the Internet and provide guidance in locating appropriate materials. Not to use the Internet in schools is to deprive teachers and students as well as other staff of a large and valuable resource (Morris, 2004).

Parameshwar and Patil (2009) cited Mahajan (2006) conducted a study on Internet use by researchers in Punjab University, which analyzed how the convergence of information and communication technologies, as embodied by the Internet, has transformed the present day society into a knowledge society. Use of the Internet by researchers and scholars is an important area of study (Parameshwar & Patil, 2009)

The use of the Internet for the exchange of research materials has reduced the need for storage of information resources in Nigeria and consequently increased the output of research publications (Kamba, 2008)

Mahajan (2006) concludes that researchers in the sciences are more positive about the use of the Internet and its impact on their educational experience.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- to ascertain the perceptions of postgraduate students on the Internet main as an enabler of scholarship

- to determine how to facilitate postgraduate students' adoption of the Internet as a tool for learning and research.

Scope

The organizational scope of this study is university of Ibadan and subjects of the study are postgraduate students.

Methodology

The study employed simple random sampling and observation. One hundred postgraduate students were randomly chosen and sampled. A 15-item questionnaire with a free response was constructed and validated by the researcher. The instrument was administered to each of the respondents, yielding a 100 percent return rate.

Results Presentation and Interpretation

Characteristics of the Subjects

Table 1: Gender distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	60	60.0
Female	40	40.0
Total	100	100.0

Sixty percent of the respondents were male, and forty female.

Table 2: Age distribution

Age	Frequency	Percentage
<30 years	4	4.0
30-35 years	32	32.0
36 years or more	64	64.0
Total	100	100.0

More than three-fifths of the respondents are 36 years of age or older.

Table 3: Educational qualifications

Education	Frequency	Percentage
HND/Degree	15	15.0
MSC	72	72.0
Others	13	13.0
Total	100	100.0

Nearly three-quarters of respondents have a Master's degree

Table 3: Adequate knowledge of the Internet

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	86	86.0
No	14	14.0
Total	100	100.0

The vast majority of respondents indicated that they have adequate knowledge of the Internet.

Table 4.5: Chi-square analysis showing students' perception of the effect of Internet on teaching, learning, and research.

SN	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Chi-square	P
1	The use of Internet and other Information Technology facilities help students in their academic performance.	41 (50.0)	59 (50.0)	-	-	7.24	<0.05
2	The most relevant Information Technology to students is the use of Internet search engines.	43 (50.0)	57 (50.0)	-	-	1.96	>0.05
3	Enough Information Technology facilities are available in the university community.	13 (33.3)	34 (33.3)	53 (33.3)	-	24.02	<0.05
4	The use of Internet facilities during lecture hour improves learning among postgraduate students.	29 (33.3)	47 (33.3)	24 (33.3)	-	8.78	<0.05
5	The use of Internet as a means of searching for materials improves student learning.	41 (50.0)	59 (50.0)	-	-	6.24	<0.05
6	Internet is a means of getting relevant materials for learning purposes	52 (50.0)	48 (50.0)	-	-	5.69	<0.05
7	The use of Internet motivates both the teacher and student and thereby promotes learning.	63 (50.0)	37 (50.0)			6.76	<0.05
8	The use of the Internet helps individualize learning and makes individual student to go at his or her own pace.	41 (33.3)	46 (33.3)	13 (33.3)	-	18.98	<0.05
9	The use of Internet as a means of communication also promotes teaching and learning.	41 (50.0)	59 (50.0)	-	-	7.24	<0.05
10	Apart from promoting learning among students, the Internet also improves student performance	47 (50.0)	53 (50.0)	-	-	8.36	<0.05
11	The use of the Internet facility strengthens students' self-efficacy	30 (33.3)	59 (33.3)	11 (33.3)	-	35.08	<0.05
12	The Internet improves the academic integrity of students	30 (50.0)	70 (50.0)	-	-	16.00	<0.05

Chi-square analysis shows students' perception of the effect of the Internet on learning, teaching, and research. The result shows that the use of Internet and other information technology facilities help students in their academic performance, as adjudged by the calculated chi-square value of 7.25, which is significant at the 5 percent level. The Internet promotes learning through searching for relevant materials using search engines. This confirms the views/findings of researchers across the globe. (Lim, 2004; Imhonopp and Urim, 2004; Morris, 2004).

The results also show that there are not enough Internet facilities, very slow Internet connections, and few computers with Internet connections at the University of Ibadan for students. Another observation

of the researcher is that some students cannot access information through the Internet without help from their colleagues.

Academic and research work are enhanced for both teachers and students when they have access to the Internet. The study found that the Internet makes learning independent and promotes the academic performance of postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan.

Conclusion

The Internet has opened the door to a new way of learning. The wealth of information available there exceeds that of any physical library, and, while access is unlimited, the findings of the study also provide insight into the factors that might improve learning, teaching, and research in Nigerian universities. Further research and investigations are needed to cover a larger population and other Internet facilities that can promote learning, teaching, and research.

Recommendations

The constraints on the use of the Internet by postgraduate students in this study are:

- University administration should provide an enabling environment for learning to take place, e.g., campus should be lighted day and night.
- An ICT policy that will sustain Internet connectivity on campus must be achieved.
- ICT must be introduced and emphasized in the school curriculum.
- More cybercafés should be licensed to operate within the campus.
- Postgraduate students should be encouraged to be computer literate, with the ability to access information on the Internet.

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