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UTILIZATION OF WEB-BASED LIBRARY SERVICES IN ISA MUSTAPHA AGWAI I POLYTECHNIC LIBRARY LAFIA, NASARAWA STATE: CHALLENGE AND REMEDIES

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Abstract
This study investigated the challenges confronting the use of web-based library services in Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic Library. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 750 registered student users of the library and the sample size of 200 students was randomly taken. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection and the data collected were analyzed using mean. The result revealed that lack of awareness of available web-based services, and high cost of Internet services among others were the challenges confronting the use of web-based services in the library. The study also pointed out that creating awareness of available web-based services, expanding coverage and quality of internet services, organizing training programs for users, designing user-friendly and dynamic websites and more are the suggested strategies to remedy the challenges. The study recommended that, the institution's management should provide more funds to enable the library to fully upgrade its web-based services so that a true virtual experience could be derived from the use of these services. Library users need to be trained on the use of the library web services as sometimes these websites are a bit difficult to navigate. In the same vein the library needs to create user friendly websites so that users can easily access their web services.

Keywords: Library services, Web based Library services, Information Literacy

Introduction

Developments in ICT have brought revolutionary changes in the modes and methods by which library users seek access and communicate information. The advent of the Internet has brought about unprecedented flow of information such that the format in which information is served is rich and diverse. The access to digital information resources and remote access to technology has changed users' needs and by extension library's objectives and services. In other words, users' needs are the main reason for change in library services. The library has adapted the online platform to meet users' needs. This is because users are now accustomed to the dynamic and interactive nature of the web, as well as social networking tools. Many of them now use web tools to find the information they need (Wang, 2019).

According to Liu (2018) academic library web sites are libraries virtual presentation to the world. These virtual spaces have evolved rapidly over the years and the dynamic or interactive web sites encourage user participation hence, the academic libraries in Nigeria today are improving their service base especially with the application of Information Technology for access and delivery of electronic contents to the end users. In this process, they are also adapting to the change and altering their image, by executing new functions and providing varieties of services in an evolving continuum.

A library web site can play different roles in the delivery of web-based services, in fact it is the major tool used by libraries to provide their web-based services. It can serve as a workstation where a user finds databases, electronic texts, and the online catalog. It is a way of making library-made products available, it is used as a window to the World Wide Web (WWW) by making Internet resources available on a selective basis, and it is a communication tool where information about services, people, facilities and collections can be found. All publicly accessible web sites collectively constitute the WWW. Today, libraries can treat their web sites as a significant point of user contact and as a way of compensating for decreases in conventional measures of library use. The ability to provide library services on the web, has also created tremendous influence in the transformation of libraries as knowledge resource centers, rather than storehouses of print media. The impact of this change is all-pervasive and affects all the aspects of library operations, information resources and services, staff skill requirements, and users' expectations. The accelerating pace of technological developments has tremendously increased the ability to access, store, and process, communicate, and deliver information services to the desk-tops of the libraries' clients through web-based services.

Web-based library services are simply library services provided using the Internet as a medium and library website as a gateway with the help of integrated library management system. Tella and Issa (2019) described services as that which is intangible, which cannot be stored up or mass produced. In essence, services are instantly perishable, and come into existence at the time they are bought and consumed. This definition indicates that service is time based; that is, service is produced and consumed instantly. Web-based services provide services to users in real time such that users are served whenever and wherever they might require it.

Availability of web-based library services is simply the presence or absence of core library services from their websites. This implies that the mere presence of library websites is not a guarantee of the availability of web-based library services. Availability of web-based services enables library users to have access to information resources just like in conventional library but online. According to Bhatnagar (2015), library service on the internet possesses the same qualities as traditional references: accuracy, promptness, courtesy, an understanding of the information need. It provides users with the convenience of accessing information in their own time, saving them traveling cost and time. The availability of these services is not constrained by the traditional opening hours but can be offered on a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week basis known as 24/7. As libraries continue to make greater use of the Internet, librarians now use websites as a means to provide web-based library and information services, as well as facilitate access to both print and non-print resources. All these are made possible through the use of the library website.

As libraries aspire to remain relevant as suppliers of information that attract and engage their patrons, embracing web-based services has become almost synonymous with their overall success. Libraries now offer a new virtual entrance to their services. The library Web services allow students, lecturers, and researchers to visit the library website through the library Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and access the library collections and facilities. Libraries also provide links for other online resources connecting millions of library users in the academic community.

Statement of the Problem

The library websites of Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic Lafia, is predominantly static. In other words, it is not very interactive and dynamic. And as such does not completely provide effective web-based services as required, and even the few web services available are not fully utilized by students. It is in view

of this, that it becomes imperative to determine the issues militating against effective utilization of web services by students in Isa Mustapha Agwai Polytechnic Lafia.

Objectives of the Study

The study set out the following objectives:

I. To determine the challenges facing the use of web-based library services in Isa Mustapha Agwai Polytechnic library.
II. To suggest strategies that could be used to remedy these challenges.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the challenges facing the use of web-based library services in Isa Mustapha Agwai Polytechnic Library?
2. What are the strategies that could be used to remedy these challenges?

Review of Related Literature

The growth of ICT and change in information seeking behaviour of library users has forced libraries to adopt and modify their service pattern. These adoption and modification of services pattern has not been an easy process. Despite the many benefits of web-based library services; there are some challenges when it comes to using these services on the web.

The design of the library website is a major challenge, when it comes to provision and utilization of web-based library resources. This is because a poorly designed website will not only be unattractive to users but will also make it difficult to access and navigate the information resources. According to Gbaje and Kotso (2014) poorly designed library website will not improve the visibility of the library neither will it promote what the library has to offer. Therefore, designing an effective library website that attracts as well as retains library users has become an important task for all academic libraries.

Also the dynamics of user needs make it difficult to create a web system that will align with each individual preference. Ogunsola and Okusaga (2018) noted that, before web-based library services can take place, there is much to be done; there is need to create electronic information systems that match individual patterns of thinking and learning in other to produce the kind of productivity expected. This can be quiet challenging since user needs vary and changes all the time. This is a major challenge as a system created for a user now can become obsolete the next minute due to change in technology and user needs

Also, it should be noted that library resources are very expensive and as the cost of these resources keep increasing, it will definitely produce recursive effect on funding of libraries by the institution. Abubakar (2018) noted that, libraries especially academic libraries in Nigeria are at crossroads. This is because they are operating in an era of dwindling finances where resources (financial and materials) are not forthcoming. Nigerian academic libraries derive the greater part of their funds from the government (both Federal and State). Okiy (2015) noted that, of all the different types of libraries in Nigeria, only university libraries have a clearly defined policy of funding, because they are allocated 10% of the recurrent annual budget of their parent institutions. However, it is regrettable that such monies are not forthcoming as most university administrators tend to flout that decision (Okiy, 2015; Yetunde, 2018).

The situation in private tertiary insitution also tends to portray a gloomy picture as the story seems to be the same. Yetunde (2018) observed that in most private institutions in Nigeria, the founder and the board of trustees usually determine the share of university library's budget which in most instances is not adequate. This ugly situation affects the efficiency and effectiveness of their functions.

Again, the high rise in foreign exchange has deterred many academic libraries from acquiring current and relevant titles of e-books, e-journals or subscribe to online databases that will support the academic programs of their parent institutions. Thus the effort of most academic libraries in providing modern information services is thwarted by the existence of the aforementioned problems whose genesis is that of inadequate funding. Also, IT literacy among academic librarians in most libraries is still at the peripheral level. Nok (2016) observed that, many staff of academic libraries are not computer literate as such they find it difficult to cope with the requirements of the electronic age.

Furthermore, providing current awareness services to an ICT driven target academic community requires dynamic, innovative, timely and adequate communication technologies (Fatoki, 2015). However, most academic libraries in Nigeria are severely constrained by a number of factors that includes erratic internet services, lack of hardware and software and in most instances the non-availability of the said ICTs in most academic libraries.

In a survey study carried out by Madhusudhan and Nagabhusbanam (2019) on the use of web-based library services in select university libraries, it was discovered that although many academic libraries now have websites, many of these websites provide static articles. That is articles that a user can only read but cannot make any contribution or leave an opinion. This is a major challenge as

users prefer dynamic websites where they can through the use of web 2.0 make contributions.

Swaminathan (2019) asserted that, intellectual property right is another major challenge facing web-based library service. Libraries require flexible licenses to create archival collections and to transfer contents to new storage technologies for preservation and dissemination Presentation of Data legally. Obtaining flexible licenses for electronic information is quite challenging since users can easily gain access to unauthorized digital information. In addition libraries may need to charge users for access to materials which is against their tradition as a non-profit organization.

Finally, another challenge to use of web-based library services is lack of awareness. Kaur (2019) opined that marketing strategies do not just include telling the library clientele what collections and services are being offered but it also contributes to building relationship with library patrons that begins and ends with awareness of the library's users: their values, their concerns, and their needs.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of 750 registered student users of the library, and the sample size was 200 users randomly selected from different departments. Quantitative data collection method was used involving questionnaire with closed ended questions. The data collected was measured analyzed using mean. The questionnaire was validated by two experts; one in library science and the other in test measurement and evaluation from Nasarawa State University Keffi. The instrument was pilot tested with 10 participants who were also registered users of the library. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha and a reliability coefficient of 0.93 was attained.

Data Analysis

The results of this study are presented in tables as follows:

Research Question 1: What are the challenges facing the use of web-based library services in Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic Library?

Table 1: Mean responses on challenges facing the use of web-based services in Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic Library.

S/N	Issues	Mean	Decision
1	Lackofawarenessofavailableweb services	3.3	Agree
2	Poorinternet coverage	2.2	Not Agree
3	Highcostofinternet services	3.4	Agree
4	Unstablepowersupply	3.0	Agree
5	Staticand unattractivewebsite	2.1	Not Agree
6	Lackofcomputerliteracy skill	2.7	Agree
7	Lackofcomputer facilities	2.8	Agree
8	Non-Challant attitudeoflibrary staff	1.8	Not Agree
9	LackoffundforICT equipment acquisition	3.0	Agree
10	Copyrightissuesaffectingdigitization	2.8	Agree
	GrandMeanScore	**3.0**	**Agree**

Key: *Mean score from 2.5 and above signifies "Agree"*
Mean score from 2.4 below signifies "Not Agree"

Table 1 shows that, lack of awareness of available web-based services, high cost of internet services, unstable power supply, lack of fund for ICT equipment acquisition and copywriter issues among others are the major challenges facing the use of web-based library services in Isa Mustapha Agwai Polytechnic library..

Research Question2: What are the strategies that could be used to remedy these challenges?

Table 2: Mean responses on strategies that could be adopted to remedy the challenges inherent in the use of web-based services in Isa Mustapha Agwai Polytechnic Library.

S/n	Strategies	Mean	Decision
1	Creatingawarenessofavailableweb-basedservices	3.8	Agree
2	Expandingcoverageand qualityofinternetservices	3.6	Agree
3	Organizingtrainingprogramforusers	3.6	Agree
4	Sourcingforalternativemeansoffundsfor libraries	3.2	Agree
5	Designingastrategic planformarketinglibraryservices	3.2	Agree
6	TrainingofstaffonICT literacy	3.5	Agree
7	Commercializingsomelibraryservicesformorefunds	2.9	Agree
8	AcquiringICTfacilities	3.4	Agree
9	Useofcreativecommonlicensesfordigital documents	3.3	Agree
	Grand Mean Score	**3.0**	**Agree**

Key: Mean score from 2.5 and above signifies "Agree"
Mean score from 2.4 below signifies "Not Agree"

Table 2 shows strategies to adopt in order to improve the use of web services in Isa Mustapha Agwai Library and they are: creating awareness of available web-based services, expanding coverage and quality of internet services , organizing training programs for users , training of staff on ICT literacy, acquiring ICT facilities and use of creative commons licenses for online documents

Discussion of Findings

The result gotten from Research Question 1 on challenges facing the use of web-based library services in Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic library indicated that lack of awareness of available web-based library services was a major challenge to the use of the services. This shows that students were not aware of these services hence the need for the library to keep users fully acquainted with their web-based services. This is because library users today prefer the services they obtain online to those that requires them to be physically present. Kaur (2019) noted that web-based library services is a means of challenging the threat posed by the Internet and the WWW by using the library website to market and promote the library to its community. Therefore, the problem is no more that of distance or visiting the physical library building. It is that of awareness of the library website and the services obtainable in it.

Poor internet coverage and service was another major challenge. The poor state of internet service in the Polytechnic and the lack of service coverage generally hinder effective use of library web services. This situation is so bad that it very difficult to receive good network services even within the school premises. This issue was noted by Fatoki (2015) who stated that, most academic libraries in Nigeria are severely constrained by a number of factors that includes erratic internet services, lack of hardware and software and in most instances the non-availability of the said ICTs in most academic libraries.

In addition, high cost of internet service and unstable power supply hinder the use of web-based library services. The cost of internet services and unstable power supply not only hinder the use of library's web services but also prevent the library from making them available in the first place. The cost charged by telecom companies in Nigeria for internet access is on the high side, this coupled with low funding of the library make internet access in the library a mirage. Even when there is internet access, there is hardly power supply with which to access the internet, thereby causing the library to spend more money to run the generators.

Further, the static state and unattractive website of the library prevents the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the users to use it. The design of the library

website is a major challenge, when it comes to provision and utilization of web-based library resources. This is because a poorly designed website will not only be unattractive to users but will also make it difficult to access and navigate the information resources. This agrees with Gbaje and Kotso (2014) who noted that poorly designed library website will not improve the visibility of the library neither will it promote what the library has to offer.

Other challenges to use of web-based library services includes, lack of computer literacy skill on the part of the users, lack of ICT facilities, Attitude of the library staff, lack of fund for ICT acquisition and Copyright issues.

The strategies revealed by the findings that could be used to remedy the challenges facing the use of web-based services in Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic library were that, the library should create awareness of available web-based services through the marketing of the library services. According to Kaur (2019), marketing strategies does not just include telling the library clientele what collections and services are being offered but it also contributes to building relationship with library patrons that begins and ends with awareness of the library's users: their values, their concerns, and their needs; which will help in serving them better through the web.

The library should also look for an alternative means of funding. This will enable them provide better quality services to their users and compete effectively with other information providers. As noted by Abubakar (2018) that academic libraries should explore more alternative sources of funding as over reliance on the government on monies that are not forthcoming may not provide the desired solutions. New initiatives are required in the form of consultancy services, marketing of information products as well as other income generating services. Libraries need to generate or acquire more funds to tackle the problem of inadequate telecommunication gadgets, poor maintenance culture and high cost of computer hardware, etc.

Furthermore, they should ensure wide coverage and quality internet services. The Polytechnic should get major telecom service providers to mount their service antenna within the campus. This will solve the problem of fluctuating and slow network services within the institution. Other suggestions includes, organizing training programs for users and library staff on ICT literacy. Acquiring more ICT facilities and using creative commons licenses for their online documents to enable download without infringement of copyright agreements.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

I. More funds should be provided to enable the library fully upgrade its web-based services to enhance a true virtual experience.
ii. Training and retraining of library staff should be regularly done to keep them abreast with current trends in online library services.
iii. Sensitization programmes should be organized to sensitize users on use of library web services.
iv. The institution should obtain common licenses for digital documents

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