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CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE OF THE ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION LIBRARIES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study investigated the conditions governing access and use of electronic information resources in Federal College of Education Libraries in Northern Nigeria. The objectives include: examine access points of electronic information resources, the conditions governing access and use of electronic information resources in the libraries, the types of training provided to library users for accessing electronic information resources and the challenges associated with the resources access in the libraries. The research adopted qualitative research methodology. The population of the study is the 12 college librarians. The sampled participants were 9 college librarians. Interview was used for data collections. The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that they provided access to electronic information resources that were available on the platform of e-databases, institutional repository, e-Granary and CDS. The challenges associated with access to resources include: power outage, inadequate awareness, slow speed of network, inadequate funding, inadequate user education and information literacy training. In conclusion, the college libraries had invested in EIRs access and use of the resources to enhance research, teaching and learning. The study recommended that the library should provide users with unlimited access to the resources remotely; network facilities should be boosted in order to have wide coverage and satisfy the increased demand from laptop users; provide training on search skills to enable users to have access and use the resources without difficulty and the management of the libraries should ensure that all the challenges, such as power outages, denial of access and network fluctuations, are minimized in order to encourage access and use of the resources and services in the libraries.
Keywords: Conditions, Access, Use, Electronic Information Resources, Training

Introduction

Access is a major issue when dealing with electronic information resources. Once a library has acquired EIRs, the library management expects that the resources

be accessed and utilized. There is need to ensure that users easily access and retrieve information available. EIRs can be good substitutes for conventional resources if the access speed is fast; access to all the important electronic information resources is provided and more computer terminals are installed to provide access to e-resources. Also, electronic resources reduce pressure on academic libraries in terms of physical storage space for books and journals and provide unlimited access to users (Lefuna, 2017). Access to electronic information resources may be remote access, which refers to the use of electronic resources via computer networks or direct access, which is the use of electronic resources via carriers (e.g. discs/disks, cassettes, cartridges) designed to be inserted into a computerized device or its auxiliary equipment. Although there is continuing evidence for increased access to ICTs and online facilities in the developing world, physical access to suitable ICTs and reliable connections to the Internet remains challenging and costly for many libraries in the developing nations. Access to electronic information resources has changed the pattern of library services in the digital era. Libraries now have both printed documents as well as electronic information resources in their collections. The electronic documents can be stored, accessed and delivered as and when required; therefore; the services of libraries are not confined within the four walls but are integrated into local, regional, national and international networks. It is common knowledge that virtually all scholarly and academic journals, electronic databases, online library catalogues, grey literature and other relevant scholarly materials in all fields of knowledge are now accessible on the internet (Okiki, 2012).

Information access in Nigeria, according to Kamba (2015), was crippled as a result of failure from our libraries and information centres for not meeting the needs of the clientele mainly because of inadequate funds, failure to anticipate future needs and keep pace with technology. Chandran (2013), reported that the maximum 66 (53.65%) respondents accessed electronic resources twice a week, followed by 36 (29.3%) every day and 15 (12.2%) once a week. Only 6 (4.88%) used electronic resources rarely. Most of the respondents (60.2%) spent "one hour" to access the electronic resources. Only 14.6% spent "more than two hours" to do so. The formulation of a relevant policy is imperative on the effective access and use of electronic information resources in the libraries around the world. E-resources lifecycle model stated that provision of access to EIRs involves I.P addresses, register, proxy servers, catalogue, portal/access list, campus authentication and URL maintenance (Pesch, 2009).

Again, Ani, Ngulube and Onyancha (2014) conducted a study on the effects of accessibility and the utilization of electronic resources on the productivity of academic staff in Nigerian universities. Respondents that access and use e-resources in research frequently publish more articles in international journals than those who do not. They concluded that the main obstacle to accessing electronic information resources in the library is the lack of ICT infrastructure and that physical access to the ICTs that provide that information is clearly a more pressing problem than a lack of available information itself. Both library staff and library users need to develop both the necessary information seeking skills and basic ICT skills to find the appropriate resources to meet their requirements.

Statement of the Problem

Access to, and use of EIRs is very essential for library users. The shift from print information resources to electronic resources requires provision of unlimited access to the resources that will enable users to search and utilize the resources. This becomes necessary because access to and use of EIRs is still not encouraging in

academic libraries. This could be as a result of: insufficient ICT facilities, such as computers, slow internet connectivity; which discourages users from consulting the resources, lack of adequate skills in identifying, retrieving and using EIRs or shortage of qualified staff to assist users in accessing resources; leads to poor access to and use of EIRs. In this regard, this research was conducted to investigate the conditions governing access and use of EIRs in the libraries under study.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed:

1. What access points of electronic information resources are provided by the libraries to users?
2. What are the conditions governing access and use of electronic information resources in the libraries?
3. What types of training were provided to library users for accessing electronic information resources in the libraries?
4. What are the challenges associated to provision of access to electronic information resources in the libraries?

Methodology

The research adopted qualitative research methodology. The population of the study is the 12 college librarians. The sampled participants were 9 college librarians because they reported to have e-resources available in their libraries, while two libraries indicated non availability. Purposive sampling was used to select the college librarians because their administrative and managerial positions related to procedures, financial administration, practices and challenges. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique used in which the sample is arbitrarily selected because characteristics, which they possess, are considered very relevant to carry out the research (Sharma, 2018). The research used self-developed semi-structured interview using the variables in line with the e-resources lifecycle model for data collections. The participants responses were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

The position of the research participants, code assigned to each participant and methods of interview are presented on Table 1:

Table 1: Schedule of the Interview

S/N	Name of College	Codes	Participants	Time of Interview	Interview Method
1	FCE, Yola	P1	E- Librarian	10:10-11:00am	Face-to-face
2	FCE (Tech), Gombe	P2	Dep. College Librarian	10:30-11:25am	Face-to-face
3	FCE (Tech), Potiskum	P3	College Librarian	11:00-11:45am	Face-to-face
4	FCE, Zaria	P4	E- Librarian	12:00-12:56pm	Face-to-face
5	FCE (Techn), Bichi	P5	E-Librarian	09:35-10:28am	Face-to-face
6	FCE, Kastina	P6	E-Librarian	12:10-12:57pm	Face-to-face
7	FCE, Kontagora	P7	E-Librarian	01:32-2:24pm	Telephone
8	FCE, Pankshin	P8	College Librarian	11:30-12:25pm	Face-to-face
9	FCE, Okene	P9	E-Librarian	11:23-12:16pm	Telephone

The researcher interviewed all the nine participants of the responding college libraries and had to formally seek for permission from the college librarians in all the colleges under study to conduct the interview. Table 1 indicates the position of the participants, code assigned to each participant and methods of interview. The interviews were held in the respective offices of the 7 participants face-to-face while telephone interview was conducted with 2 participants. The responses of the participants of individual colleges were analyzed according to the research variables.

Thematic analysis was used in analyzing the data collected through interview because it focused on examining themes within the data in an attempt to give meaning to what was being expressed by the participants, in line with these, the researcher found thematic analysis appropriate for the study. The themes the researcher identifies, codes and analyses would need to be an accurate reflection of the content of the entire data set. The use of thematic analysis was to provide a more detailed and clear distinct account of one particular theme or group of themes within the data.

Access Points of EIRs

The participants were asked methods used to provide access to EIRs in the college library. In response to this question, the data obtained from the participants were reported in Figure 1.

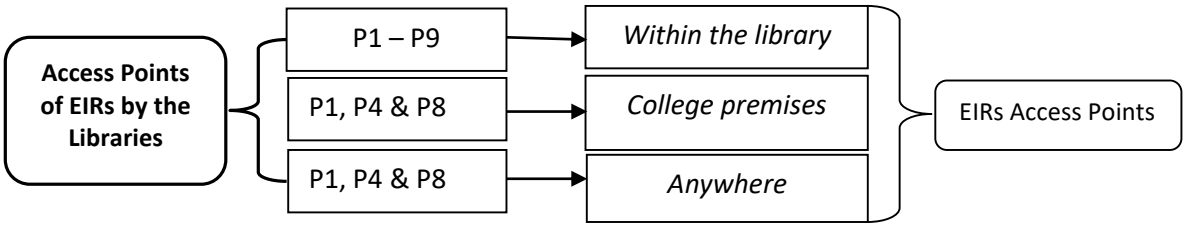


Fig. 1: Access Points of EIRs

The findings in Figure 1, reveals that only the college libraries of participants (P1, P4 & P8) provide access to electronic information resources for library users in the college's premises and anywhere through use of the college website. The EIRs were accessible in the college premises through use of hotspot on the Internet Protocol (IP) radius of the colleges. Other libraries provided access to EIRs through the use of password, giving to users which enable them access the resources anywhere as configured by the EIRs service providers and the libraries.

All the college libraries provide access to EIRs within the library using library computers and personal computer, as the case may be, in the college libraries. This could be through the use of internet for online resources, intranet for offline resources and direct collection from library staff for CD/DVD and other related EIRs storage devices. Therefore, the common methods used to provide access to electronic information resources by the libraries were through terminals in the library and user PC. This implies that majority of the libraries provide access to EIRs within their libraries, meaning that users had to come to the library for access and use of the resources.

Conditions Governing Access to Electronic Information Resources

The participants were asked conditions governing the access to EIRs in the college libraries in terms of resources access EIRs, ethics of editing, copying, printing, connecting other machines and damage of machines in the course of access and use of the resources. The data obtained from the participants were reported in Figure 2:

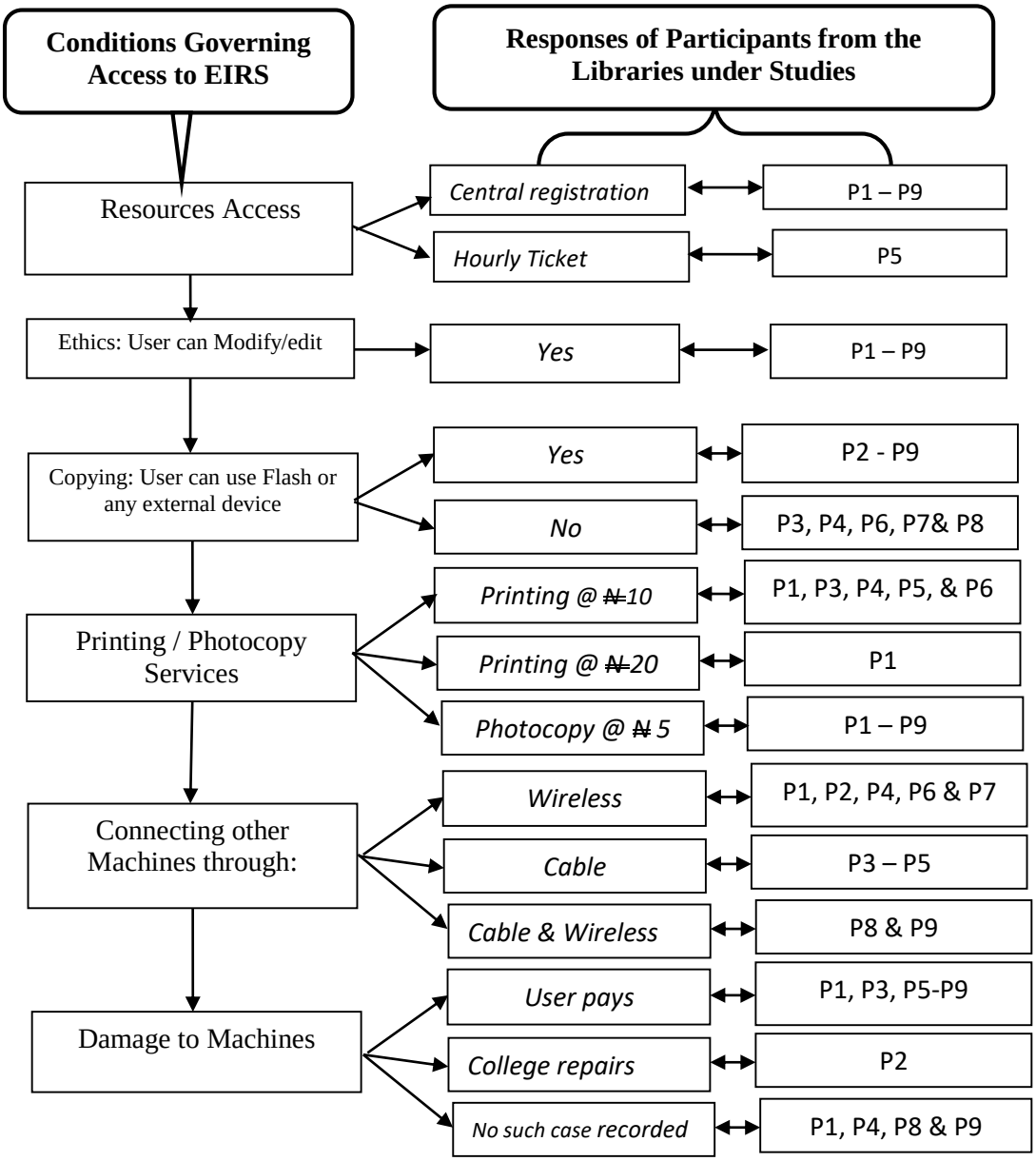


Fig. 2: Conditions Governing Access to EIRs

Figure 2 presented the conditions governing the access to electronic information resources in the college libraries. All the participants (P1-P9) reported that "their student users paid for access through central college registration while staff library users enjoyed free access". This implies that all students of the colleges paid for their use of library resources, whether print or non- print, through institutions registration. In this case, the payment for use of library resources of whatever formats is not subjective to its usage by library users. Because all students and library users paid for the use of library whether they will use the library or not.

Again, users in all the college libraries were allowed to modify or edit EIRs accessed in their libraries. This has given more opportunities to users that do not have personal computers to modify and edit accessed EIRs on the library computers before printing or saving for use. On the other hand, it could lead to longer stay on library computers by such users and denied access to other users, if not regulated by library staff or policy.

In terms of copying electronic information, participants (P1, P2, P5 and P9) of the college libraries commented that "their users were allowed to use a flash or any external drive to copy document from library machines". Although participant 9 emphasized that "their library allowed such devices under strict conditions", five college libraries (P3, P4, P6, P7 and P8) "restricted their users from using any external device to copy electronic information from the college library machines to avoid virus attacks". This is because the participants in the aforementioned libraries reported that they had challenges of maintaining or having antivirus to protect their machines.

Furthermore, eight of the participants from the college libraries reported that the library charged users for printing electronic information at N10 and N5 for photocopying per page with the exception of Participant 1 library charged N20 for printing in black and white. High cost of printing in the library mentioned discouraged users as observed by the researcher and most users go out to commercial centres where they charged less than the library. The printing and photocopying services in the libraries should not be for profit making but to provide convenient and conducive reading environment and also to ensure complies with copyright policy when providing such services for users. Participant 3 library was reported to have only photocopying services charged at N5 per page and no printing services in their library.

On connecting other machines like laptops to access EIRs in the college libraries, the following libraries (P1, P2, P4, P6 and P7) reported that they used wireless (wifi) while P8 and P9 college libraries used both cable and wireless. Only participant 5 college library used cable alone to connect other machines to access EIRs while the P3 college library affirmed in the negative not to connect other machines apart from library computers but were working towards doing such in no distant time. On the aspect of damage to library machines by users, all the participants stated that they had not experienced such cases yet, but if such happened, the user would pay or repair with the exception of participant 2 library that said the college would repair if it occurred. Participant 4 reported to have no document guiding that act yet in the library, but other disciplinary measures may be applied. Thus, such a case has not been recorded in the college library yet.

User Training for Accessing Electronic Information Resources

The participants were asked what types of training the library provided to users to enable them access EIRs in the college library. In response to this question, the data obtained from the participants were presented in Figure 3:

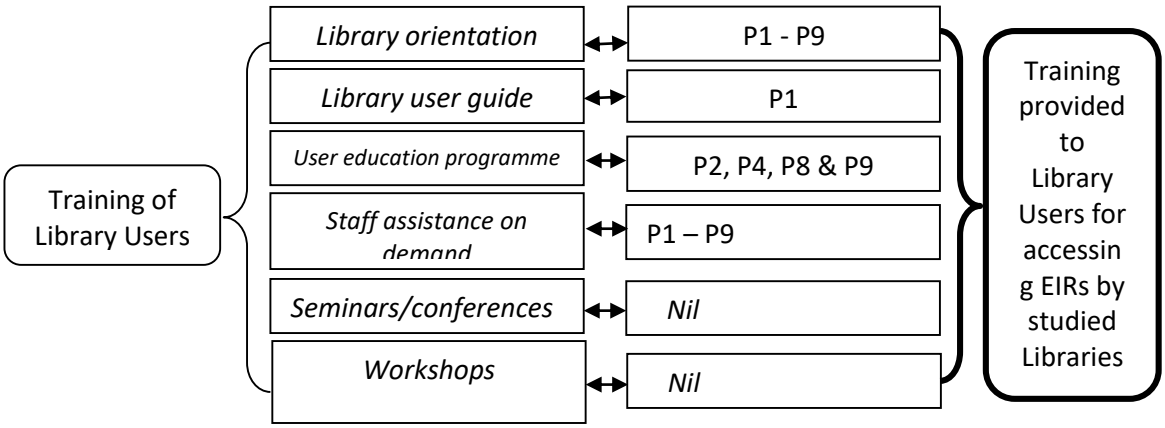


Fig. 3: Training provided to Library Users for Accessing EIRs

Figure 3 outlined the types of training librarians were giving to users to enable them to access and use electronic information resources available in their college

libraries under study were library orientation, staff assistance to users and proper user education programme, as reported by the participants in the Figure 3. Staff assistance on demand by library users were provided by all the libraries because of the new technologies that is associated with accessing EIRs in the college libraries, which users were not familiar with its operations before using the resources. Training is a learning process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, sharpening skills, concepts, rules or change of attitudes and behaviors to enhance the performance of trainees (in this particular case the library users in developing skills for accessing and use of EIRs in the college libraries.

On the other hand, none of the libraries were providing training to users on how to access and use EIRs through seminars/conference or workshop. This could be as the result of none inclusion of the programmes in the curriculum of the colleges as means of training and creating awareness to users on how to access and use EIRs. While orientations, user education programme and staff assistance were formally included in the procedures of providing services to users in the libraries. Thus, the use of seminars/conference or workshop for training of library users on accessing and use of EIRs could be an effective programme that library users could learn about the availability, access and the use of the resources to enhance teaching, learning and research.

Challenges Associated with Provision of Access to EIRs

The participants were asked to states challenges they face in the course of providing access to the resources and their responses were presented below:
The participants interviewed expressed different concerns on the challenges thus: Participants (P1 and P8) indicated they concern with access of the resources as "*inadequate fund to acquire EIRs"*. Participant 2 stated that "*the major challenges we are facing with the* access *of EIRs are inadequate fund to acquire EIRs, lack of awareness of the EIRs relevance and lack of ICT training".*

For participant 3 the challenges of their library were "*inadequate fund to acquire EIRs and inadequate EIRs infrastructure". Similarly,* Participant 4 expressed their library EIRs access challenges as "*inadequate fund to acquire EIRs and inadequate knowledge about EIRs".* The concerns of Participant 5 were "*inadequate fund to acquire EIRs, lack of proper knowledge of EIRs organization, inadequate knowledge about EIRs and lack of awareness of the EIRs relevance".* Participant 6 also highlighted "*lack of awareness of the EIRs relevance, inadequate fund to acquire EIRs, lack of proper knowledge of EIRs organization, inadequate knowledge about EIRs, lack of ICT training and lack of EIRs acquisition policy as the challenges of managing the resources in their library".*

Equally, participant 7 reported *"inadequate fund to acquire EIRs, lack of EIRs acquisition policy as the concerns of their EIRs* access *and lack of ICT training"; While* participant 9 listed "*inadequate fund to acquire EIRs, inadequate knowledge about EIRs and lack of ICT training as threat to proper management of EIRs in their library".* The challenges enumerated by the participants negatively affected the access and use of EIRs in the college libraries. The most pressing challenges associated with the access of EIRs in the college libraries were inadequate funding to acquire EIRs and lack of awareness of the electronic resource's techniques, as pointed out by most participants. Lack of proper knowledge of electronic resources organization was reported by participants (P5 & P6). Participants (P6, P7 and P9) College libraries identified lack of ICT training and lack of continue training as one of the challenges

to the effective access of EIRs. The interview data indicated that there were number of challenges confronting the access of EIRs in the respective college libraries.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding on access points of EIRs in the college libraries corresponds with some observations of Benny (2015) that "few librarians provide EIR access through their college website and library website. Majority of the librarians provide access to EIRs through their OPAC. They have an integrated OPAC for print and e-resources. This helps the users to find out all the existing resources on a particular subject at one place irrespective of their format. According Malviya (2017) through perpetual access, publishers and vendors of electronic resources are willing to provide access to materials in digital format paid for by a library during a subscription even after the subscription has been cancelled by the library. Archival access is secured by a clause in the licensing agreement that should be requested during contract negotiations.

The basic licensing principles for electronic information resources established by IFLA in 2001 stated that "a license should include provision for affordable, perpetual access to the licensed information by some appropriate and workable means.

The findings on access and use of EIRs revealed that student pays for access and use of EIRs through central registration, while staff access and use the resources free. However, all categories of users pays for other services like printing, photocopying and scanning when needed. The findings are similar to that of Muhammed, Aliyu and Aliero (2019) that EIRs access were provided via IP authentication for the entire institution(s), including simultaneous access for multiple users, in different geographic locations and sites. Such access should be provided without requiring the use of a password or other code. Again, users pay for their access and use of EIRs through central registration, print electronic information via the use of library printer and ICT centre printer at certain charges.

The findings on the challenges associated with provision of access to EIRs in the libraries are similar to that of Ankrah and Atuase (2018) which revealed that most postgraduate students rather preferred to access information from Google Scholar and other web-based databases more frequently than the databases in the library. The respondents identified poor internet connection as the most significant constrained for ineffective access to e-resources. 183 (72.6%) respondents were of the view that poor internet connectivity was the major challenge they faced in accessing e-resources. Another 173 (68.7%) confirmed that power outages in the library was a limitation they encountered in accessing electronic resources. In addition, 165 (65.5%) claimed insufficient skills hindered their ability to access e-resources while 157 (62.3%) respondents indicated that they could not access e-resources effectively due to limited subscribed titles. A total of 143 (56.7%) said they did not have effective access to e-resources in the library because of inadequate computers. Also, 32 (12.7%) perceived that overload of e-resources was a challenge. Further, other postgraduate students stated other limitations, such as passwords and user names on the e-databases of the library and the absence of research centre for postgraduate students were a hindrance for effective access of e-resources.

Conclusion

From the study findings, the study concludes that majority of the federal college of education libraries in Northern Nigeria have indeed invested in the development of electronic information resources. However, the college libraries did not actually manage their EIRs effectively for easy access and use and did not provide

the timely and accurate information needed to support organizational goals. Proper management of EIRs is a prerequisite to easy access and use of the resources to enhance research, teaching and learning. In effect, it could be stated that the under utilization of some EIRs like dissertation/thesis/project, e-manuscripts, e-discussion, e-Conference / Seminar / Workshop papers and e-Images that were available in the college libraries; was as the result of inadequate knowledge of the resources available and training on access and use of the resources equally hampered the maximum utilization of such EIRs.

Hence, the college libraries need to adhere to the procedures guiding the access and use of electronic information resources in order to provide unlimited access for the use of these resources. Proper management of EIRs which covers resources development, preservation, organization, access and use would address the lapses identified in the findings of this study.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The college libraries should prepare brochures, leaflets and distribute them to the user community and place posters in public places within the College, at the entrance of the main campus, at the library and at the restaurant.
2. The management of the libraries should ensure that all the challenges, such as power outages, denial of access, network fluctuations and system breakdowns, are minimized in order to promote access and use of the electronic information resources and services in the libraries.
3. Several access topologies should be configured in order to satisfy the increased demand from the laptop owners, who need to access and use EIRs.
4. The Internet bandwidth should be upgraded to enhance the accessibility and use of EIRs, especially online resources.
5. The library management should organize periodic training on the access and use of electronic information resources for library users. Invite someone who is a specialist in that subject to come and give a lecture on a topic related to the library, access and use of EIRs at certain intervals.

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