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ICT Provision, Services and use in the Library for Educational Growth of Students

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Abstract

This paper examined the relevance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to educational development of individuals via the library. The review of literature showed that ICT has led to the globalization of the world economy and to seamless retrieval of information wherever it is provided. Variety of media were observed by the paper to have increased the probability of students to learn more, retain better what they learn and improve their performance. The paper considered ICT provision in library, being an educational service centre, to develop individual intellectually by the services being provided by librarians towards research development and dissemination of relevant information. The paper examined the benefit of stocking ICT education carrier materials for potential and expected library users. It further enumerated ICT materials relevant in enhancing library services, users need and challenges to its use and usage which includes among others: access, maintenance of the system, and dearth of competent manpower to handle the aspect of automation and digitization. The paper concluded that, educational use of the technology is still rudimentary in Nigeria with heavy reliance on print materials.

Keywords: *ICT provision, ICT services, Libraries, ICT use, Multimedia.*

1.1 Introduction

Information Technology (IT) encompasses the notion of the application of computers to storage, retrieval, processing and dissemination of information. This involves, the use of technologies especially computer system, digital electronics and telecommunications, to store, process and transmit information. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a related

term which arose as a result of the advancement in 'IT' which has partly led to the globalization of the world economy and requires seamless retrieval of information wherever it is provided. Thus, this makes communication and media essential parts of the technology.

Communication among communities and between members of the community has been highly enhanced through international

networking such as electronic mail (e-mail), the Internet and Global System for Mobile communication (GSM). ICT is a system considered relevant for acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination of information by means of computers, office machines and other telecommunications tools. Computer machine provides the facilities for the transfer or communications of data through some applications, which Kuar (1996) observed to be pivot of network in information dissemination. This networking, according to him ensures systematic organization and co-ordination of inter-connected libraries, documentation and information centers for achieving greater economy and efficiency.

The usefulness of ICT to multimedia resources storage as sources of reference to past and current information, coupled with technological advancement has brought about its advantages in terms of space and time. Hence, this made the use of multimedia materials indispensable even in the libraries.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

2.2 ICT and Educational Development

Numerous forms of technology have been devised over the years to effectively handle information among which is radio, television, microforms, slides, film, which are means by which some groups of people are comfortable to acquire education. The use of these materials in learning is becoming a universal phenomenon. This is because experiences are abundant in visual stimuli and evoke the strongest responses in libraries or other learning situations. Enrickson (1992) affirmed that electronic media are interesting compelling springboards, which launch students into a wide variety of learning activities, which to him, increases the probability of students to learn more, retain what they learn better, and improve their performance skill. Discussing the relevance

of ICT materials to child education development, Uche (1986), asserts that ICT allow children users to acquire variety of approaches, have different experiences differ from that to be derived from reading a book, consolidate previous lectures, make services of experts available and break down emotional and intellectual barrier to learning.

The advent of CD-ROMs as publishing medium for information packaging of all kinds like encyclopedia, reference works, dictionaries, full text data base and data banks (locally or internationally produced) has enhanced the status of multimedia (Mohammed, 1999). Fapohunda (1995), the adoption of multimedia in the new information age and, with the development of its software connects users to multiple information sources from corporate proprietary database to generalized news services such as Cable Network News (CNN), to Personal electronic mails services and so on. However, Spoonley (1997) observed that, to a large extent, information technology in society as a whole is used only for mundane tasks with little effect to data especially on the actual learning process which continue to be eliminated by lectures and books of various forms. He further noted that, multimedia shows promise of offering an alternative to lectures and books at a much reduced cost, and networks like internet permit a learner to search the world for information and knowledge.

2.3 ICT and Library Services

One of the educational services that facilitate the implementation of educational policy and the promotion of effective educational system all over the world is library, hence compulsory provision of library services in all accredited institutions and agencies in Nigeria. Library serve as one of the most important educational services in the development of individuals intellectuality by the service provided by librarians toward

research development, dissemination of relevant information, stock of education carrier materials, resources in prints or other electronic devices, to potential and expected library users.

Libraries in academic environment such as in Nigerian tertiary institutions: Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education help community members in their research, teaching and learning, community development, as well as in publications. A well equipped library with current facilities and collection is a function of user's productivity towards achieving the set goals of the institution.

One of the materials that facilitate academic works nowadays is information and communication technology (ICT) facilities. Acquisition and installation of ICT in any educational institution and more importantly in the library enhance research and access of members of the academic community to information. Apart from networks, quite a number of typical library based resources are available in online, tapes and CD-ROMs which cover a variety of areas. This, according to Mohammed (1999), includes: bibliography and bibliographical references, periodicals, including abstracting and indexing. Their availability in library has been a source of information to librarian and library users.

The main objective of an information network is to promote avenue for effective utilization of information through resources sharing by group of libraries based on acceptable agreements and policies. The use of computer technology and telecommunications has added new dimension to the concept of networking in the libraries. Bada (2001) enumerated the goals and objectives of information technologies as relate to library system. These are to:

- Increase the volume of work that can be performed
- Expand services without the need for

additional staff

- Free staff from much routine work as possible
- Speed up process of materials
- Improve the quality of existing services
- Encourage better control over resources and services
- Encourage cooperation ventures among institutions
- Improve the status of library and librarians through effective performance
- Facilitates creation of data bases.

In his own submission, Kabala (2004) observed that, with ICT, staff and students can satisfactorily get answers to their queries within the shortest time, they can look up for items of interest in electronics encyclopedia, an article on particular subject from variety of publishers could be culled without having to buy the publication. He stresses further that librarians can perform their functions more effectively by communicating with other users worldwide, Internet can be used to obtain important resources for teaching and learning by sending out orders to publishers and producers of teaching materials and requirements at ease. File transfer and protocol for journal articles, magazine etc can be down loaded. In his own perspective, Adetimirin (2007) observed that ICTs can facilitate communications between teachers and students. It also provides students with additional opportunities to write edit and undertake multimedia project but the adoption of the learning tools in higher education is dependent on awareness, availability and ability to use it.

3.1 ICT Resources and Use

Use and users' studies have been carried out by scholars to justify selection and collection of materials in libraries. This is by

studying the characteristic of users to understand users' behaviours and to meet their information needs. Multimedia or digital in librarianship cover collections or materials that include kits, artifacts, audio, video and computer readable materials (Feather and Sturges, 1997). Traditionally, multimedia materials and contents have been used as teaching support materials. Thus, a lecture might be illustrated with slides, while the still projection materials have attention focusing values. With multimedia, concepts are easily comprehended. The numerous advantages from the use of computer control information retrieval system are also limitless. For instance, the advent of computers have brought about the use of CD-Rom in libraries, therefore, information that are got from sources like books, journals, and other reports are now in CD-Rom (Olaoye, 1998). But how effectively are these materials and contents put to use by the students?

According to Akande (2004) the educational use of the Internet is still very rudimentary, with heavy reliance on print materials. That no information communication technologies are used as such to deliver the content and provide students support. There are hardly any other resources such as audio or video materials to accompany the materials he therefore suggest that attempt should be made to take advantages of the emerging and new information and communication technologies. Corbett and Williams (2002) observed the student use of technology on education is expected to improve educational outcomes, increase skills in the use of technology and decrease in equalities between groups therefore the adoption and use of ICTs could facilitate access to unlimited and current information irrespective of geographical location and time.

The study of McMahon et al (1999) show that the factors that influenced the way undergraduate students in UK universities use

computers are determined by access, training and time. Barraket and Scott (2001), in their study highlighted ready access to infrastructure, availability of facilities, maintenance and up grading equipment determined use of ITC. Other factors according to Opaleke (1998) and Opaleke (2005) include: dearth of competent manpower to handle all aspect of automation, poor maintenance of ICT system gadget, irregular network connection, subscription fee delay and power failure affect effective use of ICT in libraries and as such the need to address them by appropriate authority so as to encourage use by students.

Conclusion

ICT is no longer new to the development of education in Nigeria as it has quite enormous advantages or benefits to users. Its provision, services and utilization enhance academic activities. Use of ICT, have been observed to largely depend on users' awareness, availability of the facilities and acquisition of appropriate skills to use, while maintenance and management should be handled by competent manpower or staff.

The very salient point of this paper is that, ICT provision and services growth towards education cannot be overemphasized and the usefulness to students on assignment undertakings, literature search, and self-learning are enormous and solicited. To this end, library activity where one exists enhances library productivity. However, it could only enhance educational growth where users have free access to the collection, skillful in use, and relevance to needs of potential users.

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