

# **National Open University of Nigeria**

**Library Orientation  
Manual  
(NOUNLOM)**



Edited By  
**Dr. Adam Gambo Saleh**



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA  
LIBRARY ORIENTATION MANUAL**

**Edited by  
DR. ADAM GAMBO SALEH**

**UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA  
HEADQUARTERS  
JABI, ABUJA**

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## Chapter 4

### E-Resources and Services in Distance Learning Environment

*Olaronke Fagbola and Oluwaseun Babarotimi*

#### 4.0 Introduction

Libraries are vital components of academic institutions. As a result of their services to all the segments of the populace, libraries are unique and strategic in the society. Libraries provide access, organise and help users find the information they need (Igwe and Onah, 2013). Libraries form an integral part of education and services as means through which individuals, organisations and societies provide large number of people an unhindered access to substantial information and or level of knowledge (Fagbola, 2015). Information provision is crucial to knowledge, the bedrock of transformation and development in varying aspects of life. Information is indispensable. It is the only strategic resource that contributes to the development of man (Uzuegbu and Uzuegbu, 2013).

Learning in the 21st century is significantly different from learning in the preceding centuries. Learning in the 21st century is learner-centred, a lifelong process. With the opportunities brought by distance learning, access to higher education is provided with no boundaries of space and time. Distance education (process by which an individual or institution packages information in such a way that an individual or group of individuals learn at a distance) allows for a greater diversity of students to have access to especially university education but also creates a number of variables/scenario that can make deploying library services a big challenge (Hundu, Tuamsen and Dabis, 2013). Distance education usually employs all available media, methods and techniques to enable learners' access education/information at a distance.

The advent of the Internet and use of diverse social networking tools (WhatsApp, Flickr, Instant messaging, Twitter, Web 2.0) through Information Communication and Technologies (ICTs) have revolutionised the provision of information services to library patrons and has a major impact on how people find and access information.

The rising popularity of e-books, e-journals and e-resources in particular has helped in transforming the reading habits of library patrons in our universities. This development to a very large extent has altered, redefined and transformed the nature of libraries and information services available on offer in libraries, especially academic libraries today. In this changing landscape, academic libraries are trying to adjust their services to these new realities while still serving the needs of patrons who rely on more traditional resources. Before discussing the various types of services, it is imperative to first discuss available electronic resources.

#### 4.1 Available Electronic Resources in NOUN Library

Electronic resources available in NOUN virtual library include but are not limited to the following:

| S/N | E-RESOURCES                                                | SUBJECT AREA COVERED                                                                                                                                                              | LINK                                                                                        |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | <u>AGORA(ACCESS TO GLOBAL ONLINE RESEARCH AGRICULTURE)</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> </ul>                                                                                                                   | <a href="http://www.fao.org/agora">http://www.fao.org/agora</a>                             |
| 2.  | <u>EBSCO</u>                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All subject areas covered</li> </ul>                                                                                                     | <a href="http://search.ebscohost.com/">http://search.ebscohost.com/</a>                     |
| 3.  | <u>HINARI(Journal)</u>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Sciences</li> <li>• Environmental science</li> <li>• Health education</li> <li>• Biological Science</li> <li>• Nursing</li> </ul> | <a href="http://www.who.int/hinari/training/en/">http://www.who.int/hinari/training/en/</a> |
| 4.  | <u>National Virtual Library</u>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic books, journals, films, videos and maps in various fields to facilitate teaching, research and learning.</li> </ul>           | <a href="http://www.nigerianvirtuallibrary.com/">http://www.nigerianvirtuallibrary.com/</a> |

|    |                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                         |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5. | <u>Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE)</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• environmental science</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <a href="http://oare.oaresciences.org/content/en/journals.php">http://oare.oaresciences.org/content/en/journals.php</a> |
| 6. | <u>SAGE</u>                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAGE Choice is offered on all SAGE's subscription journals and allows authors to make their published article freely available for an article processing charge</li> <li>• SAGE pure gold open access journals</li> <li>• SAGE also supports green open access archiving for authors publishing in traditional subscription journals</li> </ul> | <a href="https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur">https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur</a>                                         |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                       |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7. | <p><b>Law Pavilion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law Pavilion is a leading legal IT Research Tools provider whose existence serves to help Lawyers, Judges and Law firms make the most of their legal practice through the provision of cutting edge IT Solutions for the Legal Industry.</li> <li>• In a global world becoming increasingly technology driven, Law Pavilion helps bring your practice up to speed with current global best practices through our array of premium products: Law Pavilion Electronic Law Report (LPELR), Law Pavilion Case Manager, Case Manager Corporate Counsel Version, Law Pavilion Court Manager, Law Pavilion Solicitors' Toolkit and Law Pavilion Students Pack; thus guaranteeing you speed, efficiency, convenience and ease in the delivery of Justice.</li> </ul> | <a href="http://www.lawpavilion.com/">http://www.lawpavilion.com/</a> |
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|    |                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                             |
|----|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8. | <b>Project MUSE</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project MUSE is a leading provider of digital humanities and social sciences content; since 1995, its electronic journal collections have supported a wide array of research needs at academic, public, special, and school libraries worldwide. MUSE books and journals, from leading university presses and scholarly societies, are fully integrated for search and discovery</li> </ul>       | <a href="http://muse.jhu.edu/">http://muse.jhu.edu/</a>                     |
| 9. | <b>World Bank eLibrary</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Outreach, World Bank Economic Review and World Bank Research Observer journal articles published since 1996</li> <li>Development Economics (DEC) policy research working papers published since 1995</li> <li>e-books and reports dating as far back as the 1970's (in the case of the World Development Reports), plus</li> <li>All new formal publications upon release.</li> </ul> | <a href="http://elibrary.worldbank.org/">http://elibrary.worldbank.org/</a> |

|     |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |               |
|-----|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 10. | JSTOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>African American Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>African Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>American Indian Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>American Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Anthropology</u></li> <li>• <u>Aquatic Sciences</u></li> <li>• <u>Archaeology</u></li> <li>• <u>Architecture &amp; Architectural History</u></li> <li>• <u>Art &amp; Art History</u></li> <li>• <u>Asian Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Astronomy</u></li> <li>• <u>Bibliography</u></li> <li>• <u>Biological Sciences</u></li> <li>• <u>Botany &amp; Plant Sciences</u></li> <li>• <u>British Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Business</u></li> <li>• <u>Classical Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Development Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Developmental &amp; Cell Biology</u></li> <li>• <u>Ecology &amp; Evolutionary Biology</u></li> <li>• <u>Economics</u></li> <li>• <u>Education</u></li> </ul> | www.jstor.org |
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|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Feminist &amp; Women's Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Film Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Finance</u></li> <li>• <u>Folklore</u></li> <li>• <u>General Science</u></li> <li>• <u>Geography</u></li> <li>• <u>Health Policy</u></li> <li>• <u>Health Sciences</u></li> <li>• <u>History</u></li> <li>• <u>History of Science &amp; Technology</u></li> <li>• <u>Irish Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Jewish Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Language &amp; Literature</u></li> <li>• <u>Latin American Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Law</u></li> <li>• <u>Library Science</u></li> <li>• <u>Linguistics</u></li> <li>• <u>Management &amp; Organizational Behavior</u></li> <li>• <u>Marketing &amp; Advertising</u></li> <li>• <u>Mathematics</u></li> <li>• <u>Middle East Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Music</u></li> </ul> |  |
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|  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|--|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Paleontology</u></li> <li>• <u>Performing Arts</u></li> <li>• <u>Philosophy</u></li> <li>• <u>Political Science</u></li> <li>• <u>Population Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Psychology</u></li> <li>• <u>Public Policy &amp; Administration</u></li> <li>• <u>Religion</u></li> <li>• <u>Slavic Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Sociology</u></li> <li>• <u>Statistics</u></li> <li>• <u>Transportation Studies</u></li> <li>• <u>Zoology</u></li> </ul> |  |
|--|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

## 4.2 Accessibility of Available Electronic Resources

- i. Most databases are under subscription and only accessible with username and password, or through a Host Source. Resources obtained are usually peer reviewed and deemed reliable.
- ii. Special reference e-libraries are only accessible through subscription or a host source.
- iii. Access through a Reference Librarian (ask a librarian).
- iv. Open access resources are easily accessible but difficult to 'sift' through except when accessed through authenticated portals or host.

### 4.2.1 OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)

Online public access catalogue is the electronic form of the card catalogue. The OPAC helps users to check through the library's holdings and to know the location of materials on the shelf through the call numbers, and determine its present status; on loan or available on the shelf. The OPAC has options for searching for a book through the TITLE, AUTHOR and the SUBJECT.

NOUN Library is currently using NewGenLib online public access catalogue application.

### 4.2.2 Open Access Sites

Examples of open access sites include:

1. PubMed Central – hard sciences:  
>[www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/](http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/)<
2. BioMed Central – medicine: >[www.biomedcentral.com/](http://www.biomedcentral.com/)<
3. DOAJ – all subjects: >[www.doaj.org/](http://www.doaj.org/)<
4. Bioline – research from developing countries:  
<http://www.bioline.org.br>

### 4.2.3 Scholarly Research Search Engines

Some popularly used scholarly research search engines include:

- i. ACADEMIC INFO - <http://www.academicinfo.net/subject-guides>
- ii. NATIONAL ARCHIVES - <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/about-arc.html>
- iii. BASE - <http://www.base-search.net/>
- iv. CITEULIKE - <http://www.citeulike.org/>
- v. ERIC - <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
- vi. GOOGLE SCHOLAR - <http://scholar.google.ca/>
- vii. INFOMINE - <http://infomine.ucr.edu/>
- viii. INFOTOPIA - <http://www.infotopia.info/>
- ix. LIBGUIDES - <http://libguides.com/community.php?m=i&ref=libguides.com>
- x. REFSEEK - <http://www.refseek.com/>
- xi. THE VIRTUAL LRC - <http://www.virtuallrc.com/>

### 4.2.4 Meta Search Engines

Meta search engines send user requests to several other search engines and return the results from each one.

- i. They enhance the search because access to all the other search engines is simultaneous.
- ii. Examples of Meta search engines include: Meta-crawler and Dog pile.

### 4.3 Library Services

The library in any given community (academic, public, school or special) is expected to provide unique and effective services to the community where it is located. According to Aina (2002), the library is a store which stocks all kinds of knowledge/information carriers/materials that are meant to be consulted and used by patrons (staff and students) with little or no expense. The services provided to users of libraries basically will depend on the objectives of the parent

body. A major component of library service is ensuring that users access and use library resources effectively.

Library services are information services aimed at providing users with the right information needed to accomplish a task or for decision-making or reduction of uncertainty level. There are basic information services expected of an ideal academic library which are geared toward supporting the objectives of the parent institution - teaching, learning and research. These services can be categorized into two basic types. They are:

A. **Specialised library services:** These are special library services that are on offer in some types of library. They include:

- **Literature search:** This involves the systematic search for literature in any form on a particular topic. It forms the very first step of a research pursuit. It also makes available latest facts in writing articles or topic (Igwe and Kolawole, 2013). It can be done through e-mail alerting system online.
- **Selective dissemination of information:** This is service within a library that concerns itself with the channeling of new items of information from various sources to those points within the organisation where they can be useful (Edom, 2013). It is a system deployed by librarians/libraries to selectively disseminate information about new documents to researchers, interested patrons who might have potential interest in a given research area. Libraries usually compile the bibliographic details of all the new acquisitions to produce complete or selective list for circulations to patrons.
- **Current awareness services:** These are services which provides library patrons with information on the latest developments within a given/specific subject area. It is a device for alerting specialist about latest developments and publications newly acquired by the library (Edom, 2013 as cited in Kumar, 2004). It is a

readers' service function that is employed to inform users about new acquisition in the library through the use of displayed boards and shelves to draw attention of users to recent addition of the library. This type of service is meant for every information user. It helps to create awareness on recent library acquisition. In a distance learning library such as the library of National Open University of Nigeria, blogs can be used as a timely communication tool to inform patrons about events in the library, news on updated resources, subject guides to assist researchers.

- **Referral services:** This type of library services involves directing enquirers to source(s) of information which may be an organisation or an individual expert.
- **Translation service:** Translation is a process of transforming precisely the information contents of the text from one language to another. The former is called the source language and the latter is called the text language.

**B. General library services:** These are services directed at actively exploiting the collection of information resources in response to users' information requirements that have direct impact on the users for the satisfaction of their information needs. They are services generally provided to users of libraries. Some of the general library services include:

- **Lending services:** This entails giving out books or other library resources to registered users of the library for a short and defined period of time.
- **Inter-library loan:** This is a service where a student, faculty or staff of a university may obtain books or photocopies of articles from other institutions' library. This is a cooperative activity that entails a given library going an extra mile to meet the information needs of her user(s) by using the resources of another library. Also, registered users of a given library can be permitted to visit and use the resources of another library.

- **Document delivery services:** This service provides access to articles and book chapters that are available from publishers and/parent organisations. It is a fee-based service which requires the scanning of journal articles and mailing to interested patrons.
- **Digital library services:** This provides consulting, applications, and infrastructures to help libraries create, manage, and preserve digital content for use by patrons.
- **Reservation service:** This is very common in academic libraries. There are some documents that are heavily consulted by users, or are of high risk if kept on the open shelves. Hence, such special documents are kept in a restricted section of the library called the reserve collection room. Such kept materials can only be used for a certain period.
- **Provision of seating and study facilities:** Apart from general reading seats and tables, readers who intend to use the library for research or any serious academic activity, academic and large public libraries provide study carrels. In addition, libraries provide equipment and other facilities necessary for viewing and listening to audio visual materials.
- **Reference services:** Readers are provided this service on request. People have different reference queries that need to be solved by the librarian. Hence, it is generally a person-to-person service. In many cases, reference processes involve interviewing the reader to enable the reference librarian articulate the problem of the user clearly.
- **User education:** This entails any effort formal or informal, which will guide and instruct existing and potential library users in the recognition and formulation of their information needs. This is for the effective and efficient use of information services and the assessment of source materials that can satisfy specific information requirements. With the advent of IT, which has penetrated almost all the activities of

many libraries, it is important to explain the workings of a library to a new user in detail. The ultimate objective is to enable users exploit the resources of a library to the fullest.

- **Information literacy Programs:** This is a more holistic programme of user-education. Libraries emphasize the need for users to acquire skills that will enable them search for information independently on any aspect of knowledge using both traditional and electronic methods of accessing information. Information literacy programme is geared towards attaining competence in the use of library and computer networks/technologies. Information literacy and library use instruction can be incorporated in student's course materials. Also, online tutorials on how to use the library can be designed for them. Audio and video streaming can be used to provide library orientation and information literacy.
- **Library materials exhibition and displays services:** Libraries acquire information materials almost on daily basis. These new products are displayed upon arrival in the library on display racks and tables at reading corners, circulation counters in order to attract client's attention and use accordingly. However, in this era of technology such displays and exhibitions can be done through the library websites and social media networking tools to perform the exhibition services.
- **Photocopying services:** Photocopiers are made available and equipped at the designated position in the library for the provision of photocopying and printing self-services.
- **Bindery services:** This evaluates and prepares serials and monographs for commercial library binding and re-binding and does in-house pamphlet binding. Bindery staffs are also involved in development of bindery contracts, resolution of commercial binding problems, and quality control inspections of materials returning from the commercial bindery.

The advent of modern technologies expanded the horizon of libraries services and the processes of serving both information seekers and diverse users of information to include but not limited to:

- Internet services
- Packaging of information to meet specific user's need
- Analysis and interpretation of information
- Database search
- Thesaurus construction
- Text messaging/e-mail alert
- Social networking platform
- Rich site summary (RSS).

Apart from the list of library services stated above, the most common services that libraries offer to distance education students can be supported by the library through the following services because of the peculiarity of their programme:

- Remote access to online library catalogue.
- Electronic databases.
- Electronic books and journals.
- Electronic research guides on academic and special interest topics: These are electronic help pages that can be used to provide subject guides resource lists, instruction on how to conduct research, instruction on use of database and Web resources, help on locating books and articles, information on plagiarism and copyright, help with citations and style guides.
- Electronic general library guides.
- Ask-A-Librarian (chat, e-mail or telephone): This is a service designed to provide real-time assistance to users at a distance. It is one of the core duties of Reference librarians. In addition to chat services, webinars and individual instruction can be provided via telephone, Skype, online conferencing amongst others.
- Electronic reserves.

- **Collection development:** This entails providing students, lecturers with access to a wide range of reading materials relevant to their course(s) of study.
- **Timely student support:** Student support services *can be* designed to help *students' in a distance learning environment* maximise their academic potential and achieve their academic and personal goals.

## Conclusion

Libraries are the home of knowledge, the key enablers and providers of access to diverse information and knowledge, which is produced when information is absorbed, processed and internalised by individuals. Supporting distance learners with library services can be a herculean task. This is more so in the utilisation of electronic resources because for them, visiting a physical library can be challenging. Librarians in distance learning institutions are therefore, encouraged to ensure that library users are empowered through information literacy tutorials. Patrons should also be encouraged to use the various social networking tools to enhance unhindered access to information regardless of the format in which they appear.

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