

Challenges Associated with the Use of ICT Facilities in Public Library of Nigeria

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Abstract

This article is on challenges associated with the use of ICT facilities in public library of Nigeria. Public libraries presently are incorporating information communication technology facilities into her services. Many Nigerian public libraries which out-dated have been able to procure information communication technologies to its services. State public libraries that have tried to incorporate ICTs are Edo, Delta and Anambra public library. The paper discusses challenges associated with the use of ICTs facilities in public library, policies regulating information technology, impact of information technology on library services. The researchers proffer solutions to problems of ICTs in public libraries in Nigeria.

Keywords: Information communication technologies, Public library, Library services, and Librarians.

Introduction

A public library is an organisation established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government, or through some others forms of community organisation. It provides access to knowledge information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, age, nationality, ages, gender, religion language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment.

Public libraries also provide material for children that includes books, videos and DVDs, music CDs, and other material (both fiction and non-fiction), often housed in a special section. Child oriented websites with no-line educational games and programs specifically designed for younger library users are becoming increasingly common public libraries may also provide services for other particular groups, such as large print or Braille materials, young adult literature and other materials for teenagers or materials in other than the national language.

Librarians at most public library provide reference and research help to the general public, usually at a reference desk but can often be done by telephone interview (Oghenetega, Oyenike & Ugulu, 2014). As online discussion and social networking allow for remote access, reference is becoming available virtually through the use of internet and e-mail. Depending on the size of the library, there may be more than one desk, at some smaller libraries all transactions may occur at one desk, while large urban public libraries may employ subject specialist librarians with the ability to staff multiple reference or information desks to answer queries about particular topics at anytime of the day or night. Often the children's section in a public library has it owns references desk (Alistair and Hoare 2006).

According to International Federation of Library Association (2004) submits that public library's established under state enabling laws or regulations to serve a community, district or region. In this modern day, developments in ICT (information communication technology) have resulted in great changes in people's live for work, learning and leisure. These developments have changed the demands being made on Public Library and Information Services (PLIS) in terms of the expectations of their customers or patrons, the national and local policy agenda within which the public library operates and the means by which type can deliver services. In other to maintain the level of services required in fulfilling their functions. Public libraries presently are incorporating information communication technology facilities into her services. Many Nigerian public libraries which out-dated have been able to procure information communication technology to its services. In meeting world standard, Example of public library with a standard information communication technology services is the Edo State library which stands as the case study for this research. According to Patricia (2000) opined that computer technology (ICT) has redefined many services in public libraries, including collecting searching with online public access catalogues (OPACs), internet access, and so on. These innovations are expected to continue their present rapid growth. The benefits of computer technology are evident, but successful patron use, requires a comfort level with computers, a familiarity with basic search methods, and an ability to adapt to constantly

changing technologies. These requirements may be of particular concern for both the older and young users of public libraries.

Griebel (1998) stated that the older generation has been hesitant to use news technology and emphasized that public libraries are in an excellent position to address this issue. Public libraries are prominent providers of the burgeoning array of information of use to seniors (Kleiman 2000) for whom lifelong learning is increasing a priority and at the same time may be their first introduction to computer technology. There is thus a need to understand these technological issues from the perspective of both the older and younger users of public library and the implications for successful library visits.

In Nigeria, the application of information technology to public libraries has helped in providing a wide knowledge base for information seekers. New alternative to information has also been recorded. Public library known for its wide range of services regardless of ages, gender, status, ethnicity, educational qualification has foster easy and experienced when public libraries do things manually is been removed. Although not all public libraries in the country is connected to the internet and has information communication facilities. With the incorporation of information of information and communication facilities and technologies into the Edo state library, current awareness information is assured for its users. The use of information technology has helped in promoting Nigeria's participating in the concept of Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC) and universal availability providing its own resources for worldwide access, while as the same time, it will be accessing others.

Conclusively, the driving forces of the ICT revolution and the information societies are the development, diffusion and use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in contemporary societies. The diffusion of ICTs has contributed enormously to the growth of economics, social, political especially the educational sector where the public library is a department of non-formal education which promotes the formal and informal education of all people.

Purpose of the Study

The specific objectives of this paper are as follows:

- To provide solution on how to eradicate the lack of information technology facilities in public libraries.
- Make the atmosphere clear for ICT professional to come into the public library.
- To correct the poor funding problems of the public libraries.
- To encouraging staff training in ICT in public libraries.

Problems of using information communication technology in public library

The following are the problems associated with the use of ICT facilities in public library.

- Limited/Restricted access to users.
- Poor maintenance culture
- Poor networking
- Lack of train personnel
- Illiteracy
- Poverty (cost)
- Lack of adequate infrastructure
- Erratic power supply
- Policy structure of the government
- Political factors
- Economic factors
- Cultural factors
- Technological factors

Limited/Restricted access to users

It could be said that public library are not effectively implementing the application of information technology to its services. Users of the library are restricted to the use of ICT facilities in the library because they are sacred of damaging the equipment. 24 hours 7 days of the week, the computer system and other information users to the manual form of library servicers.

Poor maintenance culture

Most of the equipment procured for the information technology was purchased from foreign countries and as a result of the nation's backwardness. In the use of ICT facilities, they lack information and experience personnel's to effect repairs on the system during breaking down. Also when complains are passed to higher quarters or the government for consideration it goes through as long bureaucratic process.

Poor networking

When facilities are reluctantly switched on, the rate of downloading information are normally slow and in most case foil, when information is being shared from a far network.

Lack of trained personnel

Nigerian public libraries that have managed to tap into information technology resources lack trained information technology experts. This fact has left the information technology services of the library performing little or no of its functions.

Erratic power supply

The effective utilization of information and communication technology depends largely on effective and constant power supply. This is so, because cannot function effectively. It is therefore necessary that the institution or external system that wish to operate these technologies should make adequate provision for constant electricity supply since the electricity corporation (NEPA) now known as PHCN has become so epileptic. A generating set should be made available to supplement (PHCN) irregular supply.

Illiteracy

There is no gain saying the fact that illiteracy affects the effective utilization of information and communication technology (ICT). This ascertain is evident in the fact that many student in the academic institute have little or no idea about these modern technologies or electronic wonder and because of their lack of awareness they tends to discard it use on the ground that these technologies can be done electronically, they can also be done manually. It is therefore imperative that these set of people should be given lesson on how operate and use these technologies.

Poverty (Cost)

It is true of the saying that finance is the life wires of any organization as such the effective utilization of information and communication technology depends to a great extent on the financial position of the institution.

Lack of adequate infrastructure

The effective utilization of information technology can be hindered where there is no good roads, good telephone communication network, power supply etc. it is therefore, imperative that the institution should make adequate provision of these infrastructure facilities to enhance the effective utilization of technology especially in the public institution in order to enhance their effectiveness.

Policy structure of the government

The growth of any communication technology in a society and hence its applicability for distance education depend to a very great extent on the degree to which policy makers recognize the importance of ICT in promoting a knowledge based society.

Political factors

The perception and attitudes of a political system greatly affect the acceptance and growth of technology in any society. The political system is conscious of the pay-off of ICT for the enhancement of the educational profile of a country will frame appropriate policies for the adoption and dissemination of ICT throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Economic factors

Developing countries often lack the growth of communication technology in a country, the initial allocation as well as a matching fund to make feasible investment in ICT. Many countries often acquire costly technology without making provisions for bonding sufficient infrastructure to run them.

Cultural factors

Language is one of the major factors that hinder the easy assimilation of ICTs by many developing countries, this hinder transfer of technology. The radio and TV programmes, computer software and the printed texts produced in different countries bearing different cultural backgrounds.

Technological factors

Technology becomes the determining factor in the growth of ICT in any society with regards to the acceptance of a popular technology the factors such as access cost, teaching functions, inter-activeness and user friendliness, organizational issue and speed afforded to change are important issues. Another major problem the Nigerian society is facing is access. How many people really have access to telephone and the internet? Many Nigerian that quickly acquired mobile cell phone at the introduction of GSM projects in Nigeria are presently unable to afford the cost of recharge the phones to make vital calls. Internet access is especially a good measure of the availability of digital technology. It all in Nigeria because it require the integration of individual components like computers, telecommunication and skills. The proliferation of internet cafes is still largely restricted to cities and urban area. Even when, main city dwellers still do not know to use a computer; the few can still find it hard to afford the increasing cost of internet use because of the instability in electricity and the large dependence on gasoline-powered generators. Of course, many of the computers available in these internet cafes and government offices in Nigeria are the old and antiquated ones either donated by humanitarian agencies or refurbished from at the Ikeja computer village in the suburb of Lagos.

In conclusion, these problems should be checked and ensured that the lapse affecting information technology and the use its facilities on public library are corrected.

Policies regulating information communication technology on public library services.

Information communication technology, policy is an official statement which spells out the objectives, goals, principles, strategies etc intended to guide and regulate the development, operation and application of ICT. The following are some covers summaries of the policies that regulate ICTs.

- a. Development of ICT infrastructures
 - i. Infrastructure development
 - ii. Inter-operation and information system
 - iii. Enhancement of public services
 - iv. Cost saving in service delivery, purchasing, communication
 - v. Electronic commerce and secure transaction
 - vi. Development of technological standards
- b. Development of skills
 - i. Research and development
 - ii. ICTs education and training
- c. Development of legislature and policies to correspond to the requirement of new ICTs
 - i. Diffusion of information technology
 - ii. Development of ICTs industries
 - iii. Trade policies for ICT- related goods and services
 - iv. Pricing and taxation of electronic services
 - v. Protecting of intellectual property
 - vi. Privacy and personal data
 - vii. Protection of cultural and linguistic diversity
 - viii. Protection against illegal and harmful contents
 - ix. Adoption of standards
- d. Institutional development and co-ordination
 - i. Institutional and regulatory structures
 - ii. National interface and co-operation
- e. Access to ICT
 - i. Access to infrastructure
 - ii. Access to information
- f. Monitoring ICT
 - i. Monitoring the use of ICT
 - ii. Measurement of the impact of ICTs

Information communication technology on library services

Library sources, services and operations have been greatly influenced by the rapid technological innovations over the years. The way information is disseminated, captured, collected, stored and transferred has provided a new impetus to library functions and services. With development in information technology libraries are being called on to offer broad access to global information and becomes less dependent on printed collections (Rowley and Black, 1996, cited by Kiondo 2004). Consequently, libraries must be able to be an “access organisation” providing access to an array of information resources. This means having access as the right of use and not ownership of the resources, which makes licensing agreement critical (Kiondo, 2004). The application of information technology into library routines may also be referred to as “library automation”. Library helps in providing efficient and quick library services, it is economical because it saves human labour, eliminates duplication of jobs, and processes many data involved in the operations of the library operations and services, especially when budgets cut by many parents institutions, fluctuations in exchange rate of currencies, and the rapid growing cost of periodicals are the main difficulties faced by most libraries and on the contrary, when information needs of users are increasing and diversified.

Information technology, has contributed to all types of libraries in the following operations.

- 1) Selection and acquisition operation
- 2) Registration of users
- 3) Resources sharing activities
- 4) Online catalogue
- 5) Fast and reliable library services
- 6) Selective dissemination of information resources
- 7) Reference services etc.

CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATION

Public libraries provides access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, age,

nationality, gender, religion language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment. The article discussed issues on challenges associated with the use of ICTs facilities in public library, policies regulating information technology, impact of information technology on library services. The following recommendation to- ICT professionals, Librarians in public and academic libraries, and government.

- i. ICT professionals in Nigeria should support the development and growth of ICT by reducing their price of installation of ICT facilities to organizations especially libraries.
- ii. State Governments should vote enough funds to education, especially public and academic libraries.
- iii. Government and philanthropic organizations should be given more orientation on the importance of public library to the community, wider public and national development as made to understand the need why funding has to come from both on regular basis.
- iv. Measure should be put place to counter problems that affects the public libraries before they arises.
- v. Better orientation should be given to the staff of the public library and the benefits attached to the effective and efficient usage of ICT in service delivery
- vi. Public librarians and other staff of the library should be given adequate training on information communication technology as it relates to the services of the library so as to be able to power its programme
- vii. For public libraries that do not have ICT facilities, they should please strive to introduce information communication technologies into their existing services.
- viii. ICTs polices should be adopts by public libraries in Nigeria.

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