

UTILISATION OF DIGITAL LIBRARY RESOURCES BY MASS COMMUNICATION STUDENTS IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN EDO STATE

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Abstract

Digital libraries have opened vistas of opportunities and doors for higher education system in Nigeria. E-libraries have brought about a paradigm shift in learning, research and teaching irrespective of the distance and location of the learner. This study investigates types of educational resources mass communication students in selected universities in Edo State access and subsequently utilise in their digital libraries. Built on Technological Determinism theory, the study adopts survey research design in interrogating key issues under probe. The study found that mass communication students in the selected universities use diverse forms of e-library resources especially e-books and that there is high level of utilisation of e-library resources among the respondents. The study also revealed that there is high preference of digital library among mass communication undergraduates compared to the traditional library. The study among other things recommends that mass communication students in selected universities be trained in the use of e-library resources beyond e-books and that universities authorities should invest more on e-library resources to bridge the digital gap.

Keywords: Utilisation, digital, Mass Communication, libraries, Universities,

INTRODUCTION

The 21st Century which is driven by digital technology has changed a lot of things in business, politics, academics and other sectors. In the education sector, the traditional library is gradually giving way for digital library which is described by Magoi and Gani, (2014, p.6) as “ a library where services or collections of electronic resources are entirely virtual and accessed via a network.” It is believed that Nancy Schiller was one of the first writers to use the expression “virtual” (Daniel, 2000).

E-libraries have redefined the concept of learning. In terms of benefits, digital libraries have a lot to offer. They open doors of great possibilities and opportunities in higher education system in Nigeria; it is a technological innovation that promises a paradigm shift in teaching, research and learning which is indispensable in 21st century education; it gives the distant learners an opportunity to attain the highest level of education from their offices or homes and promote the emergence of educational community that shares thousands and thousands of digital resources in a networked environment. Digital libraries also encourage resource sharing among members of academic communities and offer both students and teachers the opportunity to utilise digital resources in different formats without being present in the library .(Anasi, 2012, p.355).

Eze and Uzoigwe (2013, p.432) observe that the rapid pace of development in the field of information technology and the emergence of information services have prompted a comprehensive review of the library and information science profession. Digital library

resources are dynamic and user-friendly. Some interact with users thus creating that digital bond and affinity. They are utilised by different researchers in Nigeria and beyond.

The rapid pace in technological revolution has indeed redefine the concept of library usage. The new generation which appears to be digital natives are beginning to jettison the “hardcopy” in virtual all areas of human endeavours. It is in view of the above that this study examines the utilization of digital library resources by mass communication students in selected universities in Edo State.

Objectives of the Study

This study is set to address the following objectives:

- i. Identify types of e-library resources used by mass communication students in selected universities in Edo State.
- ii. Investigate the level of utilisation of the e-library resources by undergraduate mass communication students in selected universities in Edo State.
- iii. Examine the traditional or digital library preferences by mass communication students in selected universities in Edo State.

Conceptual Clarification

The key concept that needs clarification here is the digital library.

Digital library

According to Ameen (2019, p.2) “extensive discussions on the definition and scope of digital libraries have appeared in literatures since 1990s. Both computer scientists and library professionals emphasize different aspects of the concept.” Digital libraries operate under different names. Adeyinka (2011, p.31) noted that libraries of the present age are called names such as “virtual library”, “digital library” and “education library”. He argued that libraries now deal with electronic resources that use computer and other closely related devices to access and use the information content.

Echenzone (2008) cited by Eze and Ugoigwe (2013) opines that where library services are in cyberspace and are not affected by opening and closing hours, users are given what they need irrespective of location.

It is therefore imperative to take a microscopic scrutiny of e-library resources use by mass communication students in selected universities in Edo state.

E-library Resources

There are different kinds of e-library resources that are utilized by researchers in university libraries across the world. While others are sophisticated in usage, some are easy to use with little understanding of its technology. E-library resources occupy lesser space compared to traditional library resources (Adeyinka, 2011, p.31).

Different scholars have captured their understanding of e-library resources. The different types of e-resources are e-books, e-journals, databases, CDs, DVDs, e-conference proceedings, e-reports, e-maps, e-pictures/photographs, e-manuscripts, e-theses, e-newspaper, internet/websites – listservs, newsgroup, subject gateways, USERNET, FAQs, etc (Kenchlkanavar, 2014, p.98).

Ugwu and Onyegiri (2013) identify some electronic resources of digital libraries as websites, online databases, e-journals, electronic- imported resources and physical carriers in all forms whether free or free-based required to support research in the subject covered and may be video and or textfiles. In the same direction, Ekere, Omekwu and Nwoha (2016) noted that electronic information services include world wide web; Wifi; search engines; online

indexes; video CDs; VSAT based interconnectivity; online library catalogue; online databases; portals; e-journals and e-books.

Kenchalkkanavar (2014, pp.99-100) captures the need for e-library resources:

- a. To get access to an information source by the more than one users.
- b. E-resources can be searched quickly.
- c. These can be found easily by the user.
- d. These resources can be stored in huge amount.
- e. Amount of time spent on the E-Resources use.
- f. Analyses the purpose of using e-resources by respondent
- g. Know different types of e-resources commonly used by respondents
- h. To collect, store, organize information in digital form
- i. To promote efficient delivery of information economically to all the users.
- j. To encourage co-operative efforts to save and share the investments in research resources, computing and communication network.

There are studies that investigates the use of e-library resources within the higher education sector. Dolo-Ndlwana, (2013, p.13) grouped these studies into three main categories citing appropriate experts. These are:

-) Category one includes studies that have focused on the entire academic community; that is academic staff and students belonging to one or more institutions of higher learning. These include; for example studies conducted by Ali (2005); Appleton (2006); Dadzie (2005); Shuling (2007); Swain and Panda (2009); Kaur and Verma (2009); Deng (2010); Madhusudhan (2010); Tyagi (2011); Mulla (2011); Zhang, Ye and Liu (2011). Egberongbe (2011) Dhanavandan, Esmail & Nagarajan (2012)
-) . Category two includes studies that have concentrated only on academic staff members in a single disciplinary area and they have explored the use of e-resources among academics in the identified areas. These studies include Majid and Abazova (1999); Agaba, Kigongo-Bukenya and Nyumba (2004); Rehman and Ramzy (2004), Renwick (2005); Ozoemelem (2009); Omotayo (2010); Ansari and Zuberi (2010); Shukla and Mishra (2011); Bhatt and Rana (2011); Bashorun, Tunji and Adisa (2011); Sethi and Panda (2011); Salaam, Ajiboye and Bankole (2013)
-) Category three includes those studies that have targeted only students as their objects of analysis; these include studies conducted by, for example. Asemi and Riyahiniya (2007); Ingutia-Oyieke and Dick (2010).

Specifically, this study belongs to the last category and it hoped that it will contribute positively to emerging discussions on the subject matter.

Kenchalkkanavar (2014, pp.102) outlines diverse gains of utilizing e-resources:

- a. E-publishing may be less costly than paper.
- b. E- Resources are created in any file format like text, audio, video and images.
- c. E-resources are available for 24 hours of a day and save library space.
- d. The E-resources search is easy because of user friendly interface.
- e. They provide users faster, more convenient and anytime access from home, campus or library.
- f. E-resources can be accessed by the support of advanced search and retrieval system.

- g. The content can be reproduced, forwarded, modified and leading to problem with copyright protection and preserving authenticity.
- h. The electronic environment enables the library to integrate with other libraries and make use of their resources also.
- i. Those who have limited time to access the libraries can effectively by dialing up process.
- j. The libraries provide access to very large amount of information resources.
- k. Libraries are focused on providing access to primary information.

Despite the above benefits of e-library, Waters (2001, p.5) identifies the “high cost of building and maintaining digital library, context selection and effective management of intellectual property” as some constraints of digital library which can be applied in the Nigerian situation.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Technological Determinism theory. Technological determinism is a term used to describe a set of claims made about the relationship between what we generally call ‘technology’ and ‘society’ (Kline, 2015). Technological determinism (TD), simply put, is the idea that technology has important effects on our lives. This idea figures prominently in the popular imagination and political rhetoric, for example in the idea that the Internet is revolutionizing economy and society (Adler, 2006).

The major assertion of this theory lies in the fact that “technology in any given society defines its nature; technology is viewed as a driving force of culture in a society and it determines its course of history” (Asemah, Nwammuo Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2016, p.295).

This theory is apt for this study because digital library is technologically driven in nature and structure. How the mass communication students of the selected universities in Edo State are able to make use of e-libraries resources and services depend therefore on their understanding of the e-library technologies. Technological determinism theory is therefore appropriate for this study.

Methodology

The study adopts the survey research design using questionnaire as an instrument in addressing the issue under probe. The population of the study consists of a total number of 1026 male and female undergraduate mass communication students from the selected universities in Edo State as follows:

University of Benin	=	856
Edo University, Iyamho	=	64
Benson Idahosa University, Benin	=	112

The sample size of 291 was drawn for the above population for the study using Morgan’s Table with a 5.0% margin of error. Purposive sampling technique was used in administering the questionnaire across all levels.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: E-library resources used by students

	No. of respondents	Percentage
Database	2	1%
Electronic books	118	41%
Electronic dictionaries and encyclopedia	24	8%
e-journals	48	16%
Official publication	8	3%
Online newspapers	60	21%
Video, image and sound resources	31	10%
Total	291	100%

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents (41%) use e-book library resources against other usage.

Table 2: Frequency of digital library usage

	No. of respondents	Percentage
Daily	187	64%
Weekly	62	21%
Monthly	30	10%
Once in a while	12	4%
Total	291	100%

Table 2 shows that there is a daily frequency (64%) in the usage of digital library resources

Table 3: library preference

	No. of respondents	Percentage
Digital library	274	94%
Conventional/physical library	17	6%
Total	291	100%

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents (94%) prefers the digital library to the conventional one.

Table 4: Resources in your personal digital library

	No. of respondents	Percentage
e-journals	21	7%
e-books	180	62%
Video, images and sound resources	81	28%
Others	4	1%
None	5	2%
Total	291	100%

Table 4 shows that e-books (62%) constitutes majority of e-resources in the respondents personal digital library.

Table 5: Disappearance of physical library in the future?

	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	197	68%
No	94	32%
Total	291	100%

Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents (68%) predicts the disappearance of physical library in the future

Discussion of Findings

Types of e-library resources used by mass communication undergraduate students in selected universities in Edo State.

Findings of the study revealed that the respondents often use diverse e-library resources with e-books taking the lead. Rivers Sanctuary Publishing and THGM writers (undated) cited by Ate (2019,p,8) outline advantages of e –library which motivates students usage:

- Can hold hundreds of books at once
- Usually cheap than proper books
- Lightweight and easy to hold
- They are never out of stock
- No waiting for books to be shipped and no shipping charges
- Can display just than text books(Magazines, Newspaper, blogs)
- You can read in the dark
- You can change font size
- You can follow links
- Video and audio (multi media)
- Don't overflow ones bookshelves
- It is often possible to download

Lang (2018) cited by Yamson, Appiah, and Tsegah (2018, p.291) confirms that “electronic databases form a common part of the suite of information offered by most academic libraries”. **The level of utilization of the e-library resource by mass communication students in selected universities in Edo State.**

Findings of the study reveal that there is high level of utilization of e-library resources among mass communication undergraduate students in the selected universities. Bassey and Odu (2015) noted that the effective utilization of e-library and e-resources depends solely on the availability of computers and Internet access, network connectivity, high skilled personnel and steady power supply. Oakleaf (2010) identifies data curation, digital preservation, mobile environment and scholarly communication as triggers of digital library.

Preference of the traditional or digital library by mass communication undergraduate students in selected universities in Edo State.

Findings of the study reveal that there is high preference of digital library to the traditional one. The implication of this finding is that the physical library may be sentenced to oblivion in a matter of time. The Technology determinism theory that formed the theoretical basis of

this study attested to the fact that the invention of a new technology can alter the way and manner society responds to what they are used to.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the respondents are making good use of e-library resources especially e-books and that there is high level of utilization of e-resources and services by the respondents. The study also concludes that mass communication undergraduate students in the selected universities in Edo State prefer e-library to the conventional one.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are put forward:

-) Mass communication undergraduate students in the selected universities should be trained in the use of other e-library resources beyond e-books. Videos and other pictorial resources among others can be highly utilized by the students if trained to use them effectively.
-) Based on the findings of the study, there is need for universities authorities to invest more on e-library resources than the conventional one to enable students have its optimal utilization.
-) That universities which are still held to the conventional library super structure should have a change of mind as the world is going digital in every sphere of life. It is therefore recommended that conventional librarians be trained to migrate their services to digital library platforms for the benefit of students.

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