Digital Literacy Skills Among Librarians in University Libraries In the 21st Century in Edo And Delta States, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper discussed the contemporary digital literacy skills (DLS) among librarians in university libraries the 21st century in Edo and Delta States of Southern Nigeria. The study was guided by six objectives and research questions and one hypothesis. The design of the study is descriptive survey and the population consist of all librarians from university libraries in the aforementioned states in Nigeria. The instrument used to generate data is the questionnaire and the date generated was analysed using simple percentages and frequency count for research questions and SPSS version 14.0. The findings show that electronic mailing, social networking, use of PDAs, mobile phones and internet surfing are the major DLS amongst librarians. It was also discovered that librarians acquired DLS through colleague's assistance, trial and error, IT programmes and formal education while librarian's level of use of DLS is low amongst other findings. Researcher made useful recommendations.

KEYWORDS

21st Century, Digital Literacy Skills, Edo and Delta States, Librarians, Nigeria, University Libraries

INTRODUCTION

Libraries all over the world have been faced with the evolving technological advancement, globalization, and digitization of information. These have led to library automation, digital and virtual libraries, virtual conference, web-cast, pod-cast, community and online learning, Web 2.0 and Library 2.0. Campbell (2006) stated that digital technology has pervaded every aspect of our civilization, it has set forth a revolution not only in how we store and transmit recorded knowledge, historical records, and a host of other kinds of communication but also in how we seek and gain access to these materials.

Sharma (2009) confirmed that digital resources are increasingly available in Nigerian universities thereby making it possible for students and school staff to access and use current and relevant materials for studies, research, learning and job. Over the last decade, a significant transformation has been noticed in collection development policies and practices. Print medium is increasingly giving way to the electronic form of materials. Information dissemination among the university communities has been tremendously enhanced With the introduction of digital technology facilities in the universities. Kyrillidou and Cook (2008) believes that libraries are the crucible of genius and they are fundamental to the intellectual experience and natural activity of the mind. Indeed, there are no great universities without great libraries according to him. The university library is constantly challenged to remain a vital part of this changing environment. A key part, perhaps the key part, in meeting that challenge is to ensure that librarians' roles transition to meet evolving needs. New areas of expertise are developing as are new opportunities to provide innovative, value-added services for the students and researchers

in the academic community. Across the world, librarians and university libraries are reassessing the role of the librarian within the university by equipping themselves with new skills. One of such skills is digital literacy. (Canadian Association of Research Libraries, 2010)

Building on digital literacy is the concept of digital creativity which is the expression of creative skills in the digital medium. This can include programming, web sites and the generation and manipulation of digital images (Wikipedia, 2015). Technologies are changing and there is need for both professional and para-professional library staff to embrace them. Librarians need much more in this digital age to embrace digital literacy skills on their work than ever before. Digital literacy helps professionals of all works of life to develop skills that can add to their economic status and improve their overall job performance and standard of living.

There is need for librarians to have digital literacy skills, so that they can use them to progress on their jobs and on their careers. With these skills, librarians will be more equipped for resource sharing, social networking, surfing the net, instant messaging and blogging and host of others digital oriented activities. These skills can also help them on their jobs to assist users get desired information and education. Since these are skills that can be learnt, digital skills are skills that all information professionals should thrive to possess. Therefore, the findings of the study will be relevant for making decisions by library management for employment processes, the training and development of librarians and equipping libraries with digital resources for adequate learning.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Digital literacy can be a great tool for development. It has been observed that advances in the use of technology can improve economic opportunities for the poor, increase delivery of services to the underserved, improve management and benefit social change. World Bank Group strategies in ICT have focused on promoting reform, increasing access, supporting ICT human capacity, and supporting ICT applications. But access and use of the digital resources is still much lower in developing countries like Nigeria. The education standard of Nigeria is falling every day. More so, digital/computer levels have been noticed to be very low amongst university librarians. In the developed countries, universities are continuously updating their curriculum for digital literacy to keep up with accelerating technological developments. This often includes computers and a wide range of digital gadgets in the librarians which are proficiently handles and managed by librarians for proper service delivery for users. The use of educational softwares, digital gadgets and resources to teach curriculum, library and course materials are now being made available to students, library users and librarians most especially. In Nigeria the revised is the case. The influx of information, globalization and the use of digital technology has made the world a global village where access and use of digital technology has become common place. There is lack of utilization of digital literacy skills in our libraries, many librarians in Nigeria seem to lack skills on how to operate the computer, access the email or interact through the internet. Many librarians also seem not to possess the skills to use the computer to access information and automate their libraries. Librarians world over are faced with so many challenges on their jobs in the acquisition of both print and non print information resources, organization, retrieval and dissemination to all patrons and potential users of these information resources for their accessibility and utilization. Librarians however are not finding it very easy to manage the influx of information. Ogunsola (2004) asserted that it must be realized that many Nigerian libraries, especially in the universities, face various problems in their attempts to computerize their library operations. These have constituted a challenge in the provision, maintenance and management of information resources in many academic libraries all over the nations. Therefore, in view of this scenario, the present study was necessitated.

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