Internet Knowledge and Use Skills among Clinical Medical Students in Delta State University, Abraka

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the Internet Knowledge and use skills among clinical medical student in Delta State University using questionnaire to collect data. The descriptive survey design was employed for the study. A total of 120 students selected through stratified random sampling participated in the study. The findings revealed that a majority of the students access the Internet but a larger number of them do this in the cyber cafes more than in the library. They use the Internet more for assignment and research and only a few use it to perfect their Internet use skills. The students retrieve information more from the Internet from www.google.com and acquire their Internet Knowledge and use skills from their use of the Internet and assistance from friends.

Keywords: Clinical Medical Students, Information, Internet, Internet Knowledge, Internet Skills, Students

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the Internet and its wide range of resources and applications can be considered as the most important event of recent times as far as the development of information is concerned (Mudawi, 2005). These wide range of resources offered by the web requires some skills in order for it to be harnessed and used properly. According to Ojedokun and Owolabi (2003) teachers in the developing world will have to change their teaching styles and acquire Internet skills as new technologies transform classrooms over the next 20 years. Likewise students will need to learn new skills in order to be able to search for and use information from the Internet. The Internet does not only offer a wide range of resources but also has some features, facilities and services that has to be manipulated in order for one to enjoy its services. Thus the availability of these services has created an environment in which users of the Internet are faced with a lot of things to be learnt for them to become competent users of the Internet. One of such is the e-mail which can be used for sending and receiving of messages.

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For those who have the connectivity, web-based services are of great value, the Internet can bring a multitude of information and knowledge resources to all its users (Mudawi, 2005). Clinical medical students are not left out because lots of information are available on the net for their use and they equally need these skills for information searching as no one can meaningfully explore the Internet without having a good knowledge of the Internet. Thus students will need to learn new skills on how to search the Internet for Information and use this Information to update themselves. Internet’s seeming infinite information offers access to up-to-date research reports and global knowledge (Nwokedi, 2007). So it has become an important component in academic institutions. Therefore, the Internet has become an invaluable tool for learning, teaching and research (including collaborative research) in Nigeria has become an important component of electronic services in academic. (Nwezeh, 2010).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Internet has facilitated and contributed to knowledge development. It has aided quick access to information and remove the barrier of distance in retrieving information. According to Omotayo (2010) the Internet provides scientist, lecturers and students, access to on-traditional sources of information at any point of the globe. It is becoming more and more convenient to access the Internet. With this premise in mind, clinical medical students can access the Internet and benefit from its up to date information in their field of study as the present day clinical medical student can no longer depend on only conventional information sources to cope with the recent trend in their field.

Sharma et al. (2006) posits that the Internet is a worldwide computer network allowing communication among millions of users and access to different resources. Biological researchers and Scientists are increasingly becoming more and more dependent upon computers to manage the generated information. They further posits that the Internet has become the world’s biggest library, where retrieval of scientific resources can be done within minutes; electronic hospital libraries are the most sophisticated methods for research profiles to be set up and searched regularly; the Internet has revolutionized the medical practice with the increasing use of telemedicine and evidence based medicine. The use of bulletin boards and e-forums to get information is fastly getting popular among students. They further asserts that by the use of telemedicine, through broadband high capacity network connections, we can cross these barriers to provide timely medical care in the remotest corner of the country and to achieve this, it is important for the practitioners to have ample knowledge of computers and Internet. They concluded by saying that to meet the need of increased computer and Internet use among health care professionals, it is urgently required to introduce short refresher course in computer application and internet use among the students. The students should be trained to extract valuable information from the special medical web sites and should be encouraged to check the authenticity of information by correlating with existing evidences.

According to Romanov and Aarnio (2005) information technology in all forms offers its users the tools with which to access, manipulate, transform, evaluate, use and present information. The use of computerized information systems by medical professionals has been said to improve the quality of health care and also enhance the use of evidence based treatments. It is worthy to note that the quantity, quality, pertinent and timely information available and accessible to clinical students will certainly reflect on their academic performance and the quality of doctors they will turn out to be. Romanov and Aarnio (2005) in their study also reported that a majority of medical students preferred electronic textbooks as primary sources of gathering information. This further stresses that the need to acquire computer and Internet skills cannot be over emphasized.
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