Automation Process in Nigerian Academic Libraries

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ABSTRACT

Automation process in Nigerian libraries has been the subject of discussion. This paper discussed the automation process in Nigerian academic libraries in regards to information and communication technologies in libraries, benefits of library automation, automation in library, need of library automation, areas of library automation, scope of system integration, choice of hardware, constraints and how the library can cope with the new trend in librarianship.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Automation Process, Hardware, Nigerian Libraries, System Integration

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are moving outside the walls of their buildings and the firewalls of their networks in order to provide information to users wherever they happen to be. They are applying mobile technology so that users can find information, whether they are in the street, classroom, traveling to work or study. Libraries are participating in social networks in order to be present in the virtual places that users visit everyday. They are opening up and sharing libraries data so it can be discovered via external systems and they are expanding beyond traditional roles, curating raw research data from laboratories to ensure that results are verifiable and data can be re-used. As well, connect to grid network, libraries are moving beyond local systems and information silos to discover access and re-use information resources located anywhere in the world. (European Library Automation Group, 2012).

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN LIBRARIES

In this modern world of information age, the application of information and communication technologies in libraries services in our modern day libraries is in high progress resulting from the digital age. Before the innovation of information and communication technologies library materials were processed manually which involves using paper, biro and human.
Information and communication technology (ICT) is a general concept used to describe a range of technologies for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analyzing and transmitting information (Murtala, 2007). Information and communication technology has been defined as a broad based technology (including its methods, management and application) that supports the creation, storage, manipulation and communication of information technology (Ozioko, Ezeani and Omeji, 2010). Information technology application has brought about tremendous improvement in library and information services. It also has the added advantage of making possible more services for both the management and the users of the information services institution which would otherwise not have been possible under normal operations.

Libraries have found themselves in a new environment, otherwise known as digital environment. This environment is characterized by uncertainties and increasing complexities of digital technologies (Ugwu, 2009) citing Nwakanma (2003).

**AUTOMATION**

Automation is the use of computers and other information technologies in information. According to Amadasu (2010) Automation simply means the use of machines, computers, and other telecommunication technologies to perform jobs and duties hitherto performed manually.

**Automation in Library**

The automation of library simply means the use of computers and other information technologies in processing library materials and retrieving of information within the library and outside the library. Library automation is a process of using the machineries for easily working and saving the human power and time. The main purpose of library automation is to free the librarians and library staff and to allow them contributes more meaningfully to spread knowledge and information. In the simple language “when we use machineries for collection, processing, storing and retrieved of information and do other works of the library with the help of machineries that is called library automation (Ratha, n. d.).

Library computerization, library digitization and library automation are geared towards the same purpose to achieve the same goal.

Tamiyu (2000) opined that library automation is the application of computers and related processing devices to the technical processes, public services and other housekeeping functions in libraries. In other words, library automation involves using the computers as a productivity enhancing tool to perform some or all of the data and information processing tasks in libraries. While in automation of library resources information may be put in one main entry with other headings listed too, the card is duplicated and multiple cards are made with different headings. In an automated system, the records are put in once only-each element of description, field or subfield.

Library automation is a process, which involves linking computers electronically within and outside the institution, entering library resources in a database to create an open access catalogue, which allows users to access and retrieve information in a timely manner (Nkhoma-Wamunza, 2003).

According to Bhardwaj and Shukla (2000) Library automation refers to use of computers, associated peripheral media such as magnetic tapes, disk, optical media etc and utilization of computer based products and services in the performance of all types of library functions and operation. Computers are capable of introducing a degree of automation in operations. Functions, since they are electronic; programmable and are capable to control over the process being performed.

Bhardwaj and Shukla (2000) went further to state that the utilization of computer and related techniques make the provision to provide the right information right reader at the right time in a right form in a right personal way. Automation of library activities provides the services very efficiently, rapidly, effectively,
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