

Chapter 10

Makerspace: An Innovative Inclusion in Nigerian Libraries

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ABSTRACT

Librarianship as a profession globally is witnessing lots of innovations and creativity at an unprecedented rate in this era of digital connectivity. One of such is the “makerspace” which has been embraced within libraries in developed countries, but its cognizance, acceptability, and implementation in most African libraries is still low of which Nigerian libraries are not an exception. The chapter discussed and gave insights on the “what,” “how,” and the “why” of the makerspace inclusion within the Nigerian library space. This is expected to prompt its adoption by putting into perspective all the generational age cohorts so as not to be left behind in the train of what is obtainable on the global landscape within the discipline knowing fully well that the nation is the giant of Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Librarianship as a profession is witnessing lots of innovations and creativity at an unprecedented rate in this era of digital connectivity. One of such novelty is the “makerspace” which has been embraced within libraries in developed countries but its cognizance, acceptability and implementation in most African libraries are still low of which Nigerian libraries are not an exception. It is on this premise that this chapter discussed and enunciated the “What”, “How” and the “Why” of the makerspace within the Nigerian space to prompt them in adopting the innovative idea in order not to be left behind in the train of what is obtainable on the global landscape within the discipline.

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The Makerspace which is the synergy of two concepts- ‘Maker and Space’ is an offshoot of the innovativeness in this technological era epitomising a blend of two worlds. The world of the maker and that of the space is an intricate one as the latter cannot do without the former or vice versa, else, the meaning would be blurred. This fusion within the space of Librarianship as a discipline is redefining the significant roles that Libraries play in clienteles’ existence as it provides them with the enabling environment for self-expression which can be with the aid of technology or not. This is corroborated by Okuonghae (2019) who saw makerspace as an avenue for the display of creativity and productivity among library patrons- an attribute of the 21st-century library space.

A maker is a person or organization who makes, puts together, prepare or form meaningful activities which could be either technologically driven or on a non-digital basis. These activities are tailored in such a way that it equips participants and gives them the enabling environment in achieving the set goals of embarking on the said activities in an innovative manner. This goes a long way in forming a synergy among the maker, the participant, and others too interested in the activities; thus, leading to a community of innovators or mentor-mentee relationships engaging in a lifelong learning process. Houston (2013:1) accentuated the preceding by stating that “activities of makers take place in a community of creative and enterprising individuals, who are developing innovative technology applications using lo-tech or hi-tech tools and ideas”. Libraries can suffice in this respect as the maker in the era of digital connectivity saddled with the responsibilities of engaging diverse users with the aid of technology (technologically oriented users) as well as bringing their professional competencies to bear to those who are disadvantaged technologically to bridge the digital divide. With this, the Library and all that it stands for becomes part of the maker movement that reflects self-expression, creativity, self-empowerment, originality, inspiration, collaboration, and societal transformation which is in sync with the ideology of the maker.

The space on the other hand is the physical or digital environment where the maker’s activities and philosophy are displayed either singly or collaboratively but laced with creativity which birth new inventions or ideas. This space is constructed in such a way that it caters for different categories of users who want to brainstorm on different societal or personal issues to proffer solutions or who are vast in the usage of technology. It is a synthesis of two spaces which are the physical and the digital domain; a fundamental principle pertinent to Librarianship in this era of digital transformation. A library is a space (physical or virtual) or places set aside to contain or house information resources like books, periodicals, e-resources for reading, viewing, listening, study and reference. The 21st-century library has transcended the four walls of its physical space and emerging technologies like the Social Media Technologies (SMTs) have equipped her to provide services that are not inhibited by time, means, and location due to its ubiquitous nature (Bakare, 2018).

Makerspace is therefore a place in which people converge to share ideas and knowledge in order to meet a set goal either through technology or vice-versa. The act of doing it yourself (DIY) is a major part of the Makerspace while the act of using equipment to make or invent things is also a part of the space. Pisarski (2014:15) noted that “Makerspaces consist of a community of makers that come together to create by sharing tools, skills, and knowledge-creating a place to learn a new skill, to become a creator, to connect with a community and build friendships, or to gain access to specialized equipment”. The essence of Makerspace is to converge people with different ideas to share their thoughts which will bring about new inventions and encourage DIY orientation.

Knowing the significant roles that libraries play in our society as making information readily available and accessible to users, the library space should be well utilised at this time in Nigeria. Regardless of the fact that library patronage may dwindling due to lack of funding in procuring recent information

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