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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND COMPETENCE NEEDED BY LIBRARIANS' TOWARDS ELECTRONIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT
The research investigated the professional development strategies and competence needed by librarians' towards electronic resource management in federal universities in South-East Nigeria. The author highlighted various competences needed by librarians in effective electronic resource management. The study is of the opinion that librarians as a matter of urgency in this technological era be keep abreast of the current and latest information service delivery towards their library patron. The paper also included various professional development strategies librarians can embrace in effective service delivery.

Key words: *Electronic resources, Electronic resource management, Librarians, Competence, Professional development*

Introduction

The technological innovation and the emergence of electronic resources all over the world including Nigeria has changed the traditional modes of library services to electronic services. However, most libraries in Nigeria are embracing on this change. Managing electronic resources is a task challenging enough to lend itself to numerous problems in librarians' competence and professional development as it relates to training, technological shift and practice.

Competence according to Brown, Wolski and Richardson (2015) outlined that the library professionals need training and education but the professional development should match with the demand of library patrons, divers information society and work requirements, furthermore the professional development is needed at all levels in the library and information profession. In a similar development, Opara (2010) is of the view that building a necessary set of skills and up to date knowledge require a proper channel of training and education.

It is worrisome to note that many librarians in Nigeria are not competent to take on the challenging role of the 21st century information service delivery. They are averse to technology and perceive the application of computers to library work as an aberration (Emezie & Nwaohiri, 2013). This being the case, they are unwilling to embrace the new technology. Many librarians lack confidence in the face of increasing information technology. This slows service delivery and retards productivity.

In addition, most problematic factors which slow down the adoption of information technologies stem from unfamiliarity of academic librarians and users with computers and searching databases, lack of technology literacy. Many professional librarians lack the requisite technological literacy of e-resources needed for an academic library service. Technological literacy can be viewed as the ability to responsibly use appropriate e-resources to communicate, solve problems, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, design and create information to improve learning in all subject areas and acquire lifelong knowledge and skills in the 21st century (Tanawade, 2011).

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Literature Review

Electronic Resources

In describing the concept of electronic resources (e-resources), Tan (2016) and Ukachi (2013) viewed electronic resources as resources in which information are stored electronically and are accessible through electronic systems and networks or ICT. E-resource is a broad term that includes a variety of publishing models, including Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs), CD-ROMs, online databases, e-journals, e-books, internet resources, Print-on-demand (POD), e-mail publishing, wireless publishing, electronic link and web publishing among others. In this context, the term primarily denotes any electronic product that delivers collection of data be it in text, numerical, graphical or time based, as an information available resource. Electronic resources are those resources that are housed virtually and accessed through electronic means.

The need for E-Resources according to Anand (2014) enables the librarian to provide better service to the user community. Help to get access to an information source by more than one users. E-Resources can be searched quickly and found easily by the user.These resources can be stored in huge amount. It is equally noted that, the amount of time spent on E-resources use, analyses the purpose of using e-resources by respondent; know different types of e-resources commonly used by library patrons; to collect, store, organize information in digital form; to promote efficient delivery of information economically to all the users; to encourage co-operative efforts to save and share the investments in research resources,computing and communication network.

The advent of technological advancement has made libraries to be more diverse in information provision and management; university libraries are challenged to meet these needs by providing appropriate electronic resources. The following are types of e-resources usually found in university libraries. According to Manjack, Dangani and Fari (2019) and Kenchakkanavar (2014) e-resources are categorized as follows:

Online Databases: University libraries subscribes to online databases that can be accessed through the internet to provide access to electronic books/journals to library users. Online databases are essential in contemporary research processes in university libraries. Some of these databases include: Research4life, Health Network Access Research Initiative (HINARI), Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE) among others (Manjack, Dangani & Fari, 2019).

Electronic Book: E-books is the many formats competing for prime time, including Adobe PDF, Microsoft Reader, e-Reader, Mobipocket Reader software, electronic publication (EPUB), Kindle and iPad. Electronic books (e-books) are books that are provided in a digital format for checkout or use via an internet browser, a computer or another electronic device like an e-book Reader. An e-book can take the form of a single monograph or a multi-volume set of books in a digital format that allows for viewing on various types of monitors, devices and personal computers. One area that is well recognized as benefiting from e-books is distance learning (Johnson, Evensen, Gelgand, Lammers, Sipe & Zilper, 2012).

Electronic journals as most sought electronic innovations provide efficient access to information and thus they are easy to distribute to library patrons if properly managed than traditional print. Journals made available in electronic form have now become an accepted norm for many academic institutions in the world. It is therefore the responsibility of an e-resource librarian to adequately manage these resources for easy access (Johnson, Evensen, Gelgand, Lammers, Sipeand & Zilper, 2012).

Electronic Newspaper or e-newspaper in the view of Panda and Swain (2011) is a self-contained, reusable and refreshable version of a traditional newspaper that acquires and holds information electronically. In other words, electronic newspapers retrieve information

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electronically from online databases, process it electronically with word processors, desktop publishing packages and a variety of more technical hardware and software and transmit it electronically to the end-users.

An Electronic magazine is very important part of every library collection. E-Magazines are one application of information technology. Indexing and Abstracting Databases; these are the reference sources which provide bibliographic information about journal including abstracts of the articles. Full text database; today are either free or with charges. In the view of Surendra (2012) electronic databases are available in the CD-ROM as well as online. Some of the online databases are open access or free of cost on the internet. Majority of the databases are in the subscription based which require annual subscription. It is an organized collection of information of a particular subject or multidisciplinary subject areas, information within e-databases can be searched and retrieved electronically.

Reference database are mainly dictionaries, almanacs and encyclopedias, which are available on internet in electronic format. In addition are statistical database that contain the numerical data useful for the mass community. Image collection and multimedia products came into existence due to adventure of e-images facility (Kenchakkanavar, 2014).

Electronic thesis contained PhD thesis or dissertation published through e-format. Electronic clipping: The main objective of e-clipping is retrospective search and comprehensive analysis of new items. Electronic patents; it is the exclusive right granted by the government to make use of an invention for a specific period of time. Electronic standards can be seen as written definition, limit rule, approved and monitored for complains by authoritative agency.

Electronic Resource Management (ERM)

Electronic Resource Management (ERM) as defined by Stephen (2017) is the practices and techniques used by librarians and library staff to track the selection, acquisition, licensing, access, maintenance, usage, evaluation, retention and de-selection of a library's electronic information resources. These resources include, but are not limited to electronic journals, electronic books, streaming media, databases, datasets, CD-ROMs, and computer software.

By implication, management of electronic resources is a step-by-step maintenance approach or activity carried out from the moment a resource is selected and acquired to its usage by the intended users. The activities involved in the management of electronic resources includes: policy statement, selection, acquisition, organization (cataloging), preservation (maintenance) (Ugwu & Onyegiri, 2012 and Emojorho 2012).

Hence, electronic resources management affect nearly every library department because they are used by nearly every library patron, so it is important that electronic resource librarians translate jargon to public services staff and patrons alike. Therefore to be successful and be professionally developed, electronic resource librarians should have excellent communication skills. They need to know not only whom to contact and what to ask, but also how to answer a complex array of questions from other librarians as well as end-users (Verminski & Blanchat, 2017).

Professional Development

Professional development of librarian however, enables information access and use through systematic and user-centered description, categorization, digitization, storage, preservation and retrieval. It provides and promotes free and equitable access to information and client services. It enhances facilitation, acquisition, licensing or creation of information in a range of media and formats and create accurate and standards-driven metadata for enhanced and persistent access to information resources in an online environment. It is also a set of systematic and planned activities designed by an organization to provide

its members with the opportunities to learn necessary skills to meet current and future demands of work (Posigha & Seimode, 2015).

Professional development according to Monteiro (2017) and Mourao (2014) is a development that corresponds to the growth and maturation of the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired throughout the workers' lives, as a result of formal and informal actions of learning at work. It is important to note that, while on the job, employees skills need to be updated through training and development. Most common types of professional development programmes are orientation/induction, mentoring, conferences, workshops, seminars, higher degree programmes and exchange programmes (Aslam, 2011). Professional development is attainable only if librarians' are given the needed and necessary support it deserves. Supporting librarians through training, conferences, academically among others in this new electronic environment confirms their competence in e-service delivery in the library. It will help in capacity enhancement. Once librarians are equipped especially in electronic resource management, they function practically in all spheres of their carrier. Adding to the fact that with the emergence of technological innovation that have embraced the way library operates in their service delivery, librarians need to be competent to keep abreast with all these changes especially in electronic resource management.

Competence

Competence is the ability to function effectively in the tasks considered essential within a given profession. Librarians need to be competent to enable them use ICT for management of electronic resources. However a significant ICT skill gap among information professionals in Nigeria has been identified. This skill gap has resulted in serious under-utilization and majority of librarians similarly face problem of lack of training in relation to the use of e-resources (Mulla, 2011).

Librarian's competence in electronic resource management however, include the acquisition, organization, maintenance and provision of access to electronic resources. The selection, acquisition, dissemination and preservation of e-resource are similar to that of print materials, but they differ in various aspects (Ndor & Okpokwasili, 2018).

According to North American Serials Interest Group NASIG (2019) guidelines for core competencies for electronic resource librarian, the electronic resource librarian (ERL) among other factor is expected to be able to investigate different vendor's subscription model and find new electronic content for a specific subject. The ERL should have thorough knowledge of electronic resources in the selection and acquisitions, particularly managing electronic resources budgets, encumbrances, integrated library system (ILS) acquisition module functions, split funds and other accounting situations particular to acquisition of journal packages that may not have a single discipline in common.

Scholars, Bansode and Viswe (2017), Kumar (2013) noted that librarians are expected to possess the following ICT knowledge and skills: operating system, packages and programming languages, web awareness, technical skills, knowledge of online services, subject knowledge, elementary programming languages skills, project management skills, Compact Disk Read Only Memory (CD-ROMs) or Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) search skills, web and other electronic databases search skills (Chanetsa & Ngulube, 2016).

Librarians who are competent through professional development in working with electronic resources, have a vast world of new applications at their disposition. The institutions of learning benefits greatly as these applications are implemented for effective and efficient library and information service delivery. Also librarians need to have adequate library function skills to enable them manage the library electronic resources lifecycle effectively and efficiently, such as investigate, acquire, implement, evaluate, review, cancel/replace information resources, cataloguing and

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classification of information with the use of ILS, converting local information contents into digital formats, creating backup of library information resources to storage medias, and use of barcode sensor or reader in securing the library information resources (Bentil, 2020&Horsefall, 2019).

Challenges of librarians towards electronic resource management

The major challenge facing the university libraries is not only underfunding but the poor performance of librarians in developing countries as a result of poor ICT skills. Lack of basic skills in the use of information technology has become a clog to better library services. Most librarians are without a well-developed ICT skill thereby cannot render effective library services, thus, lack of skills among librarians constitute a major obstacle to service delivery in university libraries in Nigeria (Amaechi, Enweani & Eke 2018).

Managing electronic resources is a task challenging enough to lend itself to numerous problems in user training, technological up-grading, financial constraint, IT skill manpower, perishable citation: online if website changes, Universal Resource Locators (URLs) citations disappear, authentication. (Behera and Singh 2011).

Selecting appropriate tools to support e-resource management requires thorough understanding of the e-resources workflow and lifecycle. However, lack of skilled librarians who can establish and manage electronic libraries has been identified as one of the major challenge to affect provision of electronic resource services to library patrons. These have been examined from different perspectives that the professional development of librarians was low which could be attributed to lack of training and competence in effective management of e-resources (Gbaje & Ukachi, (2011); Ojedokun & Okafor, 2011).

Conclusion

The primary responsibility of the university libraries and skilled librarian towards electronic resource management needs to pursue ongoing professional development through on the job training, conferences, workshops, seminars, job rotation and quality circle among others that will improve their knowledge and skills constantly as it regards to technological shift especially in ERM. The task for librarians to develop professionally and be more productive to meet up with the challenging role, paves way for professional development opportunities like Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund), grants, individual sponsorship, university sponsorship and many more.

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