

Access and Use of Information and Communication Technology-based Resources by Legal Professionals in Nigeria

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Purposes: - This paper aims to investigate Information and Communication Technology resources (ICT) access and use as influencing legal research in Nigeria. It attempts to identify the different ICT resources accessible for use by lawyers in Nigeria and to find out the associated problems of ICT use by lawyers. Furthermore, it reveals the distribution of ICT resources in Nigerian law firms.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study used descriptive survey design i.e. ex-post facto research design survey. Questionnaire and observation were used for data collection. The study was conducted in six states which were randomly selected from the six geo-political zones of the Nigeria. The population of the study comprises 57,250 lawyers registered by the Nigerian Bar Association in 2014

Findings: The findings reveal that there was high use of ICT resources of with exception of few areas such as in Insurance/Marine Law etc. It also reveals that telephones especially mobile phones had the highest frequency rate with 1177 (87.7%) of daily use of ICT resources. Furthermore, the findings pointed out problems affecting access and use of ICT in Nigerian law firms.

Practical Implications: -Access and use of ICT are central to legal research. Lawyers should be encouraged to use ICT resources to increase their productivity. This can be done by increasing funding to the existing law firms and providing more ICT materials for legal Institutions such as courts, law schools etc.

Original/Value: Originality lies when lawyers can access and make use of ICT resources at optimal level to conduct legal research to enhance their legal performance.

Keywords: Access, Information and communication Technology, legal research, use, Nigeria.

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) accessibility is one of the most significant technological developments of the late 20th century in legal research and practice. However, despite the added benefits of this tool to legal research and practice, a number of problems still plague the usage of this system. Choice of teaching materials has been one of the major problems encountered by both law students and law lecturers in legal research.

Jacobstein and Mersky, (2002) defined legal research as the process of identifying and retrieving information necessary to support legal decision making. Legal research involves the ability to analyze problems, determine the information needed and effectively communicate results obtained. It includes each step of a course of action that begins with an analysis of the facts of a problem and concludes with

the application and communication of the results of the investigation. Black Law's dictionary (2007) gives a more concise definition of legal research as "the process of identifying and retrieving law related information to support legal decision making". However, Research scholars (Leady, 1985 and Ayua, 2003) wrote that the term research is not easy to define in terms of universal applicability. Leady actually begins his definition by looking at what research is not before delineating distinguishable attribute of research. He argues that research is not the process of fact transcribing or information transportation but that research is the manner of thinking to solve knotty problems in an attempt to push back the frontiers of human ignorance.

Legal research is performed by anyone who is in need of legal information. These include scholars, lawyers,

jurists, lecturers and all those involved in any form of investigation in the field of law. A good lawyer is the one who knows where and how to find the law. It is in the process of finding the law that leads to using the law. The present-day legal research could not be performed effectively without ICT. To contribute to research process, Omekwu (2003), opined that Information and Communication Technology must possess and display the attributes of relevance, comprehensiveness, timeliness, availability, accessibility and adaptability. These attributes confer to information and communication technology refers to the extent to which the information instrumental value contribute to the resolution of conflict situation, clarification of doubts, the enhancement of decision-accuracy or support a theory, a position or research result. The amazing growth of information technology has implications for every aspect of civil society and raises questions about how technology is being used to serve public purposes. Access and use of information and communication technology resources is of vital importance in legal research in recent years because it has led to increase in computing power, improved wireless and user-friendly technology and reduced communication costs have contributed to low barriers to information access and exchange. Hence, other contributions could be the potential for using more innovative, cost efficient and user-friendly ICT solutions in education and for reaching all goals of society including the poor, those in the remote areas and other disadvantage groups has become increasingly visible in less advanced countries and in more advanced ones. The opportunities derived for legal research arising from developments in ICTs are very promising. In the past view decades ICT have provided society with a vast array of new communication capabilities for example, people can communicate in real time with others in different countries using technologies such as instant messaging and video conferencing. Social networking websites like Facebook and Twitter allow users from all over the world to remain in contact and communicate on a regular basis. This technologies and platform have created a global village in which people can communicate with others across the world as if they were living next door for this reason, ICT could be seen and analysed in the contents of how modern communication technology affect society. It also assists in the publication of research findings of law books, law reports, law journals, and other valuable technical reports. Supports learning and teaching in specialized areas of video conferencing, teleconference, group discussion, questions and

answer sections and moot court trial stimulates effective networking of various legal disciplines. Hence, this paper focuses on access and use of ICT as issue to legal research in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- (i) Find out the different information and communication technology resources accessible for use by lawyers in Nigeria
- (ii) Examine areas of ICT application by lawyers in Nigeria
- (iii) Examine what functions ICT are used to perform?
- (iv) Examine the frequency of use of ICT resources by Nigerian Lawyers
- (v) Find out the problems associated with ICT use by Nigerian Lawyer

Literature Review

A lawyer is described as a person who practices or studies law. In the UK he is referred to as a solicitor while in the US he is known as a barrister or an attorney and in Nigeria he is known by both names. Clark (2011) differentiated between attorney and a lawyer and he said an attorney is a lawyer, but a lawyer may not necessarily be an attorney. A lawyer is a person learned in the law as an attorney, counsel or solicitor, a person licensed. Working as a lawyer represents the practical application of legal research and acquiring knowledge to solve problems or to advance the interest of those who retain (hire) lawyers for legal services. Generally, as noted by Fowler, (2007) law primarily in the legal culture, with its extensive rules and procedures kind of information. Lawyers operate in information intensive environment. Everything they do, providing legal advice, representing a client in court, or drafting a legal document requires in depth study of law through research (Otikey and Mathews, 2000). The importance of information to a lawyer is reiterated by Bello, (1994). He argues that research in prints and non-prints format of information are tools of legal profession. Thus, of all the professions, law has the largest collection of information in both print and non-print format. To work as a lawyer takes a long time to become proficient in lawyering. A lawyer has two main duties: to uphold the law while also protecting a client's rights. To carry out these duties, a lawyer

should understand the law and be an effective communicator. In addition, he should be effective and efficient at work with speed accuracy, a lawyer needs the access and use of Information and Communication Technology resources.

The Information and Communication Technology age has not only changed the lawyers and other professionals conduct but in their businesses, it has also changed certain fundamental principles and doctrines of law (Azinge, 2002). Any lawyer trained in the era when Law of Contract was taught without regards to electronic contract formation is bound to have problems with modern contract formation and its legal implication. A lawyer's work involves a high level of documentation and information processing, storage and retrieval. The information intensiveness of the lawyer's responsibilities is such that tools and techniques that would speed up the documentation management and information handling are not only important but a professional imperative.

Clinch (1992), remarked that the ability to undertake effective legal research is one of the basic skills required of a lawyer, yet, all too often, they only acquire this skill by trial and error and fail to grasp the essential of legal research at an early enough stage in their studies. Traditionally, he remarked legal research has been about how to use a law library, but in today's study of law, a student must be able not only to find particular books on the shelves but also correctly identify and confidently use the wide range of information now available in both print and electronic formats, those publications and databases appropriate to the solution of legal problems. Reinke (1994), find that in the past, many law librarians assisted in instructing law students and other in performing online search.

With more widespread knowledge of the usefulness of Lexis and Westlaw, law librarians increasingly found themselves performing online research for other people. He discussed some of the problems of implementing and offering online legal research as a fee-based service in a law library. Strategies for dealing effectively with some patron types that may be encountered are considered along with approaches to common problems that arise in attempting to satisfy patron request for online information. He considered logistical problems such as which librarians will search, what services will be offered, setting up a price structure and problems of billing. Brown (1995), remarked that law libraries and legal research and

legal education are based primarily on the written opinions of appellate courts. He maintained that legal education and legal research should include access to lawyering as well as the judging, pointing out that discussions made by lawyers influence great amount of human conduct. He discussed the problems, benefits and methods for making lawyering decision that in recent years available in law libraries for research and legal education.

Many Scholars, lawyers and researchers have shown keen interest on how ICT impacts on legal practices. Katsh (1994) writes on the emerging generation of digital lawyers and how to re-orient the legal profession to cyberspace. Widdison (1995) describes a new practice of law in the Internet. Susskind (1996) postulates in the paper that legal practice will change dramatically from the present emphasis on casework to information management and manipulation for clients. Wall (1998) provides empirical evidence on how technology can lead to the deskilling of the legal profession and the rise of the electronic lawyer. Katsh (1994) draws attention to the difference between the present attorney and the future digital lawyers. Richard and Stagg-Taylor (2003) emphasizes the need to prepare the advocates for the courtroom of the future. The future points clearly to the maximization of the potential of digital technology for legal advocacy. Furthermore, as human behaviours and relationships evolve and change, new rules and laws become necessary to regulate the evolving social scenarios. Information and communication technology laws have therefore evolved to regulate how activities in the digital realm are conducted.

Ayres (2007), stated that lawyers have two primary motivations for integrating new information and communication technologies into the practice of law. First, the volume and diversity of data that lawyers must analyze in the course of their work have increased. Second, the efficiency gain in other industries highlights the cost savings that can be achieved by adopting more sophisticated technology. Legal information takes a great variety of forms. Familiar examples form litigation practice includes judicial opinions, court orders, dockets, briefs, transcripts, jury instructions, and verdict statistics. There is also an enormous, but less public, body of transactional materials – such as contracts and licenses, that shape commercial practice, even if such documents are never used in court. In addition to the core materials that would universally be considered “legal” in nature, there are many types of documents

that are highly relevant to legal practice. For example, medical textbooks or expert witness reports may be relevant in personal injury cases, while purchase receipts and spreadsheets may be relevant in tax refund suits. The breadth of information types

means that legal software must concern itself with written language from a diversity of sources. Legal information is therefore paramount to the success of the judiciary system. Okello-Obi, (2006) defines legal information as the requirement or right established by law, which resides in all written records.

A lawyer depends on the use of Information Technology for the efficient and effective practice. Different sources of information are needed to enhance lawyer's efficiency. A lawyer depends on retrospective, current, relevant information, interpersonal sources and frequent patronage to address the problems of justice administration especially in developing countries where justice is not only delayed but often denied. Richard and Stagg-Taylor (2003) contended that there is no question that technology is fast becoming an important part of the legal process and can help improve access to justice. He saw the workroom of the future as one that relies heavily upon electronic research communication and multimedia technology. In the United States of America, Verne (2001) indicated that every judge, law clerk and court reporter has State – owned personal computer connected to the network, so that everyone can communicate electronically. They have e-mail, personal calendars and word processors internet access and CD-ROMS system for legal research. Hence, a new generation of digital lawyers, electronic lawyers' internet law and electronic court system are beginning to emerge. Information Communication

Technology has broken the barriers of between the counsel and the court and between the court system and the citizens.

Legal research has been affected by ICTs which have undoubtedly affected law practice (Yusuf, 2006). A great deal of research has proven the benefits to the quality of law (Al Amusah, 2008) Information and Communication Technology has the potential to accelerate, enrich, and deepen skills, to motivate and engage students to relate school experience, work practice great economic viability for tomorrow's as well as strengthening law practice (Davis and Teale, Lamke and Yusuf 2005). In a rapidly changing world, basic law is essential for an individual to be able to access and use information such ability must include ICT in the global village.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design i.e. ex-post factor research design. This was adopted to investigate the accessible ICT resources for use. The population of the study comprises 57,250 lawyers registered with the Nigerian Bar Association in 2008 in all the branches in Nigeria. The stratified sampling technique was used. The population was divided into strata of lawyers in the six geo-political zones, six states were randomly selected from the zones. These were Anambra, Benue, Bornu, Kaduna, Lagos, Rivers and Abuja (FCT). From each of the selected states, Law offices were purposively selected based on accessibility and use of ICT in these offices. Accessibility was determined by the number of Law offices whose ICT resources were physically available and their ICT resources could be accessed on the spot of examination.

Table 1 Selected States

Selected States	Registered Lawyers	Purposive Samples of Lawyers
Abuja	6,155	263
Anambra	1,300	98
Benue	1,100	71
Bornu	770	85
Kaduna	2050	135
Lagos	23,120	615
Rivers	1,120	85

Source: Nigerian Barr Association (NBA) Chapter of each State

The selection was based on the physical presence and use of the information and communication technology resources in the law offices used for this study.

Data analysis and presentation of results

This study examined accessibility and use of information and communication technology accessibility and use for legal practice in Nigeria. Six states were randomly selected from the six geo-political zones of the country and the law offices were

purposely selected based on accessibility and use ICT resources in these offices. The results of research questions raised were presented using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages, bar chart as well as mean and standard deviation. For the formulated hypotheses, which were tested at 0.05 level of significance, the results are presented using Pearson correlation and regression analysis. In all, 2,100 copies of questionnaires were distributed in 185 law offices of 11 branches and 1,342 copies were filled and returned making the response rate to be 63.9%.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

S/no.	Specific characteristics	No of respondent	Percentage (%)
1.	Sex of Respondents		
	Male	1002	74.7
	Female	340	25.3
	Total	1,342	100.0%
2.	Age Range of Respondents		
	21 – 25 years	201	15.0
	26 - 30 years	307	22.9
	31 – 35 years	226	16.8
	35 – 40 years	143	10.7
	41 – 45 years	223	16.6
	46 – 50 years	132	9.8
	51 – 55 years	40	3.0
	56 – 60 years	44	3.3
61 + years	26	1.9	
	Total	1,342	100.0%
3.	Educational Qualifications		
	LL.B, BL, BA, BSC	1,291	96.2
	LL.M, MA, MSC, & PhD	51	3.8
	Total	1,342	100.0%
4.	No of years of experience in legal practice		
	1 – 5 years	462	34.4
	6 – 10 years	396	29.5
	11 – 15 years	187	13.9
	16 – 20 years	167	12.4
	21 – 25 years	86	6.4
	26 – 30 years	17	1.3
	31 + years	27	2.0
		Total	1,342
5.	Area of Specialization		
	Advocacy	102	7.6
	Soliciting	120	8.9
	Both	1,120	83.5
	Total	1,342	100.0%

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The data in Table 2 shows that male respondents were 1002 (74.7%) while the females were 340 (25.3%). This indicates more male respondents used ICT resources than their female lawyers. Those within the age range of 26 – 30 years constitute the highest number of respondents of the study with 307 (22.9%).

Based on the educational qualifications, 1,291 (96.2%) of the respondents had LLB, BL, BA, BSC, first degree in law while 51 (3.8%) had LLM (masters) and PhD degrees respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents were holders of first degree in Law i.e. LL.B and BL (Barrister in Law). More of this group use ICT than other groups.

The data shows that 462 (34.4%) respondents had spent 1 – 5 years as legal practitioners 17 (1.3%) spend 26 – 30 years. It would be inferred from the data that the number of the respondents was reducing as the years of service were increasing. Most importantly, between 6 – 10 years and 21 – 25 years of experience in legal practice, more respondents used ICT resources than those between 26 – 30 years and 30 + years of experience. The data also show that 1,120 (83.5%) of the respondents practiced as both solicitors and advocates, 120 (8.9%) practiced as solicitors and 102 (7.6%) as advocates. It could be inferred from the

data, that majority of respondents in Nigeria practiced both as advocates and solicitors.

Accessibility of ICT Resources

The analysis of the data was undertaken to find out accessibility of ICT resources in the law offices. Table 4 shows the percentages (%), mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) of respondents. In summary, the rate of accessibility of the following ICT resources were high, telephones with mean and standard deviation scores of ($\bar{x} = 3.42$ and $SD = .75$), desktop (PC law) with mean and standard of ($\bar{x} = 3.34$ and $SD = .91$), photocopying machine with mean and standard deviation of ($\bar{x} = 3.23$ and $SD = .89$) laptop (PC law) with mean and standard deviation of ($\bar{x} = 3.08$ and $SD = 1.09$) and so on. This view was corroborated by Ajala (1998) when he reported that law firms have generally accepted automation as necessary stage in law firm development. He, however, pointed out that final low accessibility of some of the ICT resources such as computerized library system, electronic constraints are a major setback. Supporting this view, Ajala and Zaid, (2004).

Table 3: Accessibility of ICT Resources to the Respondents

S/NO	ICT Resources	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	\bar{x}	SD
1.	Telephone	0	210 (15.6%)	365 (27.2%)	767 (57.2%)	3.42	.75
2.	Desk Top (PC)	77 (5.7%)	180 (13.4%)	300 (22.4%)	785 (58.5%)	3.34	.91
3.	Photocopy machine	60 (4.5%)	231(17.2%)	392 (29.2%)	659 (49.1%)	3.23	.89
4.	Laptop (PC)	174 (13.0%)	266 (19.8%)	677 (50.4%)	174 (13.0%)	3.08	1.09
5.	The Internet (E-mail Access)	135 (10.1%)	371(27.6%)	337 (25.1%)	499 (37.2%)	2.89	1.02
6	Scanner	326 (24.3%)	408 (30.4%)	243 (18.1%)	365 (27.2%)	2.48	1.13
7.	Tele-fax	434 (32.5%)	334 (30.4%)	230 (18.1%)	334 (24.7%)	2.36	1.18
8.	Law Books on CD-ROM	322 (24.0%)	540 (40.2%)	252 (19.2%)	223 (16.6%)	2.28	1.01
9.	Local Area Network LAN)	485 (36.1%)	347 (25.9%)	192 (14.3%)	318 (23.7%)	2.26	1.18
10.	Law Journals on CD-ROM	507 (37.8%)	355 (26.5%)	215 (16.0%)	265 (19.7%)	2.18	1.14
11.	Law Reports on CD-ROM	457 (34.1%)	466 (34.7%)	212 (15.8%)	207 (15.4%)	2.13	1.05
12.	Online Access on celebrated cases	712 (53.1%)	248 (18.5%)	199 (14.8%)	183 (13.6%)	1.89	1.10

	in other Jurisdiction						
13.	Computerized library system	776 (56.6%)	206 (15.4%)	148 (11.0%)	228 (17.0%)	1.88	1.16
14.	Directory of Open Access (DOAJ)	841(63.0%)	149 (11.0%)	170 (12.0%)	182 (13.3%)	1.77	1.12
15.	Lexis-Nexis	786 (58.6%)	225 (19.0%)	166 (12.3%)	135 (10.1%)	1.74	1.02
16.	Decided cases on CD-ROM	819 (61.1%)	232 (16.3%)	147 (11.3%)	147 (11.3%)	1.71	1.03
17.	West law	822 (61.3%)	235 (17.5%)	181(13.5%)	104 (7.7%)	1.68	.98
18.	Electronic Court Proceedings	890 (66.3%)	188 (14.1%)	144 (10.7%)	120 (8.9%)	1.62	.99
19.	OTHERS – Marine, Insurance, Medical Law	952 (70.9%)	108 (8.1%)	155 (11.5%)	127 (9.5%)	1.60	1.02
20.	EBSCOHOST	957 (71.3%)	142 (10.6%)	141(10.5%)	102 (7.6%)	1.54	.96
21.	JSTOR	953 (71.0%)	156 (11.6%)	141(10.8%)	88 (6.6%)	1.53	.93

Use of ICT and specialization of the Respondents

To determine the frequency of the use of information technology resources in law offices in Nigeria, respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of use of daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and never used, with 13 items as presented in Table 6. Telephones ranked the highest item that was used

daily at the rate of 87.7%. This was followed by desktop (Pc law) at the rate of 82.6%. Photocopy machine took the third position in order of daily use with 78.6%. Next on the list was laptop (Pc law) with 77.7%. Printers took the fourth position with 73.4% and the Internet had 66.6%.

Table 4: Use of ICT according to Areas of Specialization of Respondents

S/NO.	Use of ICT based on specialization	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	\bar{x}	SD
1.	Litigation	104 (7.8%)	275 (20.5%)	584 (43.5%)	379 (28.2%)	3.12	.92
2.	Administration	107(8.0%)	171 (13.1%)	500 (37.3%)	558 (41.6%)	2.92	.89
3.	Corporate and business	139 (13.3%)	259 (19.2%)	574 (42.8%)	370 (27.6%)	2.85	.93
4.	Employment and labour law	152 (13.3%)	397 (20.7%)	574 (42.8%)	219 (16.3%)	2.64	.79
5.	Constitution Law	159 (11.8%)	277 (20.7%)	528 (39.0%)	383 (28.5%)	2.85	.96
6.	Alternative Dispute Resolution	159 (11.8%)	291 (21.7%)	577 (43.0%)	315 (23.5%)	2.78	.94
7.	Human Right	171 (12.2%)	265 (19.8%)	578 (43.1%)	328 (24.4%)	2.79	.95
8.	Criminal Law	165 (12.2%)	244 (18.2%)	574 (42.8%)	359 (26.8%)	2.85	.69
9.	Environmental Law	177 (13.3%)	360 (26.8%)	544 (40.5%)	261 (19.4%)	2.66	.94
10.	Industrial Relations	213 (15.8%)	331 (24.7%)	503 (37.5%)	295 (22.0%)	2.66	.95
11.	Political Law	213 (15.8%)	265 (19.8%)	449 (33.5%)	415 (30.9%)	2.76	.96
12.	Appellate Practice	180 (13.4%)	392 (29.2%)	485 (36.1%)	285 (21.3%)	2.62	.94
13.	Mergers and Acquisition	233 (17.4%)	352 (26.2%)	448 (33.4%)	309 (23.0%)	2.62	.99
14.	Immigration	260 (19.4%)	348 (25.9%)	398 (29.7%)	336 (25.0%)	2.60	1.02
15.	Marine, Insurance Medical etc	828 (61.8%)	164 (12.2%)	246 (18.3%)	104 (7.7%)	1.72	.99

The frequency of the use of ICT resources on weekly basis, showed that law journal on CD-ROM, law reports on

CD-ROM and law books on CD-ROM were rated highest with 25.5%, 25.3% and 25.2% respectively. Next on the list was database law management software package with 18.9%, the Internet had 16.4%, tele-fax had 15.9% and printers had 15.6%. Telephones recorded 4.5% that was used on weekly bases. The frequency of use of ICT resources on monthly basis indicated that law reports on CD-ROM had 19.9%, law journal on CD-ROM had 13.5%, tele fax machine with 11.5%, law books on CD-ROM with 11.0% and the least was laptop (PC law) that recorded (7.5%). The ICT resources that were used on quarterly basis were: Decided cases on CD-ROM with 26.9%, database law management software package with 24.2%, law journal on CD-ROM had 20.4%, law reports on CD-ROM had 19.8% and telephones with 2.4% been the ICT resources that consulted on quarterly basis.

Frequency of ICT use

Response to the problems were in three categories of; agree, disagree and undecided. The findings revealed that a highly significant majority (71.9%) of the respondents agreed that limited financial resources

was a problem associated with ICT use, (18.5%) disagreed and (9.6%) indicated undecided respectively. The mean and standard deviation scores were (Table 6) this was followed by incessant power failure or outage, (59.9%) of the respondents indicated agree, (16.8%) disagree and (23.3%) undecided with mean and standard deviation scores of Next is inadequate ICT personnel, the findings revealed that (57.6%) respondents agreed, (15.5%) disagreed and (26.6%) indicated undecided that inadequate ICT personnel is a problem of ICT availability and use to lawyers' productivity in Nigeria. The mean and standard deviation were On high cost of specialized systems, (52.7%) of the respondents indicated agree, (21.4%) disagree and (25.9%) undecided that high cost of specialized systems contributes to the problems of ICT availability and use on lawyers' productivity in Nigeria, with mean and standard deviation of while others followed in this sequence, lack of in-house expertise,(52.4%) of the respondents indicated agree, (21.4%) disagree and (26.3%) undecided while the mean and standard deviation were high cost charged by ICT consultants, with mean and standard deviation of high cost charged by ICT consultants.

Table 5: Frequency of ICT use by the Respondents

S/NO.	ICT Resources	Daily Freq. Per	Weekly Freq. Per.	Monthly Freq. Per.	Quarterly Freq. Per.	Never used Freq. Per	\bar{x}	SD
1)	Laptop (PC)	1043 (77.7%)	100 (7.5%)	34 (2.5%)	68 (5.1%)	97 (7.2%)	3.43	1.21
2)	Desktop (PC)	1108 (82.6%)	111 (8.2%)	37 (2.8%)	39 (2.9%)	47 (3.5%)	3.63	.94
3)	Telephones	1177 (87.7%)	61 (4.5%)	72 (5.4%)	32 (2.4%)	0	3.78	.65
4)	Printers	985 (73.4%)	210 (15.6%)	38(2.8%)	42 (3.1%)	67 (5.1%)	3.49	1.05
5)	Telefax Machine	467 (73.4%)	214 (15.9%)	153 (11.5%)	207 (15.4%)	301(22.4%)	2.25	1.59
6)	The Internet & E-Mail	895 (66.6%)	220 (16.4%)	111 (8.3%)	75 (5.6%)	41 (3.1%)	3.38	1.05
7)	Photocopy Machine	1054 (78.6%)	148 (11.0%)	49 (3.6%)	35 (2.6%)	56 (4.2%)	3.60	1.48
8)	Dbase Law	253 (18.9%)	242 (18.0%)	135 (10.2%)	325 (24.2%)	387(28.7%)	1.74	1.50
9)	Management Software	534 (39.8%)	338 (25.2%)	148 (11.0%)	263 (19.6%)	59 (4.4%)	2.76	1.28
10)	Law Reports CD-ROM	354 (26.4%)	340 (25.5%)	267 (19.9%)	266 (19.8%)	115 (8.5%)	2.41	1.30
11)	Law Journal on CD-ROM	429 (32.0%)	343 (25.5%)	181 (13.5%)	274 (20.4%)	115 (8.6%)	2.52	1.35
12)	Decided case	229 (17.1%)	146 (10.9%)	138	361	468	1.48	1.48

	on CD-ROM			(10.2%)	(26.9%)	(34.9%)		
13)	Others – marine, Insurance, Medical etc	74 (5.5%)	68 (5.1%)	51 (3.8%)	140 (10.4%)	1009 (75.2%)	0.55	1.14

However, the findings also indicated that the respondents showed low response to the following problems; dissatisfaction with ICT consultants, the respondents indicated (49.0%) agree, (36.0%) disagree and (25.0%), limited market, respondents indicated (47.8%) agree, (25.4%) disagree and (26.8%) undecided. The findings also revealed that

respondents had low response for rate for the hardware/software problem with (43.5%) agree, (39.8%) disagree and (22.0%) undecided and harsh tropical environment showed that (40.4%) of the respondents agreed, (38.6%) disagreed and (21.6%) undecided.

Table 6: Problems with ICT use by Respondents

S/NO.	Problems Associated with ICT	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	\bar{x}	SD
(1)	Limited financial resources	129 (9.6%)	95 (7.0%)	154 (11.5%)	504 (37.6%)	460 (34.3%)	3.76	1.30
(2)	Incessant Power Outage	313 (23.3%)	115 (8.6%)	110 (8.2%)	556 (41.4%)	248 (18.5%)	3.53	1.13
(3)	Inadequate ICT Personnel	357 (26.6%)	120 (8.9%)	92 (6.9%)	348 (25.9%)	425 (31.7%)	3.67	1.20
(4)	High cost of specialized systems	348 (25.9%)	144 (10.7%)	144 (10.7%)	441 (32.9%)	265 (19.8%)	3.40	1.22
(5)	Lack of in-house expertise	353 (26.3%)	178 (13.4%)	109 (8.1%)	465 (34.6%)	237 (17.7%)	3.40	1.16
(6)	High costs charged by ICT consultants	327 (24.4%)	177 (13.2%)	144 (10.7%)	444 (33.1%)	250 (18.6%)	3.36	1.23
(7)	Dissatisfactions with consultants	444 (33.1%)	152 (11.3%)	335 (25.0%)	230 (17.1%)	181 (13.5%)	3.28	1.24
(8)	Firm's policies	435 (32.4%)	162 (12.1%)	335 (25.0%)	223 (16.6%)	187 (13.7%)	3.28	1.20
(9)	Limited market	424 (31.6%)	137 (10.2%)	360 (26.8%)	217 (16.2%)	204 (15.2%)	3.31	1.23
(10)	Poor maintenance culture	341 (25.4%)	258 (19.2%)	281 (20.9%)	253 (18.9%)	209 (15.6%)	3.27	1.19
(11)	Lack of ICT skills	425 (31.7%)	134 (17.0%)	308 (22.8%)	(12.8%)	209 (15.6%)	3.09	1.39
(12)	Harsh tropical environment	286 (21.6%)	308 (23.0%)	202 (15.0%)	328 (24.4%)	218(16.0%)	3.04	1.31

Discussion of Results

The finding of the study on gender use of ICT resources indicated that there were more male respondents than female respondents. Although the extent of use was at least a pointer to the awareness and embrace of ICT resources among lawyers. The

results also revealed similarities in the embrace and awareness between both male and female lawyers.

The indicated differences of us in both sexes were not significant enough to warrant associations to gender differences. There was no evidence that male or

female respondents used ICT resources more extensively than the other. Despite this, the aggregate number of male lawyers was higher than that of female. This is in line with Haruna (2000), that there were more male lawyers than female lawyers in the practice of law in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The findings of the age range of the respondents showed that, the use of ICT resources vary with the age range. It also revealed that there is closeness between the age range of the young respondents and the middle age respondents in the use of ICT resources. The findings further revealed that as the age range increases, ICT use decreases. This might be because the longer you are in a job, the more the responsibility that is given to you. The use of ICT resources across ages might be that the respondents were exposed to ICT training at the undergraduate level because most law faculties in Nigerian Universities have been mandated to include computer appreciation in their curriculum. Although observation revealed that majority of the age range of 55 years and above did not operate computer directly on their own. Some of them lay claim to using the computer since they have secretaries who use the computer to type their write-ups for them. This buttresses the assertion of Lichtenberg (1995), that there evidences that the managers will not use computer access terminals directly will make use of their secretaries or assistants who have been trained in data processing. In addition, Nwankwo (1995), stated that the top executives depend upon specialization and skills of their middle-level managers to a great extent. Data gathered on qualifications show that first degree holders formed the majority of the respondents. In addition, a call to bar certificate is awarded to those who want to practice law in Nigeria. The possession of law degree in Nigeria entails a period of five years in the universities followed by 12-months training at the Law School. Second and doctoral degrees respondents were very few. This is probably due to the fact that, success in law does not necessarily have any attachment to higher degrees. The findings are corroborated by Ekundayo (1992), and Akinjide (1996), who posited that a successful lawyer does not necessarily need a higher degree but should be hardworking, honest, reliable, courageous, eloquent in oral and written expressions, experienced and resilient in practice.

Based on years of experience in legal practice respondents within age ranges of 1 – 5 and 6 – 10 indicated a relatively high use of ICT resources with

462 (34.4%) and 396 (29.5%) respectively. This is probably due to the fact that younger age groups are interested in things that involve some measure of practical that would engage them all the time and they have higher retentive memories than the adults. In addition, most universities in Nigeria have started teaching students computer appreciation at the undergraduate level, at Law School and in some cases, students are required to own a laptop.

The study also revealed that ICT use decreases as the years of experience in legal practice increases. This may be due to computer phobia of the older lawyers and the attitude of the same group in using the traditional method they were used to. They were addicted to the paper format of law reports and books, and do not want to part totally with the traditional method of searching the law. This view is in support of Jegede (1995), in her research on why law libraries are late at computerization. In her view she stated that, it is due to the nature of law and legal practice and that there is no other class of professionals that rely heavily on use of books than legal men.

This study revealed that over 80% of respondents specialized as both advocates and solicitors, while the rest specialized in either advocacy or soliciting. It is inferred that Nigerian lawyers appear at the bar as write briefs on behalf of their client(s). This is unlike what happens in the more developed nations where law profession is not fused together. That is, an advocate goes to court only and is not involved at the pre-court stage of a case.

Table 3 shows the accessibility of the different hardware software technologies that are accessible, functional and have contributed meaningfully to legal research and legal practice in Nigeria. This finding revealed that telephones, GSM, Landlines and Intercoms phones, top that list and are widely used by all lawyers for their private and official transactions. This finding supports the views of Chisenga (2004) and Resenberg (2005), in which Chisenga reported the use of different types of computers and other accessories. 'Rosenberg took a study of the digital information communication technologies in 20 African university libraries and found out that different libraries had different ICTS.

Respondents indicated that litigation, administration, corporate and business, constitutional, alternative dispute resolution and criminal areas of law practice

have high ICT use, the highest being litigation with (92.3%) which almost ranked the same with administrative law that had (92.0%). This result tends with that of Haynes (2004), who found that ICT resources use in Northern Cameroon, have been on the increase since the economic upsurge commenced and the implication of Cameroon, have been on the increase since the economic upsurge commenced and the implication of this to law firms is an increase service capability which also impacted on lawyers' productivity. The ICT resources were physically present and technically functional. This was in support of what Kontos (2002), posited that successful law officers need to be knowledgeable and skillful in the application of new technologies in order to work effectively. The least areas of ICT use were insurance and marine-laws with (38.3%) etc. According to the respondents during the oral interview, 'these are new areas in law practice that have not attracted much development.

The study revealed that some law firms have internet connectivity especially mega law firms situated in Lagos and Abuja while others have stand alone systems. With these in place, lawyers could freely interact with clients through electronic mails and other internet facilities. This provided them with the opportunity of today's globalization and the means to overcome barriers on service delivery. They use the Internet to obtain information about new law materials which might be available in local foreign jurisdictions could be accessed and used as evidence. This in itself can save many hours of wondering over records in print format and searching for endless result. This is supported by Berul and Lewis (2002) and Vale (2003), when discussing how the Internet has rapidly changed the role of lawyers.

The result of the study showed the frequency of ICT resources used by the respondents based on daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and never used basis. The findings revealed that telephones, desktop/laptop computers, photocopiers, the Internet and printers were highly used daily. This is because the resources are easily affordable in terms of cost to the respondents. The frequency of ICT use on weekly, monthly and quarterly basis showed that law reports on CD-ROM, law journal on CD-ROM, law books on CD-ROM were used in these periods. The result indicated they were not often used.

The finding of the study on the problems associated with ICT use revealed that inadequate funding is a

major problem affecting the law firms in Nigeria. As a result of this, most of the law firms found it difficult to expand and improve upon their investment on ICT. This supports the finding of Dada (1995) that most law offices in Nigeria lack adequate funding compared with the advanced countries.

Another finding from the study is the problem of inadequate personnel/ICT skills. This result is in agreement with Dada (1995), when he observed that personnel problem is real and could be highly intractable when it comes to quality and capacity to retain the few skilful ones that could be attracted or trained on the job. The findings revealed that only few law firms have computerized law libraries with Internet connectivity. Lawyers in such firms could easily access the net and source for relevant legal material that would aid their job productivity. It was also revealed that lawyers attitude towards information technologies was positive unlike in the olden days when they were not proactive towards ICT usage. This supported the view of More (1990), that no enough lawyers work on the basis that the very success or failure of contemporary and future information technology depends on the attitudes of people who design, consume, work with and live with that technology.

Observation of the law firms was conducted by the researcher and the research assistant to check accessibility and use of ICT resources. Generally, the following ICT resources were accessible and used in the law firms: Mobile Phones, desk and laptop computers, digital video tapes, law database management software, cameral, photo and journals, and at least two lawyers in each of the law firms where the survey was conducted were interviewed. Highlight from the interview conducted showed that lawyers with relevant ICT resources seemed to perform well.

Recommendations

- Trainings on ICT skills, through which legal practitioners could fulfill their roles in meeting high demands of clients' requirements, need not be played upon. They should use publications and electronic databases that are applicable and appropriate to their environment. This view corroborates that of Nimpat (1998) who observed that the world is becoming a global village occasioned by the imaginative use of

the new information communication technologies. He concluded that lawyers should learn and experiment on how a fusion of information, literature and technology could be better harnessed to improve knowledge and qualitative administration of justice in the society. In preparing a sound plan on a fusion of information, literature and technology (networking) one should draw lessons from approaches adapted elsewhere. However, any approach to be used must keep in view the local conditions. Any approach may be acceptable with modifications or it may be rejected. After implementation, the programme must be evaluated periodically.

- The accessibility of ICT makes utilization possible by improving lawyers, productivity, thereby speeding up their services by serving as bedrock for knowledge growth and expansion. Therefore, it is mandatory for legal professionals to realize this fact and put all the necessary machineries in place for legal practices to function properly.
- Lawyers should find time to acquire computer skills and, in most occasions, firms should ensure that lawyers have the time. Though some might still feel it is a waste of time, they will later realize that the time spent in acquiring these skills was a good investment to their profession. They collaborate with the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), which can organize computer seminars for lawyers together with short courses in basic computer skills. Paying attention to the Internet and what it has to offer is a key to practicing law in the years ahead. In addition, there should be more emphasis on ICT training of lawyers both at local and international levels. This may mean that legal practitioners' ability of managing ICT resources could be enhanced if appropriate training to acquire the needed skills is put in place. Computerized library system is a major instrument and plays critical roles in the existence and growth of law offices. Young (2001), made similar suggestion, at the 4th Northumbria International Conference on performance measurement in library and information services and commented that "well equipped and automated library system is an essential asset to a law office".

- The development in information communication technology (ICT) system provides an alternative platform for legal information production, acquisition, interpretation and dissemination. It is significant to know that one of the areas of ICT in law is in software packages whether locally customized or otherwise. Examples of these are: Nexis Lexis, Westlaw, PC law, Eurolex, lawtell etc.
- There should be a generally acceptable software package(s) that can be accessed by all law firms in Nigeria. In this respect, a policy statement could be made by the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) in conjunction with Nigerian Council of Legal Education to have special software to be used by all law offices in the country. There is also the need for the various law offices in the country to aspire to link up with the Internet facilities in order to enjoy the advantage thereof. The Internet connectivity offers a lot of opportunities and is turning the world to a global village.

Conclusion

As the world has become a global village through the use of ICT, making ICT accessible and using the ICT for the benefit of speedy administration of justice in the country is *sine-qua-non* to adequate and current legal materials in non-print formats to enhance effective and efficient legal practice in Nigeria. Lawyers are always in need of updating their knowledge and professional skills. Therefore, the paradox is that legal practitioners need computerized library system that is up-to-date and well equipped to enhance effective and efficient legal practice. Such progressive measure will assist the country in developing a powerful working culture culminating in the advancement of the ideals of development and professionalism, particularly in materials on science and technology.

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