The Utilisation of Electronic Resources by University Students in Niger State, Nigeria

Jibril Attahiru Alhassan, PhD

University Library Services, Federal University of Technology, Minna
j.alhassan@futminna.edu.ng; jibalhassan@yahoo.com

Abstract

Purpose: This study was carried out to determine the types of e-resources available, its awareness and use by university students in Niger State of Nigeria.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of the undergraduate students of two universities in Niger, namely Federal University of Technology, Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 200 respondents from the two universities. Data collected were analysed using frequency count and simple percentages.

Findings: The findings revealed that the Internet services, e-mail services, online databases, and electronic databases were the available electronic information resources often used by the undergraduate students in both universities. The use of the e-resources enable the undergraduates to have access to current and up-to-date information, faster and easier access to information, and access to a wider range of information. The students used the resources for academic purposes, online application/registration, research, communication with friends and colleagues, sourcing for materials for project writing, complete assignments and for other personal purposes. However, inadequate power supply, and poor network/internet connectivity, was major constraints.

Implications: Universities should give priority to the development of Information and Communication Technologies in the library by subscribing to relevant educational databases.

Information retrieval skills using information technology should be included in the curriculum for the undergraduate students to be able to make use of these electronic resources effectively. Hands-on training on the use of these resources should be actively promoted.

Originality/Value: The study recommended improved network facilities by University Libraries to improve service delivery to students.

Keywords: Developing Countries; Electronic Resources; Niger State; Nigeria; University Students; Utilisation

Introduction

Libraries have been part and parcel of human civilization because the art of writing and preservation of knowledge is an integral part of human culture and civilization. Libraries have thus gone through tremendous developments and transformation over the years. One of the major aspects of human civilization that adopt technology for its operations is the library, all in the efforts to preserve human experience. Thus librarianship helps to preserve and make widely accessible the records of human experience. Information Technology is the technology of the 21st century which started to manifest and transform in the later part of the 20th century. The emergence of Information Technology (IT) has re-directed the practice of librarianship.

The advent of Information and Communication Technology has accelerated availability and use of electronic resources in the academic libraries because of high demand for relevant information by faculty members and students. In order to meet up with such needs, libraries and librarians have to wake up and meet this global development. Thus, academic libraries now invest so much on electronic resources to expose to various electronic resources outlets via the internet and the CD technology.

In academic libraries, the electronic resources that are of critical importance for use are e-journals and e-books. This is so because they are the e-version of the conventional books and journals found in the library. These e-resources are stored organized in various databases to permit easy retrieval. Some of these databases are subject based while some cover a wide range of subject area. Publishers often have their own databases with all their publications while some other agents collate publications from various.

databases to provide robust access to e-resources The present dispensation of library and information services has put every librarian on his toes to be able to meet the demands of the varied clientele. This is as a result of shift from the traditional printed material provision to users to that of hybrid service where both the print materials and the electronic sources are provided concurrently especially in the university libraries. In fact the growth and diversity of electronic resources, especially e-journals, has led many to predict the extinction of the printed journals. According to Shuling (2007), electronic information has gradually become a major resource in every university library in recent years. Kinengyere (2007) stated that "the impact of moving from text-based to resource-based learning has involved heavier use of library materials and a demand for more and varied media sources" This makes the provision and use of electronic information systems in academic libraries a critical issue for those working in information and library services (Armstrong et al., 2001).

Tella et al. (2007) noted that students' ability to find and retrieve information effectively is a transferable skill useful for their future lives as well as enabling the positive and successful use of academic electronic resources. The ability to explore the digital environment is a requirement for academic success today. Students are increasingly expected to use electronic information resources at the university. In order to make use of the growing range of electronic resources, students must acquire and practice the skills necessary to exploit them. Skills learning are essential in a technology driven environment, and it can be enhanced through the use of innovative learning strategies (Lawson, 2005).

Students constitute the largest percentage of library users in universities. The advent of electronic resources accessible by remote means using various facilities created some conveniences for students in using library facilities that are e-based. In spite of this, the patronage of the library is still not very encouraging especially the e-library. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the utilization of e-resources by university students in Niger State.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are;

1 To determine the types of e-resources available in the university libraries in Niger State.
2 To find out the level of awareness of e-resources and how often is being used by students
3 To determine the rate of use of the e-resources.
4 Find out the impact of e-resources on students' academic achievement in the universities in Niger State.
5. To find out the challenges of using e-resources by university students in Niger State.

Literature Review

Borrego, et al. (2007) observes that there have been many studies of users of electronic resources in the professional literature in the last few years. In a recent exhaustive review of the literature on the subject, Tenopir (2003) analyzed the results of over 200 studies of the use of electronic resources in libraries published between 1995 and 2003. The main conclusion of this review is that electronic resources have been rapidly adopted in academic spheres, though the behaviour varies according to the discipline.

Okello-Obura and Magara (2008) investigated electronic information access and utilization at the East African School of Library and Information Science, Makerere University, Uganda. The study revealed that users derived a lot of benefits from electronic resources gaining access to a wider range of information and improved academic performance as a result of access to quality information.

Madhusudhan (2007) conducted a study on internet usage by research scholars in the University of Delhi and the results indicate that the problems encountered include inadequate number of computers with internet facilities, slow internet connection and lack of skills and training. Watts and Ibegbulam (2006) examined some of the barriers to the usage of electronic information resources available at the medical library of College of Medicine, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their findings reveal that lack of inadequate ICT (information and communication technology) infrastructure and affordable online access, absence of in-depth ICT skills and information searching skills among library staff and cost of using the cybercafé are barriers to the use of electronic resources.

Oduwole and Akpati (2003) investigated the accessibility and retrieval of electronic information at the University of Agriculture Library, Abeokuta, Nigeria and reported that electronic information cuts across all members of the University community that it was to a greater extent easy to use and were satisfied with their search outputs. The constraints identified included insufficient number of terminals available for use despite high demand and inadequate electricity supply.

Ojo and Akande (2005) reported a low level of usage of the electronic information resources by students in their study of access, usage and awareness of electronic information resources at the University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan, Nigeria. The major problem however identified is lack of information retrieval skills for exploiting electronic resources, thus making the level of usage of resources by medical students very low.

Research methodology

The survey research design was used study. The population of the study comprised of 20,000 undergraduate students of Federal University of Technology (FUT), Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University (IBBU), Lapai both in Niger state Nigeria. Two hundred (200) students, 100 from each of the two universities were sampled for the study using simple random sampling technique. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection which was analysed using frequency count and simple percentage.

Data analysis and interpretation

Distribution and return of questionnaire

Out of the total of 200 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 130 were completed, returned and found useful representing 65% return rate.

Demographic Information of the Respondents

The demographic information of the respondents are presented and analyzed below.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Institution and sex

Item	Frequency	Male	Female
F.U.T Minna	66 (50.77%)	46 (69.69%)	20 (30.30%)
IBBU Lapai	64 (49.23%)	36 (56.25%)	28 (43.75%)
Total	130 (100%)	82 (63.07%)	48 (36.92%)

Table1 revealed that 66(50.77%) of the respondents were from FUT Minna while 64(49.23%) were students from IBBU Lapai.

The table also show that 82(63.08%) of the respondents were male while 48(36.92%) of the respondents were female.

Table 2: Computer literacy of respondents

OPTION	FUT MINNA	IBBU LAPAI	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
YES	60	53	113	86.92
NO	6	11	17	13.08
Total	66	64	130	100

Table2 shows that large number of respondents were computer literate that is, 113 respondents representing (86.92%) while 17(13.08%) of the respondents were not computer literate .

Table3: Awareness of the electronic resources in your institution's library

OPTION	FUT MINNA	IBBU LAPAI	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
YES	60	56	116	89.23
NO	6	8	14	10.77
Total	66	64	130	100

From table3, it is shown that 116 representing 89.23% of the respondents were aware of the electronic resources in their institution's library while 14 (10.77%) respondents were not aware of the existence of electronic resources in their institution's library. This implies that majority of the respondents were aware of the electronic resources in their institution's library.

Table 4: The electronic resources available in your institution's library

Option	FUT Yes	IBBU Yes	Overall Count & Percent for Yes	FUT No	IBBU No	Overall Count & Percent for No
CD-ROM Databases	13(10%)	25 (19.23%)	29.23%	53 (40.77%)	39 (30%)	70.77% 130(100%)
Internet services	66 (50.77%)	64 (49.23%)	100%	-	-	- 130(100%)
E-mail services	59 (45.38%)	58 (44.62%)	90%	7 (5.38%)	6 (4.62%)	10% 130(100%)
Electronic journals	49 (37.69%)	39 (30%)	67.69%	17 (13.08%)	25 (19.23)	32.21% 130(100%)
Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	21 (16.15%)	23 (17.69%)	33.84%	45(34.62%)	41(31.54%)	66.16% 130(100%)
Online databases	51 (39.23%)	41(31.54%)	70.77%	15 (11.54%)	23(17.69%)	29.23% 130(100%)
Electronic books	11 (8.46%)	20 (15.38%)	23.84%	55 (42.31%)	44(33.85)	76.16% 130(100%)

Table4 shows that eBooks (23.84%), CD-ROM (29.23%) and OPAC (33.84%) are judged unavailable by respondents in their university libraries based on the low percentage of respondents that attested yes to their availability. However, over 60% of the respondents affirmed that the resources are not available. All the other resources namely internet services, email services, e-journals and online database are attested to be available by respondents with over 65% affirmative response.

Table 5 : You make use of electronic resources

OPTION	FUT MINNA	IBBU LAPAI	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
YES	63	59	122	93.85
NO	3	5	8	6.15
Total	**66**	**64**	**130**	**100**

Table5 shows that 93.85% (122 respondents) from both universities indicated that they use the electronic information resources while, 8(6.15%) of respondents indicated that they do not use electronic resources. This implies that electronic resources are used by respondents

Table 6: You prefer the printed resources over the electronic resources

OPTION	FUT MINNA	IBBU LAPAI	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
YES	30	20	50	38.46
NO	36	44	80	61.54
Total	**66**	**64**	**130**	**100**

From table 6, 38.46% (50) respondents indicated preference using printed materials over the electronic resources, while majority of the respondents 80(61.54%) were on the opposition of preferring printed resources over the electronic resources. This implies that both printed and e-resources are used by respondents with e-resources having higher preference over printed sources.

Table 7: You use the following electronic resources

S/No	Options	Yes FUT	Yes IBBU	Total	No FUT	No IBBU	Total
a.	CD-ROM Databases	21 (16.15%)	20 (15.38%)	31.53%	45 (34.62%)	44(33.85%)	68.47%
b.	Internet services	66 (50.77%)	61 (46.92%)	97.69%	-	3 (2.31%)	2.31%
c.	E-mail services	57 (43.85%)	54 (41.54%)	85.39%	9 (6.92%)	10 (7.69%)	14.61%
d.	Electronic journals	38 (29.23%)	35 (26.92%)	56.15%	28 (21.54%)	29 (22.31%)	43.85%
e.	Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	32 (24.62%)	26 (20%)	44.62%	34(26.15%)	38 (29.23%)	55.38%
f.	Online databases	40 (30.77%)	39 (30%)	60.77%	26 (20%)	25 (19.23%)	39.23%
g.	Electronic books	50 (38.46%)	45 (34.62%)	73.08	16 (12.31%)	21 (16.15%)	28.46%

Table 7 indicated that internet services (97.69%), e-mail services (85.39%), electronic books (73.08%), are used by over 70% of the respondents. Online database (60.77%) and electronic journals (56.15%) are used by 55-65% of the respondents while Online Public Access Catalogue (44.62%) and CD-ROM database (31.53%) were used by less than 50% respondents. This implies that all the resources are used but the most used are internet services,

email services, e-books, and online databases with 60% and above.

Table 8: Frequency of using the electronic resources

Option	FUT	IBBU	Total	Percentage
Daily	18	24	42	32.31%
Weekly	22	17	39	30%
twice a week	6	9	15	11.54%
Monthly	20	14	34	26.15%
Total	**64**	**64**	**130**	**100%**

Table 8 reveals that 42 (32.31%) of the respondents make use of electronic resources daily, 39 (30%) of the respondents use the electronic resources weekly, 15 (11.54%) make use of electronic resources twice a week while, 34 (26.15%) respondents make use of electronic resources monthly. This implies t6hat the frequency of use is high with 62.31% of the respondents using it either daily or weekly

Table 9: Frequency of use of each electronic resource

Option	Very Often	Often	Occasionally	Rarely
CD-ROM Databases	-	26(20%)	48(36.92%)	56(43.07%)
Internet services	62(47.69%)	47(36.15%)	21(16.15)	-
E-mail services	54(41.53%)	39(30%)	30(23.07%)	7(5.38%)
Electronic journals	31(23.84%)	16(12.30%)	52(40%)	32(24.61%)
OPAC	-	-	57(43.84%)	73(56.15%)
Online databases	27(20.76%)	39(30%)	35(26.92%)	29(22.30%)
Electronic books	57(43.84%)	48(36.92%)	17(13.07%)	8(6.15%)

Table 9 shows that internet services are the most frequently used as 62(47.69%) respondents very often use it. This is followed by electronic books 57(43.84%) and email services as affirmed by 54(41.53%). Others are electronic journals 31(23.84%) and online databases 27(20.76%). Cd-ROM and OPAC were not frequently used by respondents as none of them ticked very often for them. The table further revealed that electronic books is often used by 48(36.92%), while 47(36.15%) often used internet services, 39(30%) often used email services and online databases, 26(20%) often used CD-ROM databases and 16(12.30%) often used electronic journals. OPAC was not often use, but occasionally used by 57(43.84%) respondents. Electronic journals were occasionally used by 52(40%) respondents and CD-ROM by 48(36.9%) respondents. The other four resources are Online databases 35(26.92%), email services 30(23.07%) internet services 21(16.15%) and electronic books 17(13.07%). On the rarely used column, OPAC has 73(56.15%), CD-ROM 56(43.07%), electronic journals 32(24.61%), and online databases 29(22.30%). However, no respondent rarely used the internet services but only 8(6.15%) and 7(5.38%) rarely used the electronic books and email services respectively.

The analyses of the table implies that internet services, eBooks and email services are the most frequently used electronic resources while OPAC and CD-ROM are the least frequently used. Furthermore, the fact that respondents are undergraduates could account for the more impressive use of electronic books over electronic journals.

Table 10: You derived the following benefits from the use of e-resources

S/No	Electronic Resources	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
a.	Access to a wider range of information	130	100%	-	-
b.	Faster access to information	127	97.69%	3	2.31%
c.	Access to current up-to-date information	120	92.31	10	7.69%
d.	Easier access to information	98	75.38%	32	24.62%
e.	Improved academic performance as a result of access to quality information.	122	93.85%	8	6.15%

Table 10 shows that all the respondents 130(100%) affirmed that they have access to wider range of information, 127(97.69%) respondents indicated faster access to information, and 120(92.31%) respondents indicated current and up-to-date information. Meanwhile, 98(75.38%) indicated that they have easier access to information as a result of the use of electronic information resources while majority of respondents 122(93.85%) of the respondents reported that the use of the electronic resources improved their academic performance as a result of access to quality information.

This result implies that the benefits derived from the use of the electronic information resources

by the undergraduate students in both FUT Minna and IBBU Lapai are enormous and they included: access to current and up-to-date information, faster access to information, access to a wider range of information and easier access to information.

Table 11: You use e-resources for the following reasons

S/No	Options	Yes		Total	No		Total
		FUT	IBBU		FUT	IBBU	
a.	Academic purposes/ course works	59	55	114 (87.69%)	7	9	16 (12.31%)
b.	Complete assignment	46	50	96(73.85%)	20	14	34(26.15%)
c.	For research purposes	50	48	98(75.38%)	16	16	32(24.62%)
d.	Communication with friends and colleagues	61	54	115(88.46%)	5	10	15(11.54%)
e.	Online application/ registration	37	46	83(63.85%)	29	18	47(36.15%)
f.	Sources for materials for project writing	65	58	123(94.62%)	1	6	7(5.38%)
g.	Personal	48	50	98 (75.38%)	18	14	32(24.62%)

Table11 shows various purposes for which the respondents used the electronic information resources. The Table shows that most of the respondents 114(87.69%) used the electronic resources for academic purposes/ course works, 96(73.85%) of respondents used the electronic resources for assignments, 98(75.38%) of respondents used it for research purposes, 115(88.46%) of respondents used it to communicate with friends and colleagues, 83(63.85%) of respondents used electronic resources for online application/registration. Almost all the respondents 123(94.62%) of the respondents used the electronic resources as sources of information for project writing and 98(75.38%) of the respondents used the electronic resources for other personal purposes.

Table 12: These factors hinder you from using the electronic resources

S/No	Factors that Hinder Electronic resources Use	Yes		Total	NO		Total
		FUT	IBBU		FUT	IBBU	
a.	Two much information retrieved	23(17.69%)	18(13.85%)	41(31.54%)	43(33.08%)	46(35.38%)	89(68.46%)
b.	It is time consuming	18(13.86%)	28(21.54%)	46(35.4%)	48(36.92%)	36(27.69%)	94(64.61%)
c.	Access to computer terminal is Limited	46(35.38%)	39(30%)	85(65.38%)	20(15.38%)	25(19.23%)	45(34.61%)
d.	No IT knowledge to effectively utilize the services	50(38.46%)	42(32.31%)	92(70.77%)	16(12.31%)	22(16.92%)	38(29.23%)
e.	Using electronic resources often distracts me from doing my other work	33(25.38%)	38(29.23%)	81(54.61%)	33(25.38%)	26(20%)	59(45.38%)
f.	Library staff don't assist to use	48(36.92%)	40(30.77%)	88(67.69%)	18(13.86%)	24(18.46%)	42(32.32%)
g.	The system is sometime slow	66(50.77%)	64(49.23%)	130(100%)	-	-	0(0%)
h.	Sometime there is network failure	59(45.38%)	59(45.38%)	118(90.76%)	7(5.38%)	5(3.85%)	12(9.23%)
i.	Power failure	38(29.23%)	45(34.62%)	83(63.85%)	28(21.54%)	19(14.62%)	47(36.16%)

The table12 shows that 41(31.54%) of respondents responded that too much of information retrieved hinder electronic resources use while, 89(68.46%) of respondents attested that too much of information retrieved did not hinder use of electronic resources. 46(35.4%) of respondents are of the opinion that time consumption hindered electronic resources use while 94(64.61%) of the respondents had contrary opinion. As for limited access to computer terminal being hindrance to electronic resources use, 85(65.38%) respondents stated yes while, 45(34.61%) of respondents stated no. 92(70.77%) of respondents responded that lack of IT knowledge to effectively utilize the services hindered usage of electronic resources use while, 38(29.23%) were for no. also 81(54.61%) of respondents responded that using electronic resources often distracts them from doing their work while 59(45.38%) of respondents disagreed to this. 88(67.69%) of respondents agreed that non-assistance from library staff to facilitate easy access hinder electronic resources while, 42(32.32%) of respondents responded that non-assistance from library staff did not hinder their use of electronic resources. All the respondents representing 130(100%) agreed that the slow of the system

sometimes hindered use of electronic resources. Almost all the respondents representing 118(90.76%) agreed that sometimes there is network failure which hindered use of electronic resources. However, 83(63.85%) of respondents agreed that power failure hinder use of electronic resources while, only a few respondents representing 47(36.16%) said that power failure did not hinder usage of electronic resources.

Summary

This study investigated the awareness and use of electronic resources by undergraduate students of Federal University of Technology Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida Lapia (IBB). It was revealed from the findings of this study that the following electronic resources Internet services, e-mail services, online databases, electronic databases and electronic journals were available for the use of undergraduate students in both Federal University of Technology Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida Lapai. However, other electronic resources like CD-ROM databases, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), as well as electronic books were not readily available for their use.

The result also found that some of the available electronic resources like the internet, e-mail, online databases, electronic databases and electronic journal were always used by the undergraduate students in both FUT Minna and IBBU Lapai. The study revealed that electronic resources like the internet and e-mail services were the only ones often used by the undergraduate students of university under study, while others like CD-ROM databases, electronic journals, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and electronic books were rarely used by them.

The findings gathered that the benefits of using the electronic resources by the undergraduate students are enormous and cannot be underestimated. These among other things include access to current and up-to-date information, faster and easier access to information, improved academic performance as a result of access to quality information and access to a wider range of information. These confirms findings by Okello-Obura and Magara (2008) who investigated electronic information access and utilization at the East African School of Library and Information Science, Makerere University, Uganda that users derived a lot of benefits from electronic resources gaining access

to a wider range of information and improved academic performance as a result of access to quality information. Furthermore, the study also revealed that the undergraduate students use the electronic resources for various purposes. According to the findings, they used the resources for academic purposes, online application/registration, research, communication with friends and colleagues, sourcing for materials for project writing, complete assignments and for other personal purposes.

Limited access to computer terminals was a major constraint to the use of electronic information resources which collaborates findings by Oduwole and Akpati (2003) at the Univwersity of Agriculture Abeokuta, Nigeria. Other constraints according to the study are lack of IT knowledge to effectively utilize the services, network failure, poor network/internet connectivity and power failure were the major factors that hinder the effective use of electronic resources by the undergraduate students in both FUT Minna and IBBU Lapai.

Conclusion

The study found out that electronic information resources like internet, e-mail services, online database electronic databases and electronic journals were available for use in both Federal University of Technology Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai. The resources are often used by them to support their academic course works, online application/registration, research, communication with friends and colleagues, sourcing for materials for project writing, complete assignments and for other personal purposes. However, the use of these resources by the students have resulted in a number of benefits such as access to current and up-to-date information, faster and easier access to information, and access to a wider range of information.

The study also established that the use of electronic information resources by undergraduate students in the two universities is very encouraging. Inadequate power supply, inadequate provision of key electronic resources and facilities in the library were identified as key factors militating against the effective use of the electronic information resources.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made, based on the findings of this study.

1. Universities should give priority to the development of Information and Communication Technologies in the library by subscribing to relevant educational databases.
2. Information retrieval skills using information technology should be included in the curriculum for the undergraduate students to be able to make use of these electronic resources effectively. Hands-on training on the use of these resources should be actively promoted.

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