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## *Review*

# **Use of Library Electronic Information Resources by Academic Staff in Olabisi Onabanjo University**

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**This study was a survey of academic staff use of the library electronic information resources at the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria. A total of 150 lecturers were randomly selected from four faculties in the university. A copy of a structured questionnaire by the researchers was used for data collection while simple percentage was used for data analysis. The findings revealed that majority of the sampled lecturers made use of library electronic information resources. The findings also indicated that the electronic information resources were available at the library and used them majorly for research and lecture purposes. It was also found that the lecturers preferred the electronic resources for research because they are less expensive, more informative, more useful and time saving. Factors hindering effective use of the library electronic information resources included power outage, slow download, low bandwidth and lack of computer systems. The study recommended amongst others training for academic staff on effective use of library electronic resources in the library.**

**Keywords:** Academic Staff, Electronic Information Resources Use, Lecturers

## **INTRODUCTION**

Technology has penetrated all aspects of human life. Libraries generally are not excluded from these transformations. The use of information technology (IT) has influenced work procedures and approaches in librarianship. Libraries now use IT for improved services provision and to satisfy diverse user needs. Libraries have transformed into digital and virtual libraries where books, journals and magazines have been transformed into e-books, e-journals and so on. Similarly, reference materials like encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks and so on as well as abstracting and indexing services are

also available online. These have however, increased global dissemination of information to individuals most especially researchers. Electronic resources can now easily be made available and accessible in the remote areas. Electronic resources solve storage problems and control the flood of information. There is a great need to study the use of electronic resources and identify factors that hinder their use among academic staff. The quality of research among academics in any university system depends largely on the quality and quantity of electronic information resources at the institution's disposal. Availability, accessibility and use of electronic information resources are indispensable to the teaching, research and community services activities of academic staff members in the Nigerian university system. The

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continued existence and relevance of academics in any university system depends on the ability to exploit available information resources either in print or electronic formats. Academics in Nigerian universities require information to function effectively (Nwalo, 2000; Chukwu, 2005; Oyedun, 2006; and Adetimirin, 2007). Information and its use are as old as man. Indeed, without information there cannot be communication. The technology embrace has led to the proliferation of electronically available information resources. Popoola (2008) expressed the view that the quality of teaching, research, and community service of social scientists in any university system depends on information sources and services. Popoola (2008) stated further that information availability, accessibility, and use are essential to the teaching, research, and service activities of social scientists in the Nigerian university system. Okiki (2011) stressed that information is the pivot on which the survival of any society rests. According to him, information remains the major ingredient in taking decision and also assists in reducing the degree of uncertainty. Electronic information resources available for use by academic staff includes: the CD-ROM databases, electronic mails, Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs) and Internet facilities. The Internet which is the most prominent of these sources has made possible, access to electronic books, electronic journals, various databases and search engines. All these resources constitute the electronic information resources.

Apart from teaching and community services, academic staff members are expected to publish quality research output, communicate ideas within the profession, thereby contributing to the available knowledge base. Recent studies such as those of Popoola, 2007; 2008 and Okiki 2011 have shown that research productivity plays a major role in attaining success in the academia as it relates to promotion, tenure and salary of the academic staff. It has also been reported that the quality of research output by academics in any university system depends largely on quality and quantity of information resources at their disposal (Popoola, 2008). Thus, non-availability and usage of electronic information resources by lecturers in tertiary institution has great adverse effect not only to the lecturers but also to the educational system as a whole. Therefore, this study was designed to examine the use of library electronic information resources by academic staff in the Olabisi Onabanjo University (O.O.U.), Ogun State, Nigeria.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed at examining use of library electronic information resources by academic staff of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State, Nigeria. In view of this,

the following specific objective will be looked into:

1. To identify the frequency at which the academic staff of O.O.U. make use of library electronic information resources
2. To examine availability of library electronic information resources
3. To identify the purpose of use of library electronic information resources by academic staff of O.O.U.
4. To identify reasons of use of library electronic information resources by academic staff of O.O.U.
5. To identify factors limiting the use of library electronic information resources by academic staff of O.O.U.
6. To investigate possible solution to the factors limiting use of library electronic information resources by academic staff of O.O.U.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

An electronic resource is any information source that a library provides access to in an electronic format. It could also mean any material in digital format that are accessible electronically. Any library especially academic library purchases subscription to many electronic information resources in order to provide members of the academic community (students and most especially academic staff) access to them free of charge. There are also some electronic resources that are non-fee based that academic libraries also provide access to. When these electronic resources are acquired, maintained and controlled at the library, they become the library's electronic resources. Examples include e-full text journals, e-books, e-technical and e-research journals, e-newspaper, e-dictionaries, e-encyclopedias, digital images, online databases in varied digital formats, Adobe documents, web pages (.htm, .html, .asp, and so on) to mention a few. Due to licensing agreement regulations, only faculty, students and staff can access library resources. Many of the databases allow users to create personal profile in order to keep tracts of new contents facilitated through electronic mails or RSS feeds.

Electronic information resources are products of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and they have been found to be relevant to the teaching, learning and research processes in universities. According to Meadow and Yuan (1997) as reported by Popoola (2008), information is a message that changes the recipient's knowledge base. This means that information increases significantly the existing knowledge of the user. The information resources and services available in academic and research libraries are therefore expected to be able to support the teaching and research activities of the parent institutions. Library electronic

information resources are expected to be acquired, organized in retrievable formats and made accessible to the academic staff and researchers to conduct teaching and research activities. The ability of the academic libraries to carry out these functions effectively depends on availability and accessibility to information resources such as books, journals, research and technical reports, conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, periodicals, reference sources, microforms, ICT and staff. It has been established by studies such as those of Ibeun (1995; 2005), Popoola and Zaid (2007) that the ability of libraries to render effective information services, such as current awareness, documents delivery, photocopy services, Internet and E-mail, facsimile, selective dissemination of information (SDI), bindery, on-line database searching, translation, technical report writing, user education, current contents listing, consultancy and so on has correlation with resources' availability.

The quality of teaching, learning and research in any academic or research institution depends, to a large extent, on its library's information resources and services. Information availability, accessibility and use are essential to effective teaching and research. The use of library resources and services has been established by studies such as those of Meadow and Yuan (1997) and Popoola (2007, 2008) to have relationship with research/publications outputs of academic staff and researchers in any academic and research environment. Popoola (2008) revealed that highly productive scholars are more information rich than their counterparts. Information richness here is considered in terms of the abundance of information resources available and accessible to the user as well as their quality in terms of their intellectual contents. Consideration is placed on regency, relevance, coverage of the sources as well as authority of the authors. If the institutional information services fail to meet the needs of the academic staff, they would use other available systems.

The shift from print to electronic information sources as a result of advances in information and communication technologies affords users to availability of vast arrays of information. However, Roy (2006), discussing information accessibility as proposed by Dodge, stated that it is based on access to relevant resources at the right time. This concern stems from the idea that the Internet could provide access to a vast array of information resources. However, because of information overload, it does not necessarily provide access to useful, current, reliable and affordable information and at the right time. Agba, Kigongo-Bukenya and Nyumba (2004) asserted that the shift from print to electronic information means that both academic staff and students in a university system must use these resources for better quality, efficient and effective research more than ever. They should,

however, be used with a high sense of evaluation because the information resources and services available in the institutional information systems must be capable of supporting research activities in the institutions.

Information is an essential commodity that is needed for improved teaching and research productivity of academic staff and researchers. Popoola (2008) found out that there are main and interaction effects of the use of information sources and services on research output of academic staff. He concluded that the use of information sources or services will improve the research output of the researchers. He further stated that if the information sources and services available in the institutional information systems or elsewhere are used by academic staff, their research output will be more significantly enhanced.

Libraries are now investing heavily on electronic resources especially academic libraries where users are exposed to various electronic resources outlets via Internet. This development is noticeable in the developed nations of the world. African countries and other developing nations are still struggling to bridge the digital divide that is preventing them from the full benefits of electronic era. However, several efforts have been made to lunch African universities into the digital society with several initiatives by national and international bodies toward providing the required networked infrastructure that would enable them have access to free or heavily discounted journals and databases through programmes like AGORA, eIFL, HINARI and PERI (Rosenberg, 2005). According to Bar-Ilan, Peritz, and Wolman (2003), the most active users of electronic journals are the younger members of the teaching and research staff. In a related study, Bush (2004) showed that age was not an influential factor in whether the respondents read articles on paper or in electronic format. Brennan et al (2002) in a study that centered on how the adoption of electronic information resources affected academics' information behaviour revealed that faculty made fewer visits to the library and read more than in the print era across a broader number of journals. Most academics reported using generic databases to locate information, while a few relied on smaller discipline-specific databases. Corroborating this, Dilek-Kayaoglu (2008) in a research on use of electronic journals by faculty at Istanbul University, revealed that majority of respondents supported the transition from print to electronic resources. The literature on electronic resources reported the following user-centered barriers to e-resources use included: a lack of skills in how to use information sources, a lack of appropriate reward for electronic scholarly communication, a lack of consistent technical support and provision and a lack of time to spend on searching for information. In another recent survey of users of electronic resources carried out by Bar-Ilan and

**Table 1** Distribution of respondents by sex

Sex	Frequency	%
Male	78	52.00
Female	72	48.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 2** Distribution of respondents by age

Age	Frequency	%
Under 30 years	47	31.30
31-40 years	48	32.00
41-50 years	28	18.70
51 years or more	27	18.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 3** Distribution of respondents by educational qualification

Qualification	Frequency	%
M.A/M.SC/M.ED	91	60.70
PH.D	59	39.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 4** Distribution of respondents by status

Status	Frequency	%
Assistant Lecturer	17	11.30
Lecturer II	24	16.00
Lecturer I	32	21.30
Senior Lecturer	26	17.30
Associate Professor	13	8.70
Professor	38	25.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 5** Frequency of use of Library Electronic Information Resources

Parameter	Frequency	%
Every Day	20	13.30
Twice a week	65	43.40
Weekly	38	25.30
Monthly	16	10.70
Quarterly	08	5.30
Never	03	2.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Fink (2005) revealed that: use of electronic journals increases with time; age and/or academic position are inversely related to the use of electronic media and journals; there is a gradual reduction in the use of printed journals as users preferred and used the electronic format more. With increased use, users access the

electronic format more frequently and that the use of a journal is not necessarily an indication of the preference of users. There may be an increase in the acceptance and frequency of use of the electronic format merely because the traditional print format is no longer easily available. The study further revealed that when

**Table 6** Availability of Library Electronic Information Resources

Parameter	Frequency	%
Very Much Available	85	56.70
Available	55	36.70
Not Available	06	4.00
Undecided	04	2.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 7** Purpose of using Library Electronic information Resources

Purpose of Use	Frequency	%
Research/Publication	105	70.00
Lecture	41	27.30
Acquire knowledge	04	2.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 8** Reasons for use of electronic resources by academic staff

Reason for E-Resources	frequency	%
Time Saving	77	66.00
Time Consuming	08	7.20
Easy To Use	70	59.10
Difficult to use	10	8.90
More Informative	52	46.50
More expensive	12	10.70
Less Expensive	12	10.70
More useful	52	46.50
Less Useful	10	8.90

respondents were asked of the advantages of using electronic journals, accessibility and desktop access, home access, ease of retrieval and hyperlinks to outside content were the arguments cited most often. On the other hand, the disadvantages of electronic journals mentioned most often were lack of back issues and problems with reading a text from the computer screen.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey approach was used for this study. A questionnaire was constructed to gather information from the academic staff on use of electronic information resources at the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria. The items in the questionnaire were adapted from questionnaire used in previous related studies. The questionnaire sought for the respondents' awareness and usage of library electronic information resources. The target study population was lecturers of O.O.U. The

population of academic staff of the institution as at the time this study was conducted stood at 350 lecturers. The simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents from the Faculties of Arts, Sciences, Law and Social and Management Sciences. To ensure the validity of the instrument, that is, the questionnaire, it was first examined by some senior colleagues and then two lecturers in the educational technology department of the university. Their observations and suggestions were used to review the draft questionnaire before final adoption. The instrument was then administered on twenty lecturers in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State, Nigeria to ensure its reliability. After two weeks, this instrument was again administered on these same lecturers. The responses of the instrument were subjected to analysis by a statistician using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result gave a reliability value of 0.73. The researchers personally administered the instrument on lecturers from the four faculties mentioned above. The exercise took two weeks. One

**Table 9** Factors limiting usage of library electronic information resources by academic staff

Hindrances	Frequency	%
Limited computer system	44	29.30
Power outage	74	49.30
Slow download	22	14.70
Fear of use of computer/Lack of ICT skills	10	6.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 10** Possible solutions to factors limiting usage of library electronic information resources by academic staff

Solution	Frequency	%
Increase bandwidth	40	26.70
Provision of stable Power	65	43.30
Provision of more computer Units	25	14.70
Organize trainings and workshops on ICT	20	6.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.00</b>

hundred and sixty (160) questionnaires were administered but one hundred and fifty (150) were retrieved. All the 150 questionnaires were found useable for this study. The questionnaire after collection was coded for easy analysis.

### Data analysis and Interpretation

This sub section presented the results of the analysis in line with the objectives formulated for the study.

Table 1 above presented the distribution of respondents by gender. 78(52.0%) of the respondents were male while 72(48.0%) were female. This showed that majority of the respondents that constituted the target population were male.

Table 2 presented the distribution of respondents by age group. According to the result of the analysis, 47(31.3%) of the respondents were under 30 years of age, 48(32.0%) of the respondents were between 31-40 years of age and 28(18.7%) were between 41-50 years of age while 27(18.0%) were above 50 years of age. This indicated that majority of the respondents were below 41 years of age.

Table 3 showed that 91(60.7%) had MA/MSC/MED while 59(39.3%) had PHD. This indicated that majority of the respondents had Master' degree qualifications and might be pursuing their doctorate programmes in relevant fields.

Table 4 showed that 17(11.3%) of the respondents were Assistant Lecturer, 24(16.0%) were Lecturer II, 32(21.3%) were Lecturer I, 26(17.3%) were Senior Lecturer, 13(8.7%) were Associate Professor while 38(25.3%) were Professor. This indicated that majority of the respondents were Professors, Lecturer II and

Senior Lecturers.

Table 5 above presented the distribution of respondents on the frequency at which the academic staff made use of the library electronic information resources. 20(13.3%) of the respondents indicated daily, 65(43.4%) indicated twice weekly, 38(25.3%) indicated weekly, 16(10.7%) indicated monthly, 8(5.3%) indicated quarterly while 3(2.0%) of the respondents never made use of library electronic information resources. The table signified that over 92.70% (139) of the respondents used the library electronic information resources with 82.00% (123) of the lecturers using the electronic resources frequently (daily, twice weekly, and weekly) while 2.0% (3) did not use the electronic resources at all.

Table 6 above presented the distribution of respondents on availability of library electronic information resources. 85(56.7%) of the respondents indicated that the electronic information resources are very much available, 55(36.7%) indicated that they are available, 6(4.0%) indicated not available while only 4(2.6%) of the respondents were undecided. The analysis revealed that 93.40% (140) of the respondents signified that the electronic resources are available in the Library and only 6.6% (10) signified not available. This was a good indication and safe conclusion that lecturers were aware and made use of the library electronic resources.

Table 7 revealed that 105(70.0%) of the lecturers made use of library electronic information resources for research and publication efforts, 41(27.3%) made use of the library electronic information resources for lecture purposes (that is to prepare lecture notes) while only 4(2.7%) made use of them for knowledge acquisition. This indicated that the electronic information resources were being used majorly by the respondents to conduct

research and to publish their research articles, followed by teaching activities. This result was in line with the findings of Popoola (2007; 2008) that quality information resources and services enhanced research productivity of academic staff which positively influenced their promotion, tenure and salary.

Table 8 revealed that majority of the respondents preferred to use e-resources in comparison to traditional resources. 77(66.00%) of them considered electronic resources as time-saving, 70(59.10%) considered them easy to use while 52(46.50%) and 52 (46.50%) considered them more informative and more useful respectively. Only few 12 (10.00%) considered them more expensive, 10(8.9%) considered them less useful, 10(8.90%) difficult to use and 8(7.20%) considered them time consuming. These responses were just less than 10.00% of the total responses. It can thus be inferred that the electronic resources were preferred by respondents because they were more useful, time saving, easy to use, more informative and less expensive.

Table 9 revealed that power outage was rank high 74(49.3%) followed by limited computer system 44(29.3%), then by slow download 22(14.70%). Lack of ICTs skills 10(6.70%) was not a constraint at all among academic staff, although, it is expected that academic staff should be ICTs literate in order to be able to use information and media tools effectively.

Table 10 showed that provision of stable power supply 65(43.30%), increased bandwidth 40(26.70%), provision of more computers 25(14.70%) and trainings on ICTs skills 20(6.70%) had been suggested as possible solution to the factors militating against effective use of library electronic information resources by the academic staff of the institution.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major findings of this study are that over 92.70% (139) of the lecturers used the library electronic information resources with 82.00% (123) of the lecturers using the electronic resources frequently (daily, twice weekly, and weekly) while only 2.0% (3) did not use the electronic resources at all. The results also indicated that 77(66.00%) of the lecturers considered the electronic resources as time-saving, 70(59.10%) considered them easy to use while 52(46.50%) and 52 (46.50%) considered them more informative and more useful respectively. Only few 12 (10.00%) considered them more expensive, 10(8.9%) considered them less useful, 10(8.90%) difficult to use and 8(7.20%) considered them time consuming. The study also showed that majority of the lecturers are dependent on the use of electronic resources to get desired and relevant information for research conduct and publication as well as for teaching

and forming lecture notes. The findings also indicated that these resources are available in the Library. In addition, findings also showed that power outage, limited computer system, slow download and the fear of use of computer/lack of ICT skills are factors limiting the lecturers on effective use of library electronic information resources. The findings however suggested some measures such as, provision of stable power supply, increased bandwidth, supply, provision of more computers and ICTs skill or literacy trainings for lecturers of the institution so as to be able to make maximum use of the electronic information resources subscribed to, by the university library. Infrastructure and training programmes are essential for better use of electronic resources campus-wide. It was evident from the analysis that the electronic information resources are almost sufficiently available but the infrastructure to use the resources such as stable power, provision of computer units, and so on were not adequate and actually hindering effective use among the university community users. This observation is common to libraries and universities in developing countries as was observed by Ali (2005).

The following suggestions are being proffered in order to improve the facilities and services for effective use of electronic resources in the university library as follows:

- Academic staff training is essential for effective use of electronic resources in the library since a good number of lecturers used the electronic resources for research and teaching purposes. Electronic resources trainings should include advanced search strategies and use of controlled vocabularies to make electronic search processes easier and more effective.
- The university management should provide more funds for subscription to more scholarly electronic primary and secondary sources and databases.
- The university library should also identify the non-users of electronic resources while effective steps should be taken to convert them into potential users of the library electronic resources.
- Furthermore, it is essential to increase the number of terminals and printers at the university library and the ICTs Centre.
- An electronic document delivery should also be introduced into the library at the earliest opportunity. Moreover, instead of expecting users to accept whatever exists in the market, the right perspective is to know and provide whatever electronic resources suits users under their respective circumstances (Kebede 2002). The library management therefore needs to conduct user study survey to know more about electronic resources needs of their academic staff community.
- Finally, there is the need for the university management to integrate information (technology)

literacy programme into the university curriculum for lecturers in the university.

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