

# AN EXPERIMENT IN DEVELOPING A COMPUTER-BASED ACQUISITION SYSTEM FOR NIGERIAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

By

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**Abstract:** *Computers are applied in libraries for housekeeping routines and information retrieval. The objective of the study was to design and implement a computer-based acquisition routine for Nigerian Academic Libraries. A sample of 18 libraries was selected from a population of 117 academic libraries using the sample random sampling technique. The System Analysis and Design Methodology was adopted for the study. Interview, record inspection and observation were used to obtain data for the study. Data were presented using data flow diagrams while the process descriptions, and stores, data dictionary entries and detailed listings of data flows, data stores and processes were also provided. The problems of the existing manual acquisitions processes were highlighted and a new menu-driven computerized system was designed. The system was programmed using dBase IV and implemented on a Leading Edge 486 microcomputer using MS-DOS version 6.0. The computerized acquisition system has eliminated the problems associated with the existing manual system.*

**Keywords:** Computerization, Academic Libraries, Nigeria

## INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are established in order to support the teaching, learning, research and community service activities of their parent institutions. This is done by systematically procuring and processing relevant bibliographic items and making them available to registered users -- students, academic and non-academic staff. The process of procuring bibliographic materials called acquisition is very unique and important in a library system in many respects. First, no other library function or operation can exist without first putting the acquisition function in place. The acquisition function therefore is the foundation on which library operations are built. Second, a huge chunk of the financial resources of the parent institution is often devoted to library development and bibliographic materials which are the stock-in-trade of libraries consume more than half of such allocations. The acquisition function is responsible for ensuring an equitable distribution of the financial allocations among competing academic programmes and bibliographic items. A library that is unable to fulfill its obligation to the parent institution through on-demand supply of bibliography items despite the huge financial allocations to it will find it difficult to justify its continued existence. The above dispositions of the acquisition function make a study of the current practices inevitable. In addition, an understanding of the current practices would assist in identifying possible areas for improvement.