**` A CLARION CALL FOR THE INCLUSION OF NEW MEDIA STUDIES IN LIBRARY SCHOOLS’ CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

The speedy advancement of Information and Communication Technology has transformed the way information is accessed, shared, and disseminated in a contemporary society that is knowledge-driven. New media which is made up of digital platforms, social media, and online communication channels has emerged as a powerful force shaping the information age. As technology continues to progress, libraries and information professionals face new challenges and opportunities in meeting the information needs of their users. The inclusion of new media studies in library school curricula in Nigeria has become necessary because of the transformative impact of digital technologies on the field of library and information science. Thus, the study examined the call for incorporating new media studies into library schools’ curricula. The case study research design was used for the study. The population of the study was 19 library and information science educators in the Department of Library and Information Science Federal University of Technology Minna. A questionnaire was used for data collection. Data was analysed using frequencies, and percentages. The study found that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that with the inclusion of new media studies in LIS curricula LIS students will be equipped with the ability to harness new technologies to provide access to a wider variety of resources. The study recommended that FUT Minna Library School must ensure it has adequate ICT facilities to facilitate the inclusion of new media studies in its curriculum.

**Keywords: Education, Inclusion, Library and Information Science New Media Studies, Nigeria**

**Introduction**

There is no doubt that the 21st century is the information and knowledge era. This is because unlike \in the past, when economic growth is measured on the basis of industrialization, 21st-century economic growth is based on the acquisition and application of knowledge. Senthlinathan (2016) emphasized that the knowledge age is a new advanced form of capitalism in which knowledge and ideas are the sources of economic growth. As a result of this development, there has been a dramatic change in work patterns, business practices, and the skills required of workers in various disciplines.

 The knowledge age is driven by the advancement of Information and Communication Technology. (ICT) AL- Busaidi (2014) noted that ICT provides support for the development of a knowledge-based economy, through enhancing education, skills, and innovation systems. As a result of the advancement in ICT, societies now live in a diverse, globalized, and complex media-saturated society. The advancement of ICT has led to the emergence of new media technology.

 New media can be defined as a digital medium for producing, transmitting, and receiving information. New media comprises digital platforms, social media, and online communication channels. According to Cote (2022), new media is any media that is delivered digitally. Examples of new media are social media, websites, and podcasts, new media enhances communication, collaboration, creativity, community, and convergence. Mukherjee–Das (2014) pointed out that a new digital communication technology has emerged with an e-Superhighway beginning to guide the globe as voice, video, and data coverage. The author also remarked that the new media are interactive and immediate, demassification, asynchrony, easy to update, time-saving, and cost-effective.

The emergence of new media has ushered in a new kind of revolution in various organisations library inclusive. One revolution of the new media age is the increasing use of various interactive devices coupled with self-motivated users who prefer remote and ready-made access to information sources to satisfy their information needs. Yujie (2022) opined that the new media technology enabled people to spend more time on social media platforms to consume information, people began to verify information through the Internet, organisations began to promote their products and services, people began to search for information through the web, organisations began to use new media to search for a new audience,

The commencement of new media technology has exposed libraries to certain challenges that characterized the modern information age. According to Young and Peters (2003) libraries are facing new challenges such as changing use population and attitude, technological advancement, and transformation of the scholarly communication systems, Libraries in Nigeria can create a path for themselves by embracing the opportunities provided by new media technology in facilitating the provision of library services and resources. Thompson (2019) pointed out that libraries that have embraced new media have experienced enhanced outreach, increased visibility, and improved user experiences. However, it must be noted that the adoption of new media technology also presents challenges such as privacy issues, information literacy, and digital preservation (Mc-Elvaney, 2022)

Furthermore, for libraries to effectively acclimatize to the changing information age, it is imperative that library schools should incorporate the study of new media studies in their curriculum. This paper explores the need to include New Media Studies in library education in Nigeria.

Today, we are living in a world where almost every human activity is enhanced by the use of technology. New media studies are the study of digital technology as a medium for acquiring, selecting, preserving, and disseminating information. There is a need to incorporate New Media studies as a result of the changing role of libraries in the digital age. In the past libraries were just custodians of information. However, the role of the library has changed with the emergence of ICT, especially the New Media. Libraries are now not only custodians of information but are now dynamic spaces that foster learning collaboration, and community engagement. The digital age has fostered libraries not to provide only traditional library services but to also provide services that promote the use of virtual services that are boundless, timeless, interactive, and participatory. Lupton (2018) emphasized that library school curricula must reflect this changing landscape and equip librarians with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively connect New Media technologies in the provision of library services.

As newer technology continues to change, there is a need for librarians to possess diverse skills to effectively satisfy the information needs of their users. New Media studies will enable librarians to understand the impact of digital technology on the information needs of users, the information-seeking behavior of users, and their expectations. By integrating New Media into library school curricula, potential librarians can acquire the necessary skills to navigate various new media platforms that continue to emerge in satisfying the evolving information needs of users. Johnson et al. (2015) stated that users now seek to have convenient access to information, interactive, and participatory access to information, and librarians who are trained in New Media studies can anticipate and respond to these changing information needs of users.

Libraries do not only provide physical access to resources and services but now encompass digital resources and services. The inclusion of New Media studies in library school library collections prepares librarians with the necessary skills to navigate various New Media platforms in providing and managing virtual resources. Koltay (2011) stated that librarians need to understand digital rights management, copyright issues, and preservation of digital resources.

The inclusion of new media studies in the library school curriculum will empower potential librarians with the knowledge and skills to effectively navigate and search for information resources for their users. In today’s digital age libraries do not only provide access to print resources but also provide access to electronic resources such as databases, institutional repositories, e-books, online journals, and multimedia content. Understanding the principles of new media studies enables librarians to effectively search, evaluate, and retrieve information from various digital sources,

**Statement of the Research Problem**

The advancements in society, technological changes, and changing information needs of users have resulted in several changes in the library. As a result of these changes in the LIS discipline, there has been a radical change in the LIS curriculum globally.

While some library school curricula include courses or topics related to new media the extent and depth of coverage vary widely and are not treated in-depth. (Campbell, 2020). A look at the Department of Library and Information Science, Federal University of Technology Minna undergraduate courses that were related to new media were few and the contents were not rich enough to cover new trends in technology such as data management, cloud computing, and collaboration. It is against this situation that the researchers seek to find out the possibility of advocating for the inclusion of new media studies in library schools’ curricula.

**Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives guided the study.

1. to determine the skills to be acquired by library and information science students in the inclusion of new media studies in the library and information science curriculum at Federal University of Technology Minna;
2. to determine the extent to library and information science educators have attended professional development programmes on new media studies;
3. to determine the proposed topics that should be included in the curriculum of library and information science at the Federal University of Technology Minna and
4. to investigate the extent facilities are available for the inclusion of new media studies in the library and information science curriculum at the Federal University of Technology Minna.

**Literature Review**

Abubakar (2021) noted that the library and information science (LIS) field of study has been experiencing a radical change, especially in the last couple of decades which results in fundamental changes in all areas of the discipline. As a result of these changes in the LIS discipline, there has been a radical change in the LIS curriculum globally. The writer also stressed that the LIS discipline globally has integrated many new and related areas such as information science, computer science, information systems, knowledge management, information architecture, digitization, and content.

. Abubakar and Farouk (2016) recommended that curriculum developers should include courses related to networking, internet searching skills, database management, and online reference charts. Similarly, Aina (2014) reported that the curriculum approved by the National Universities Commission (NUC) certain courses required to furnish salient skills for contemporary library and information services are absent in the NUC curriculum.

Several studies have been carried out on the state of curriculum in Nigeria. Oluwaseye and Alex-Nmecha (2019) carried out a study on library and information science education at Rivers State University and the University of Portacourt Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that LIS students’ awareness of emerging topics in the discipline was low and there was no practical sessions and cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills were not collectively considered in the overall evaluation of LIS students. Mole *et al*. (2017) examined the concept and characteristics of LIS knowledge societies through conceptual framework and critical examination. The study recommended that the LIS curriculum must equip LIS professionals with the relevant ICT skills and competencies that are necessary for the re-engineering of LIS education in the area of content and methods of training in order to meet the information needs of a knowledge society.

Saka (2009) carried out a study on the extent of the implementation of ICT in library schools’ curricula in northern Nigeria. The findings from the study that there are inadequate system analysts and computers in computer laboratories. It was also discovered from the study that ICT courses have not been fully implemented in most library schools in northern Nigeria. In other to meet the requirements of the 21st century information age, there is a need to introduce new media studies in library schools’ curricula in Nigeria.

Ebong *et al*. (2022) carried out a study on continuing professional development as a medium in the empowerment of LISE for effective knowledge delivery and sustainable education in South-East Nigeria and found out that LIS educators in South-East participated in short courses. Similarly, Mathew (2011) investigated the impact of ICT on the professional development and education needs of library professionals in the universities of Kasala the study discovered that most LIS educators recommended that high priority should be given to developing competence in ICT application, library management and soft skills in library school’s curriculum at the universities of Kasala. In addition, Ukpanah *et al*. (2020) carried out a study on the applications of ICT in teaching the organization of knowledge in Nigerian library schools for sustainable development and discovered that most library schools in Nigeria lack adequate ICT facilities.

**Methodology**

A case study research design was used for the study. The study’s population comprises nineteen lecturers from the Federal University of Technology Minna. Data were collected using a questionnaire. Out of the 19 copies of the questionnaire administered, 14 copies were correctly filled and used for the study. Data were analysed using tables, frequency, and percentages. Items with percentage scores of 50 and above were accepted while those with mean scores below 50 percent were rejected.

**Results**

**Research Question One:** What are the skills to be acquired by library and information science students in FUT Minna in the inclusion of new media studies in library and information science (LIS) curriculum

**Table 1: Responses of Library and Information Science Educators (LISE) on the Skills to be Acquired by Library and Information Science Students in the Inclusion of New Media in (LIS) Curriculum**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S/N | Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 1 | Students will be equipped with skills to navigate and effectively use digital technologies, online resources, and social media for the provision of library services. | 7(50%) | 7(50%) | - | - |
| 2 | Students will be equipped with the necessary skills to access information from a variety of digital sources. | 6(43%) | 8(57%) | - | - |
| 3 | Students will be equipped with the ability to harness new technologies to provide access to a wider variety of resources such as databases, digital achieve, e-books, and multi-media resources | 12(86%) | 2(4.%) | - | - |
| 4 | Students will be equipped with the necessary skills to engage with various types of users in the digital world. | 5(36%) | 9(64%) | - | - |
| 5 | Students will be exposed to various emerging technologies. | 2(14%) | 12(86%) | - | - |
| 6 | Students will be exposed to skills on how to adapt to the changing information needs of users | 3(21%) | 8(57%) | 3(7%) | - |
| 7 | Students will be exposed to techniques for fostering collaboration in the digital world. | 2(4%) | 12(86%) | - | - |

Table 1 displays the percentage of responses from respondents indicating their perceptions on the skills to be acquired by library and information science (LIS) students in the inclusion of new media studies in LIS curricula in the study area. Findings from the study show that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed 12(86%) that with the inclusion of new media studies in LIS curricula LIS students will be equipped with the ability to harness new technologies to provide access to a wider variety of resources such as databases, digital achieve, e-books and multi-media resources.

**RESEARCH QUESTION TWO:** To what extent have library and information science educators in FUT Minna attended professional development programmes on new media studies?

**Table 2: Responses of LISE on the Extent they have Attended Professional Development Programmes on New Media**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S/N | Statements | Great Extent | Medium Extent | Little Extent | None |
| 1 | Certificate courses | 2(14%) | 2(14%) | - | 10(71%) |
| 2 | Postgraduate courses | 2(14%) | 2(10%) | 10(71%) | - |
| 3 | Webinar | 3(21%) | 8(57%) | 3(21%) | - |
| 4 | Self-development | 8(57%) | 4(29%) | 2(14%) | - |
| 5 | Seminar | 5(36%) | 5(36%) | 2(14%) | 2(14%) |
| 6 | Workshop | 3(21%) | 8(57%) | 2(14%) | 1(7%) |
| 7 | Conference | 8(57%) | 2(14%) | 2(14%) | 2(14%) |
| 8 | On the job training | 7(50%) | 2(14%) | 5(36%) | - |

Table 2 shows the extent to which respondents have attended various professional development programmes on new media. Data presented in the Table revealed that self-development 8(57%) and conferences 8(57%) were the professional programmes respondents have attended to a great extent on new media. The data further revealed that the majority of the respondents 10(71%) have not attended certificate awarding courses/courses on new media.

**RESEARCH QUESTION THREE:** What are the proposed topics to be included in the curriculum of library and information science (LIS) FUT Minna?

**Table 3: LISE Responses on the Proposed Topics to be Included in the Curriculum of LIS FUT Minna**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S/N | Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 1 | Digital Marketing of library and information resources and services | 7(50%) | 7(50%) |  |  |
| 2 | Collaboration | 8(57%) | 6(43%) | - | - |
| 3 | Data management | 5(34%) | 9(64%) | - | - |
| 4 | Artificial Intelligence | 7(50%) | 7(50%) | - | - |
| 5 | Electronic Information retrieval and dissemination | 6(43%) | 8(57%) | - | - |
| 6 | Electronic archives  | 5(34%) | 9(64%) | - | - |
| 7 | Digital acquisition and processing of library’s resources | 6(43%) | 8(57%) | - | - |
| 8 | Cloud computing | 5(36%) | 9(64%) | - | - |
| 9 | Social media in libraries | 7(50%) | 7(50%) | - | - |

As indicated in Table 3 the respondents strongly agreed that collaboration 8(57%), digital marketing of library and information resources and services 7(50%), and social media in libraries 7(50%) on new media should be included in the curricular of LIS education in the study area.

 **RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR**: To what extent are facilities available for the inclusion of new media studies in the library and information science (LIS) curriculum in FUT Minna?

**Table 4: LISE Responses on the Facilities Available for the Inclusion of New Media Studies in LIS Curriculum in FUT Minna**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S/NO | Facilities | Extremely Available | Very Available | Moderately Available | Not Available |
| 1 | Equipped and functional laboratory/ laboratories | 3(21%) | 2(14%) | 9(64%) | - |
| 2 | Research laboratories | 1(7%) | 2(14%) | 2(14%) | 9(64%) |
| 3 | Digital cameras | 3(21%) | 2(14%) | 2(14%) | 7(50%) |
| 4 | Audio recorders | 3(21%) | 2(14%) | 1(7%) | 8(57%) |
| 5 | Projectors | 2(14%) | 6(43%) | 6(43%) | - |
| 6 | Large screens | - | 2(14%) | 1(7%) | 10(71%) |
| 7 | 3D Printer | 2(14%) | 5(36%) | 3(21%) | 4(29%) |
| 8 | Smartboard | 2(14%) | 7(50%) | 5(36%) | - |
| 9 | Computers | 10(71%) | 2(14%) | 2(14%) | - |
| 10 | learning spaces with flexible seating arrangement | 3(21%) | 3(21%) | 8(57%) | - |
| 11 | New media specialists | 5(35%) | 2(14%) | 3(21%) | 4(29%) |

Table 4 shows that computers were the only facilities that were extremely available 10(71%) in the library school of FUT Minna. Also, the data in Table 4 revealed that the following facilities were not available: large screens 10(71%), research laboratories 9(64%), audio recorders 8 (58%) and digital cameras 7(50%).

**Discussion of Findings**

Based on the data presented in Table 1 the study revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that with the inclusion of new media studies in library school FUT Minna, students will be equipped with the ability to harness new technologies to provide access to a wider variety of resources such as databases, digital achieve, e-book and multi-media resources. It must be emphasized that equipping LIS students with new media will enable them to expand the range of resources available to library users, equip students with the ability to meet the changing needs and expectations of library users, it enables students to engage in digital preservation of library resources and the ability to harness new media empowers library students to engage in innovative practices to enhance users ’experiences. These findings are contrary to the findings of Mathew (2011) who discovered that high priority must be given to developing LIS students at the University of Kasala to be competent in ICT application, library management, and soft skills.

Data presented in Table 2 revealed the professional courses on new media that LIS educators in FUT have attended. The results from the findings show that many LIS educators have not attended certificate-awarding courses on new media. It cannot be overemphasized that it is crucial that LIS educators in FUT Minna should ensure they attend certificate courses in new media due to the following reasons: by attending new media courses LIS lecturers can keep themselves abreast with the latest trends, tools and techniques which will enable them to impact the knowledge on LIS students, it will enable LIS educators empower students with the knowledge and skills necessary to interact with diverse media formats and address the information needs of digital users, it provides them with specialized knowledge on how to utilize various new media technologies and this knowledge can them be shared with students and enhance their critical thinking abilities, it will also enable them to incorporate interactive and engaging sessions into their lessons and lastly attending certificate courses on new media will enable LIS educators to collaborate with colleagues from diverse backgrounds which will promotes the sharing of best practices and the exchange of ideas among one another. These findings are in disagreement with the findings of Ebong *et al*. (2022) who observed that LIS educators in South-East Nigeria have attended short courses in ICT-related courses.

Similarly, in Table 3 the study discovered that the majority of the respondents proposed topics on digital marketing of library and information science in new media studies. It is imperative that digital marketing of LIS resources and services should be included in new media studies due to several reasons such as: with the increasing use of technology and several online sources by users LIS students need to be armed with skills to adapt and effectively promote their services and resources in the digital world, and digital m marketing will equip students on how to engage and interact with library users in new and innovative ways.

Table 4 shows that several facilities were not available to facilitate the inclusion of new media studies in the LIS curriculum research laboratory, digital cameras, audio recorders, and large screens. It must be emphasized that new media studies require students to have hands-on practical work by utilizing various facilities. By engaging in these practical works will enable students to gain firsthand experience with new media technology. When adequate new media facilities are acquired, it will demonstrate the institution’s commitment to preparing students for the evolving setting of new media. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Ukpanah and Enang (2020) who discovered that there was inadequate availability of ICT facilities in most library schools in Nigeria.

**Conclusion**

The inclusion of new media studies in library school curricula is imperative to equip future librarians with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the digital age. By incorporating new media studies, library schools in Nigeria can empower librarians to remain relevant in an ever-changing information landscape. Librarians trained in new media studies will be equipped to navigate emerging platforms, understand evolving user behavior, and effectively utilize digital technologies to enhance library services. The integration of new media studies in library school curricula will contribute to the evolution of libraries as vibrant hubs of knowledge and innovation, fostering a culture of lifelong learning and community engagement.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are hereby suggested:

1. It is vital for LIS educators in FUT Minna to attend various continuous development programmes that are focused on new media. By updating their knowledge and skills LIS educators will be better equipped to include new media studies in the curriculum.
2. The FUT Minna library school must ensure it has adequate ICT facilities. These facilities will enable students and educators to explore and engage with various forms of new media fostering practical experiences.

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