

## AVAILABILITY AND UTILISATION OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND SERVICES BY LIBRARIANS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This study surveyed the availability and utilisation of electronic resources and services by librarians in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study reported that electronic resources and services constitute a major source of information for librarians in their job/research productivity. Availability of electronic resources and services denotes the assurance that electronic resources and services are acquired, processed and managed by libraries in order to facilitate their accessibility and utilisation, while utilisation entails the practical and deliberate effort to maximize the use of library electronic resources and services. The research design adopted for the study is descriptive survey and the population is 36 librarians from Bingham University, AutaBalifi, Federal University, Lafia and Nasarawa State University, Keffi. A structured questionnaire, observation checklist and interview schedule were used to collect relevant data regarding the study. The study revealed that various electronic resources and services are available across the three universities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria, except Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), multimedia services, electronic reference services, electronic Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) and electronic document delivery services that behaved differently. Furthermore, there were variances in the utilisation and satisfaction rate with the use of electronic resources and services by librarians in the three university libraries under study. Where the utilisation/satisfaction is low, it was attributed to epileptic power supply, low bandwidth/ network fluctuation, lack of renewal /updates to subscription of online databases among others. The literature review showed that the job/research productivity of librarians depends on the level of availability and utilisation of electronic resources at their disposal, it was recommended that deliberate efforts by the university management should be made to ensure adequate funding of the university libraries in order to acquire and make electronic resources and services abundantly available in university libraries in Nasarawa State.*

**Keywords:** Availability and Utilisation; Electronic Resources and Services; Librarians, University Libraries; Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

### Introduction

The primary objectives of establishing a university is to promote scholarship, research and development in various fields of learning and community services, as stated in the national policy on education. One of the goals of university education is to acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to become self-reliant and useful members of the society (Eze and Uzoigwe, 2013). Behind the mission and vision of the university education is

the university library, which is the academic library serving the university community. A university library is generally regarded as the heart of the university. It is the hub of all academic activities in a university. The main functions of universities include: conservation of knowledge, pursuit, promotion and dissemination of knowledge through teaching, research and development of human resources for meeting the manpower needs of the nation. In order to carry out these responsibilities efficiently and effectively, universities worldwide establish libraries to complement and supplement their functions, aims and objectives. The primary purpose of the university libraries is to support teaching, learning, and research in ways consistent with, and supportive of, the institution's mission and goals (Emenike, Obiora and Chibuzor, 2014).

University libraries play a prominent role in supporting the mission and vision of the university by providing information resources and services in various forms to librarians, faculty members, students and researchers. Moreover, the librarians discharging these services to the library clientele need to be trained and equipped with relevant skills to deliver effective and efficient services. A librarian is an information professional who has undergone a degree course in library science (librarianship). He or she is saddled with the responsibility of managing the library and its collections, selection and acquisition of book and non-book or electronic materials, and other services such as Current Awareness Services (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), loan or Document Delivery Services (DDS), to meet the information needs of the library clientele. Nowadays, the quantity of electronic information resources are overwhelming, therefore, librarians must possess media literacy skills commensurate with the format of new information generated. Librarians are information professionals and they engage in the selection, acquisition, organisation, storage, preservation, retrieval and dissemination of information to users. They apply special skills and knowledge to undertake this task (Udensi, 2017).

Availability and utilisation of electronic resources and services refers to the effective use of electronic facilities available within and outside the library environment. It is the practical and deliberate effort to maximise the use of library electronic resources and services (Ntui & Udah, 2015). Lee & Lee (2010) in Amanyi, Akor & Madu (2018) maintained that academic library in 21st century is a place where various innovative electronic resources such as e-books, e-periodicals, Compact Discs (CDs), Digital Video Displays (DVDs) and other electronic reading materials are acquired, organised and managed. Electronic resources (or e-resources) denotes library resources in digital or electronic formats which include the information content and/or electronic devices accessible electronically. An electronic information resource is any digital medium where information is derived or extracted from (Kenchakkanavar, 2014). Electronic information resources are carrier of digital information and it also denotes means of electronic information supply. Similarly, Chima and Nwokocha (2013) maintained that an electronic information resources include all form of electronic information carriers that can be used to provide and encouraged effective research activities and development projects. According to Ani, Ngulube & Onyancha (2014), electronic information resources may be blogs, e-books, e-journals, online magazines, online newspapers, web pages, CD-ROM, DVD and electronic databases. Furthermore, the electronic databases that are commonly available in Nigerian university libraries include: ArXiv, Science Direct, EBSCO HOST, AGORA, HINARI, MEDLINE, JSTOR and OARE. The availability and use of electronic information resources by librarians and information professional is an important factors in their research work and service delivery. All university libraries regardless of size are expected to have adequate electronic information resources available for the librarians and their clientele.

Ani, Ngulube & Onyancha (2014) asserted that the major advantages of electronic resources and services in university libraries include: ease of accessibility to the needed information, minimization of storage space, minimization in cost of acquiring the resources, increase speed in accessing and retrieving the needed information, portability, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of electronic information resources, remote access, round the clock accessibility, and automated routine processing. According to Adeleke and Nwalo (2017), university libraries previously acquire only print resources to their collections, however, the advent and development of ICT in libraries necessitated the inclusion of electronic resources to complement the print resources. Furthermore, the desired needs of electronic resources by librarians, faculty members and researchers have made it imperative for university libraries to acquire, manage and disseminate electronic information resources. Today, most university libraries have electronic resources, as Ani and Ahiauzu (2008) in Adeleke and Nwalo (2017) believed that electronic informational resourced have gradually become a major source of information in Nigerian university community.

All the services provided by libraries are intended to facilitate access and retrieval of information resources by the librarians and their clientele. Literature have revealed that there is a correlation between availability, accessibility and utilisation of electronic resources and services with research productivity of librarians, faculty members and researchers. Some university libraries acquire these electronic resources but access to them are either restricted or impeded by some factors such as erratic power supply, lack of renewal to online database subscription and lack of technical know-how of the librarians to user/deliver electronic services efficiently and effectively. It is against this backdrop that the researchers deem it fit to undertake this research in order to determine the available electronic resources and services in university libraries in Nasarawa State and find out the extent/level of utilisation and satisfaction derived by librarians in the use of electronic resources and services available in their libraries.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Preliminary investigation and literature review showed that, some university libraries do not have adequate electronic resources in their collections to satisfy the information needs of the librarians and their clienteles. Even when these electronic resources are available, access to them are either restricted or impeded by some factors. As a result, they resort to the electronic resources available on the Internet. The void of these qualitative electronic resources in these libraries have forced the librarians and their clientele to the maze of the information explosion and low quality information resources retrieved from various web search engines. Thus, the librarians and the clientele become more confused than being illuminated; the resultant effect of this is a decline in job/research productivity of librarians, faculty members and researchers. A viable solution to these problems is to ensure adequate availability and utilisation of electronic resources and services in university libraries to satisfy the information needs of the librarians and their clientele. Consequently, this will tremendously increase the job/research productivity of librarians and also assist faculty members and researchers through the provision of adequate qualitative electronic resources in accomplishing their academic engagements/assignments.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to determine the availability and utilisation rate of electronic resources and services by librarians in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigerian. However, the specific objectives are to:

- (i) find out the available electronic resources and services in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

- (ii) Determine the utilisation rate of electronic resources and services by librarians in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.
- (iii) Determine the level of satisfaction derived by librarians in the use/delivery of electronic resources and services in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- (i) What are the available electronic resources and services in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?
- (ii) What is the utilisation rate of electronic resources and services by librarians in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?
- (iii) What is the level of satisfaction derived by librarians on the use/delivery of electronic resources and services in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?

### **Significance of the Study**

The outcome of this study will be of great significance to librarians, faculty members, researchers and library administrators. The findings of this research will enlighten librarians, faculty members and researchers of the significance of adequate utilisation of electronic resources in the library to accomplish their academic engagements/assignments. Furthermore, it will assist library administrators in advancing convincing reasons to the university management for adequate funding in acquiring electronic resources to the library. It will also ensure judicious and proportionate financial allocation based on the needs and preferences of the librarians and library clientele. Additionally, this study will contribute immensely to the corpus of knowledge, as it will provide empirical evidences to researchers and scholars on the availability, utilisation and level of satisfaction derived by librarians in using electronic resources and services in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

### **Research Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study is descriptive survey research design. Nworgu (2006), opined that descriptive survey research denotes studies that are aimed at collecting data on and describing in systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. The area of the study is Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Nasarawa State is located in the north central geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The total population for the study was 36 librarians (professional library staff) from three (3) university libraries across Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Furthermore, total enumeration of the population was used for the study because the population is small and manageable (Nwana, 1992). Table 1 gives an outline of the total population for the study. Moreover, a structured (closed-ended) questionnaire, observation check-list and interview schedule were used for collecting data regarding this study. The observation checklist and interview schedule were used to check for the availability of electronic resources and services in the three university libraries and the challenges they encounter, 36 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the librarians in the university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The generated data from the questionnaire were analysed based on the research questions. The research questions were analysed using frequency counts and percentages.

**Data Analysis, Results and Discussion****Table 1: Population and Response Rate of Librarians in University Libraries in Nasarawa State**

S/No	Institutions	Number of Librarians	Response Rate
1.	Bingham University, AutaBalifi.	9	8
2.	Federal University, Lafia.	12	7
3.	Nasarawa State University, Keffi	15	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>20</b>

Research Question One: What are the available electronic resources and services in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria?

**Table 2: Availability of Electronic Resources and Services in University Libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria**

S/N	Electronic Resources and Services	Bingham University Library, AutaBalifi	Federal University Library, Lafia.	Nasarawa State University Library, Keffi
1	Online public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	.	.	Nil
2	Online Databases	.	.	.
3	E-Journals	.	.	.
4	E-Book	.	.	.
5	CD- ROM	.	.	.
6	E-Newspapers	.	.	.
7	E-Magazine	.	.	.
8	Multimedia Products	.	.	.
9	Computers	.	.	.
10	Printers	.	.	.
11	Scanners	.	.	.
12	Photocopy Machines	.	.	.
13	Multimedia Services	.	.	Nil
14	Internet Services	.	.	.
15	Library Websites	.	.	.
16	Electronic Reference Services	Nil	Nil	Nil
17	Electronic Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	.	.	Nil
18	Electronic Documents Delivery Services (DDS)	.	.	Nil

From Table 2 above, there is enough evidence to conclude that the various electronic resources and services listed in this study are available across the three universities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria, except OPAC, multimedia services, electronic reference services, electronic Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) and electronic Documents Delivery Services (DDS) that behaved differently.

Research Question Two: What is the rate of utilisation of electronic resources and services by librarians in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigerian?

**Table 3: Utilisation Rate of Electronic Resources and Services by Librarians in University Libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria**

Key: VHE=Very High Extent, HE=High Extent, LE=Low Extent, VLE=Very Low Extent

S/ N	Electronic Resources and Services	Bingham University Library, AutaBalifi				Federal University Library, Lafia (FULafia)				Nasarawa State University Library, Keffi (NSUK)			
		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	VHE	HE	LE	VLE
1	Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	87.5 %	12.5 %	Nil	Nil	14.3 %	14.3 %	28.6 %	42.9 %	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
2	Online Databases	37.5 %	50%	12.5 %	Nil	28.6 %	28.6 %	42.9 %	Nil	60%	40 %	Nil	Nil
3	E-Journals	50%	37.5 %	12.5 %	Nil	42.9 %	28.6 %	28.6 %	Nil	100 %	Nil	Nil	Nil
4	E-Book	25%	50%	12.5 %	12.5 %	57.1 %	14.3 %	28.6 %	Nil	100 %	Nil	Nil	Nil
5	CD- ROM	37.5 %	37.5 %	25%	Nil	14.3 %	28.6 %	42.9 %	14.3 %	20%	20 %	40 %	20
6	E-Newspapers	25%	37.5 %	25.5 %	25%	14.3 %	57.1 %	28.6 %	Nil	40%	20 %	20 %	20
7	E-Magazine	37.5 %	25%	12.5 %	25%	14.3 %	57.1 %	28.6 %	Nil	40%	20 %	20 %	20
8	Multimedia Products	25%	50%	25%	Nil	14.3 %	57.1 %	28.6 %	Nil	20%	20 %	40 %	20
9	Computers	87.5 %	12.5 %	Nil	Nil	57.1 %	28.6 %	14.3 %	Nil	80%	Nil	Nil	20
10	Printers	100 %	Nil	Nil	Nil	57.1 %	28.6 %	14.3 %	Nil	100 %	Nil	Nil	Nil
11	Scanners	87.5 %	12.5 %	Nil	Nil	57.1 %	28.6 %	14.3 %	Nil	80%	20 %	Nil	Nil
12	Photocopy Machines	100 %	Nil	Nil	Nil	71.4 %	14.3 %	14.3 %	Nil	60%	20 %	20 %	Nil
13	Multimedia Services	37.5 %	12.5 %	50%	Nil	42.9 %	Nil	57.1 %	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
14	Internet Services	87.5 %	12.5 %	Nil	Nil	71.4 %	14.3 %	14.3 %	Nil	100 %	Nil	Nil	Nil
15	Library Websites	75%	25%	Nil	Nil	57.1 %	14.3 %	28.6 %	Nil	Nil	20 %	40 %	40
16	Electronic Reference Services	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
17	Electronic Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	12.5 %	50%	12.5 %	25%	28.6 %	42.9 %	28.6 %	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
18	Electronic Documents Delivery Services (DDS)	12.5 %	37.5 %	25%	25%	57.1 %	14.3 %	14.3 %	14.3 %	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

The report on utilisation rate of electronic resources and services by librarians in university libraries in Nasarawa State indicated in Table 3 above revealed that librarians in Bingham University Library mostly use OPAC, and only a few in FULafia library do so, while NSUK appears to be nil. Furthermore, electronic information resources such as online databases, e-

books, e-journals, e-magazines, online newspapers and CD-ROM are highly utilised by librarians in the three university libraries under study. Electronic products and services such as computers, printers, scanners, photocopiers, scanners, multimedia services, Internet services, e-reference services, e-SDI and e-DDS are highly and averagely being utilised by the librarians respectively. The utilisation rate of some of the products/services is low except where such products/services are not available.

Research Question Three: What is the level of satisfaction derived by librarians in the use of electronic resources and services in university libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigerian?

**Table 4: Level of Satisfaction Derived by Librarians in the Use/Delivery of Electronic Resources and Services in University Libraries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria**

**Key: VHE=Very High Extent, HE=High Extent, LE=Low Extent, VLE=Very Low Extent**

S/ N	Electronic Resources and Services	Bingham University Library, AutaBalifi				Federal University Library, Lafia.				Nasarawa State University Library, Keffi			
		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	VHE	HE	LE	VLE
1	Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	87.5 %	Nil	12.5 %	Nil	14.3 %	14.3 %	28.6 %	42.9 %	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
2	Online Databases	37.5 %	62.5 %	Nil	Nil	28.6 %	14.3 %	57.1 %	Nil	20%	20 %	40 %	20%
3	E-Journals	50%	50%	Nil	Nil	28.6 %	28.6 %	42.9 %	Nil	60%	20 %	20 %	Nil
4	E-Book	25%	50%	12.5 %	12.5 %	28.6 %	28.6 %	42.9 %	Nil	60%	40 %	Nil	Nil
5	CD- ROM	25%	50%	25%	Nil	42.9 %	42.9 %	14.3 %	Nil	20%	20 %	60 %	Nil
6	E-Newspapers	37.5 %	12.5 %	25%	25%	14.3 %	28.6 %	57.1 %	Nil	40%	Nil	60 %	Nil
7	E-Magazine	25%	25%	25%	25%	14.3 %	28.6 %	57.1 %	Nil	40%	Nil	60 %	Nil
8	Multimedia Products	25%	12.5 %	37.5 %	25%	42.9 %	Nil	57.1 %	Nil	20%	40 %	20 %	20%
9	Computers	50% %	37.5 %	Nil	12.5 %	28.6 %	28.6 %	42.9 %	Nil	60%	40 %	Nil	Nil
10	Printers	37.5 %	50%	12.5 %	Nil	28.6 %	28.6 %	42.9 %	Nil	80%	20 %	Nil	Nil
11	Scanners	50%	25%	25%	Nil	28.6 %	28.6 %	42.9 %	Nil	80%	20 %	Nil	Nil
12	Photocopy Machines	62.5 %	12.5 %	25%	Nil	42.9 %	14.3 %	42.9 %	Nil	80%	20 %	Nil	Nil
13	Multimedia Services	37.5 %	12.5 %	50%	Nil	28.6 %	14.3 %	57.1 %	Nil	20%	20 %	40 %	20%
14	Internet Services	50%	25%	25%	Nil	57.1 %	Nil	42.9 %	Nil	60%	40 %	Nil	Nil
15	Library Websites	37.5 %	25%	37.5 %	Nil	42.9 %	14.3 %	42.9 %	Nil	Nil	40 %	60 %	Nil
16	Electronic Reference Services	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
17	Electronic Selective	37.5	37.5	25%	Nil	28.6	Nil	71.4	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

	Dissemination of Information (SDI)	%	%			%	%	%				
18	Electronic Documents Delivery Services (DDS)	37.5 %	37.5 %	25%	Nil	28.6 %	14.3 %	42.9 %	14.3 %	Nil	Nil	Nil

Table 4 above shows that more than half of the librarians in Bingham University Library and NSUK are satisfied with the use of electronic resources and services in their libraries while the rest are not, except where such products/services are not available. In FULafia, average number of the librarians are satisfied with the use of electronic resources and services, except where such products/services are not available.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that electronic resources and services is important to libraries and librarians in their services delivery and in carrying out their job/research activities. However, the study revealed that, there are variances in the availability, utilisation and satisfaction rate with the use of electronic resources and services by librarians in the three university libraries under study. While the librarians are satisfied with some of the electronic resources and services, the behaviour is different in others. Furthermore, the observation checklist and interview schedule revealed that electronic reference services is not available across the three university libraries. Moreover, the problems that impedes the full utilisation/service delivery of electronic resources and services by librarians in some of the three university libraries include: epileptic power supply, lack of UPSs to backup power, low bandwidth and network fluctuation, lack of constant updates and subscription to online databases and lack of adequate funding/allocation of budget to electronic resources and services. Hence, the following suggestions and recommendations are offered:

- (i) Deliberate efforts by the university management should be made to ensure adequate funding of the university library in order to acquire and make electronic resources and services abundantly available in university libraries in Nasarawa State.
- (ii) Librarians should endeavour to utilise the available electronic resources and services in order to increase their job/research productivity.
- (iii) Since most of the electronic resources and services are impede by epileptic power supply, low bandwidth/ network fluctuation, lack of renewal /updates to subscription of online databases, the library management should endeavour to tackle these challenges so as to satisfy the information needs of the librarians and their clientele.

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