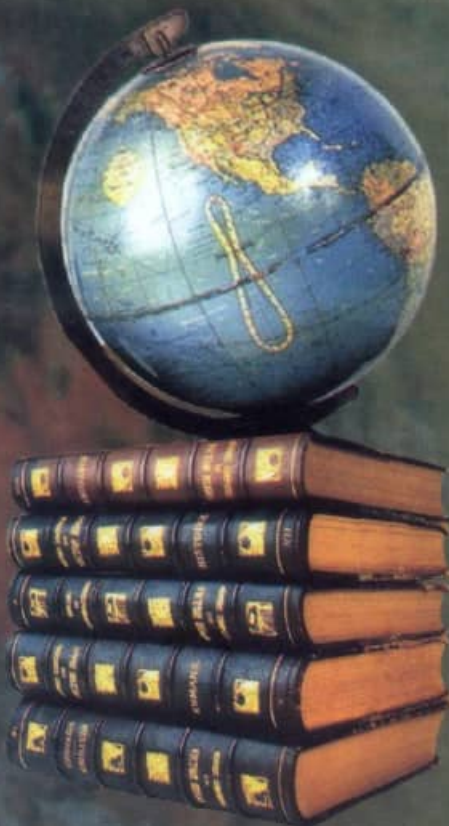# Global Review
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UTILIZATION OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES IN THE LIBRARY BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF BINGHAM UNIVERSITY, KARU

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Abstract
This paper assessed the extent of utilization of electronic information resources by undergraduate students of Bingham University Karu in Nasarawa State. The design for the study is descriptive survey which used questionnaire and an observation checklist as the instrument for data collection. The research was carried out using the simple random sampling method. A questionnaire was designed and administered to three hundred and forty (340) students out of which 335 were filled, returned and found usable. The aim of the research is to investigate the available electronic information resources in the library, extent of use of these electronic information resources available in the library and, the challenges hindering the utilization of these electronic information resources available in the library, among others. The study shows that e-journals and e-books on CDs and VCDs, downloaded open access resources, and databases like e-granary and OPAC are the major electronic information resources available in the library. The main purposes for the utilization of the library's information e-resources by undergraduate students were basically for assignments and research works. However, in the cause of accessing and utilizing these resources available in the library, they do encounter challenges like poor knowledge of the library's OPAC, dearth in Internet searching skills and slow Internet connectivity, to mention a few. Proffered strategies amongst others are; orientation/seminar on how to use the library's OPAC and also upgrading the university's Internet bandwidth and/or providing the library with its own Internet facility.

Keywords: Electronic Information Resources (EIRs), Utilization, University Libraries, Bingham   University.

Introduction

The nature of collections in libraries especially academic libraries are changing rapidly from analog to electronic, digital or hybrid form thereby revamping the method of accessing and utilizing information resources. According to Igwesi (2015), this change is as a result of the innumerable advantages inherent in electronic or digital resources such as multiple and easy access to information, availability of information in various formats, simultaneous search and speedy retrieval.

However, the benefits of electronic information resources (EIRs) cannot be over emphasized. It was in this light that Gakibayo, Ikoja-Odongo and Okello-Obura (2013) buttressed that accessing and utilizing electronic information resources offers opportunities to obtain accurate and timely literature. The library can use electronic resources to reach unlimited number of students virtually and simultaneously. The ability to search multiple files at the same time, ability to save, print and repeat searches more frequently, ability to update and ability to access from outside the library are only but a few advantages of use of EIRs. Thus, if despite the numerous benefits of electronic information resources particularly in this technology era and students who are the major users of the library resources fail to maximize these benefits, then this will put student's personal and individual search for knowledge and understanding at stake, which may also result to poor academic performance of these students in both internal and external professional examinations as a result of shallow knowledge-level (Ajibili, 2016).

Therefore, in this era of technology, it is no gainsaying that modern library especially those in academic environments need to embrace and use these technologies to provide its users with apt, efficient and effective services. However, between 2006 when the Bingham University, Karu was established to date, the library has been able to provide an Internet service and also acquire several databases like the MIT courseware and e-granaries, in an attempt to match up the challenge of this technology era. Only but recently, it started building its OPAC after several deliberations and trials in an attempt to adopt suitable library software to managing its resources. Besides, the university library works in conjunction with the University's ICT unit to provide electronic library services, giving the students and other staff access to a wide range of academic resources, including the robust NUC virtual library amongst others.

Statement of the Problem

The responsibility of supporting learning and research within the university environment, through the provision of information materials has always been that of the university library. However, some related literature observed that there exists a decline in library usage as some students do not take advantage of the information resources especially electronic information resources provided by the university library. Where such is the case, students may find it difficult coping with the rigor of academics. Abosede and Ibikunle (2011) observed a growing concern over students' use of the libraries and their resources in higher institutions in Nigeria. A study by Osinulu (1998) and Akin and Ajayi (2008) brought to light the declining use of libraries and their information resources (EIRs inclusive) within the university system. It is in the light of the above, that the present study investigates the utilization of electronic information resources in the library by undergraduate students of Bingham Universities, Karu, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the utilization of information resources in the library by undergraduate students of Bingham Universities, Karu, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

1. identify the types of electronic information resources available in Bingham University Library.
2. determine the extent of use of the electronic information resources by undergraduate students in the Library.
3. determine the purpose of use of the electronic information resources by undergraduate students in the Library.
4. identify the challenges associated with the use of electronic information resources in the library by undergraduate students with a view to proffering strategies for their effective use .

Literature Review

The primary purpose of university libraries is to support teaching, learning, and research in ways consistent with, and supportive of the institution's mission and goals. In addition, library resources and services should be sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, and currency to support the institution's curriculum. As a result of this, university libraries are often considered as the most important resource centers of an academic institution. It was in this light

that Franscotti, et al (2007) says that libraries are trying to re-invent themselves to be more appealing. No wonder then, that many libraries within and outside Nigeria now go beyond the provision of print information resources to the provision of electronic information resources as well as employing ICT use in different areas of library services to meet the information needs of the users. Moreover, the growth of research in all fields of human endeavor is becoming increasingly detailed and sophisticated; hence it is assumed that researchers and scholars have realized that electronic information resources have a great role to play in their day to day research.

However, the concept of 'electronic information resources' has been used interchangeable with 'digital resources'. Nevertheless, for the sake of this study, both will be accepted as the same because they have similar characteristics such as being in electronic form (softcopy) and requiring ICT to access, process and utilize. This was supported by Igwesi (2015) when she opined that digital resources are those information materials that are primarily in electronic format. Das and Das (2008) also see digital information resources as an electronic journal article, a digitized image of a photograph, numeric data, a digital video, or a complete book in digital form. The writer further stressed that they are dynamic in nature as they can be easily accessed, manipulated, copied, stored, edited and transmitted by electronic means and are normally referred to as e-resources (such as e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers, e-theses and e-dissertations, etc). Ekwelem, Okafor and Ukwoma (2009) further buttressed EIRs as information sources that are available and can be accessed electronically through such computer networked facilities as online library catalogues, the internet, the World Wide Web and digital libraries.

EIRs have increasingly become an invaluable asset in education, research, teaching and learning. EIRs have transformed the conduct of research and teaching in universities by allowing faculty members a wide range of opportunity for accessing accurate and timely information on various subjects. The use of Electronic Information Resources enables the library users especially students to effectively and efficiently access digital information to assist with investigating issues, solving problems, making decisions, product and creative solutions to support learning, develop new understanding in areas of learning and teaching (Aramide and Bello, 2010). However, Oduwole and Akpati (2003) identified the available electronic resource that are commonly used in Nigerian universities which includes CD-ROM databases, electronic mail, online public catalogue (OPAC), and web resources. Thus, when electronic information resources are carefully organized and planned in the library, it becomes cost and

space efficient for the library and ensures users' optimal use.

Utilization of library and its resources is essential for the justification of the existence and survival of any university library. According to BBC English Dictionary (1992), utilization means the usefulness of something or making proper use of something in order to achieve a desired result. Bida (2011) opined that the major objective of any library is to ensure that maximum use is made of its resources and services. He further explained that, this is so because no matter how rich a library's collection may be, it is believed that if the users of such library are not able to gain access and use the library resources, the collection of the library is regarded as a waste.

Research method

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population for this study was made up of one thousand seven hundred (1,700) undergraduate students of Bingham University, Karu. Some variables like age, level and department were ignored so long as the students were undergraduates. Sequel to the fact that the population is too large to be covered for this study, the researcher randomly selected 20 percent from the total students' population of 1,700. Nwana (1981) states that if a population is in many hundreds, one needs a sample size of 20%, and if a population is in a few thousands, one needs a sample size of 10%, but for a population of several thousands, one needs a sample size of 5% or less; thus 20% was used to form a total sample size of 340. A questionnaire alongside an observation checklist was used for data collection. The total number of questionnaire distributed was 340, and the total number returned was 335.

Result

Below are the analysis of the responses to the research questions and the interpretation of the findings.

Table 1: Observation checklist on electronic information resources available in the library

S/N	Items	Available	Not Available
1.	E-books (CDs/VCDs)	✓	
2.	E-journals (CDs/VCDs)	✓	
3.	Databases i.e. OPAC & e-granary	✓	
4.	Open access resources	✓	
5.	E-newspapers		✓
6.	E-references materials (CDs/VCDs)		✓
7.	E-conference proceedings		✓
8.	E-projects		✓
9.	E-thesis		✓
10.	E-dissertation		✓
11.	Staff publications in electronic form		✓
12.	Government publications in electronic form		✓

The observation checklist above revealed that only four (4) out of twelve (12) of the listed electronic information resources are available in the library. These available electronic information resources are e-books, e-journals, databases such as OPAC as well as e-granary, and open access resources.

Table 2: Extent of use of available electronic information resources in the library

S/N	Items	Frequently (%)	Occasionally (%)	Never (%)
1.	E-books (CDs/VCDs)	54	35	11
2.	E-journals (CDs/VCDs)	55	40	5
3.	Databases i.e. OPAC & e-granary	35	60	15
4.	Open access resources	54	35	11
5.	E-newspapers	5	49	46
6.	E-reference materials	5	49	46
7.	E-conference proceedings	0	3	97
8.	E-projects	4	49	47
9.	E-thesis	4	49	47
10.	E-dissertation	0	4	96
11.	Staff publications in electronic form	0	4	96
12.	Government publications in electronic form	0	4	96

Findings from Table 2 indicated that the respondents do use the electronic information resources available to them in the library. Among the most available electronic information resources agreed to be available to users in the library, the respondents actually claimed to frequently utilize e-journals (55%) the most while e-books and open access resources both received a positive responses of 54% and 54% respective. However, the response on the extent of utilization of databases such as OPAC and e-granary received a negative response by quite a number of the respondents who agreed they occasionally use this EIR (60%). Besides, the responses on items 5-12 were also negative, with the respondents claiming they occasionally or never use these items.

Table 3: Purpose of use of electronic information resources in the library

S/N	Purpose	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1.	Research	31	51	5	0
2.	Entertainment/leisure	3	32	60	5
3.	Assignment	6	50	0	0
4.	Examination	3	30	60	7
5.	Compliment lecture notes	5	30	60	5
6.	Prepare for lectures	5	30	60	5
7.	Current affairs	5	40	50	5

Table 3 above shows that a large number of the respondents (82%) totally indicated that they use the available electronic information resources in the library for the purpose of their research work or final year projects, and a good number (56%) also indicated that they use these resources for assignment purpose. However, other purposes like entertainment/leisure, examination, complimenting lecture notes, preparing for lecturers and for current awareness reasons, received negative response.

Table 4: Challenges associated with the use of electronic information resources in the library

S/N	Challenges	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1.	The e-resources are not current	4	30	60	6
2.	The e-resources are not relevant	4	30	60	6
3.	Lack of Internet searching skills	8	71	20	1
4.	Poor knowledge on how to use the library's OPAC	8	80	12	0
5.	Erratic power supply	5	47	40	8
6.	Slow Internet connectivity	10	85	5	0
7.	Inadequate computer systems	8	71	20	1

Table 4 above revealed that the major challenges faced by undergraduate students when using these electronic information resources available in the library was slow Internet connectivity, poor knowledge on how to use the library's OPAC, lack of Internet searching skills, inadequate computer systems and erratic power supply; all received a positive response rate of 95%, 80%, 79%, 79% and 52% respectively. However, the respondents refuted that the electronic information resources available in the library were not current and relevant to their various field of study.

Discussion of findings

The study revealed that among the 12listed common electronic information resources expected in a modern library, only 4 (e-books, e-journals, databases and open access resources) are said to be available in the library. Although, other basic EIRs like e-projects, e-theses, e-dissertations, staff scholarly publications in electronic form were not evidently available yet these are expected to be found in an academic library with a policy requiring every member of staff and student to submit an electronic copy of their scholarly publications to the university library as they are being published or submitted (in the case of students' final projects).

Furthermore, even though these undergraduate students patronize the library and its resources, they basically use three of the available EIRs frequently, which are e-journals, e-books and open access resources respectively in a scale of preference. The databases such as the library's OPAC and e-granary are under-utilized probably because of the epileptic power supply and inadequate computer systems which are part of the challenges the study revealed these students encounter when using the available EIRs in the library.

Also, it was revealed that the electronic information resources available in the library are mostly used for assignments and also for research or project works especially by final year students. These could be associated to the fact that these students lack Internet searching skills and have poor knowledge of the university's OPAC as indicated by the study hence are only compelled to use the EIRs to obtain current and up-to-date information for referencing and citation as a prerequisite for their project.

Finally, the study revealed that slow Internet connectivity and poor knowledge on how to use the library's Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) were the two major challenges among others which were associated with the use of available EIRs in the library. The students need to understand how to use the library's OPAC to search for their relevant materials for easy retrieval and use.

Similarly, the Internet service needs to be stable and regular to enable the students' access the library's databases from the web.

Recommendations
Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The library should ensure that adequate training is given to students of the university by organizing seminars/workshops on how to use the library's OPAC to ensure accessibility and optimal utilization of the electronic information resources in the library.

2. The library management should provide adequate and functional computer systems to augment the already existing ones in the library. This will further encourage and boost EIRs usage especially among users who feel the systems are inadequate.

3. The university should upgrade/increase its Internet bandwidth, or at better still, provide the library with its own Internet facilities. This will arrest the frustration that erupts from slow Internet connectivity during browsing.

4. There is need for the library to also provide power inverters or solar power facilities in the library as backup for stable electricity. This will forestall the persistent Internet service downtime experience during power failure. Besides, the power backup will also be beneficial in enhancing library services especially for libraries that are digitized.

5. Internet terminals especially via Wi-Fi should be increased in the library to allow room for more flexible use of the Internet especially for those with PCs (Personal Computers).

6. Since it is very rare for anyone to use what he/she is not aware of except by mistake, hence there is a need for the library as a matter of duty, to embark on a mass awareness programme on the existence of the electronic information resources available in the library and how to access and utilize them. It could be done through notice boards, the library's social media platforms or during students' first year orientation programme.

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