



## Article

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# THE INTERNET AND INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR STATE AND PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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### **Abstract**

*This study is based on the use of the Internet and information resources for state and public library development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As a developing country, there is need for our libraries to create awareness of the Internet and to be connected to the Internet; as such our library users will have access to global information. The paper also examines the Internet through the provision of World Wide Web and E-Mail services. These are but the few provisions of the Internet. People require some form of information, in every field of life, hence the need for full exploitation of information resources as this paper points out. The paper states that State and Public Libraries play important role in the life of the community they serve. Therefore, to meet the need for Global information in this 21<sup>st</sup> century the Librarians should ensure that the Libraries and its users have access to information technology.*

### **Internet**

The Internet popularly known as Net, is described as the biggest communications revolution since the advent of the printed book. In the past, it was a secretive field enjoyed and jealously guarded by a few selected individuals. Presently, things have changed for the better, and the Net is now a thriving community electronic device with many millions of people exchanging information, ideas and opinions. With the Internet, there is an opened up information access to every one, from young children and students at school, to professionals in all fields and walks of life.

For a librarian or information scientist involved in information processing, dissemination and easy retrieval, it is a perfect medium to explore. Almost all Librarians are no longer able to read a book or magazine without considering the

material's possible value for exploitation in the library by the library users. We spend hours and money retrieving out for materials that will be of benefit for the users.

To the librarian and information scientist, as well as other users, the Internet can be an infinite resources file of texts, visual stimuli, listening material, vocabulary, information video files, TV, radio and newspapers from around the world.

It is worthy of note that the Internet is a source of authentic information in all fields of life. It is a "home" to encyclopedic information about all sorts of topics you may want to engage in the library and of professional knowledge for students and teachers.

This paper attempts to bring to focus the structure and meaning in the use of Internet as a medium for the dissemination of information so as to help library users get the most out of this medium.

The Internet is often used as a term to describe the World Wide Web. In fact, the World Wide Web is just one part of this multi-faceted communication medium, which takes in anything from simple text communication by e-mail to video-conferencing.

### **The World Wide Web**

The World Wide Web is the medium of choice for both new and experienced users on the Net. It is visually attractive, easy-to-use, easy-to-understand, and manages to combine other Internet-based forms of communication in a single manageable package. (Dudency Grvin (2000:3)

Most modern computers already come equipped with the tools needed to connect to the Internet. All you need are a modem, a telephone line (or, for a better connection, an /SDN adapter card and/AND phone line) and Internet services provider. A MODEM is a piece of machinery inside the computer, which enables your computer to "talk" to other computers through a standard telephone line. AN INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER (ISP) is a company, which has extremely powerful computers permanently connected to the Internet.

When you connect to the Internet through your computer, you are making a phone call to the other entire computers connected to have plenty of information about ISPs and how to get connected.

To view an Internet with the web, you use a web browser. This is a piece of software which helps you move around the web and displays the information you are interested in.

The librarian and library users should know exactly what the web is all about, the web is simply a collection of screens of information from thousands of computers around the world, all of which are permanently connected to that Internet. These pages are all linked together, or classified in various directories and search; catalogues.

### **The E-Mail**

Another Internet device that will be of use to the information scientist librarian is the E-mail. E-mail is a short way of saying “electronic mail.”

There are many popular e-mail programs which one to use is a question of personal preference. The most popular programs are Eudora and Outlook Express.

There are usually six steps involved in working with an e-mail program. Most of these steps can be done while you are not connected to the Internet. This is known as working off line. You can read message sent to you, and write new message without being connected to the Internet and without incurring an enormous phone bill. E-mail messages are simply text documents, which can be sent over the net. They are usually small and written in a “shorthand form. They are written in informal language and uses a lot of abbreviations like IMHO (in my humble opinion) FYI (for your information) and BTM (By the way) and others. They make e-mail quicker to write. Dudency, Gavin (2000).

### **Information Resources**

Information resources entail communication of knowledge, transmission of knowledge, dissemination and distribution of knowledge through the use of some documented materials.

Almost everything people do as they work will require some form of information. All library users come to the library because they need information librarians and library users need information to prepare documents, enter data into the computer, answer the

telephone, organize a meeting and do many other things. Librarians must ensure that the users acquire correct and timely information.

The information resources in a library, State or Public, include: Books and nonbook materials, visual and audio-visual aids. Accessibility and availability of information go hand in hand with the production of information. (Olufunmi, Layo G.T (1991). Hence information can be made accessible and available through the Internet. Therefore, librarians should explore avenues to make information available and accessible by using the Internet.

### **State/Public Libraries**

The word Library, which in English, refers to a collection of books, gathered for the purpose of reading, studying or references, is derived from a Latin word "Liber" which means book. A Library can also be defined as a collection of books printed or written including audio-visual material arranged in a systematic and consistent order to allow for easy access, retrieval and dissemination.

### **Types of Libraries**

There are five different types of Libraries. They are: National Libraries, Public Library, School Libraries, Special Libraries and Academic Libraries. Each type of library is distinguished by the type of users which it serves, the basic function of all these Libraries is to acquire, organize, disseminate, information and make materials available to users.

The concentration for this paper is State Libraries, which can also be referred to as Public Libraries.

### **Public Libraries**

They play indispensable role in the life of the community they serve. They promote reading culture among adolescents and children, the Public Libraries provide good information and reference center for the masses. In many cases they build up collections that relate to local interest.

### **Forms of Library Services**

The Public Library offers different kinds of services to its users, some of these services are:

### **Identification and collection of materials**

The library identifies relevant book and non-book materials, collects, processes them, and integrates them in the collection. The library also makes access to such collected materials easier for users. The library stores information, through processing and organization of materials by cataloguing and classifying them.

Other services offered by the library are: Preservation of information, loans, Retrieval and Dissemination of information.

### **Internet Services: A Necessity for/State Libraries in Nigeria**

State libraries are encouraged to computerize their libraries as a way to modernize the libraries. This will help to provide easy access to information. Moreover, getting hooked to the Internet is a necessity for the State Libraries, because most libraries around the globe are now connected to the Internet. Our government must endeavour to build up the libraries to meet the standard of other contemporary libraries globally. The study conducted by the Inter Network for the Availability of Scientific Publication (INASP) in 2004, on the use of ICTs in African Public Libraries revealed that most Nigerian Public Libraries have few computers with no Internet connection, but with plans to be automated. The public libraries in Nigeria started acquiring computers in the year 2000; while their counter-parts like: Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ghana, Zambia and Johannesburg Public Libraries started their acquisition of computers in the 1990s and at the same time embarked on Internet connection. Chisenga, Justina (ed) (2004).

The public libraries in Abeokuta, Kano State Library Board, Plateau State Library in Jos, Lagos State, Anambra State, Imo State and Enugu State embarked on the acquisition of ICT facilities in the year 2000. It is only recently that these Public Libraries are making efforts to have Internet connection. Out of the seven Public Libraries in Nigeria mentioned above, only four have Internet connection. They are Abeokuta, Lagos, Imo e and Enugu States.

Out of the ten libraries surveyed in Africa by (INASP) only two were fully automated: the Johannesburg public library and that of Kenya. Chisenga, (ed) (2004).

### **Barriers to the Use of Internet in Nigerian Public Libraries**

The following are some of the Barriers to the use of Internet in Nigerian Public Libraries:

- Lack of electronic information from librarians.
- Lack of funds to acquire ICT facilities and lack of funds to organise trainer's programmes.
- Resistance of staff to change, the staff may sometimes be reluctant to embrace any change.
- Lack of technical support and maintenance of facilities
- Erratic power supply from Power Holding Company of Nigeria.
- Poor funding from State Government. Present development in Nigeria suggest that the library management should use influential people in the society to get the government interested in the library and activities.

### **Libraries, In this World of Global Technology**

The Internet can provide the libraries with lots of information in different field, especially on international issues and not just locally. The libraries can bank on the Internet for the right information for users, in the right form and at the right time, which can be provided in all fields of study. The use of the right form of information is an important resource that is essential for national development. With the Internet, information will come from sources both inside and outside the organization.

The Internet makes possible the immediate communication of information to the person who wishes to use it without much delay. In the absence of the seeker of the information the librarian can hook on to the Internet for the information required by the user, store or file it and then retrieve it when it is eventually needed.

Wide range of information from other fields of life like Marketing, Finance, Administration, education, Production, Research and others can be provided through the use of the Internet.

### **Conclusion**

Almost all libraries all over the world are getting computerized and connected to the Internet and the State/Public Libraries of Nigeria should not be left behind in this development. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, our State/Public libraries should not be retrogressing; there is urgent need for more development of our information resources by getting

connected to the global information resources available to researchers, students, teachers and the whole library community users.

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