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# THE PLACE OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN E-LEARNING IN UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE: A CASE STUDY OF NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY (UNIZIK), AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE UNIVERSITY, ULI; AND MADONNA UNIVERSITY (MU), OKIJA

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## Abstract

*The paper tries to identify the preparedness of university libraries in Anambra State to cope with e-Education programme recently introduced in our University system. The survey and observational methods were used to elicit information from the three University Libraries in Anambra State. A total of twenty (20) questionnaires were distributed to only the professional librarians but seventeen (17) questionnaires were completed and returned, giving 85% response rate. The findings showed that the essential ICTs for e-learning at the university libraries are adequate. The resources should be digitized rather than be in print format as they still occur in the University Libraries studied. The findings also showed some factors that impede the establishment of e-learning to include but not limited to poor funding of university libraries. The researchers recommend the establishment of e-library foremost before e-Education in Nigerian Universities.*

## Introduction

Attempts have been made by different authors to define e-learning. For instance, Agaja (2005) defined e-learning as learning through the personal computer (PC) with Internet access. Sloman (2001), Rosenberg (2001) and Pearson as cited by Agaja (2005) described e-learning as an emerging term which takes advantage of connectivity ... learning delivered or received mainly through the Internet, extranet or the web. Ugwu and Inyiama (2005) defined e-learning as the delivery of contents and learning materials via the Internet or Intranet or CD with an aim of changing the behaviour of the learner.

Electronic learning has its origin in the century-old correspondence course, whereby courses of instruction in a series of written lesson and assignment were exchanged by mail between teachers and students (The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language. 2003). Later on some media like film, radio, television and videotapes were introduced into teaching and learning. These media were so much advanced that it was even predicted that they would replace textbooks

and classroom teaching (Rosenberg, 2001). Today, correspondence course is commonly deployed through a multimedia, web-based environment.

Computers are now being made use of in imparting knowledge in institutions of learning and this has brought about a tremendous improvement in the quality of knowledge acquired. Rubinoff and Yovits as cited by Agaja (2005) noted that this is the most challenging application of computers since it requires sophisticated interaction with the students at an economic price. The emergence of the computer with Internet access has brought into the world a wider database for students and researchers to acquire knowledge or engage in participatory research. Computers with Internet access enable the students to take charge of their own learning through direct exploration, expression and experience. This shifts the student's role from being taught to learning and the teacher's role from expert to collaborator or guide (Agaja, 2005).

E-learning is changing the approach to teaching and learning in universities. It has the potential of revolutionizing the way learning and teaching are experienced and conducted. However, despite the benefits of e-learning, it is very obvious that they cannot be fully realized without e-library (electronic library).

An electronic library according to Ojedokun (2000) is basically a library that consists of materials and services in electronic format rather than in the print format. The components of an electronic library include digital materials such as electronic databases, CD-ROM discs and any material used in the library, like video and audiotapes, microforms, etc. that require the use of electricity. Another name for electronic library is digital library (Prytherch 2000). According to Ojedokun (2000), a digital library is listed as including electronic databases on the Internet, WWW, CD-ROMs and proprietary services such as Dialog, Info America, etc. Digital libraries consist mainly of digital materials and services. The items are stored and processed using digital devices. They are also transmitted over networks.

### **Statement of Problem**

The Federal Government of Nigeria has announced its plan to embark on e- Education programme. Packaged in this programme is the Nigeria universities e- learning project among other things. With the Federal government's efforts to embark on e-Education, this paper has investigated the preparedness of University Libraries in Anambra State to cope with the new development in terms of availability of the required infrastructure and manpower. The implication of e-learning is that the university library resources

should be in digital or electronic format rather than in print format to be transmitted over networks.

## **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to find out:

- the essential ICTs for learning
- the ICT facilities available in the university libraries in Anambra State
- benefits of e-library
- hindrances to the establishment and efficient use of e-library in the University libraries in Anambra State
- the way forward

## **Methodology**

Survey research method was used to carry out this study. The three (3) University Libraries in Anambra State constitute the population of the study. The questionnaire and observational checklist were instruments used for data collection. A total of twenty (20) questionnaires were distributed to only the professional Librarians of the three University Libraries but seventeen (17) Librarians responded, giving 85% response rate. Data collected were analyzed using percentages.

## **Findings**

Discussion of findings was based on the five objectives set for this study.

### ***OBJECTIVE 1: The Essential ICTs for E-learning.***

**Table 1: Basic ICTs for e-learning**

Basic ICTs	UNIZIK AWKA		ASU ULI		MU OKIJA		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No
* Personal Computers (PCs)	3	50	-	-	-	-	17
Internet	2	33.3	4	57.1	3	100	17
WWW	2	33.3	2	26.6	-	-	17
Multimedia (Texts, graphics, Sound, video & animation)	1	16.7	2	28.6	"	-	17

In Table 1 above 3(50%), 2 (33.3%), 2 (33.3%) and 1.(16.7%) respondents from UNIZIK Library indicated that the essential ICTs for e-learning were PCs, Internet, WWW and Multimedia respectively. At ASU, 4(57.1%), 2 (26.6%) and 2 (28.6%) respondents indicated that Internet, WWW and Multimedia respectively are the essential ICTs for e-

learning. Nobody indicated the PCs. At Madonna University, 4 (100%) respondents indicated only Internet. None of the respondent indicated PCs, WWW and Multimedia. The implication of these responses is that most Librarians do not know the ICTs for e-learning. The University Libraries studied lack the ICT infrastructures for e-learning, hence the Librarians are not familiar with them. Therefore, the University Libraries in Anambra State are not yet prepared for the e- learning programme which the Federal government has introduced into the Nigeria university system. They cannot contribute to this laudable nationwide programme.

## **OBJECTIVE 2: ICT Facilities Available in the University Libraries in Anambra State**

**Table2: ICTs Available in Anambra State Universities**

Basic ICTs	UNIZ AWKA		ASU ULI		MU OKIJA		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Computers	6	100	7	100	4	100	17
Printers	6	100	7	100	4	100	17
CD-ROM	2	13.3	2	28.6	1	25	17
Telephone	-	-	2	28.6	4	100	17
Photocopies	6	100		71.4	4	100	17
Fax Machine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Computer workstations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
E-Mail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OPAC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WWW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Multimedia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2 shows that all the University Libraries in Anambra State have computer, printers, CD-Rom and photocopiers. Whereas ASUTECH and Madonna University have Telephone in their libraries, UNIZIK has none. Regrettably, other ICT facilities lacking in these libraries include: Fax machine, Computer workstations, E-mail< OPAC, Internet WWW and Multimedia.

## **OBJECTIVE 3: The Benefits of Electronic Library**

Responses from the questionnaire show that an electronic library could offer the following benefits:

- Improves the quality of research activities in universities
- Add value to the teaching and learning process
- Improves quality packaging and delivery of educational materials

- Enhance curriculum development and innovation
- Improves library services
- Enhance records management and retrieval
- Contributes significantly to operational effectiveness and productivity
- Makes librarians job more exciting and easier
- Reduces recurrent expenditure on paper and other office supplies
- Improves Internal organization of libraries
- Information can be delivered with electronic speed
- Gives prestige to the library profession
- Motivates library staff and users to work harder.

However, majority of the respondents did not agree with the researcher that an electronic library could help to reduce brain drain. The respondents also added the following benefits:

- Electronic library widens the frontiers of knowledge
- Breaks down the barrier of access to information by time, space or availability.

Thus, information can be accessed from a myriad of sources.

***OBJECTIVE 4: Factors that Impede the Establishment and Efficient use of E- Learning in Universities in Anambra State***

Research findings indicate factors that impede the establishment and efficient use of e-learning in Universities and Anambra State to include:

- Poor funding
- lack of basic infrastructures for e-learning
- lack of ICT policy
- high cost of ICT infrastructures
- low ICT skills
- high cost of training staff to properly use ICTs
- lack of qualified personnel to handle the technical equipment
- poor equipment maintenance culture
- erratic power supply

One of the respondents added that most faculties in Nigerian Universities do not expose students to e-learning facilities especially Library and Information Science students.

**OBJECTIVE 5: The way Forward**

When the respondents were asked to suggest the possible solution to the problems identified as impediments to the establishment and efficient use of e-library in our university system, greatest number of respondents indicated insufficient funding of university libraries. They stressed that the budgetary allocation to universities and university libraries should be improved and that special funds should be allocated to university libraries for e-library facilities. The respondents added that if the Federal government is serious with the plan for e-education in Nigeria universities they should first and foremost talk about e-library that will support the e-education. It is very difficult if not impossible for e-education to thrive in a university where only traditional library operations are in place like in the Anambra State universities.

Greater number of respondents suggested that the cost of ICT infrastructures for e-library should be brought down and made easily available. Moreover, when these infrastructures are acquired they should be carefully handled and properly maintained. Therefore, library staff should be well trained on how to use these infrastructures. This will help to solve the problem of low ICT skills among the library staff. Qualified technicians to handle the technical problems should be employed.

Some of the respondents suggested serious improvement in electricity supply by the Power Holdings Corporation of Nigeria (PHCN). In addition to this, a standby generator should also be provided in university libraries.

Finally, a good number of the respondents suggested the establishment of ICT policy by the Federal Government. The policy among other things, should include the framework for the implementation of e-education and e-library, as well as concrete strategy.

**Summary and Recommendations**

E-learning has the potential to widen participation in teaching and learning. Learners can access learning at any time and place of their choice, and more choice of subjects are offered. However, despite the benefits of learning, it cannot thrive without e-learning. In the university libraries in Anambra State, the essential ICTs for e-library are seriously lacking. The researcher recommends that these infrastructures should be put in place in university libraries before the Federal Government can actualize e-education. Regrettably, the three university libraries in Anambra State are not yet prepared for e-education.

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