

Marketing E-Resources in Festus Aghagbo Nwako Digital Library (FANDL) for Improved Access for Implementation of Project 200

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Abstract

Electronic information resources are invaluable assets in higher education, yet awareness of these resources among students and academics in many Nigerian universities seems to be low. The paper sought to find out the various tools which Festus Aghagbo Nwako Digital Library (FANDL) use to market E-resources and the limiting factors. The respondents were 60 library users (students, lecturers and researchers) selected through simple random sampling. The instruments used were questionnaire, oral interview and observation checklist. The study revealed that the major tools used for marketing E-Resources in FANDL are social media, seminars and workshops. The study recommended the formulation of a written policy for marketing EIRs and provision of sufficient funds.

Keywords: *E-Resources, Marketing Tools, Academic Libraries, Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library.*

Introduction

The application of information and communication technology (ICT) in academic libraries resulted in the introduction of electronic information resources (EIRs) and services. With ICT, especially the Internet, academic libraries have become only one of the key players in the information supply chain. Gupta as cited in Okon and Umoh (2014) observed that in the present scenario "the notion of service has changed from basic to value-added, from staff assisted to self-service, from in-house to outreach, from free to priced, from reactive to proactive, and from mass customization to individualized service". Today, it is possible for users to access electronic information resources

from remote locations, making physical presence optional.

Users' preference of E-Resources has drastically increased in academic libraries because the resources facilitate access to information, enhance fast searching, and save the time of users. In this digital age, library collections have continued to move from print to electronic formats, therefore the challenges of effective marketing of e-resources has become apparent (Kumar, 2014). Marketing increases library users' awareness, thereby motivating them to utilize library products, which justifies the huge amount of money invested by the institutions in the acquisition of ERs. Marketing plays an important role in promoting accessibility and utilization of

library holdings. This invariably leads to increased research productivity which is an important criterion for the world ranking of universities. A world-class university must have a library which provides relevant and current information resources in the right format at the right time; and also promotes optimal utilization of the resources.

“Project 200” is a project in Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU) which targets the university to be listed among the 200 best universities in the world from its present position of 4029. It is the vision of the new Vice Chancellor - Prof. C. Esimone. For this to be realized, the Digital Library in Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library must contribute significantly by promoting awareness of the availability and accessibility of E-resources and ensuring effective utilization of the resources by academics and scholars. This would impact positively on their research productivity, thus promoting the visibility of the university and increasing the possibility of realizing the vision of project 200.

Festus Aghagbo Nwako Digital Library (FANDL)

FANDL is the digital library of Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The university was established in 1991 with the main library known as Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library. It also has other branch libraries including a Law library at Awka, a Medical Library at Nnewi, and a Pharmaceutical Library at Agulu. The main library occupies a gigantic building with a usable floor area of 40,000 sq. meters with a sitting capacity of 3,000 users and materials capacity of

over 500,000 volumes of books and a computer capacity of over 1000 systems/workstations. Ogbonna (2016) noted that the digital library took off in 2010 and is equipped with 480 desktops and 120 laptops through which it provides enormous E-resources. These are CD-ROMs consisting of theses and dissertations which reflect various disciplines in the university. The online databases include Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE), Access to Global Research in Agriculture (AGORA), Health Internet Network Access to Research Initiative (HINARI), Directory of Open Access Journal (DOAJ) and World Digital Library, Nigerian University Virtual Library, Directory of Open Access Books and E-Library USA. Others include PROTA, EBSCOHOST, JSTOR and a host of offline databases such as MIT Open Courseware and e-Granary. The library website is library.unizik.edu.ng.

Concept of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs)

An electronic information resource can be defined as a material, data or programs encoded for manipulation and accessed by a computerized device. It may require the use of a peripheral directly connected to a computerized device (CD-ROM drive) or a connection to a computer network (AACR2 as cited in Kenchakkanavar, 2014). Some EIRs may not require the use of a computer. From the above definition, it is understood that an electronic resource is normally encoded, that is, when ordinary language is changed into letters or symbols for the material to be stored electronically, and the resource can be accessed through the

Internet or direct access. Popular EIRs include E-books, E-journals, E-Theses and Dissertations, E-Newspapers, E-dictionaries, E-directories, E-encyclopedias, E-biographies, E-audio/visual resources or other published resources that are in soft-copies. Some EIRs are born digital while others were formerly in print but later digitized. While some are online others are offline.

These web-based resources are often more current than their print counterparts, they are accessible to multiple users and can be utilized simultaneously even from remote locations. E-resources defy distance, time and space as the resources can be accessed from remote locations at any point in time. EIRs are invaluable research tools which have been widely accepted and utilized in academics. These resources complement print-based resources and can be searched, browsed and interlinked with other publications and databases, downloaded and saved in different formats for future use. According to Jotwani (2014), "E-resources provide access to information that might be restricted to the users because of geographical location or finances". Through various search techniques, these resources can be searched, browsed and interlinked with other publications and databases, downloaded and saved in different formats for future use. In addition, they are convenient to use as these can be accessed from the digital or visual library, offices or the comfort of homes. One of the biggest advantages of E-resources is that they facilitate the formation of consortia where group(s) of libraries join together to leverage their collective strength and to acquire a large number of information

sources at a very low price. E-Resources are also known as electronic information resources.

Concept of Marketing of Library Services

Singh (2009) defines marketing of library services as "the process of planning, pricing, promoting and distributing goods and services to create exchange that will satisfy the library and her clients or users. From this definition, it can be deduced that mere provision of library resources especially E-Resources in the library is not enough, rather, it should be made accessible in the right form and format, at the right time and useable to the satisfaction of the users. Since users are the top priority, Bhatt (2011) opined that service providers should remember that users are the most important people to be served in library and information centres. This could be enhanced through the marketing mix. Bhatt (2011) further stated that marketing mix includes products (such as books, book-related and non-book materials); price (in the form of credit, discount, cash); place (including coverage, distribution channels, location); and promotion (which is done through advertising, personal relations and public relations); identifying users' needs and satisfying them in an effective and efficient manner.

Statement of Problem

In this digital age, university libraries provide various types of E-resources in addition to print resources to facilitate teaching and research. Research productivity is a major criterion for the

ranking of universities in the world. Utilization of E-resources has been proved to impact positively on research productivity in academic institutions (Ani, Ngulube & Onyancha, 2014). Yet, awareness and use of the resources among academics in many Nigerian universities have remained low which grossly affect effective research activities (Kyung, 2010). With the present need to achieve **Project 200** which targets Nnamdi Azikiwe University to be listed among the first 200 universities in the world; FANDL has a mandate to facilitate research and promote academic excellence by providing relevant information resources to the users in the right form at the right time and also ensuring that they make effective use of the resources. FANDL cannot achieve this goal without engaging in marketing activities to create awareness of the availability of EIRs. If the marketing of e-resources is not given serious attention in FANDL; library users would not be sufficiently aware of the available EIRs and may not make optimal use of the resources which would culminate into low research output which would have an adverse effect on the position of the university in the world ranking. This paper, therefore, investigates marketing of EIRs in FANDL focusing on the following: tools employed by librarians in marketing EIRs and factors which hinder effective marketing with a view to finding possible solutions.

Purpose of the Study

1. To identify the types of E-resources users access in FANDL.
2. To identify tools which FANDL employ in marketing E resources.

3. To ascertain factors which hinder the marketing of E-resources in FANDL.

Research Questions

1. What types of E-resources do users access in FANDL?
2. What are the tools which FANDL employ in marketing E-resources?
3. What factors hinder marketing of E-resources in FANDL?

Review of Related Literature

Any medium containing information is an information resource. Information resources are obtainable in two formats: print and non-print). E-Resources consists of various non-print and non-paper based resources which are used to store information (Ibenne, 2010). EIRs are mainly accessed through E-libraries. Anyim (2018) observed that university E-libraries have made research more interesting and have attained the status of intellectually organised information resource centres and a world of knowledge at researchers' fingertips. Adoption of university E-library motivates researchers, students, faculty members and the university to engage in more research. The rationale for the adoption of E-libraries in universities in Nigeria is solely to provide electronic and online resources for staff and students to promote educational development and provide educational resources for effective teaching, learning and research. An electronic library achieves its objectives by creating opportunities for users to access and retrieve appropriate information that satisfies their information needs. University e-library is responsible

for providing instant access to digitized information, electronic information resources and services with the aid of computer or telecommunication technologies. Electronic library acquires, processes, stores, evaluates and disseminates information via electronic means to the audience in need of information. It can serve as a medium for achieving national and community development through the provision of relevant information necessary for decision making and policy enhancement. Electronic library is a multi-disciplinary concept that shares various branches of computer science including data management, information retrieval, library science, document management, information systems, the web, image processing, and artificial intelligence. Multidisciplinary nature of electronic library engenders flexibility in the definition which makes it difficult to have a singular definition of e-library. However, the format, form and nature of digital libraries give a clearer picture of what digital library means.

Marketing E-Resources in Academic Libraries

In the view of Kumar (2014), marketing of information products and services is a concept of sensitively serving and satisfying the needs of all those who are involved in education, scholarship, research and development and so on. Singh (2009) also defined it as “marketing library services is the process of planning, pricing, promoting and distributing goods and services to create exchange that satisfy the library and the customers”. From this

definition, it can as well be deduced that mere provision of library resources in the library is not enough rather making them accessible and useable to the satisfaction of users is paramount.

In the past, libraries advertised their print resources through such traditional methods as Current Awareness Services and Selective Dissemination of Information. In this era of E-resources, libraries need to engage in more aggressive marketing because some people find it difficult to accept technology. Marketing library resources benefits the library in many ways. Wu (2012) stressed that marketing library services is not all about telling the public what collection and services are being offered; it contributes to building a relationship with library customers. Okon and Umoh (2014) discussed other reasons for marketing library products and these include the following:

1. To enable libraries to compete for funds with other organs in the institutions.
2. Increases awareness and effective usage of library products.
3. Helps libraries maintain relevance.
4. Gives libraries improved image as perceptions about the library and its staff change.
5. Helps libraries identify the resources readers need.

Tools for Marketing Electronic Information Resources

Electronic information resources is a relatively new format of creation, storage and dissemination of information. The

collection of e-resources is growing day-to-day and libraries have to pay a heavy amount of their budget for subscriptions especially on E-journals, databases, E-books among others. It is important to ensure the maximum utilization of these resources by library users. Library marketing helps to build awareness and increase utilization of e-resources among the library users. Nwosu (2016) wrote on issues in the marketing of library products and services and described social media as the free websites which are presently the popular global interaction and marketing platforms. The social media utilization is as a result of the application of Lib 2.0 in

library services. Nwosu (2016) suggested such marketing outlets as facebook, blog, Twitter, WhatsApp, Skype, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, and Meetup. This author also suggested that every library should have a web site or at least a webpage in the institution's website to maintain web presence where the library Online Public Access Catalogue can be showcased. Tyagi (2011) points out that posters, E-mail lists, leaflets and brochures can be used to inform users about the available resources. Below are major tools and their features necessary for marketing EIRs.

Digital Media	Library Website, E-mail services, Webpage alert, Library portal, OPAC, Online survey, Webcasts and Web announcements, Online advertising, Social Network site such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Blogs, Wikis, RSS, Web 2.0.	<u>Features</u> Time-saving, Instantly reachable to the patrons, easy to cover large population, cost-effective, less stimulating, require ICT skills, creative, Simultaneous in nature.
Print media	Booklets, Brochures, Flyers, Banner/Posters, Bookmarks, Newspaper alert and Newsletter, Use Statistics, Library publications, Annual calendar, Feedback form, Postcard/Letters, survey	Time-consuming, limited access for patrons, expensive, more informative, no extra skill required for use it, Static, at a time available for one user.
Events and Activities	Workshops, Seminars, User - Education and Orientation, Word of mouth, Classroom Instruction, face -to-face events, Library tours, Training session, One- to- one Conversations.	Long time activates, more expensive, more informative for participants, Flexible for Instructors, establish direct with and tutors.

Tools Used for Marketing E-Resources in Academic Libraries as outlined by Kumar (2017)

The present age is rightly characterised as the information age, where success in any activity is based on the amount and accuracy of information available. Information is a key resource for progress and national development; it should be acquired and marketed using the appropriate tools to get the patrons. In the course of the literature review, it was observed that many previous researches did not focus on barriers. The present study focused on barriers in a particular library-FANDL.

Barriers to Marketing E-Resources in Academic Libraries

A number of factors hinder marketing of EIRs in academic libraries. One of them is insufficient funding for marketing E-Resources: the accessibility and usage of e-resources can be influenced by the budget for acquiring EIRs, facilities for using the resources and marketing materials. Inadequate number of computers to access EIRs and for subscriptions paid to the publisher for access (Martin, 2010). When budget is limited, accessibility and usage of e-resources and even its marketing may be low. Alemna as cited in Adekunmisi (2013) identified the relatively low level of knowledge while Jestin and Parameswari as cited in Adekunmisi (2013) identified a lack of agreement concerning users' requirements, wants and needs.

Adekunmisi (2013) also noted other barriers as follows: the subsidized non-

market environment in which most scientific and technical information is utilized; the difficulty of estimating the value contributed by library resources to the efficiency of research and advancement of scholarly pursuits; the general economic unsophistication of those mostly schooled in the humanities, the non-market oriented library schools and the nonchalant attitudes of librarians and other information professionals towards marketing resources. Librarians need the following skills for marketing EIRs: perception of user needs and ability to obtain feedback from users; technical knowledge, such as the ability to use the Internet and other databases; knowledge of various marketing strategies for promoting information skills.

Strategies for Marketing of E-Resources in Academic Libraries

Academic libraries cannot achieve effective marketing without strategizing. Pessa (2019) suggested the following:

1. Use of Marketing Committee
2. Adoption of Library Marketing Policies
3. Training of Library Users
4. Setting Financial Plan
5. Management Support.

Adekunmisi (2013) also suggested some strategies and these include the following:

1. Libraries should organize Campaigns: This will raise the visibility and value of the library and its resources.
2. Use of Volunteer Librarians: Volunteer librarians can develop

guides, manuals and toolkits to train librarians to learn and apply marketing planning in their libraries. They can organize workshops and act as facilitators.

3. Library Associations can Contribute: American Library Association set the pace. NLA can contribute by training librarians on skills for marketing library resources.
4. Libraries should Organize Information Literacy Programs for users.

Training of librarians on marketing skills and training library users through Information Literacy are part of marketing strategies. Library professionals are expected to grasp the marketing approach, as it is an essential weapon in this competitive age. This will help to promote efficient delivery of information economically to all users; encourage co-operative efforts in research, strengthen communication and collaboration among academic researchers which results in generation and dissemination of knowledge. According to Patil and Pradhan, as cited in Thu and Lixin (2018). Librarians need to possess the following skills for marketing: Perception of user needs and ability to obtain feedback from users; technical knowledge, such as the ability to use the Internet and other E-resources and databases; knowledge of various marketing strategies for promoting information skills.

For users to be able to access and effectively use e-resources, they must also have adequate skills for retrieving information

and to evaluate the outputs of the search process. Mardis, Hoffman and Marshall (2008) refer to these skills as the competencies needed to access resources. These competencies include the information literacy skills, including skills to formulate a search, to identify appropriate information sources, to select the right search tools, to employ suitable search strategies and to evaluate the results. According to Bendersky, Metzler and Croft (2012), search formulation involves coming up with appropriate queries useful for finding the information needed by the information seeker.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey and the population of the study comprised of students, lecturers and researchers who registered with the digital library as at 2019/2020 academic session. 60 respondents were selected through simple random sampling technique. The questionnaire titled **Questionnaire on Marketing E-resources in Academic Libraries (QMEAL)** was administered on the library users. Out of 60, 52 were returned, that is a return rate of (86.7%). Data were analyzed using frequency and percentages.

Interview was held with the E-Resources Librarian of FANDL in order to elicit information on marketing tools used by the library and the barriers experienced. The researchers used an observation checklist to identify the tools employed in FANDL in marketing EIRs.

Presentation of Results

Sixty (60) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents but 52 were successfully collected, that is, a return rate is 83.3%

Table 1: Types of E-Resources Accessed by the Users

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Theses and dissertations in soft copies	6	11.5
E-Journals	2	3.8
E-books	5	9.6
E-mail	7	13.6
Online resources	32	61.5
	52	100

From table 1, the result showed that 32 (61.5%) respondents make use of other online- resources (Online Dailies, E-games, E-movies etc), while 2(3.8%) make use of E-Journals.

Tools which FANDL employs in Marketing E-resources

During the interview, the researchers requested the E-Resources Librarian to identify the tools through which FANDL markets EIRs. The librarians revealed that the major tools which the library use to market EIRs are Social Media, Library Publications, Library Websites, Library Orientation, Workshops and Face-to-Face. The social network sites identified are Facebook, Twitter, Flicker, YouTube and Blog.

Factors which Hinder Marketing of E-resources in FANDL

The researchers requested the E-Resources Librarians to identify the factors which hinder marketing in FANDL. Based on this request, the information professional made the following revelations:

1. Nonchalant Attitudes of Librarians towards Marketing Library New Products:

Some librarians lack the required technical skills and interpersonal skills while others have not become conversant with marketing tools. The librarians need training and motivation in this regard.

2. Inadequate Facilities:

When the library adequate does not have adequate facilities for the use of EIRs, librarians are not confident advertising the

products because when users demand for the resources, they cannot utilize them

On factors which hinder marketing in FANDL, the study revealed that librarians' lukewarm attitudes, insufficient funding, university library management, inadequate facilities and lack of technical support and lack of written policy on marketing constitutes problems in marketing in FANDL. These are in line with such previous studies as Martin (2010); Alemna as cited in Adekunmisi (2013).

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers make the following recommendations:

1. Librarians should be trained on e-resources marketing skills.
2. Adequate facilities should be provided to enable users utilize EIRs.
3. Adequate funding should be provided for marketing activities.
4. Use of marketing committee should be encouraged.
5. Library management leadership should work harmoniously with librarians.
6. Sufficient number of technical experts should be readily available.
7. Information literacy programmes should be organized for users regularly.
8. There should be a written policy on marketing library products.
9. Marketing of library EIRs should be conducted regularly.
10. Marketing as a course should be introduced into the curriculum of Library Schools especially at the undergraduate level.

11. Library portals, banners and posters should also be explored.

Conclusion

This study has explored the types of E-resources which users' access, tools for marketing E-resources in FANDL and the various factors which hinder marketing of E-resources in FANDL. Social media is the main tool for marketing E-resources in FANDL. Librarians should learn to market the resources through the word of mouth. A closed mouth is a closed destiny. The barriers discovered include lukewarm attitudes of librarians, lack of funds and inadequate facilities. Marketing EIRs have become imperative in FANDL now than ever before. If the recommendations made are implemented, the situation will be improved and there will be greater awareness and more effective use of E-Resources. This would impact positively on academic achievement of students and research productivity of academics thus promoting the chances of the university being listed among the first 200 universities in the world, which is the goal of **Project 200**.

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