Article

STATUS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SKILLS AMONGST LIBRARIANS IN THE INFORMATION AGE: CASE STUDY OF ANAMBRA STATE LIBRARY BOARD

Nkem Ekene Osuigwe* & Augonus Nnamdi Uhegbu (PhD)**

*Anambra State Library Board

**Department of Library and Information Science, Abia State University

Abstract

The advent of the information age has brought about the introduction of new tools for information creation, retrieval, processing and dissemination. To remain relevant in this age, librarians need to acquire and develop skills that would enable them use the new technologies for performing their duties. This paper therefore investigates the information communication technology (ICT) competencies of librarians in Anambra State Library Board juxtaposed with skills needed by librarians to operate maximally in the information age. The survey method of research was used and questionnaire was used to gather data from the 22 librarians that work in the Library Board. The findings of the study reveal that some of the respondents do not have basic ICT skills like putting on a computer and knowledge and expertise in electronic mail use. Many of the librarians can use different search engines to garner information on the internet. However many of the respondents have no knowledge of Library 2.0 tools and indicated a low level of expertise in word processing, web design and searching of databases. Majority of the respondents suggested that attendance to seminars/workshops organized by professional bodies and in-house training would enable them acquire and develop ICT skills. The paper concludes that the librarians be proactive in the acquisition and improvement of ICT skills so as to perform their duties effectively in the information age.

INTRODUCTION

Society has passed through various phases; from the agricultural age when agriculture was considered the dominant force for development to the industrial age when massive industrialization was the priority of nations and to the present time when information is the capital resource for development. The colossal growth of electronic information and

global access to information made possible by technological advancement has changed the value, use, handling,   retrieval, storage, packaging and dissemination of information. This has brought many transformations to the human society. Information has become a most critical resource for users in the areas of research and education, national development, personal well-being, competitiveness in business and industry and in every other sphere of human existence (Baylan, 2007). Information is now regarded as a catalyst for social, economic and political change. The Internet and its associated technologies serve as veritable instruments for exploiting the opportunities of information explosion. The term 'Information Age[1] began to be used to explain the concept of information driven society where the formation, design, sharing, dissemination, use, assimilation, exploitation and management of information is a major activity economically, politically and culturally. Martin (2008) defines the information society as:

A society in which quality of life, as well as prospects for social change and economic development depend increasingly upon information and its exploitation. In such a society, living standards, patterns of work and leisure, the education system and the market place are all influenced markedly by advances in information and knowledge. This is evidenced by an increasing array of information intensive product and services, communicated through a wide range of media, many of them electronic in nature.

According to World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (2003), the nations of the world need to be committed in working towards building a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented society where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge. This would enable individuals and communities to achieve their full potentials and improve their quality of life while promoting sustainable development. The summit identifies the use of ICT technologies as the main tool in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Information has thus become a crucial asset in the global economy and countries are mapping out ways and means to ensure that the resource is easily available, adequately provided and effectively used by their citizens (Mchombu and Cadbury, 2006). The capability to generate and use information as a capital and the ability to make such accessible to all sections of* the society is a mark of the information age.

Libraries provide information and global access to information. They contribute to the successful function of the Information Society (IFLA, 2006). Since libraries are channels through which knowledge, culture, civic awareness and resources for economic development and innovations in the society are disseminated, they are crucial even in the information age where they create and add value to digital content. O'Connor (2006)

notes that promotion of global access to information is no longer enough, people need to become information literate because the amount of information available is growing on a continuous basis and only those who know how to locate, access, evaluate and use information will thrive in the Information society. According to Bawden (2001), information can be available but inaccessible in terms of use because of lack of knowledge on how to use them.

Librarians have always been involved in inculcation of literacy. To be able to help people access information and to be information literate in the information society, librarians need to have certain abilities and skills (Jain, 2005). The librarian should have some dexterity in ensuring universal access of information, be proficient in the use of information communication technologies, be able to teach users how to locate and access information no matter where it is domiciled and still possess the knack to manage information resources and integrate their various media successfully.

Batool & Ameen (2010) posit that the emergence of modern, high tech information society characterized by changing modes of information carriers and high demand for digital resources more than print materials have totally affected libraries and the services they render. It is therefore not surprising that to be able to operate in the milieu of technological innovations, librarians need to learn a new set of skills different from the ones taught in the Library Schools (Elmborg, 2004).

Public libraries in Nigeria should be a part of the information technology revolution. The public library is the only library that is open to all irrespective of age, social class, educational attainment and religious creed. The public library therefore needs to have the capability to make available information resources that will cater to all levels and shades of information needs. Survival in the information age presupposes that an increasing number of people be exposed to information that can help them thrive in their chosen fields of endeavour and thus aid in national development. The public library is best suited for this purpose and should therefore be properly equipped to provide current and relevant information resources in both print and electronic media. In this era of proliferation of information aided by the rapid growth of technological innovations, public libraries need to serve as the arrowhead in bridging the gap between the information rich who can easily access information anytime, anywhere, anyhow and the information poor who will have only the resources available in the

public library as their source of information (Emojorho, 2011; Gill, Pestell, Hassner, Hayrapetian & Clubb, 2000).

Consequently librarians working in public libraries are expected to have skills that would enable them to serve their varied clientele effectively.

ANAMBRA STATE LIBRARY BOARD

The present Anambra State was carved out on 27th August. The State which ranks 35th out of the 36 States in the country occupy a land mass of 4,844km^2. It has an estimated population of 4,055,048 people (Anyaeche, 2007). The State is made up of 177 communities in 21 local government areas. The State capital is in Awka, Onitsha is the commercial centre of the State while the industrial nucleus in the State is Nnewi.

The Anambra State Library Board was set up under CAP 82 laws of Anambra State Nigeria 2669 of 1979. It has three divisional libraries at Abagana, Nnewi and Onitsha and seven branch libraries at Adazinnukwu, Ajalli, Amichi, Atani, Ihembosi, Nkpologwu and Ozubulu. The libraries are being administered from the temporary State Central Library Ifitedunu (Osuigwe, Udeze & Anunobi, 2011). Work has been concluded at the Professor Kenneth Dike State Central e-library. The fencing and landscaping of the compound is on-going. The library has thirteen (13) librarians, nine (9) library officers and more than 100 supporting staff. The librarians are thus distributed in the divisions and branches; State Central Library - 9 librarians, Onitsha Divisional Library -4 librarians, Nnewi Divisional Library - 4 librarians and Abagana Divisional Library has only one librarian. Adazinnukwu branch Library has a librarian, Ihembosi branch Library has a librarian while Ozubulu branch library has two librarians.

At present no operation in the library is automated. The Library Board presently has two (2) laptops, five (5) desktops computers, two (2) photocopiers (the photocopier in the office of the Director is also equipped with a scanner), an internet modem and four printers. The equipments are distributed within the Director's office (two laptops, two desktops, two printers, a photocopier with a scanner and an internet modem), Administration Department (one desktop, one printer and one photocopier) and Adazinnukwu branch library where the indigenes donated two (2) computers that are used mainly for Word processing. Nnewi indigenes had formerly donated two (2) computers to the Divisional library in the town but they were second hand purchases and proved to be of no benefit to the library as they could not be configured for any

process. The Library however in its bid to achieve some visibility has a website - www.anslb.com that was designed by a youth corp member in 2010 and is updated by the Director's office.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Advances in ICT have brought new tools to play in service delivery in libraries. This coupled with the development of information society has elevated information to the main currency in global economy, social change and all aspects of human existence. These changes have necessitated the move from paper to electronic media as the prevailing form of information storage, retrieval and dissemination. Libraries are access points of information. Public libraries are most accessible to every member of its host community irrespective of age, creed, educational, social or academic status. Librarians working in these libraries need to be knowledgeable in the use of these new tools for optimal provision of information to all. An assessment to recognize skills currently possessed by these librarians which need to be strengthened and identification of those that are lacking is therefore necessary. In view of this the need to ascertain the status of information technology skills and knowledge of librarians working in Anambra State Library Board arose. This appraisal would also aid in proffering avenues for acquisition of new skills.

Purposes of the study

This research aims to achieve the following objectives;

  i.   To establish the type and degree of ICT knowledge possessed by librarians working in Anambra State Library Boar

 ii.   To find out if the librarians have any ICT skills.

iii.   To find out the major constraints in acquiring ICT knowledge and skills.

 iv.   To ascertain the major avenues of acquiring ICT skills for librarians working in Anambra State Library Board.

LITERATURE REVIEW

All over the world librarians in all libraries are faced with technological changes that affect the tools of their profession and how they provide services to their clientele. The rapid changes being witnessed in the information sector has transformed information processing from human dependent operations to machine dependency. The shift to information economy therefore necessitates that new technical skills be acquired by these library workers so that they can provide responsive service. Technical skills are

those professional job-related knowledge, proficiency and abilities needed to operate in a digital age workplace including the ability to use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information (Partnership For 21st century Skills, 2007; Evans, 2002). Garrod & Sidgreaves (1998), Burke (2001) and Crosby (2002), all agree that librarians no matter the type of libraries they work in use new technologies to organize and disseminate information.

These emerging information communication technologies use the Internet as a platform to provide opportunities for all to participate in the information society. This has given birth to government, business, social and educational transactions being carried out online. However it has been generally observed that quite a number of people face barriers of access in their bid to partake of these services. Public libraries play a crucial role in bridging information gaps for the community by providing platforms where they can access the internet. The public library also assists in helping users learn the necessary skills in retrieving information (American Library Association, 2005 & Freedman, 2007). Librarians working in the public libraries therefore need to exploit the opportunities presented by the application of new technologies to improve their services to users.

The ability to assist users' access information electronically has become a major part of a public librarian's routine activity (Veronica, 2010). The librarian is consequently expected to demonstrate a general understanding of basic skills for the handling of computer based operations in the library. At a minimal level these skills should include putting on a computer, using a mouse and keyboard as well as having some understanding of terminologies usually used with information communication technologies (Cates, 2006). The ability to employ the use of different search engines to retrieve information from the internet, send and receive e-mails, have an advanced or intermediate knowledge of popular productivity tools like word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation and publishing programmes are also important technology skills that librarians need to acquire (Tang, 1998; Hyett, 2000; Omekwu, 2003; Morgan, 2005; Macaulay, 2006 and Mazumdar, 2007).

The State Library of North Carolina (2007) and Ohio Public Library (2008) outlined various information technology skills that librarians who work with the public need to possess in order to efficiently and effectively meet the information needs of internal and external clientele. These include;

- Have basic computer hardware knowledge
- Possess e-mail skills
- Familiarity with web 2.0 applications including blogs, wikis and social sites
- Know how to use skill presentations such as Microsoft PowerPoint
- Operate printing options
- Have skills to help patrons use computers both on one-to-one basis and in small groups.

According to U.S. Department of Labour (2009) librarians in addition to collecting and organizing books and other materials with a view of making them available also need to have database searching skills as the use of electronic resources have become widespread. The changing roles of librarians in the information age necessitates that they acquire skills for database management, web pages development, ability to use information retrieval software as well as be able to teach others how to use technology for information retrieval, operate search engines and have an above average knowledge of operating systems (Sharma 2005; Burke 2001). Possession of these skills would enable librarians use technology fully in the creation, retrieval and delivery of library resources, functions and services.

Library personnel have a special responsibility to be current with their profession. The huge growth of new information, introduction of new technologies in the libraries, a growing population of educated citizenry with sophisticated information needs and changing trends in library services has made this a necessity.

Consequently, librarians need to continually reassess their skills and to keep on learning (Abdullahi & Haeuna 2008). According to them, this has become quite necessary because new tools for information creation, storage, retrieval and dissemination are continuously being introduced "and librarians have to be able to face the challenges of being able to use them to provide information. Olorunsola, Adeleke & Adeniran (2010) warn that librarians like other professionals should not assume that once they have acquired the basic professional training that they are equipped for life. They opine that the dynamic and ever mutating information environment needs a continual renewal of skills.

Widarto (2004) suggested that for librarians to be up to date with IT skills they   need to network amongst themselves while those who qualified a long   time   ago   should

consider continuing their education formally. Igun (2010) felt that constant use of ICTs would enable librarians to be more proficient in their usage. Okiy (2010) proposed the incorporation of ICT competency training into the curricula of Library and Information Science schools. She also recommended that practicing librarians need to be involved in training and retraining of themselves so as to hone their IT skills. This view had formerly been canvassed by Mahmood & Ajmal (2007) who recommended that the continuing education is compulsory for librarians if they must learn IT skills. This proposal was put forward after their study of needs analysis of ICT skills for librarians in Pakistan. Library associations were highlighted by Das & Lai (2006) as the main agent that would help in developing IT competency of librarians through organizing training programmes, workshops and seminars.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research method was used for this study. The population of the study comprises twenty two library staff of Anambra State Public Library made up of thirteen (13) librarians and nine (9) library officers. The whole population of librarians and library officers was studied because the number is small. The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire which was self administered to the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first section was to gather demographic data of the respondents. The second part was to ascertain their skills and knowledge of the tools of information technology as well as determine avenues of acquiring the absent skills.

Analysis and discussion of findings

Out of the 22 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 19 representing 86.4% were returned. The data collected were analyzed with frequencies and percentages. The findings were presented in bar charts, tables and pie charts. Librarians' level of knowledge of technology has been identified as a reliable predictor of their attitude towards acquisition of I.T skills (Adekunle, Omoba & Telia 2007; Nkanu & Okon, 2010). The respondents were therefore asked to indicate their knowledge of Web 2.0 tools, search engines and services that are provided online by libraries. Out of the 19 returned questionnaires only 14 respondents reacted to the query on their knowledge of Web 2.0 tools. 6 were aware of blogs, 14.28% or 2 had some knowledge of wikis while 1 respondent knew about Flicker while 21.42% or 3 were aware of RSS feeds and the same number of the respondents were in the know about hyperlink. The social network sites of Facebook and LinkedIn received the highest proportion of responses - 10 or 71.42%. See Figure 1 below for more details.
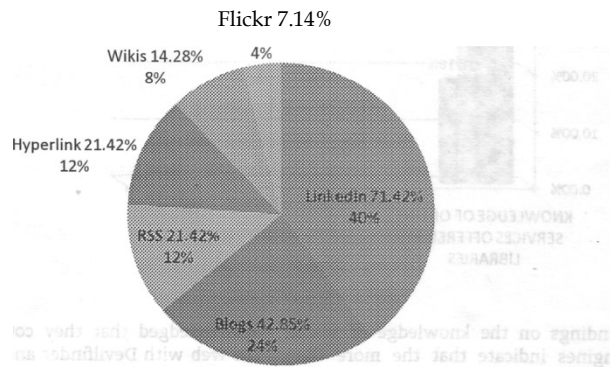
Knowledge of Web 2.0 tools

Figure 1 – Knowledge of Web 2.0 tools

11 or 57.89% of the respondents answered the enquiry about their knowledge of online services provided by libraries. 81.81% of them indicated their knowledge of OPAC, 54.54% knew about electronic journals, 63.63% have some knowledge about digital library services and only 18.18% indicated their knowledge of electronic reference shelf. See Figure 2 below for more details.

Figure 2- Knowledge of Online services offered by libraries
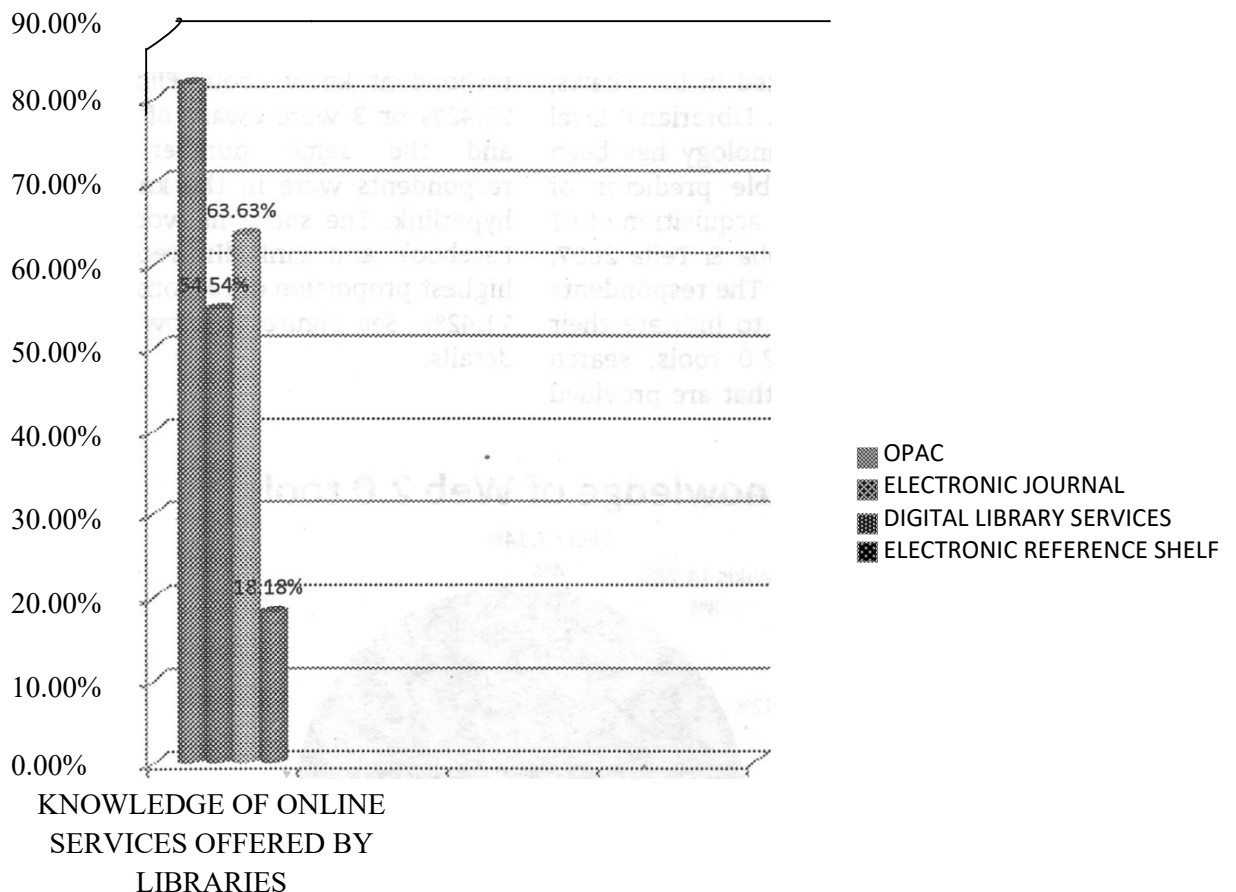
Findings on the knowledge of search engines indicate that the more than half of the respondents (66.66%) were quite familiar with Yahoo!, followed closely by Google (55.55%) while Bing was a distant third (16.66%). Only 11.11% of the respondents acknowledged that they could search the web with Devilfinder and Altavista search engines each. 18 respondents reacted to this question. The details of the above findings are represented in the table below.

Figure 3 - Knowledge of search engines

SEARCH ENGINE	VERY LARGE EXTENT		LARGE EXTENT		SMALL EXTENT		NOT AT ALL	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
YAHOO	9	50	3	16.66	2	11.11	4	22.22
GOOGLE	8	44.44	2	11.11	3	16.66	5	27.77
DEVILFINDER	1	5.55	1	5.55	2	27.77	11	61.11
BING	2	11.11	1	5.55	4	22.22	11	61.11
ALTAVISTA	2	11.11	0	0	5	27.77	11	61.11
ASK.COM	1	5.55	0	0	7	38.88	10	55.55

The research found out in terms of IT skills that 16 respondents or 84.21% affirmed that they could put on a computer while 3 confirmed that they did not know how to put on a computer. Adetoro, Oyefuga & Osunkoya (2010) had lamented that library schools are turning out 'half- baked' librarians and information scientists who graduate without the prerequisite practical skills to practice in the Information Age. However Kamba (2011) opines that this lack of a basic skill could be attributed to not just lack of full incorporation of teaching of I.T skills in library schools curricula but rather to the poor working environment characterized by non-presence of computers. Librarians can actually relapse into computer illiteracy due to lack of facilities to practice with. Inadequate working tools can lead to lack of job satisfaction which may spiral into loss of interest in professional growth by affected workers (Chaudhary 2001), See Figure 4 below for more details.

PUT ON A COMPUTER

Figure 4- Ability to put on a computer

18 representing 94.73% of the respondents answered the question about their ability to operate electronic mail accounts out of the returned 19 questionnaires. 5 or 27.77% of the respondents were sure of their knowledge to a very large extent about creating a new e-mail account and 22.05% were sure to a great extent. These totalled up to 49.82% of those who were quite sure of their skills in opening a new e-mail account. 27.77% were sure to a small extent while another 27.77% of the respondents indicated their total lack of skills in creating a new e-mail account. It is a clear indication that most of the respondents answered negatively to the question thus 55.54% of the respondents are not confident of their skills in creating a new e-mail account. 38.88% of the respondents were sure to a very large extent of their ability in composing and sending an e-mail, 22.22% were sure to a great extent about possession of the skill. Thus a total of 61.1% of the respondents affirmed that they could perform the task. 7 respondents made up of 4 who were certain to a very large extent and 3 who were positive to a large extent that they could put an attachment to an e-mail constitute 38.86% of the population. Majority of the respondents - 61.1%   were   not   positive in their responses about the skill. 10 respondents - 55.54% affirmed that they could reply or forward an electronic mail while 8 or 44.44% made up of 4 representing 22.22% indicated that they knew to a small extent how to perform the task and 4 or 22-22% were very definite about their inability to perform the task.

The number of respondents who were strongly positive and sure to a large extent about the ability to create folders in the e-mail box were quite minimal - 27.77% compared to those who were skeptical about their ability to perform the task and those who were sure they did not know how to go about it 72.21%. The pattern of responses is repeated in answering the question about the capability to block an e-mail address. 11.5% were confident that they could perform this function while 88.71% were either unsure (22.05%) or unable (66.66%) to block an e-mail address. Only 3 respondents representing 16.66% very strongly and strongly agreed that they could customize an e-mail box while 22.22% felt that they could cope with the task to a small extent and 61.11% emphatically indicated that they could not perform the task. The research findings are detailed in the table (Figure 5) below;

Figure 5- Ability to operate electronic mail accounts

| TASKS	VERY LARGE EXTENT FREQ	%	GREAT EXTENT FREQ	%	SMALL EXTENT FREQ	%	NOT AT ALL FREQ	%
CREATE AN ACCOUNT	5	27.77	4	22.22	5	27.77	5	27.77
COMPOSE AND SEND	7	38.88	4	22.22	4	22.22	4	22.22
PUT AN ATTACHMENT	4	22.22	3	16.66	5	27.77	6	33.33
FORWARD/ REPLY	7	38.88	3	16.66	4	22.22	4	22.22
CREATE FOLDER	3	16.66	2	11.11	6	33.33	7	38.88
BLOCK AN ADDRESS	1	5.55	1	5.55	4	22.22	12	66.66
CUSTOMIZE E-MAIL	1	5.55	2	11.11	4	22.22	11	61.11

The findings of the study indicate that more than half of the respondents could perform word processing tasks and half could perform web searching tasks. However the greatest challenges for the librarians in Anambra State Library Board was in the area of Web design where only 22.22% conceded to knowing to a great extent how to perform the task and in blogging where only 11.11% affirmed strongly that they could undertake the job. Only 16.66% could handle power point presentations. 6 respondents or 33.33% were very sure they could conduct database searches, 33.33% could teach others how to use technology, 44.44% were adept in using a printer, 33.33% could manage files while 27.77% signified that to a very large extent and to a great extent that they could perform CD-ROM/DVD searches. The indicators for performance of information technology tasks are low. Only an average of 18.33% of the respondents were very definite that they could perform all the tasks outlined above while only an average of 14.44% of the respondents were definite that they could perform the tasks (totals up to 32.77%). See Figure 6 below for more details.

Figure 6 - Ability to perform information technology related tasks

TASKS	Very large extent		Large extent		Small Extent		Not at all	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Microsoft (word processing)	6	33.33	4	22.22	4	22.22	4	22.22
Web searching	6	33.33	3	16.66	4	22.22	5	27.77
Web design	0	0	4	22.22	4	22.22	10	55.55
Blogging	2	11.11	0	0	5	27.77	11	61.11
Power point presentation	1	5.55	2	11.11	3	16.66	12	66.66
Searching library databases	5	27.77	1	5.55	4	22.22	8	44.44
Teaching others how to use technology	2	8	44.44	22.22	5	27.77	6	33.33
Using a printer	6	11	61.11	11.11	2	11.11	9	50
File management	3	16.66	3	16.66	4	22.22		
CD-Rom/DVD search	2	11.11	3	16.66	2	11.11		

Access to computers and Internet is one of the factors that can militate against acquisition of IT skills. According to Gill, Hassner, Pestell, Hayrepetian & Clubb (2000) library staff in public libraries should have access to computers and the internet to enable them perform their duties satisfactorily in the Information Age. This question was asked to establish where and if the librarians have access to computer and internet facilities. From the data gathered, 7 of the respondents have access to computers at home and the same proportion have access to such facilities in cybercafés. Only 2 or 10.52% of the respondents have access in the office. However, 3 or 15.78% of the respondents do not have access to computers and internet either at home, office or cybercafés. Figure 7 below shows the details of the findings.

Figure 7- Access to computers and internet at home, office and cyber cafe

Legend:
- HOME
- OFFICE
- CYBER-CAFÉ
- NOT AT ALL
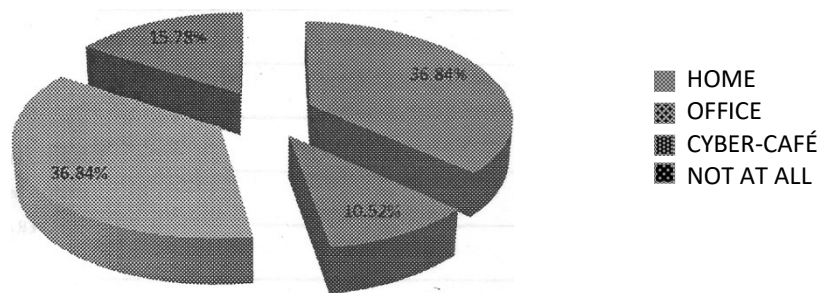
The regularity of accessing the internet was investigated. Regular visits to the internet facilitate learning current trends in the profession especially for the library professional whose library does not subscribe to professional journals in print. Non-visit to the internet could therefore impede acquisition of IT skills and knowledge. 3 or 20% of the respondents agreed that they visit the internet daily while 6 or 40% visit the internet on a weekly basis. However 1 or 6.66% of the respondents visit the internet on r monthly basis while 5 or 33.33% never visit the internet at all. Only 15 respondents answered this question. The assumption is that 4 or 21.05% that omitted the question do not visit the internet at all. The findings are graphically represented in Figure 8 below.
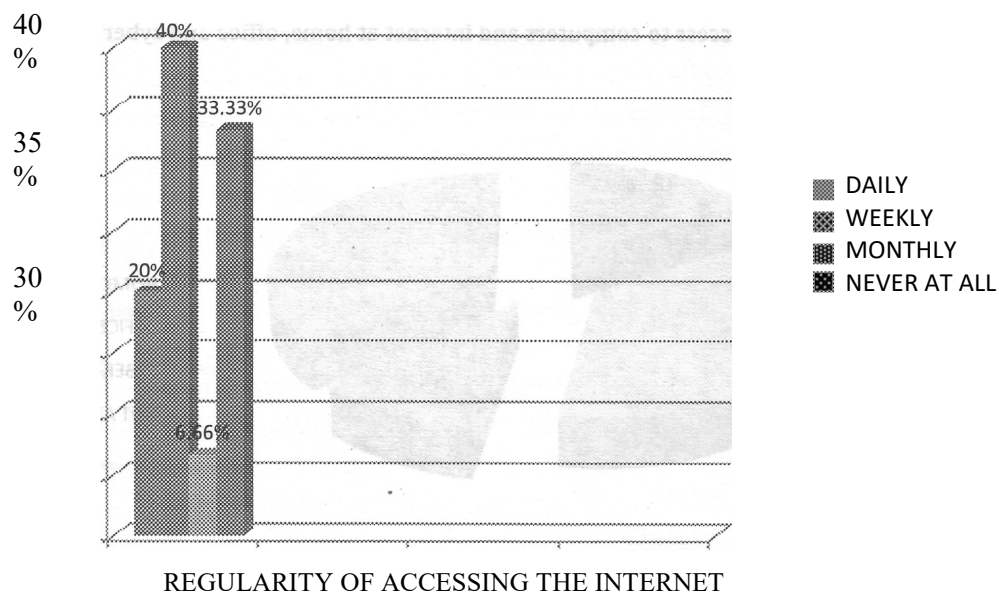

REGULARITY OF ACCESSING THE INTERNET

Legend:
- DAILY
- WEEKLY
- MONTHLY
- NEVER AT ALL

Figure 8 – Frequency of visits to Internet

Six avenues were delineated by which respondents could build their capacity in the area of acquisition of information technology skills. 19 respondents answered the question. Attendance of workshops/seminars helps professionals, librarians included to be current with developments in their fields and to refresh their residual professional

knowledge (Adomi, Alakpodia and Akporhonor 2006; Vega and Connell 2009). 17 or 89.47% indicated that continuing formal education is a good avenue for acquiring new skills. According to the findings, all the respondents agreed that attendance to workshops/seminars organized by professional bodies will aid in 21.05%. 13 standing for 68.41% of the respondents perceive that in-house training programmes will be of benefit to them while 10 or 52.62% felt that learning on the job is a good way of training and retraining. 10 or 52.62% of the respondents felt that joining the electronic mailing list of professional bodies like IFLA, Library Journal Online, Public Libraries Online and Open Access Initiative would help greatly in acquiring IT skills and knowledge as they would be kept up to date with new trends in the profession. 12 or 63.15% of the respondents agreed that training with software programmes on I.T applications for libraries would facilitate capacity building in that area. See table below (Figure 9) for more details.

Figure 9 - Avenues for acquiring IT skills and knowledge

Avenues	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Learning on the job	7	36.84	3	15.78	5	26.31	4	21.05
Continuing formal education	10	52.63	7	36.84	2	10.52	1	5.26
Attendance of seminars/workshops by professional bodies	13	68.42	6	31.57	0	0	0	0
In house training programmes	10	52.63	3	15.78	3	15.78	3	15.78
Joining electronic mailing list of professional bodies	7	36.84	3	15.78	5	26.31	4	21.05
Training with softwares on I.T applications in the library	8	42.10	4	21.05	5	26.31	2	10.52

No clear pattern was observed as pertains years of experience aiding or hindering possession of I.T skills. However it was noticed that 10.46% of those continuing formal education have been out of library school for 16 years upwards and it could be an intervening factor that obliterated any conceivable pattern. The new roles of librarians in the information age require less routine and more innovative thinking. Library professionals therefore need to imbibe new ideas and strategies of handling and disseminating information no matter how old they have been in the field.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Librarians in Anambra State Library Board have more knowledge of information technology than the skills at manipulating the tools. The respondents were mainly positive of their knowledge of Web 2.0 tools, search engines and how libraries could effectively provide services online. The findings indicate that lack of access to computers and the Internet is a big hindrance to the acquisition of information technology skills. These facilities are mainly absent in the office and not all the librarians have access to cybercafés where they could acquire the skills through practice or where they could visit the internet to learn more and supplement the skills taught them in library schools.

From the findings it could also be adduced that the librarians in Anambra State Library Board are willing to expose themselves to the acquisition of these skills. Continuing formal' education, attendance to conferences, workshops and seminars were chosen by them as the most viable avenues of acquiring these skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

New innovations in information technology have become a characteristic of the Information Age. Librarians whose main stock in trade is information cannot afford to be left stranded without the prerequisite skills to use the new technologies. The findings of this paper indicate that the librarians working in Anambra State Public Library do not have the aforementioned skills though they have some knowledge of their existence. It is therefore recommended that; Library professionals should take urgent steps to remedy their deficiencies in the area of information technology.

Efforts should be made by management of public libraries to make available computers and internet access in offices as well as sponsor librarians and library officers to conferences and workshops/seminars so that they update their knowledge and acquire new skills.

Learnt skills are lost due to lack of practice, library professionals need to access the internet on a regular basis so that they can practice what was taught in library school.

Further investigations need to be made into the status of I.T skills of librarians and library officers in public libraries across the country to ascertain the level of skills possessed. This would help in determining the scope, avenue and nature of capacity building training needed.

CONCLUSION

Library professionals are facing great challenges of re-tooling in this era of rapid changes in the way librarianship is practiced. The wave of new technological innovations is yet to abate. Librarians therefore need to explore avenues of continuously acquiring skills and knowledge relevant to their profession and applying what they learnt in library schools so that they would be able to continue to practice their profession efficiently in the Information Age. This is most important for librarians in the public libraries who serve everybody in the society and therefore need to be equipped with skills for performing the all encompassing task of providing information to all.

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