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Authors Guideline

Library Research Journal is an annual publication of Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Format for Submission

Manuscript submitted for publication must not have been submitted or published elsewhere. Articles should not be more than 14 pages. Manuscripts should be typed on A4 sheet using MS word (Times New Roman, 12 points, double-spaced). The title, author's full name, institutional affiliation, position, phone number and e-mail address should appear on the first page.

Submissions should include an informative abstract of not more than 200 words. Four to six keywords should be included. Tables and graphs should be included in the body of the work (where necessary). The APA 6th Edition (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association) referencing format should be used throughout the manuscript. All submissions will be peer reviewed.

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Library Research Journal is an institution based journal from Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. It is an online peer reviewed Google Scholar journal, published in the month of September. This edition is a compilation of research reports from various institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The research reports cover a wide array of issues in Library and Information Science. This volume addresses topical issues in librarianship such as NgRen, Competency Appraisal of law cataloguers as well as law students' profile as a correlate of library use. Emerging concepts in librarianship such as MOOC's, parenting styles and readership were part of the compilation. Research reports from Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library focused on library practices in the Circulation Department, Information Literacy, Zik Research Centre and reprographic services in the library.

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INSPIRING INNOVATIVE LIBRARY SERVICES FOR COVID-19 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

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Abstract
Present day library services are IT driven. Rapid technological advances in information and communication technology have enabled the provision of library and information services beyond the four walls of the library building. With this development, it is possible to render library services online via library portals and websites. This has enhanced library services around the world. The outbreak of COVID 19 disease has affected the nature and structure of library services. The contagious nature of the outbreak of the disease forced many public institutions to shut down at the hit of the disease in 2020. Libraries as public institutions were shut down but the information needs of their users remained unsatisfied. Added to this is the increasing growth in the number of information service providers who feed the information seeker with both filtered and unfiltered information resources. For libraries to meet the information needs of its users and to continue to remain relevant, libraries need to restrategise and create innovative services in line with the WHO safety protocol. In this regard, libraries now consider using massively Online Public Access Catalogs (OPAC) and networked databases, personal space / my library, Short Message Service (SMS) notification, Quick Response (QR) codes, online / text reference services, library portals among others as innovative approaches to library users' information dissemination. These form the focus of this paper.

Keywords: *Libraries, COVID 19, WHO, Innovative Services, OPAC, Quick Response Services.*

Introduction:

The library according to Eberhart (2010) is a collection of information resources in a variety of format that are organised by information professionals or other information experts providing convenient physical, digital, bibliographic or intellectual access. In addition, Nenonen, Van Wezel, and Berkouwer (2017) described a library as a collection of tools in a variety of formats assembled by information professionals or other experts, providing convenient physical, digital, bibliographic, or intellectual access, as well as targeted services and programs designed to educate, inform, or entertain a variety of audiences, with the goal of stimulating individual learning and learning.

Libraries provide a variety of information to their users including health information needs.

Providing innovative library services is in agreement with the 5th law of S.R. Ranganathan which states that the library is a growing organism. If the library is a growing organism, it means that its services will grow and improve with the changing times. Its information resources and services will be tailored to meet the varying needs of its users. The library should be proactive in its strategy to meet their users where they are. Expectedly, the librarians' roles have changed to high powered services, such as content creation, knowledge management, digital creation, computer and information literacy, digital divide, web designing, mobile technology and media marketing (Shonhe & Jain, 2017). Libraries now expand their horizons through tutoring, continuing education programs, conferences and workshops, skill enhancement and counselling for users to make full use of emerging technologies in learning

more especially to check the outbreak of COVID-19 and guidelines for preventing it. Electronic information resources in the library include e-books, e-periodicals, e-newspapers, e-records, CDs, videotapes, DVDs, audiobooks, e-table, e-games/video games and amongst others.

Covid-19 Pandemia and Libraries Services
COVID-19 or Corona virus disease is an infectious disease caused by a new type of virus recently discovered. The World Health Organization (2020) defines Corona virus as a family of Corona virus found in 2019, hence to the acronym COVID-19. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), most people infected with COVID-19 experiences mild to moderate respiratory disease and recover without special treatment. Older people and those with underlying health conditions such as respiratory disease, diabetes, chronic lung disease and cancer are more likely to experience serious illness. Symptoms associated with this disease include fever, exhaustion and a dry cough. Other signs include shortness of breath, discomfort, sore throat and very few people experience vomiting, nausea or a runny nose (WHO, 2020).

The contagious nature of the disease has forced the library to move its services to the digital space (Huwiler, 2015). The disease according to the WHO spread through human contact. The contagious nature of the disease was what forced many public institutions to go into lockdown in 2020. Death toll the world over was on the increase. Libraries, markets, industries and transportation systems of various countries closed its doors to the public. Since COVID-19 is life-threatening and pandemic in nature, it becomes imperative for all public institutions to restrategise on its mode of operation and services, the library inclusive to minimize human contact.

Thus, all guidelines given by WHO and NCDC like coughing into a flexed elbow, use of tissue paper while coughing (to be thrown away immediately after use) and social distancing became necessary health information for dissemination to the populace. Obviously, the library as a public institution, also became involved in educating the public on this health information aimed at identifying symptoms, clear guidance to treatment, and ensures the safety of the citizens in COVID 19

(Ali & Gatiti, 2020). Health information services also include regularly washing of hands, use of alcohol-based sanitizer, avoidance of hands shaking among others. In the fight against COVID 19, Ali and Gatiti (2020) posited that librarians are making frantic efforts in promoting public health awareness by creating and disseminating preventive measures as stipulated by WHO, and supporting research teams and faculties through providing information on the latest research development and literature.

At the peak of the outbreak of the disease, library buildings were shut down to reduce the spread. When library services could no longer be carried out due to the COVID 19 pandemic, Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) was deployed in library services to enhance online/virtual library services since users no longer visit the library building. According to Tindowen, Biltran, Umayam andAzardon (2019), the library today does not only serve as book storehouses but offers comprehensive services to its users from within the stock of the library as well as from a broad variety of external sources. The external sources do not mean just the conventional means like the physical buildings, it may be by virtual means like the Internet and other smart technology to disseminate information gathered, obtained, handled and stored by books, manuscripts, documents and digital material. This is the reason libraries extend information services in the COVID-19 era amidst the buildings being shut down.

Broadly speaking, libraries provide a wide range of servicesin both print and electronic media to their users. Some of these documents have information on COVID-19 for researchers, students, scholars, policy makers. Tindowen, Biltran, Umayam, and Azardon (2019) stated that libraries provide catching up information services, everyday information services, exhaustive information services, current information, Selective Dissemination of Information (customized to individual needs), and electronic clipping services.

The services libraries provide according to Tindowen, Biltran, Umayam and Azardon (2019) are grouped under catching up information services, everyday information services, exhaustive information services, current

information, Selective Dissemination of Information (customized to individual's needs), and electronic clipping services. Likewise, Tindowen, *et al*. (2019) further grouped the following information services libraries provide to users as:

(i) **Catching Up Information Services:** These services provide contemporary information on societal issues. Contemporary details may be about other topics such as health issues on COVID-19 as stipulated by WHO to avoid and stop the spread of the disease. This may come from the latest academic papers, journals, essays, latest books and monographs, preprints, and other publications (Tindowen, et al., 2019).

(ii) **Everyday Information Services:** These information services provide and avail the public, the products, innovations and other things that help people in day-to-day activities to live sustainably. Moreover, most of these services are offered by reference sources such as project management and engineering operations in a factory or laboratories. For example, in this pandemic era, these resources can be used to make information available and accessible for the development of facemasks, drugs to counter COVID 19 and any other products or inventions to prevent COVID 19 spread (Tindowen, et al., 2019).

(iii) **Exhaustive Information Services:** These services are important to assess and understand overall developments in a given topic. Such programs include the ways in which the disease spreads and how it can be directly avoided. It gives general pandemic disease growth. These services include literature search, compilations of bibliographies, state-of-the-art reports, critical reviews and others. Such programs can be planned and customized to the needs of a person and can be delivered on request. These information services are significance for societal development and to researchers (Tindowen, et al., 2019).

(iv) **Current Information Services:** Such information services provide current research patterns in many fields and assist in receiving awareness of the highest degree of accomplishments in that specific field. This has helped to reach the highest degree of in-field achievement. Such services thereafter provide avenues for updates on the latest published literature/information in a subject area.

However, during COVID 19 pandemic these services provide information on the highest level of achievements on the fight of the pandemic disease (Tindowen, et al., 2019).

(v) **Selective Dissemination of Information** (SDI) (customized to individual's needs): The library coordinates selective information dissemination (SDI) where the users are presented with the current information on selected topics of interest and from selected sources of information on COVID-19. User feedback is an important prerequisite in the SDI process as it supports user profile or search query if needed (Tindowen, et al., 2019).

(vi) **Electronic Information Service**: these provide users with online resources for specific topics on COVID-19. They get lists of resources from current journal issues in their mailbox to simple articles on the pandemic (Tindowen, et al., 2019).

Innovative Library and Information Services in COVID 19 Era

Innovative approach simply means a new concept, process or services, or new technology. Libraries aim to support the dissemination of information to users during the COVID-19 era. In view of this, Fagbola, Uzoigwe and Ajegbomogun (2011) asserted that the emergence of technology and continuous ICT advances are transforming libraries in terms of service collection, storage, management, maintenance and how services are made. Some of these solutions are self-service solutions requiring the use of technologies such as tablets, smart phones, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), which include computing, telephone/fax, Internet and networking apps, audio files (MP3s), computers, and more in assessing COVID 19 information. Below are some of those inspiring approaches libraries adopt in the dissemination of information in COVID 19 era.

Online Public Access Catalogues and Networked Databases:

Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is the electronic version of the library card catalogue. The presence of online catalogues can be used to retrieve and access information services in COVID 19 era. PubMed (2017) clarified that current library users use mobile devices, such as cell phones, to access OPACs. To avoid the spread of the virus, library users are no longer allowed to access

OPACS and library databases within physical buildings of the library. Nalluri and Gaddam (2016) suggested that information seekers acquire specific sources of information through mobile online public access catalogues and web database ssuch as PubMed, which houses a great deal of biomedical literature with more than 26 million quotations and may include full-text material.

Personal Space/My Library: This is a personal library room, where users can find their choice of information and services. In compliance with the requirements of WHO (2020) on COVID 19, libraries use this website to provide users with the ability to read updates, review records, update services, request objects, monitor interlibrary loans, requests for document delivery, set up a new book and journal articles email/ notifications, set up catalogue search preferences and others. In line with this, Saxena and Yadav (2013) and Verma and Verma (2014) have reported that the platform is a self-service platform where library users manage their customized accounts using custom collections.

Short Message Service (SMS) Notification: According to Saxena and Yadav (2013), libraries may provide for users wherever they can go with the updates on the latest news, events and notices via SMS and MMS. Users can be informed instantly with notifications such as updates on COVID 19 and the related resources like new books, feedback, and availability of documents on their websites. Other library information on unpaid fines, updated books, subscribed e-journals, scheduling changes, notifications about significant events, loan requests among others are also done with SMS. In addition, Kumar and Chitra (2008), Kumar (2014) and Negi (2014) stated that libraries use this service to warn patrons about unpaid payments, renewals, call number access, interlibrary loan, issue return notification, things on hold and new arrivals. Verma and Verma (2014) added that an integrated library management program is used.

Social Media Networks: The information professionals often use social media to disseminate information. Social networks are suitable for delivering information and personalized services on COVID 19. These include WhatsApp, Imo, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and other web applications such as Google SMS (Prabhakaran & Kalyani, 2014).

Quick Response (QR) Codes: QR code refers to 'fast-response' and two-dimensional bar codes that contain any alphanumeric text and are also used to store URLs, email and others. Any QR generator can convert the data into a QR file, many of which are available as a free download. Consumers simply enter the data to be interpreted, and the generator generates the code which can then be displayed either electronically or in printed form. Mobile camera phones can assess the QR reader, decoding the information (Verma & Verma, 2014). Walsh (2009) reported that QR is a two-dimensional barcode that guides users to the websites they desired. It is a technology that saves time and serves as a guide to indexed or programmed URLs. The barcodes provide information about an object that has QR code attached to it. Thus, smart phone camera functions to search images and interpret the details (Saxena & Yadav, 2013). Web tagging is also known as the QR codes (Verma & Verma, 2014). Librarians may adopt this approach in COVID 19 era to guide users to appropriate or important websites, either on a particular subject or on library advertising.

Online/Text Reference Services: Librarians receive volumes of inquiries which need satisfying responses in ensuring customer service. Smith, Jacobsand Lippincott (2010) stated that the librarians could simultaneously use the technology to address multiple customer queries. This is ideal for services in COVID 19 era. For instance, enquiries on opening hours, call numbers and dictionary definitions can be given instantly with mobile reference service technologies (Liu & Briggs, 2015; Saxena &Yadav, 2013; Verma &Verma, 2014).Reference librarians can speak to library users through live video messaging, which can be achieved with Skype, Imo, WhatsApp, and Twitter (Barnhart & Pierce, 2011).

Online VOD (MVOD) System: The librarians will use this forum in COVID 19 pandemic to disseminate library and information resources in remote locations. According to Wang, Ke, & Lu (2012), this platform allows library users to play videos on their mobile devices with the use of Wi-Fi or 3G network. Similarly, Azer (2012) added that videos can be searched using access created and included on reference points such as the creator 's name or the video title. For instance; the library

of the Oriental Institute of Technology (OIT) uses the MVOD system (Wang & Lu, 2011).

Library Websites: The library website serves as one of the main source of information in COVID 19 era. Information is passed to users on how and where to download books and other materials. Many of these websites are designed to make sure they run on every ICT platform. Approaches such as CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) or ADR (Auto-Detect and Reformat Software) are used (Nalluri & Gaddam, 2016) to allow websites to rearrange and adjust to the size of the mobile device used.

Mailing Lists: This would be the most growing approach to disseminating information in COVID 19 era. The use of email in library services is important and enables groups of people to concurrently access personalized information. This would help the library users get adequate information and materials needed for their personal use. It would also cut off physical contact and COVID 19 disease spread.

Library Virtual/ Audio Tours: This is effective for instruction/induction / orientation services and in getting non-users to the libraries as well as assisting remotely located users in various geographic locations. Again, users of the library who have no time or desire to attend a workshop on-site can access the library tours on their mobile devices. Audio / virtual library tours can be created relatively easily, cheaply, and can minimize the amount of staff time spent helping new users to organize themselves in the library and clarify the available services. It can be conveniently supported on both the library website and on mobile platforms as downloads.

Conclusion

The deployment of Information and Communication Technologies in library services has created innovative resources and services during the COVID 19 era. The library world has partnered with other public institutions in WHO's effort in curbing and treatment of COVID 19 pandemic. The use of Online Public Access Catalogs (OPAC) and networked databases, personal space / my library, Short Message Service (SMS) notification, Quick Response (QR) codes, online / text reference services, library portals, and other technology are steps in the right direction. Libraries who are yet to adopt these services should join as a matter of urgency. All funding agencies of libraries should encourage public library services through improved funding. Provision of ICT infrastructure such as robust bandwidth, steady power supply, skilled manpower and modern mass media channels is encouraged.

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