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Authors Guideline

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

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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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PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF DIGITIZATION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

Digitization is simply the process of converting information into a digital (computer-readable) format. The purpose of the study was to investigate the prospects and challenges of digitization of information resources in university libraries in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. The research design was a survey. The population of the study comprised 38 library staff in public universities in Anambra State. No sampling was done as the population was of manageable size. Two sets of questionnaire were used for data collection. The first was titled 'Prospects of Digitalization of Information Resources in University Libraries (PDIRUL)' While the second was titled Challenges to Digitalization of Information Resources in University Libraries (CDIRUL)'. Data collected was analysed using mean scores. The findings of the study showed that enhanced access to information resources on the web; increase in the visibility of information resources, efficient use of web and electronic data bases; increase in the availability of information resources on the web and improvement in the efficiency of information search mechanisms were prospects of digitalization of information resources in university libraries. The study equally found that the absence of digitalization policy; inefficient supervision of the project; lack of clearly stated or specified evaluation performance measure, poor preservation of digitized content and erratic power supply were major challenges major challenges inherent in the management of digitalized content in university libraries in Anambra State. It was thus recommended amongst other things that both the commencement and management of the digitization project in public universities in Anambra State should be anchored on a well-articulated digitization policy. This is to ensure the sustainability of the project in public university libraries in Anambra State.

Keywords: *Digitization, Electronic Information Resources, Electronic Databases, Print Resources, University Libries, Anambra State*

Introduction

Presently, library services the world over is IT driven. This is enabled by the rapid technological advancement and information explosion of the 21st century. Traditional library services based on print information resources is fast giving way to electronic information resources. Most libraries are migrating to web based library services. The rapid technological advancement has changed the way information is created, packaged and disseminated. Expectedly information resources now appear in electronic formats. Many library users have migrated to the online environment where information and various information resources abound. In the online environment, information could be sourced from diverse sources. The information user is faced with not only avalanche of information but most importantly the right source to choose from hence the need for libraries to migrate to the online environment to ensure their users are fed with only filtered and reliable information sources.

Many university libraries in Nigeria and Anambra State in particular were established with information resources on print format such as textbooks, journals, encyclopedia, yearbooks, manuals, newspapers etc. Some of these information resources are no longer in print neither are they still on sale in the market. Even when they are still on sale, many public institutions in Nigeria are poorly funded. Added to this is the rising cost of information resources as a result of global economic downturn. These prevailing situations are thus making libraries not only to migrate online through their portals and websites but to make

frantic effort to preserve their print collection through digitization.

Digitization of information resources is a process of moving from manual to electronic method of searching or disseminating information. Digitization captures a wide variety of stages involved in the process of conversions and making of historical and other materials globally accessible through the use of digital processes (Otubelu& Ume, 2015). According to Igwe and Uzuegbu (2013), digitization encompasses preservation; accessibility; resource sharing and service delivery; prestige and visibility and technological development. Digitization is fast becoming trendy in recent years. This is heightened by the advent and post effect of Covid-19 pandemic. Digitization has hugely changed the perception of library collections, services, and strategic planning (IFLA, 2014). The preservation of original information resources as well as enhancing access has been the cardinal reason driving many global digitization projects (Mendelsson, Falk & Oliver, 2014). More so, Mendelsson, Falk and Oliver (2014) observed that the planning and successful implementation of a digitization project necessitated not only technology know-how, but also, managing budgets, staff planning, workflow (digitization processes such as scanning, quality control, creating of metadata), development of IT capabilities and organizational support. University libraries widely engaged in digitizing their physical collections such as books, journals, archives of newspapers, artifacts, music, theses and dissertations, and other historical documents and images of international and cultural interest (Rafiq & Ameen, 2013). According to Riley-Reid (2015), there are vital steps that could guide the planning of digital projects in the libraries viz: determination of project goals; identification of financing/resources, assessment of the collection; identification of legal/copyright issues, analysis of workflows; creation/maintenance of metadata; maintenance of quality control and staff and users training.

Interestingly, digitization has become a key area of activity and research in digital libraries (Sharma, 2012). Digitization is fast gaining popularity among university libraries due to the prospects it offers librarians as well as library patrons. Digitalization has the obvious advantage of enhancing a wide and speedy access to information resources to library patrons within the confines of their homes. Pinkas, *et al.* (2012) noted that access and preservation continue to be the key underlining motives for the justification of the continuous engagement in digitization among librarians. Equally, digitization offers universities a unique opportunity to showcase their institutional resources via the increase in the availability and visibility of such resources on the Web; supporting the preservation of endangered information resources; enhancing access to information resources, as well as improving the efficiency of information search mechanisms which eventually enthrones information sharing (Adeleke 2014). It must however be noted that digitalization of information resources in university libraries must not be embarked upon without recourse to the development and implementation of policies on digital libraries and digitized resources, as well as approval for such policies by their parent organizations to ensure the smooth take-off (Shehu, 2016).

The obvious advantages of digitization notwithstanding, they are however not without attendant challenges. Some of these challenges include indecision of the management, funding problems, infrastructural provision problems, dearth of ICT technical staff, sustainability/ maintenance problems, training and delay caused by transition from analogue to electronic formats (Markus, 2020). Umar and Shittu (2014) identified other challenges to include constant changing of hardware and software, copyright issues, technical support and security, unavailability of needed materials, large size of chart diagrams and accompanying object for capturing by the scanner. Reacting to the challenges of digitization of information resources in university libraries, Yaya and Adeeko (2016) identified digital illiteracy among library personnel, inadequate financial support, epileptic power supply, unavailability of modern Infrastructure as well as dearth of technical experts. Mohammed (2013) noted that poor telecommunication, infrastructure, low Internet connectivity, lack of highly skilled personnel, software and hardware challenges, astronomical cost of equipment, poor funding, erratic power supply, lack of organizational infrastructure, legal and copyright laws, plans and strategies, policies, lack of the coherent plan for universities ICT

project sustainability; and the non-existent of National Information Communication Infrastructure (NICI) policy are some of the critical challenges facing digitization projects in university libraries in Africa.

Nneji (2018) investigated the digitization of academic library resources in University of Port Harcourt using 13 library staff. The findings of the study revealed that digitization of library resources is challenged by several factors such as power supply, security of databases, infrastructure to contain the digitization process, staff capacity to manage the process, users' dependency in traditional library resources. He observed that strategies to enhance the digitization of library resources include the installation of alternative to power supply such as standby power generating set, solar power system, utility power systems, installation of anti-virus, malware and hacks proof software, inclusion of digitization sections while planning for library buildings, library user education should include skills needed for use of digital libraries. Similarly, Harilal (2018) investigated problems and prospects of digital libraries of selected libraries in Telangana using 25 library staff. The study found that inadequate funding and lack of infrastructure are problems associated with digitalization while the prospects of digitalization include proper planning, infrastructural development, trained manpower, sound budget and professional awareness. A cursory look at the works reviewed in this study showed that none dwelt on the prospects and challenges of digitalization of information resources in university libraries in Anambra State, hence this study. In the light of the foregoing, the following objectives were explored:

1. Prospects of digitalization of information resources in University libraries.
2. Challenges to digitalization of information resources in University libraries.

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to guide the study:

1. What are the prospects of digitalization of information resources in University libraries?
2. What are the challenges to digitalization of information resources in University libraries?

Method

The study employed survey research design. This design is deemed appropriate because, according to Nworgu (2015), it seeks to collect and analyze data from a group of items or people which are studied from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. The population of the study was made up of 38 library staff in the public universities in Anambra State. No sampling was done as the population was of manageable size. Two sets of questionnaire were used for data collection. The first was titled 'Prospects of Digitalization of Information Resources in University Libraries (PDIRUL)' While the second was titled Challenges to Digitalization of Information Resources in University Libraries (CDIRUL)'. Both contain 12 items were structured on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Data were analyzed using mean scores. The cut of mean for acceptance was 2.5. Thus, items with 2.5 mean rating and above was adjudged positive whereas items with mean rating below 2.5 was regarded as negative.

Result

Table 1: Prospects of digitization of information resources in university libraries.

S/N	The following are prospects of digitalization of information resources in university libraries:	Mean	Remark
1.	Efficient use of web and electronic data bases.	3.75	Agree
2.	Development of skills for digitization personnel.	3.30	Agree
3.	Preservation of endangered information resources.	3.25	Agree
4.	Increase in the availability of information resources on the web.	3.66	Agree
5.	Increase in the visibility of information resources on the web.	3.77	Agree
6.	Enhanced access to information resources on the web.	3.82	Agree
7.	Improvement in the efficiency of information search mechanisms.	3.60	Agree
8.	Efficiency in collection development.	3.45	Agree
9.	Enhancement of institutional profile.	3.04	Agree
10.	Development of ICT infrastructure.	3.11	Agree
11.	Generation of new research opportunities.	3.13	Agree
12.	Creation of multimedia files which can easily be integrated into complex digital library contents with navigational links to related resources.	3.00	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**3.41**	**Agree**

The analysis in Table 1 shows that item 6 has the highest mean score of 3.82. This shows that respondents were in agreement that enhanced access to information resources on the web is one of the prospects of digitalization of information resources in university libraries. This is followed by item 5 with a mean score of 3.77; indicating that a good number of respondents agree that increase in the visibility of information resources on the web is one of the prospects of digitalization of information resources in university libraries. Item 12 has the lowest (though positive) mean score of 3.00. It is an indication that creation of multimedia files which can easily be integrated into complex digital library contents with navigational links to related resources is one of the prospects of digitalization of information resources in university libraries. The cluster mean of 3.41 indicates that the respondents agreed that all the items listed in Table 1 are prospects of digitalization of information resources in university libraries.

Table 2: Challenges to digitization of information resources in university libraries.

S/N	The following are challenges of digitalization of information resources in University libraries:	Mean	Remark
1.	Absence of digitalization policy.	3.64	Agree
2.	Lack of established digitalization plan and procedure.	3.07	Agree
3.	Low management support.	3.10	Agree
4.	Lack of clearly stated or specified evaluative performance measure.	3.46	Agree
5.	Lack of continuous training and exposure for staff.	3.18	Agree
6.	Lack of advanced digitalization skills.	3.00	Agree
7.	Engagement of inexperienced digitalization supervisors.	2.98	Agree
8.	Inefficient supervision of the project.	3.50	Agree
9.	Poor maintenance culture.	3.08	Agree
10.	Erratic power supply.	3.26	Agree
11.	Poor preservation of the digitized content.	3.42	Agree
12.	Insecure storage facility for digital objects server.	2.70	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**3.20**	**Agree**

Result of the analysis in Table 2 shows that all the items listed received positive mean rating. item 1 has the highest mean score of 3.64, an indication that absence of digitization policy is a major challenge in the digitalization of information

resources in university libraries. This is closely followed by item 8 with a mean score of 3.50; showing that a good number of respondents agree that inefficient supervision of the project another big challenge of digitization of information resources in university libraries. Item 12 received the lowest (though positive) mean score of 2.70. The cluster mean for Table 2 is 3.20. It is an indication that respondents agreed these items listed in the table were challenges university libraries face in the digitization of information resources in their libraries.

Discussion Prospects of digitization of information resources in university libraries.
Findings of the study shows that enhanced access to information resources on the web; increase in the visibility of information resources, efficient use of web and electronic data bases; increase in the availability of information resources on the web and improvement in the efficiency of information search mechanisms are factors which enhances the digitization of information resources in university libraries. Digitization is a technologically assisted process that will enhance the availability, access and utilization of information resources in university libraries. It will also enhance online learning and thereby limiting frequent visit to the library which is one of the measures to check the spread COVID 19 disease. The findings of this study collaborate the findings of Harilal (2018) in which he found that prospects of digitization include proper planning, prospect of infrastructure development and prospect of trained manpower. The findings of this study further agrees with Adeleke (2014) who stated that digitization offers universities a unique opportunity to showcase their institutional resources via the increase in the availability and visibility of such resources on the Web; supporting the preservation of endangered information resources; enhancing access to information resources, as well as improving the efficiency of information search mechanisms which eventually enthrones information sharing.

Challenges to digitization of information resources in university libraries.
The result of the findings shows that absence of digitalization policy; inefficient supervision of the project; lack of clearly stated or specified evaluative performance measure, poor preservation of the digitized content and erratic

power supply are challenges facing digitization of information resources in university libraries. Understandably, digitalization is not likely to occur if there is no adherence to laid down policies or intensive monitoring of the exercise by relevant stakeholders. Similarly, unsteady power supply is a major challenge in the entire process both for the operation or sustenance of use of digital information resources. This finding agrees with Nneji (2018) who stated that several factors such as power supply, security of databases, infrastructure to contain the digitization process, staff capacity to manage the process and users' dependency in traditional library resources are issues that affect the digitization process. Markus (2020) also observed that some of the challenges to digitization of information resources include indecision of the management, funding problems, infrastructural provision problems, dearth of ICT technical staff, sustainability/maintenance problems, training and delay caused by transition from analogue to electronic formats.

Conclusion
Based on the findings, it could be concluded that digitization enhances access to information resources on the web and resource sharing. Furthermore, non-application of digitalization policy is a major hindrance to digitization of information resources in university libraries. Digitization of information resources will remain an exercise in futility without a digitization policy.

Recommendations
Consequent upon the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:
1. Librarians should prioritize digitization policy before the commencement of digitization project.
2. Training and retraining of library staff should be planned and maintained if the digitization project will succeed.
3. The university management should make provision for alternative power supply since the digitization process is electricity driven.
4. Fund allocation to university libraries should be improved to enable successful commencement and maintenance of the digitization project
5. University library management should imbibe maintenance culture once the project starts.

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