



# **LIBRARY RESEARCH JOURNAL**

**Volume 6, 2021**

# Library Research Journal

Volume 6, No 1, 2021.

## Library Research Journal 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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# DIGITIZATION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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## **Abstract**

*Digitization is simply the process of converting information in print format into a machine-readable form. Digitization improves access to information resources. This paper discussed the concept of digitization and information resources, benefits of digitization of information resources, skills and competencies required for digitization of library resources, and the digitization process. Challenges involved in the process of digitization of information resources in academic libraries were also highlighted. Major constraints in the digitization process include lack of ICT infrastructure, high cost of digitization equipment, poor funding, shortage of technical staff, sustainability/maintenance problems as well as legal/copyright issues. This paper established that strategies that could be adopted to enhance digitization of library resources include provision of infrastructural facilities; improved funding, trained manpower, inclusion of digitization skills in library education and maintaining standard policy protection in line with global practices.*

**Keywords:** *Digitization, Information Resources, Academic Libraries, ICT.*

## **Introduction**

Academic libraries play a crucial role in the acquisition, organization, preservation and dissemination of information resources in institutions of higher learning. However, the evolution of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and the subsequent interest of library users to access information resources anywhere and at all times has made it inevitable to consider alternative option in reaching out to library users. The analogue method of preserving and searching for information resources in the traditional library system is defective, time-consuming and inefficient in meeting the information needs of users. Therefore, it has become necessary to adopt ICTs, specifically, digital technologies for information production, storage and dissemination to meet the information need of users. This will enhance timely access to information, improve information searching, offer unlimited access to information and help to reduce stress on the users in having to visit physically the location of the library to access the needed information resources (Ebunuwele, 2016). Digitization is fast becoming trendy in recent years given that the advent of Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the need to transit from “analogue” information materials to electronic information materials.

## **Concept of Digitization and Information Resources**

Digitization according to Akintunde and Anjo in Igwe and Uzuegbu (2013) is the process of preserving, liberalizing and internationalizing access to documents with the ultimate aim of improving their usability by converting them into digital form. They noted that digitalization encompasses preservation; accessibility; resource sharing and services delivery; prestige and visibility and technological development. Digitization also involves the transfer of tangible information materials to digital format; thus, protecting the original item from damage while providing public access to materials that might otherwise be restricted as a result of location differences (Yaya&Adeeko, 2016). Similarly, Achebe (2008), maintains that digitization is the process of translating a piece of information from books, sound recordings, pictures or video into bits. Nneji (2018) identifies the major objectives of digitization as access to available information resources and preservation and conservation of materials for posterity. In agreement, Mendelsson, Falk and Oliver (2014) noted that preservation of original information resources as well as enhancing access are the cardinal reasons driving many global

digitization projects. Furthermore, the added that planning and successful implementation of a digitization project necessitate 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. Shehu, (2016), reveals that digitization 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. Digitization arose as a result of the need to contribute the local content to the Global Information Network (GIN), increased access and long-term preservation of information materials in order to avoid the deterioration often associated with paper collections (Igvesi, 2010).

Academic libraries are 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).

#### **Benefits of Digitization of Information Resources**

Digitization of information resources bestows enormous benefits to academic libraries and their users. Ebinuwere (2016) observes that digitization helps to broaden the image and development of the library as an information service institution. She further noted that digitization ensures the posterity of information bearing materials without necessarily restricting access and use by the general public. Buttressing this point, Pinkas, Schnur, Wolff, Hovde and Harling-Henry (2012) noted that access and preservation continue to be the key underlining motives for the justification of the continuous engagement in digitization among librarians. More so, 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 enthrone information sharing (Adeleke 2014).

Other benefits of digitization according to the guidelines for digitization projects UNESCO (2002), include increase access to a specific collection; improve services to an expanding user's group by providing enhanced access to the institution's resources with respect to education, long life learning; reduce the handling and use of fragile or heavy used original material and create a "back-up" for an endangered material such as brittle books or documents; give an institution opportunities for the development of its technical infrastructure and staff skill capacity; establish sharing partnerships with other institutions to create virtual collections and increase worldwide access; seek partnerships with other institutions to capitalize on the economic advantages of a shared approach.

#### **Skills and Competencies Required for Digitization of Library Resources**

Librarians are expected to possess ICT skills to be successful in digitization of library resources. Such skills are according to Igvesi, (2010) and Nneji (2018) are

**Internet skills:** This is the ability to navigate, browse, filter, retrieve and access digital documents. The skill to provide digital reference, search network databases in number of digital sources and website. The competency to create home pages, content conversion, downloading techniques, web publishing, archiving, electronic messaging, web authoring, preservation and storage.

**Multi-media:** This is the competency in multi-media indexing, image processing, interactive digital communications and visualization. These skills are skills of speech recognition and conference techniques including teleconferencing and video conferencing.

**Digital Information System:** Digital information system management refers to the overall competencies, knowledge, know-how, skills and attitudes necessary to create, store, organize, retrieve and disseminate digital information in digital libraries (Sreenivasulu, cited in Igvesi, 2010). Such skills

include: the skills of interfacing on-line and off-ramps, twists and turns of digital knowledge. This includes competence to digitize print collections and manage compact Disc-Read Only Memory (CD-ROM), design and development of database and conversion of print media into digital media.

**Digital Right Management (DRM).** Other skills needed by library staff in digitization include Digital Right Management (DRM). This is defined as a collective name for technologies that prevent you from using a copyrighted digital work beyond the degree to which the copyright owner wishes to allow you to use it (Litman, (2001). The core capabilities and skills for the future librarian especially in the digital environment according to Sommerland, cited in Igwesi (2010) include: advanced skills in information location and retrieval; familiarity with databases of different types; local ICT problem-solving, troubleshooting; keeping up with latest information technology; understanding the scale and structure of the internet ; organize, present and authenticate information for users; assessing the utility of information for a particular purpose; tailoring retrieval strategies and information to the needs, interests and preferences of individual users (mass customization); customer service skills and associated questions of interpersonal behaviour; create links between the information service and related delivery and support systems (requiring knowledge of different service providers and social /organizational infrastructure); designing databases for identifying, collecting, organizing and disseminating relevant documents; and training and facilitating, helping people of any age, background, specialism or need to use information resources and transact services.

### **Digitization Process**

Certain factors should be considered when digitization projects are to be embarked on in libraries. Fabunmi, Paris and Fabunmi (2006) and Pandy and Misra (2014) identified the following factors: The top management should enact a policy on the project which will serve as a reference point and guide for implementing the project; the policy should be approved by appropriate authorities before project for digitization is implemented; it is necessary to set up a planning committee that will draw the plan and budget for the digitization programme; appropriate

technology (equipment/hardware and software) needed for digitization is selected and acquired; sensitization, psychological preparation and retraining of staff; clear understanding of copyright law and rights of ownership; developing selection criteria for digitization of specific items; verification of or ascertaining whether digital copies of such materials already exist; metadata. Contributing to this discourse, Riley-Reid (2015), revealed that the vital steps that could guide the planning of digital projects in the libraries are 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. Otubelu and Ume (2015), observe that 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.

### **Challenges of Digitization of Library Resources**

Digitization of library resources poses a great deal of challenge to the library management, employees and library users. Some of these challenges according to Markus (2020), include lack of infrastructure, indecision of the management, insufficient funding, dearth of ICT technical staff, sustainability/maintenance problems, training and delay caused by transition from analogue to electronic formats. Contributing to this discourse, Umar and Shittu (2014) identified 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 the following: digital illiteracy among library personnel, inadequate financial support, epileptic power supply, unavailability of modern Infrastructure as well as dearth of technical experts. Similarly, 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 as some of the critical challenges facing digitization projects in university libraries in Africa. In the same vein, Nneji (2018), maintains 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 and users' dependency in traditional library resources. Similarly, Harilal (2018) in a research on the problems and prospects of digital libraries in Telangana reported that inadequate funding and lack of infrastructure are the major problems of digitization. In collaboration, Pandey, *et al*, (2014), pointed out that the following factors can hinder digitization of library resources: constantly changing of software and hardware; technophobia; technological obsolescence; continuous migration or periodically moving files from one encoded environment/ format to another and updating the information to be consistent with more recent computer environment; deterioration of digital media or inaccessibility of digital information in the long run.

### **Prospects/Strategies for Digitization of Library Resources**

Many scholars have articulated strategies for enhancing digitization of library resources. For instance, Nneji (2018), identified the following strategies: installation of alternative 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. In same vein, Harilal (2018) ascertained the prospects of digitization as proper planning, infrastructure development, trained manpower, sound budget and professional awareness. Ebinuwale, (2016), furthermore highlighted the following strategies: adequate funding; provision of infrastructural facilities; standard policy protection in line with what is obtainable globally; intensified manpower training and development to be able to implement, monitor and maintain digital projects; initiation and creation of local content so as to derive maximum benefits and

help portray our rich cultural heritage thereby contributing to the global culture and knowledge base. The Federal, State, Local Government, private and multinationals should support in funding library projects consistently and adequately in order to enhanced digitization of library materials. It is necessary to introduce digitization skills in library education curriculum to enable Library and Information Science students to acquire the skills while in school.

Furthermore, Igwesi (2010) identified the following strategies or factors for effective digitization: adequate planning before embarking on a digitization project, formulation and implementation of policy on digitization, establishment of goals and objectives, provision of fund, selection of suitable software and hardware, and provision of Internet connectivity for effective digitization project. She further noted that developing an institutional policy for digitization project is very crucial to the success of any digitization project. She also suggested setting up a committee to draw a plan and draft a policy to guide digitization project.

### **Conclusion**

Digitization is an important aspect for academic libraries in 21st century. It is a swift process of enhancing availability, access and utilization of information resources. Digitization is reshaping the context in which information resources are being delivered. It increases access to a specific collection and improves services to an expanding user's group by providing enhanced access to the institution's resources with respect to education, long life learning. Digitization reduces the handling and use of fragile or heavy used original material and also creates a "back-up" for an endangered material such as brittle books or documents. There are certain ICT skills and competencies required for digitization of library resources. Digitization of library resources is challenged by several factors such as lack of infrastructure, insufficient funding and digital illiteracy among library personnel. However, strategies for effective digitization include adequate planning before embarking on a digitization project, formulation and implementation of policy on digitization, establishment of goals and objectives, provision of fund and training and retraining of library staff.

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