

Challenges and Prospects of Using Internet Facilities in a Nigerian Teacher Training Institution

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Abstract *This study examined the challenges and prospects of using internet facilities in Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, Rivers State. A survey research design was used and a simple random sampling method was used to determine the 200 samples used for this study. Findings were analysed using descriptive statistics and the results indicated that the students make use of the internet facilities in the library at the time that is convenient to them morning, afternoon evening. Majority of the respondents can interact with the internet themselves with some challenges identified as being impediment to their using the internet facilities in the library. The paper finally make some recommendation in combating the challenges affecting the students use of internet facilities.*

Introduction

Academic libraries generally are established to achieve the tripartite objectives of teaching, research and community service. The library serves as the primary source of providing information print, non-print and electronic for their various clientele use. Before the advent of digital, virtual and electronic library the only major source of information in most developing countries like Nigeria is mostly books found in conventional libraries. With recent development in information explosion the use of internet has revolutionised the ways existing and potential library users source and use information.

According to Daly (2000) the internet is estimated to be growing at a rate of 10.15 per month with numbers rising from about 56 million internet users world wide in 1995 to about 200 million people in 1999. No wonder most tertiary institution libraries are already hooked to the internet to provide easy access to their users to get whatever information they wanted with ease and within the shortest possible time.

With the introduction of internet facilities in libraries, the various users can communicate with colleagues and download information needed and gotten to improve their academic pursuit. This is to say that every individual or students who wish to excel in his or her academic pursuit may therefore find the internet relevant to search and get vital information needed for his or her academic pursuit. Therefore, information sourcing and utilization through the internet in academic libraries is sine qua non if the students are to achieve the goals for which they are in the Institution.

Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku

The Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, Rivers State, Nigeria, was set up by Decree 4 of 1986 as one of the Federal College of Education in Nigeria. Academic work actually commenced in 1988. On the other side the College library better known as Hamidu Alkali Library meets the standards as recommended by the National Commission for Colleges of Education in terms of services rendered. Apart from other conventional library services rendered, the library also has a virtual library section where the users staff and students come in to search for information electronically services and Resources Available on Internet.

Previous Studies

According to Ibegwam (2002) the internet has revolutionized communication globally in the last decade. It is the world's largest computer network, the network of networks scattered all over the world. The internet is special because it is the cheapest and fastest means to get information provide information and compile

information (Leon and Leon, 1999). For Jensen (2001) the internet has grown rapidly in the African continent over the past few years. Studies on student use of internet as studied by Jagboro (2004) reveals that 38.24% and 22.06% of the university students use it on weekly or daily basis while 11.76% use it monthly and bi-monthly. Similarly, according to Lumande and Mutshewa (1999) 42.6% of their respondents indicated that they use the internet very often.

Ibegwam (2004) suggested that students' use of internet will improve if institutions should put in place training on the use of Internet, provided free Internet services, use VSAT to improve connectivity and increase workstations connected to the Internet. On problems associated with the use of internet facilities Bac (1998) observed that very little training is given to students in the use of internet facilities and where internet exists in an institution very little time allocation is made for students use of the internet while Chifewepa (2003) identified lack of guidance, inability of use and inadequate internet facilities were identified as problems associated with the use of Internet facilities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked.

1. When do students use the internet or library facilities to obtain academic information?
2. Do students use the internet more than the library to obtain academic information?
3. How do students access the internet?
4. What are the challenges to the students' use of internet?
5. What solutions would you recommend to solving the challenges?

Methodology

Research Design

The survey research design was adopted for this study because of the large number of respondents. According to Fraenke and Wallen (1993) the big advantage of survey research is that it has the potential to provide us with a lot of information obtained from quite a large sample of individuals' population of the study.

The population of the study is made up of all library registered students from part 1 to 3 in the 2009/2010 academic session. Record shows that for the period under review 403 users were registered, of this number 200 which represents about 50% of the respondents who were randomly selected as samples for this study.

Data Collection

The data collected for this study was collected between July and December 2010. Data was collected by giving questionnaires randomly to the students who visit the library between these periods. To ensure that a student does not complete two questionnaires the students were asked whether they have completed one before; to confirm this, they are to write their matriculation numbers only on the forms completed.

Analysis of Data

The data collected were analysed using the descriptive statistics to report the findings.

Results and Discussion

Data analysis and findings were based on the research questions of the study.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Demographic variable

Item	Classification	Frequency	%
Age range	16 – 20	29	14.5
	21 – 25	162	81
	26 – 30	9	4.5
	31 and above	-	0
Gender	Male	128	64
	Female	72	36
Level	100	32	16
	200	61	30.5
	300	107	53.5
School	Education	42	21
	Vocation	23	11.5
	Technical	24	12
	Business	71	35.5
	Science	30	15
Use of Internet	Yes	161	80.5
	No	39	19.5

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The results show that majority of the respondents which represents 162 (81%) of the respondents are in their twenties between age ranges of 21-25. Similarly 128 (64%) of the respondents are males while 72 (16%) are females. On the level of students 107 (53.5%) are in 300 level or their final year 61 or 30.5 in 200 level and 32 (16%) in 100 level. The number of students from the school of Business forms majority which represents 71 (35.5%) followed by schools of Vocation respectively. The number of respondents that uses the internet in the library is 161 (80.5%) which represents majority while 39 (19.5%) did not use the internet facilities at all.

Research Question 1: When do students use the internet or library facilities to obtain academic information?

Table 2a: Frequency of library and internet use

Time of the day	Library Freq.	%	Internet Freq.	%
Morning	73	36.5	61	30.5
Afternoon	46	23	35	17.5
Evening	81	40.5	65	32.5
Not Applicable	-	-	39	19.5
Total	200	100	200	100

Table 2 shows that while 73 (36.5%) of the respondents prefers using the library in the morning for academic work while only 61 (30.5%) prefer using the internet facilities, similarly while 46 (23) prefers using the library in the afternoon 35 (17.5%) use the internet facility, 81 (40.5%) prefers using the library in the evening while 65 (32.5%) prefers using the internet at the evening and the other 39 (19.5%) did not use the internet facilities at all.

Research Question 2: Do students use the internet more than the library to obtain academic information?

Table 2b: Frequency of days spent I library and internet facility per week

Days	Library Freq.	%	Internet Freq.	%
0	0	0	39	30.5
1	20	10	11	5.5
2	81	40.5	74	37
3	69	34.5	49	24.5
4	16	8	15	7.5
5	09	4.5	07	3.5
6	05	2.5	05	2.5
Total	200	100	200	100

Table 2b shows the results of the days of the week that the respondents spend in searching the library or the internet for academic work. The result show that 39 of the respondents did not make use of internet facilities at all while 20 (10%), 11 (5.5%) use a day, 81 (40.5) and 74 (37%) use 2 days in both the library and internet facilities in searching for information respectively while 69 (34.5%) and 49 (24.5%) use 3 days, 16 (8%) and 15 (7.5%), 9 (4.5%) and 7 (3.5%) and 5 (2.5%) and 5 (2.5%) uses 4 days, 5 days and 6 days respectively to search both the library and internet facilities for information for academic work.

Research Question 3: How do students access the internet?

Table 3: Students ways of accessing the internet

Options	Frequency	%
Personally	112	56
Help from library staff	28	14
Help from friends	21	10.5
No response	39	19.5
Total	200	100

Table 3 reveal that majority of the respondents which represents 112 (56%) of the respondents can access the internet themselves, 28 (14%) and 21 (10.5%) others opined that they get help from library staff and friends and the 39 (19.5%) did not try to access the net at all.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges to the students use of the internet?

Table 4: Proportionate response of respondents to challenges on the use of internet

Variables	Frequency	%
Slow speed of server	98	49
Distance tot eh library	42	21
Power failure	144	72
Attitude of library staff	23	11.5
System breakdown	118	59

Poor knowledge of usability	40	20
Insufficient work station	101	50.5
Time constraints	55	27.5

Table 4 identified the respondents responses to what they feel are the challenges to their using the library internet facilities. The challenges according to them reveals slow speed of server 49%, distance to the library 21%, power failure 72%, and attitude of library staff 11.5%, other challenges identified are system breakdown 59%, poor knowledge of usability 20%, insufficient workstations 50.5% and time constrains 27.5%.

Research Question 5: What solutions would you recommend to solving the challenges?

Table 5: Solution to challenges in using internet facility

Variables	Frequency	%
Upgrading	121	60.5
Organizing internet training	144	72
Installation of generating set	181	90.5
Institutional subscription for some sites	83	41.5
Employing computer engineers	53	26.5
Increasing work stations	177	88.5
Continuous system maintenance	80	40
Installation of library dedicated server	169	84.5

Suggestions recommended by the respondents on solutions to improving the challenges encountered in making use of the internet facilities in the library reveal that upgrading the speed of the server has (60.5%), organising internet use training (72%), installation of generating set (90.5%), institutional subscription to some sites (41.5%), employing computer engineers (26.5%), increasing work station (88.5%), continuous system maintenance (40%) and installation of a library dedicated server (84.5%).

Discussion of Result

The result of the study indicated that majority of the respondents use internet facilities in the library and that they also access the facilities themselves. This shows that they are knowledgeable in the use of internet facilities.

The students prefer using the internet facilities in the morning and evening. This may be at the time when they have free lectures or completed their lectures for the day. The results further reveal some of the challenges in the use of internet facilities in the College libraries as slow speed of server, distance to the library, power failure, attitude of library system, system breakdown, poor knowledge of usability, insufficient work stations and time constrains while some suggestions were also preferred on how this challenges can be solved.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges and prospects of using internet facilities in the library of the Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku. The study showed that the students makes use of internet facilities in the College Library and the time of usage differs while some prefer using it in the morning, some prefers the afternoon while others prefers evening. Some challenges were also identified as

affecting their making use of the internet facilities in the library. These were identified and some solution were suggested by the respondents. The finding here will help both the College Management in taking some vital decisions in improving the internet services in the library and also the respondents to get improved services in the area of challenges identified.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are therefore suggested that

1. There is need for more work stations to be provided considering the fact that majority of the respondents makes use of the internet facilities themselves. This will allow more users have access the use of the facilities and the time allocation can also be increased to users.
2. Use of internet should be added to the course outline of the introduction of library studies programme. In addition to this a training programme can be organized from time to time to library users on the use of the internet facilities in libraries.
3. The library should be provided with a big standby generator to be used whenever power is off.
4. The library should have its own dedicated bandwidth as against sharing its resources with other units of the College.
5. A computer engineer should be employed to help in the maintenance of the internet facilities in the library.

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