

# **IMPLICATIONS OF THE USE OF COMPUTER IN THE LIBRARY SERVICES**

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## **Abstract**

This paper focuses on the role of computers in the library, the writer highlights the role of Librarians in the computerization of their libraries and how it is expected to expose the Librarians to the world of knowledge at this jet age. It gives brief history of computer revolution and points out how new technologies are developed to attack and overcome a serious problem in effective handling of information. Finally it was concluded that computer education should be integrated into the curriculum to promote teaching and learning process at all levels of education.

## **Introduction**

The word library comes from a latin word “liber” which means book Ezennia (1992) defined library as an institution or establishment for the care of collection of books and of making them accessible to prospective users In addition to the above Katz (1982) introduced a new dimension to the library as a learning center and a depot of information With the computer, library patrons can have access to bibliographical records thousands of miles away. A computer is an electronic device which accepts stores and processes information However a computer does more than store, process and disseminates information it has the ability to distinguish between words lines and characters.

Adeniba (1988) defined a computer as a collection of electronic devices that is able to carry out operations such as arithmetic logic manipulations of skills on various categories of data and subsequently come out with results which could be practically implemented in practical sense. It is expected that with the librarians' exposure to library automation or computerization, library services will be more useful and relevant within the academic set-up Librarians would be able to operate and order books from vendors through the internet with the aid of computers. Another great challenge awaiting librarian is that they must be knowledgeable in bibliography According to Kinney (1962) a bibliographer is primarily a librarian who goes further in the field of reader guidance and become a professional specialist

The objectives of a library as stated by Andrew (1998) include:

- To develop the student or library patrons on skills and resourcefulness required tor a profitable use of books and libraries and to inculcate in them rite habits of individual investigation.
- To encourage a life-long education through the use of library resources.
- To provide adequate experience in social decent living.
- To acquire books and non book materials to meet the demand of the curricular and the needs of users and organize these materials for effective use.
- Lastly, to establish a variety of sufficient materials that would be of interest to library users.

According to Obi (1977) objectives of a library are as follows. “It promotes the development of reading skills and encourages long term learning habits through reading, listening and viewing a variety of learning materials”. To provide students with vocational information leading to the choice of a suitable career, training students to study independently by providing a wide range of materials for class projects and assignments. Help in discovering and developing the specially gifted and talented students.

## **Review of Related Literature**

The education industry which is the largest industry in Nigeria has embraced the use of computers. The West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) which is an educational agency makes use of computers in result processing the large number of candidates enrolment and in the prompt release of results. Rowley (1980) identifies reasons why libraries should be automated as Increase work load, Need for greater efficiency, New services and Cooperation and centralization.

While Moihot (1987) explains that the benefits of automation in libraries are: we no longer type cards, the system supplies them, patrons do not need to copy down call numbers before going to the shelves, the system prints them out. Patrons don't sign for books, a light pen reads their identification cards and the system charges the book out to them. Without any doubt, computer has numerous benefits to offer in all fields of human endeavours and the application of such have resulted in considerable success. In his contribution, Cochrane (1992) identified the followings as some of the advantages of computer technology to libraries, it allows easy integration of various activities like cataloguing, accessing and ordering, facilities cooperation and the formation of library network helps to avoid duplication of efforts within a library and between library in a network. Helps to increase the range of services offered to the user in terms of charging and discharging. Provides marketing opportunities to its users such as photocopy, selective dissemination of information and current awareness services. Ultimately may save or generate money, save the time of the user and increase productivity and efficiency within the library.

The influence of computer on the library has been confirmed by Jatto (2002) that all operations related to acquisition have been made simple, that is pre-order checking, monitoring, recording and correspondences have become faster and more efficient. Also in cataloguing all the delays and errors are automatically overcome, it also helps in preparing subject bibliographies using classification schemes. While in circulation, it helps to eliminate the apparent chaos common with manual circulation system e.g. over due notices are generated by the computer in the form of letters requesting borrowers to return, or review the book listed as over due against them. There are other services that can be improved through the use of computers, for example? On-line public access catalogue bibliographic and selective dissemination of information services, can also be used to generate fund into the library without laying off librarians working in the library as it is known today, the library will be a center in which access to databases and data banks will be provided and in which trained personnel will be available to assist in the exploitation of these resources.

Hickery (2000) was of the view that the library will not disappear, but in the long term, the library/librarian can be expected to move closer to our current idea of an archive the role of librarian will also change in the new environment as they will function as information consultants. Adelani (1999) quoting Agaja (1997) puts it thus "as a Professional Manager who has been properly tutored in this trade, the 21st century Librarians are expected to be skilful in the complex arts of managing human and materials resources, information packaging, library repositioning strategic planning, budgeting and effective allocation of funds among competing needs.

Applebee and Clayton (1997) in their submission described the relevance of computer in academic setting as having a significant impact on every academic work". In the worlds of Alasa and Kelechukwu (1998) the computer offers a rapidly growing collection of information with topics ranging from medicine to science and technology. It is expected that a librarian will be seen as an audio-visual specialist who will be expected to engage himself in the production of audiovisual materials like slides, film, audio/visual recording, over head transparencies etc. instead of importing them from abroad. While Agaja (1997) says librarian's exposure to library automation or computerization of library services in the library school, will make such a librarian to order books from vendors through the internet with the aid of computers and also to provide computerized cataloguing and reference service/to his clients with sophisticated tastes for information delivery.

Another challenge for future librarian is that he/she must be knowledgeable in bibliotherapy according to Adelani, (1999) quoting Kinney (1962) who says a bibliotherapist is primarily a librarian who goes further in the field of reader guidance and becomes a

professional specialist. While in the banking industry, computers are used to carry out tedious and complex works, in a survey carried out by Anglor (1996) in Benin a total of 15 banks operating in Benin metropolis were found to be fully or partially computerized. The judiciary system is not left out. Marwa (1998) while commissioning the computer acquired for Lagos State Judiciary said "The procurement of these computers will help in the speedy dispensation of Justice as Justice delayed is Justice denied" Marwa in his remark did not say that the computers would replace judges or lawyers

According to Muhammed (1997). most educators are emphasizing the use of computers in the field of science and as an aid to or facilitate the effective teaching/learning process This is in line with Bajah (1983) who enlisted among others the use of computer as the most effective aid in the teaching of modern science in our schools While Agholor (1999) modify Bajah's view, strongly recommends the use of computers in teaching both science and arts subjects to aid the teacher in instructional delivery and the learner to facilitate the learning process. Thus, the computers are meant to supplement and complement the efforts of the professional and not to replace them. The use of computer is applicable to a wide range of operations in library services and its application has brought maximum efficiency to services of libraries through increased reduction of mistakes, increase in convenience, adequate statistical data keeping, control of literature growths, labour saving, and easy exchange of documentation.

While some of the numerous benefits that can be derived from internet by libraries have been enumerated by Alasa and Kelechukwu (1995) as follows Quick and convenient information exchange Access to experienced and expert individuals in thousands of fields; Access to regular up dates on topics of interest; Access to archives information; It enables you to reach your fellow librarians with messages and documents independent of the constraints of mails, telegraphs or even fax; Enhancement of team work across geographical distances.; and There' should be a lot of changes in our libraries in the areas of operation work, work flow and administration.

Oketunji (2001) has enumerated that automating the cataloguing section can facilitate the following: Establishing and maintenance of local authority lists, name authority, field, subject file; File input and maintenance, these include record preparation, tiling and transaction control, Inventory control, establishment of shelf list control record, added copy control and inventory statistics and Output generation, dissemination and reporting. This will embrace change records, overdue notice, reserve notice and preparation of printed circulation lists and report. The impact of automation in the library has been beneficial since one of its early results was the eradication of inefficient handling of library work.

### **The New Technologies and Librarians**

Numerous forms of technologies have been devised over the years to effectively handle information and other library/organizational chores. The technology of information handling has undergone series of changes due to the introduction of computer and communication equipments Tremendous achievements have been made in these areas and this is likely to continue as the existing networks of information services and libraries become more elaborate and their operations move from being paper-based to being implemented in more advanced electronics technologies. The new technologies are therefore developed to attack and overcome a serious problem of ineffective handling of information which information explosion has caused to information specialists. One very significant of these new technologies to librarians is the enhancement of greater efficiency by way of saving money, staff time and reducing expenditure on staff as regards information handling.

Libraries are faced with increasingly unmanageable quantity of information that makes the processing of such information almost impossible. The need for a faster, cheaper and more effective approach to information handling becomes inevitable. Computers are now used by librarians in nearly all library functions from ordering and other technical processes to provision of information on-line. Librarians should also be aware that, although the use of photocopies are regulated by copyright laws all over the world, the law recognizes that there is a dearth of books in most libraries and hence, makes provision for the photocopying of one tenth of the volume of any book. Librarians should keep to this regulation in the course of managing library resources as photocopying will continue to be used extensively As a result of information technology, many systems have been designed by the librarians to handle any of the library processes of acquisitions, cataloguing and circulation control etc. There are a variety of ways by

which, IT has assisted the library to accomplish its objectives of information procurement, storage and retrieve- Brown (1991) indicated that these technologies emerge in order to achieve:

1. Dissemination of information in a format which many are comfortable and familiar e.g. Television.
2. Desire to extend their services to groups not adequately served by more traditional means e.g. handicapped, the sick etc

Training programme, seminars, workshops and conferences should be frequently organized to serve as a forum for acquiring more experience for the librarian. This will enrich their knowledge with the idea of the current event in the computer world. The application of computer in the library services to users, librarians and other staff members of the library need some level of training so that they will know how to operate the system. Since the importance of computer cannot be overstressed to the promotion and learning processes at all levels of education, it should be noted to the curriculum in order to allow the library user gain essential

## Conclusion

Training programme, seminars, workshops and conferences should be frequently organized to serve as a forum for acquiring more experience for the librarians. This will enable us know the current trends in the computer world, and the application of computer in the library services to the users. Librarians and other staff members of the library need some level of training so that they will know how to operate the system

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