

ASSESSMENT OF ON-LINE DATABASES USE BY ACADEMICS OF FACULTY OF EDUCATION AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA.

BY

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ABSTRACT

Online publications are becoming more popular than traditional print resource due to the portability, flexibility, and instant availability of up-to-date information. Academic libraries in Nigeria and in particular Kashim Ibrahim Library are spending a substantial amount of their budgets in providing online databases to its customers which means the issue of availability has been addressed. Meanwhile availability does not translate to use. Therefore, this study seek to assess the use of online databases among academic staff of the faculty of education A.B.U Zaria with specific emphasis on the types of online database used by academics, the purpose for which the online databases are used, the extent of its use and challenges faced by academic staffs in the use of online databases. A survey research method was used for this study. The population comprise of 140 academics of faculty of education A.B.U, Zaria. A structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection, out of the 140 questionnaires distributed, 90 were returned completed representing 64.3% response rate. These were used for the analysis using frequency counts and percentages. Some of the findings amongst others were Academics in Faculty of Education only use DOAJ and AJOL out of all the databases available. Also, the major challenges faced by the respondents when trying to access and use the online databases are: Slow Internet connection, insufficient access to required journals and erratic power supply amongst others. A recommendation amongst others was that the library in collaboration with the ICT division of the university and the faculty should on a regular basis organize training for academic members on how to use e-resources and basic ICT skills.

Introduction

Explosive growth of a variety of electronic information technologies over the last decade has had a profound and revolutionizing influence on libraries and information centers in academic institutions. Networked information has changed the notion of literacy and has had a significant impact on social evolution. The change is noticeable in that today's libraries, and especially the components of electronic

information retrieval, present a type of "culture shock" for many customers (Tibbo, 1999) in (Aregbesola & Oguntayo, 2014). Also with the advancement of Information Technology (IT), Libraries have transformed into digital and virtual libraries where physical books, journals, magazines, newspapers, thesis and dissertations have changed into e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers, e-magazines e-thesis, e-dissertations etc.

Online databases are collections of computerized information or data such as articles, books, graphics and multimedia that can be searched to find information. They can be general or subject based in form of abstracts and/or full text. By means of time-sharing many users can search information simultaneously (Miguel de Benavides Library, 2008). They are accessible from a computer network, including the Internet. It differs from a local database, held in an individual computer or its attached storage, such as a CD. Some major characteristics of online databases are: online databases are delivered primarily via a web browser, they are often purchased by subscription, and they embed common collaboration features such as sharing, email notifications, among others. Online databases include online books, online journals, online magazine, online newspaper, online thesis, online dissertation etc. Online databases are convenient for searching vast amounts of data within the shortest possible time. Significantly, a good number of databases are available on the Internet today, which can be accessed free of charge.

University libraries, including, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria have provided access to online database services through open

access international donors or annual subscription of online databases such as Elsevier science direct, Ebscohost, Jstor, DOAJ, Sage, ATLA Religion Database, Hinari, etc. Online databases contain current information because they are updated frequently. They offer advanced search capabilities, offer flexibility in the storage of results and enable access and use of information without restriction of time and location. However, these advantages are still unknown to most academics in faculty of education from the preliminary investigation carried out by the researcher. For there to be improvement in the use of online databases by academics in the faculty of education, there is need to assess the use of online databases from the perspective of the academic staff of faculty of education, ABU, Zaria.

Statement of Problem

Online databases have brought about a shift in the provision of library services and information by providing wide access to resources from different parts of the world with ease. Online databases provide many advantages such as providing 24x7 access, universal access; saving physical space; ability to linked from and indexing and abstracting databases; accessibility from the

users home, office, or dormitory irrespective of whether or not the physical library is open; the ability to get usage statistics and their relative ease of maintenance. Online databases have become an integral and substantial component of academic library collections worldwide. The resources are regarded as essential for teaching, learning and research activities as well as self and community development

The issue of availability of online database has since been addressed in Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The university library provides access to online databases in order to enhance online information resources utilization among its customers. However, observations revealed that most researches carried out by Academics of Faculty of Education ABU Zaria do not contain citations of online database available in the university library website. Hence, the need to assess the use of online databases by academics in the faculty of education A.B.U, Zaria.

Research Questions

1. What type of online databases are been used by the Academics in Faculty of Education ABU Zaria?

2. For what purpose are the online databases been used by academics in the faculty of education?
3. To what extent are the online databases used by academics in faculty of education?
4. What are the challenges encountered by academics in the use of online databases in Faculty of Education ABU Zaria?

Literature Review

Most of the institutes and Universities provide online databases to their customers to support teaching, research and development. According to BC University Library (2012) a library database is an electronic catalog or index, often contains information about published items, and is searchable. Anyira (2012) identified online databases to include Ebscohost, JSTOR, Directory of open access journals (DOAJ), AJOL, PsychInfo, Directory of open access repositories (DOAR), Ebrary, HINARY, Science direct, Best of the web, Amazon, NUC virtual resources, and Internet public library. Materials found in this kind of database include articles from journals and magazines, electronic books, newspapers, images, reference sources. Some library databases provide abstracts of the items they

index. Abstracts are summaries provided by the author or database publisher.

BC University Library further stated that library databases typically provide citation information about the items they index. A citation most often consists of: Author, Title of Article, Source (Title of Publication), Publisher, Date of Publication (BC University Library, 2012). Some library databases index items across many subject areas. Most databases index materials from a specific focus or discipline. To find a database by subject, go to Databases and select the By Subject tab.

On the other hand, the web database according to Kokemuller (2013) is a database application designed to be managed and accessed through the Internet. Web database applications enable site operators to manage collection of data and presentation of analytical results online.

Use of online Databases by Academics

Online databases utilization is concerned with the use of variety of information resources for teaching, learning and research activities. Such resources include online books, journals, thesis, and dissertations, online newspapers, magazines, indexes/abstract, internet based online

Databases, online encyclopedia and Dictionaries. etc

Khalid and Hafeez (2010) found electronic information resources (online/offline) are used for the purpose of conducting scientific research, teaching and community development etc. Kumbar, Lamani, and Gourikeremath (2014) study found that factors such as easy access reduced physical visit to library. The user-friendly features of online resources offer a comfortable platform for participants to use e-books, e-journals, e-magazine, e-newspaper, e-thesis, e-dissertation etc. Many academics in university rely on electronic databases as their source of information because they provide many advantages over the traditional print based resources. They contain current information because they are updated frequently. They offer advanced search capabilities, and offer flexibility in the storage of results. They enable access and use of information without restriction of time and location.

Ibrahim (2004), Borrego, Anglada, Barrios and Comellas (2007) and Omotayo (2010), have all reported that e-journals are the most used among the arrays of available electronic resources. As reported by Omotayo (2010) 22 (8.98%), 67 (37.35%),

102 (41.63%), 34 (13.88%) and 20 (8.16%) of the total population of 245 used electronic journals daily, weekly, monthly, bi-monthly and occasionally respectively. A majority use e-journals monthly, while 52% of total population in Borrego *et al.* (2007) stated that they use electronic journals exclusively or mainly.

According to Sharma (2009), the second highest preference in terms of e-resources usage after e-journals is the Web and e-mail with 30 (57.69%) and 41 (78.84%) among teachers, whereas 23 (76.66%) and 18 (60.00%) among research scholars use them, respectively

Adeleke & Emeahara (2016) and Badu & Markwei (2005) found out that e-journals and other e-resources are available for academics staff and postgraduate students.

On the other hand, Azubogu and Madu (2007) observed that academic staffs of the Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria, have resorted to the use of computer and Internet technologies to search for information because the university library lacks funds to subscribe to scholarly and research journals. Likewise, Ojedokun and Owolabi, (2003) also stated that Internet resource is an invaluable tool for collaborative research among academic staff.

Coombs (2005) conducted a case study under the title “Lesson Learned From Analyzing Library Database Usage Data”. The results from examining usage data showed that users were utilizing particular types of resources, from specific physical locations, and accessing those resources from website. In another research, Madhusudhan (2008), conducted a study to learn about the use of the Internet by research scholars and perceive that the majority of the use the Internet daily for their academic purposes, because all faculties were provided connection to the Internet.

In a similar research by Madhusudhan (2008) conducted a survey on Internet use by research scholars at Delhi University, which reveals that most respondents used search engines more than subject gateways or Web directories to locate information. Academics use the opportunity to associate with colleagues who have made important contributions to human knowledge. The entire faculty (100%) uses the EIR for subject knowledge update, for writing research/review articles and for proposed research.

Mahajan (2006) conducted a study on Internet use by researchers in Punjab

University, Chandigrah, which analyzes how the convergence of information and communication technologies, as embodied by the Internet, has transformed the present day society into a knowledge society. Chandran (2000) carried out a study on the use of Internet resources and services in S.V. University, Tirupati, indicating that more than 56% of respondents are used to the Internet to access online information.

Presentation of results and discussions

1. Online databases used by academics in faculty of education

Table 1: Types of online databases used by the Academics

Types of online database used	Freq	%ge
African Journal Online (AJOL)	53	75.7
Directory of Open Acces Journal (DOAJ)	58	82
Journal Storage(JSTOR)	40	57.1
Health Internet-work Access to Research Initiative (HINARY)	0	0
Sciencedirect	2	2.9
Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO)	5	7.1
Sage OARE	4	5.7
Agora	25	35.7
Journal of Interdisciplinary History	3	4.3
BioOne	9	14.3
BioMed Central	2	2.9

The respondents were allowed to tick as many that applied. The table above shows that DOAJ 58 (82%), AJOL 53(75.7%),

Methodology

The survey design was used for this study. The population comprise of 140 academics of faculty of education A.B.U, Zaria. A structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection, out of the 140 questionnaires distributed 90 were returned completed representing 64.3% response rate. These were used for the analysis using frequency counts and percentages.

(JSTOR) 40(57.14%), Agora 25 (35.7%) were the type of online databases used by

the respondents with highest scores. while Journal of interdisciplinary History 3(4.28%), SciELO 5(7.14), Bioone 9(14.28%), Sage OARE 4 (5.7%), had the least frequencies as types of the online databases used by the Academics. This indicates that majority of Academics in

Faculty of Education only use DOAJ and AJOL out of all the databases. This finding confirms the earlier finding by Ibrahim (2004) and Moghaddaszadeh & Nikam (2011), which revealed that the frequency of use of e-resources is significantly low among academic library users.

2. Purpose for which online databases are used

Table 2: Purposes for which online databases are used

Purpose for the use of online database	Freq	%ge
Research activities	51	71.8
For publication	30	42.8
Teaching	45	64.2
Seminar/workshop presentation	50	71.4
Preparing lecture notes	40	57.1
Self development	10	14.2
Consultancy services	10	14.2
Community development	20	24.4
Thesis/dissertation writing	51	72.8
Others	0	0

On the purpose for which online database are used, table 2 revealed that research activities, thesis writing, preparing lecture notes, teaching, and writing for publication have the highest frequencies of 51 (71.8%), 51(72.8%), 40(57.1%), 45(64.2), and 30(42.8) respectively. while, Community

development 20(24.4%), Self development 10(14.2), Consultancy service 10(14.2%) had the least frequencies. This finding is in line with the major responsibility of the academics which is teaching and research. The finding agrees with Ansari & Zuberi (2010) and Ariffin & Bakar (2013) who

reported that academics use electronic resources for research, to prepare lectures and for gaining subject knowledge.

3. Extent to which online databases are used by academics in faculty of education

Table 3: Extent of use of online databases by academics

Online databases	Very often	Often	Rarely	Not often	Undecided
African Journal Online (AJOL)	30(42.8)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	15(21.4)
Directory of Open Acces Journal (DOAJ)		0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	10(14.3)
Journal Storage(JSTOR)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	50(71.4)	5(7.1)
Health Internet-work Access to Research Initiative (HINARY)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	53(75.7)	0(0.0)
Sciencedirect	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	52(74.2)	0(0.0)
Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	50(71.4)	0(0.0)
Sage OARE	0(0.0)	2(2.8)	0(0.0)	40(57.1)	0(0.0)
Agora	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	45(64.2)	0(0.0)
Journal of Interdisciplinary History	2(2.8)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	45(64.2)	0(0.0)
BioOne	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	50(71.4)	0(0.0)
BioMed Central	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	49(70)	0(0.0)

Table 3 indicates that DOAJ 40(57.14), AJOL 30 (42.8) were the most frequently used online databases by the Academics. The other databases were not often used. This implies that majority of the Academics do not use the available online databases, which could be due to lack of awareness and

inadequate computer literacy skills which is not surprising because it confirms the finding of Abubakar and Adetimirin (2015) that frequency of use of e-resources was significantly low for most types of e-resources due to lack of computer literacy.

4. Challenges Encountered in using online Databases by Academics

Table 4: Challenges in Using Online Databases

Challenges	Freq	%ge
Slow Internet connectivity	50	71.4
Erratic power supply	53	75.7
Poor ICT facilities	43	61.4
Lack of access to Internet connectivity in the office	43	61.4
Insufficient access to needed journals	50	71.4
Lack of information literacy skills	53	75.5

Table 4 reveals that some of the major challenges faced by the respondents when trying to use the online databases are: Slow Internet connection, insufficient access to required journals and erratic power supply and lack of information literacy skills were rated 50(71.4%), 50(71.4%), 53(75.7%) and 53(75.7%) respectively. while Lack, poor ICT facilities and lack of access to internet connection in the office and poor ICT facilities 43(61.4) are other factors affecting the use of online databases by academics in faculty of education. This finding confirms the view of Khan and Bhatti (2012) that emphasized lack of basic knowledge of ICT as the second major constraint after the problem of erratic power supply to the use of

electronic resources by academic librarians in developing countries

Summary of Findings

1. Academics in Faculty of Education only use DOAJ and AJOL out of all the databases available
2. Those that use online databases use them for research activities, thesis writing, preparing lecture notes, teaching, and writing for publication which is in line with the major responsibility of the academics which is teaching and research.
3. DOAJ and AJOL were the most frequently used online databases by academics in the faculty of education

4. The major challenges faced by the respondents when using online databases are: Slow Internet connection, insufficient access to required journals and erratic power supply.

Conclusion

This study has established that most of the Academics in Faculty Education ABU Zaria do not use online databases. The reasons include, lack of awareness, lack of information literacy skills, slow internet connection, poor ICT facilities, and erratic power supply. The study further revealed the few academics use these databases access them through search engines which requires them to subscribe before they can gain access, instead of going through the university website which will give them full access because the university has already subscribed for them. This study also found out that the online databases are used for the following purposes; research activities, thesis writing, lecture note preparation, teaching, writing for publication and consultancy services.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. In order to increase the use of online databases by the Academics, the Faculty and Departments should give more assignments related to current issues, so that the Academics and other researchers may be forced to learn how to use online information resources and services more effectively.
2. The library in collaboration with the ICT division of the university and the faculty should on a regular basis organize training for academic members on how to use e-resources and basic ICT skills.
3. In respect to the challenges faced by academics in Faculty of education in the use of online databases, the university library should take a leading role to
 - i. Create more awareness among Academics on the available online databases by:
 - a. Conducting training and retraining programs
 - b. Organizing workshop and audio visual presentation so as to increase the use of these services
 - ii. The university management should improve on the Internet

connectivity in the campus and particularly in the offices.

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