

## USE OF RETRIEVAL TOOLS FOR RECORDS ACCESS IN THE REGISTRY DIVISION OF AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

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### **Abstract**

*This study focuses on Use of Retrieval Tools for Records Access in the Registry Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In order to achieve this, two research objectives were used. To find out the procedures through which the records retrieval tools are used and the challenges associated with the use of records retrieval tools in the registries of the Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The research methodology adopted was quantitative and survey design. The population of this study comprised of the entire records managers in the three study areas under Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, totaling twenty six (26) in number. Because the population was small, the researcher used the entire members of the population. The researcher used self-developed questionnaire for collecting data. It was found out among others that majority of the respondents indicated the procedures through which records retrieval tools were utilised are manual records guide, manual records inventories, registers, manual records index and electronic records catalogue. Majority of the respondents also indicated that the challenges faced in the utilisation of records retrieval tools were none indication on the records retrieval tool, for example, records catalogue (manual and electronic) that a particular record is totally lost from the storage devices of the records centre. It was concluded that the records retrieval tools used in the registries of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, were not many and they were mostly manual and not efficient. It was recommended, among others, that the management of the Registries of the Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, should update some of the records retrieval tools to align with the present records management system in order to be used like the other ones used in the Division.*

**Key words:** records, retrieval tools, records retrieval tools, utilization of records retrieval tools, Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

### **Introduction**

Retrieval tools in records and information centres are critical for accessing information. As records and information centres receive and create records, some of such records are stored for future use. Before the utilization of such records, how to access them is necessary. Records access is only possible when right retrieval tools or devices are available and used. Records retrieval tools provide information management staff with the ability to find the location, the device and reference number of a particular record to be retrieved for use. University Archives (2017) showed that syllabic, reading lists, minutes of the meeting, reports etc. are retrieved and used by the institution whenever the need arises. There are many retrieval tools in the organisation where records are generated and preserved. They include records guides, special lists, registers, records index among others.

Records retrieval tools can be inform of designated equipment that are used for accessing records in the records centre. They include registers, description list, index and computer. Records retrieval has to do with the process of identifying and locating records in their storage area. It is the science of locating documents that contain particular information. Adamu (2015) maintained that records retrieval is the fruit of any records keeping system. Retrieval of records can be in form of manual or electronic.

The use of records retrieval tools by the organizations to access their records constitute that operating records management system. This is because these tools represent the conformant that is responsible for identifying, locating and accessing the records created and stored by the organization. This conferment constitute requisite without which all the records created and kept by the organization cannot be accessed by that organization. Lack of access to the created and stored records of the organization in turn prevents that organization from using such records heading to the inability of such organization to archive efficiency, sound use of financial resources, accountability to mention a few (International council on Archives, 2008; Atuloma, 2011; Aduku and Abdul, 2012; Adamu, 2015).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Records retrieval tools play a vital role in the utilisation of records in the Division of Agricultural Colleges. They describe the nomenclature, date of creation, subject and the location of records kept in a particular place. (Atulomah, 2011; Odeyemi, Issa and Saka; 2011; Adamu, 2015). Therefore, utilisation of records depends on the retrieval tools for locating and accessing such records within a short period of time and with ease. Barata et al. (2001) opined that maintenance of records retrieval tools (finding aids) is very critical to the achievement of the sound records management system, this will ensure quick and easy retrieval of records. Organizational retrieval tools that are effective and efficient (standards) should possess the following attributes as outlined by the New York State Archives and Records Administration Government Records Services. Norris (2002) in a document titled "The Six Attributes of an Effective Records Management Programme outlined" these attributes are as follow: Effective records retrieval tools have satisfactory filing and as locators they should be designed under the guide of documented policies and procedures; The tools should include index, registers etc. that are well prepared for their usage; Subject matter lists should meet the freedom of information law; Policies and procedures regarding the access restriction should be incorporated in the tools; The tools should be filed appropriately for their usage; Local Area Network for the records access should be used as an avenue through which electronic records retrieval tools should be used within the organization.

However, Preliminary investigation revealed that a lot of time is wasted by the Registry Staff of Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria to retrieve records. This has been found to be detrimental to efficient and effective registry. In some instances, records are not found, access to records and tools use to access these records are inconsistent. This naturally discourages the use of records and negatively influence decision taking among others. It is against this backdrop that this study focuses on Use of Retrieval Tools for Records Access in the Rigraphy Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are

- (1) To find out the procedures through which the records retrieval tools are used in the registries of the Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

- 2) To find out the challenges associated with the use of records retrieval tools in the registries of the Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

## **Literature Review**

### **Records Retrieval Tools Utilized in Academic Registries**

Records retrieval tools play important role when records are to be retrieved. The use of records retrieval tools by the organizations to access their records constitute that organization's general records management system. According to Echem and Adaora (2018) the effectiveness of an archival institutions as an information centre of getting to know is decided through the success with which it is able to provide the users with the necessary gear capable of having access to and retrieving the statistics they seek. Indexed the library statistics retrieval gear to include: studying list, index, abstract, library catalogue, search engine, Online Public Access Catalogue(OPAC), bibliography, shelf guides, web-primarily based totally statistics retrieval structures that are presently, at students' disposal to resource them in having access to statistics. Universities provided several statistics resources in their libraries but the university library-primarily based totally retrieval gear for having access to these resources have been every now and then used. This means that the archival resources have been under-utilised.

### **Challenges Associated with Utilization of Records Retrieval Tools in Registries**

Organisations that create records and use records retrieval tools face some challenges when using such tools to retrieve their records. Onwuchekwa and Jegede (2011) maintained that the volumes of information created, generated and preserved are immense that without adequate knowledge of information retrieval methods, the retrieval process for an information user would be cumbersome and frustrating. Lauren (2021) indicated that records control techniques assist and maintain organizations green and productive. Without a thorough, documented statistics control strategy, organisations enjoy miscommunication and records loss. However, the following are other challenges according to United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (2012) concerning the use of records retrieval tools:

- i. None indication on the records retrieval tool, for example, records catalogue (manual and electronic) that a particular record is totally lost from the storage devices of the records centre.
- ii. None indication on the records retrieval tool that a particular record is taken away from the storage devices of the records centre for binding, re-binding, or the record has been weeded away from the records centre.
- iii. Users' inability to precisely articulate which of the types of records retrieval tools (author, title or subject) to be used when searching for a particular record from the vast records in the records centre.
- iv. Inadequacy in the bibliographic information contain in the records retrieval tools which leads to the difficulty in retrieving a particular record from the vast records stored in the records centre.
- v. Damages in the records retrieval tool, for example, records catalogue (manual) such as tear, staining etc. that make the records retriever difficult to understand the full bibliographic information contain in the records retrieval tools etc.

## **Methodology**

This study used quantitative research methodology, and the research design used was a survey. The entire population of this study was used which consisted 26 records

managers in the registries in Division of Agricultural College, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Self-developed Structured and closed ended questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The data collected for this study was organized, analyzed and presented using the tables in line with the research objectives used. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency and percentage were used to analyse the data collected.

## Result and Discussions

**Table 1: Procedures through which Records Retrieval Tools are Utilised in the Registries of Division of Agricultural College, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria**

S/N	Procedures which Records Retrieval Tools are Utilised in registries of the Division of Agricultural College, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	Registries		
		Samaru College of Agriculture, Samaru, Zaria	College of Agricultural and Animal Science, Mando, Kaduna	Kabba College of Agriculture, Kogi
1.	Manual records guide	10 (40.0)	7 (28.0)	5 (20.0)
2.	Manual records inventories	7 (28.0)	6 (24.0)	3 (12.0)
3.	Manual records index	9 (36.0)	8 (32.0)	4 (16.0)
4.	Registers	5 (20.0)	6 (24.0)	4 (16.0)
5.	Special list	3 (12.0)	5 (20.0)	2 (8.0)
6.	Records catalogue	7 (28.0)	3 (12.0)	3 (12.0)
7.	Electronic records guide	3 (12.0)	3 (12.0)	1 (4.0)
8.	Electronic records inventories	6 (24.0)	5 (20.0)	4 (16.0)
9.	Electronic records index	2 (8.0)	1 (4.0)	1 (4.0)
10.	Electronic records catalogue	3 (12.0)	2 (8.0)	2 (8.0)

**Note: In the cells, the numerator= Frequency, denominator= percentage**

Table 1. Presents the procedures through which records retrieval tools are utilised in the Registries of Division of Agricultural College, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. From the table, it is seen that in the Registry of Samaru College of Agriculture, the procedure through which records retrieval tools were utilised was the manual records guide with frequency and percentage of 10 (40.0%). In the Registry of the College of Agricultural and Animal Science, the procedure through which records retrieval tools were utilised was the use of manual records guide with frequency and percentage of 7 (28.0%). In the Registry of Kabba College of Agriculture, the procedure through which records retrieval tools were utilised was the use of manual records guide with 5 (20.0 %).

These findings agreed with those of Adamu (2015) and Aduku and Abdul, (2012) who carried out studies on Assessment of the Organization and Retrieval of Students' Records in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Management of Records of the Judicial service committee of the Federal capital territory Abuja, respectively. They found out that the procedures through which records retrieval tools were used included the use of manual records guide, manual records inventories, manual records index among others. This implies that records cannot be retrieved without following unique procedures.

**Table 2: Challenges in the Utilisation of Records Retrieval Tools in the Registries of Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria**

S/N	Challenges	Registries		
		Samaru College of Agriculture, Samaru, Zaria	College of Agricultural and Animal Science, Mando, Kaduna	Kabba College of Agriculture, Kogi
1.	None indication on the records retrieval tool, for example, records catalogue (manual and electronic) that a particular record is totally lost from the storage devices of the records centre.	9 (36.0)	8 (32.0)	5 (20.0)
2.	None indication on the records retrieval tool that a particular record is taken away from the storage devices of the records centre for binding, re-binding, or the record has been weeded away from the records centre	7 (28.0)	7 (28.0)	4 (16.0)
3.	Inability to precisely articulate which of the types of records retrieval tools (author, title or subject) to be used when searching for a particular record from the vast records in the records centre	5 (20.0)	7 (28.0)	4 (16.0)
4.	Inadequacy in the bibliographic information contain in the records retrieval tools which leads to the difficulty in retrieving a particular record from the vast records stored in the records centre	4 (16.0)	6 (24.0)	2 (8.0)
5.	Damages in the records retrieval	7	4	3

	tool, for example, records catalogue (manual) such as tear, staining etc. that make the records retriever difficult to understand the full bibliographic information contain in the records retrieval tools etc.	(28.0)	(16.0)	(12.0)
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**Note: The numerator = frequency, the denominator= percentage**

Table 2 presented the challenges Faced in the utilisation of records retrieval tools in the registries of the Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. From the table, it is seen that in the Registry of Samaru College of Agriculture, Samaru, Zaria, the respondents indicated that the challenges faced in the utilisation of records retrieval tools includes none indication on the records retrieval tool, for example, records catalogue (manual and electronic) that a particular record is totally lost from the storage devices of the records centre 9(36.0 %); none indication on the records retrieval tool that a particular record is taken away from the storage devices of the records centre for binding, re-binding, or the record has been weeded away from the records centre 7 (28.0%); damages in the records retrieval tool, for example, records catalogue (manual) such as tear, staining etc. that make the records retriever difficult to understand the full bibliographic information contain in the records retrieval tools etc. 7 (28.0%), while the least response rate is inadequacy in the bibliographic information contain in the records retrieval tools which leads to the difficulty in retrieving a particular record from the vast records stored in the records centre 4 (16.0%) .

In the registry of the College of Agricultural and Animal Science, the challenges faced with the highest response rate is none indication on the records retrieval tool, for example, records catalogue (manual and electronic) that a particular record is totally lost from the storage devices of the records centre 8 (32.0 %), while the least response rate is damages in the records retrieval tool, for example, records catalogue (manual) such as tear, staining etc. that make the records retriever difficult to understand the full bibliographic information contain in the records retrieval tools etc 4 (16.0%)

In the registry of Kabba College of Agriculture, challenges faced with highest response rate is none indication on the records retrieval tool, for example, records catalogue (manual and electronic) that a particular record is totally lost from the storage devices of the records centre 5 (20.0 %), while the least response rate is inadequacy in the bibliographic information contain in the records retrieval tools which leads to the difficulty in retrieving a particular record from the vast records stored in the records centre 2 (8.0%).

These findings did not agreed with that of Odeyemi, Issa and Saka (2011) who carried out studies on Management of Records in the Judiciary of South-Western States of Nigeria. They found out that the challenges faced in the use of records retrieval system was that of organization of the records rather than the use of retrieval tools. This implies that studies on records retrieval tools are scarce and the challenges faced in the management of records were not widely discovered.

The Research found that the procedures through which records retrieval tools are utilised in the Registries of Division of Agricultural College, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria was through manual records guide.

The studied discovered that there is no indication on the records retrieval tool (manual or electronic) that a specific record is completely lost from the storage devices of the records center when used in the registries of the Division of Agricultural Colleges, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

## **Conclusion**

From the analysis of the findings, it can be concluded that records retrieval tools were utilized for records access in the Division of Agricultural College Registries, Ahmadu Bello

University, Zaria, but not effective due to the loss of some records from the storage devices of the records centre, and still appearing on the record retrieval tools, inability to precisely articulate which of the types of records retrieval tools (author, title or subject) to be used when searching for a particular record from the vast records in the records centre, among others.

### Recommendations

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

1. The management of the Registries of Division of Agricultural College, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, should encourage the production of electronic records retrieval tools in order to facilitate easy and faster retrieval of records.
2. The staff of the registries of Division of Agricultural College, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, should always indicate whether the records are discarded from the records centre or not. This is in order to agree with the international best practice of records management.

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