

**Awareness, Access and Usage of E-Journal Resources of the Library, By the Students of Yaba College of Technology, Yaba –Lagos Nigeria.**

**By**

**Andy Umuna Achonna**

Serials Section, Library Unit

Yaba College of Technology, P.M.B. 2011 Yaba Lagos.

**Email Address:** [Andyachonna@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Andyachonna@yahoo.co.uk)

**Abstract**

The study investigated students' awareness, access and usage of E – journal resources at the library of Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos. It examined the level of awareness, access and usage of E – journal resources among the students; and the problems they encounter in their bid to use the resources. The study revealed that the level of usage of the E – journal resources was low, and that lack of skill to use the resources, power outage and inadequate computers were some of the problems encountered by the students. The study recommended a conscious effort to be made to provide information skills training appropriate to individual needs of the students; and information retrieval skills training to be embedded in the curriculum, undertaken at an appropriate time and supported by academic staff. Lecturers are to emphasize and popularize information technology and its usage by talking about it and giving assignment that will motivate students to use the E – journal resources. It was also recommended that stable power supply and more computers should be provided to ensure constant, consistent and available services.

**Introduction**

The E –journal resources was introduced as an aspect of the serials unit of the library of Yaba College of Technology in 2002. Initially the printed hard copy of the journals and the E – journal resources were kept in the same room. However, in 2006, the serials section of the library was relocated to the first floor of the library and a separate room provided to house the printed hard copy journals while as a partition was erected in the last quarter of 2007 to house the E – journal aspect of the serials section.

Presently, the serials section has four computers with one of them connected to the Internet and one actively installed with the E-Journal resources. The name of the E – Journal resources is the EBSCO Host which was subscribed to by the College Management years ago. In order to monitor and administer the E – journal resources properly, a big hard cover notebook has been provided to record user's name, information needs, level of satisfaction or otherwise derived from the use of the resources and possible remarks which could form the basis for service delivery improvement.

The staff strength of the serials section is (8) eight. This is composed of (2) two professional librarians, (3) three Para-professionals, one library assistant, one clerk and the secretary of the section. In the professional cadre is the head of section who is an Assistant Chief Librarian, a principal Librarian who is in charge of the printed hard copy journal unit, one senior library officer, a library Assistant and one clerical officer all in the printed hard copy unit. With regards to the composition of the E – journal

resources; there is a principal library officer who is in charge and has just successfully completed his master's degree being assisted by a higher library officer. It is in the E – journal unit of the serials section that the secretary of the section operates from.

When the E – journal resources was introduced, notices in the form of fliers, posters, memos were sent out to schools, service units and departments for publicity and to create awareness. Some important forums like staff union meetings, student unions and lecture rooms were also used to announce the arrival of the E – journal resources to the library of the College.

The student population constitutes a significant segment of the College Community. The library and its resources are meant to facilitate the accomplishment of their major goal; which is their academic pursuit. Hitherto, the main resources of the library had been printed resources and Audio – visual materials. The introduction of the E – journal resources to the collection of the library is a welcome development which has an added impetus to enrich the library collection, thereby enhancing the learning resources for students to achieve success in their academic endeavour.

The college uses substantial proportion of its budget to provide books, reference sources, serials and the subsequent provision of computers and the E –journal resources which no doubt has increased the budget expended on the library substantially. It is against this background that this study is being conducted to determine the level of awareness, access and the

usage of the E – journal resources among the students of Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos.

### **Statement of Problem**

The Polytechnic libraries constitute a major component in the infrastructure of knowledge in the polytechnic teaching, research and learning. Hitherto, the core resources of the library had been printed books and periodicals. Recent developments and advances in science and technology have ushered in information and communication technology which has brought about the uses of computers, Internet, emails and e-journal which is transforming the services of libraries from printed to electronic resources. It is this innovative addition to the traditional services of polytechnic library services of which Yaba College of Technology is one that has informed the conduct of this study to examine the level of awareness, access and usage of the newly introduced e-journal resources among the student population.

### **Research Questions**

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, attempts would be made to answer the following questions.

- i. What is the level of awareness of the students about the existence of the e-journal resources in the College library?
- ii. What is the level of ease of access of students to the e-journal resources?
- iii. To what extent are the students making use of the e-journal resources in the library?
- iv. What are the possible barriers to the students' use of the e-journal resources?
- v. How did the students acquire the skill to use the e-journal resources?
- vi. Why do students avoid the use of the e-journal resources in the library?
- vii. Does the e-journal resources contribute to the academic accomplishment of the students?

### **Objectives of the study**

This study is designed to achieve the following objectives. To:

- i. Find out the level of awareness among the student about the existence of the e-journal resources in the College library.
- ii. Determine the students ease of access to the e-journal resources
- iii. Ascertain the extent to which the students use the e-journal resources.
- iv. Determine what constitutes barriers to the students' use of e-journal resources.

- v. Obtain information on how the students acquired skills on the use of the e-journal resources.
- vi. Know why students avoid the use of e-journal resources
- vii. Determine the importance of E – Journal resources to the academic programme of the students.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study can form the basis for the formulation and implementation of policy on better acquisition of (IT) Information Technology hardware, software, staff recruitment, capacity building, and user education.

### **Research Methodology**

The sample population of this research study will be the students of Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos. The survey research method was chosen for the study because it will enable the researcher to collect original data for discussing the population under study. It will also help to measure one or more characteristics of many people at one point in time.

The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The student population constitutes the subject for the study and this stood at (150) one hundred and fifty. The method used for the selection of the student was a simple random sampling. The method that helped in the selection was the students who came to read in the library especially those who came to make use of the E – Journal resources. The numbers of questionnaires successfully retrieved from the respondents were 145 representing 97% of the 150 population. The remaining 5 questionnaires representing 3% of the 150 population were not successfully retrieved from respondents. The administration of the questionnaire was carried out by three library staff for two weeks in the first semester in the month of April; 2008.

### **Literature Review**

The provision of information and the access to the services of the library has been greatly influenced by the advent of (ICT) Information communication Technology. This development has affected the librarian, the resources of the library and the services provided. It has also affected the users in one way or the other. This has made it imperative that we evaluate the awareness, access and usage level of users towards the electronic information resources, which will put the Information Managers (Librarians) in a better position to help users, and at the same time give information that will help in evaluating the effectiveness of the services rendered.

Ajayi Olatokun and Tianiya (2001) points out change as a permanent concept in organizations. Things that were done manually in the past are now done using computers and communication technologies. Technology to some is a blessing, to others a source of worry. Librarians who have not adjusted to the realities of the present times are bound to be uncomfortable with new innovations thrown up by ICT. Childer (2004) opined that ICT impact is more felt in the area of training need for library staff both professionals and para-professionals alike. The training could take the form of in-house training or staff attendance of workshop training as an integral part of staff development in the library.

Kathryn Ray and Joan Day (1998) indicated in their studies that the last few years have seen a number of changes in higher education sector which have exerted pressure upon the traditional role of the academic library. [Such changes are seen in

- rapid growth in students number which is not relative in the number of library and information services staff;
- growth in non-traditional students, for example, mature students and part time students who have different needs and expectations from the regular and much younger students;
- inflation in the cost of printed materials
- growing numbers of academic publications
- falling library budgets as a percentage of the total institutional budgets;
- changes in teaching learning methods, towards a greater emphasis on student centred learning
- Technological development.

Furthermore, the increase in the amount of electronic information sources available which is seen to be costly results in a demand for information skills training for both staff and students and is causing a radical shift from an original emphasis upon holding materials towards the importance of being a gateway to networked information, providing access rather than holdings.

Brophy (1993) detailing the advantages of electronic information sources over traditional print based sources stated that electronic information sources are often faster than consulting print indexes especially when searching retrospectively, and they are more straight forward when wishing to use combinations of keywords. They open up the possibility of searching multiple files at one time; can be printed and searches saved to be repeated at a later date; they are updated

more often than the printed tools. Moreso, one main advantage of electronic information resources, especially to distance learners or those with limited time to access the library, is their availability from outside the library by dial-up access.

Writing on the skills required to maximize the potential of electronic resources, Dutton (1990) is of the view that much more greater skill is required to use the electronic sources, and these skills include a knowledge of the structure of the database and the instructions which must be input into the computer by the searcher, as well as an understanding of the ways in which the instructions are linked with one another.

Hence, it is pertinent to note that the ability to find and retrieve information effectively is a transferable skill useful for future life as well as enabling the positive and successful use of the electronic resources in future. The acquisition of information skills is therefore to be seen as one of the key learning objectives for every student to be fully equipped to cope with the information intensive world – the information society as an end user.

Chisenga (2004) surveyed the use of ICT in (10) ten Anglophone African public libraries and found out that all public libraries in South Africa have implemented ICTs and provided full access to the internet. Mutula (2002) on the other hand, reported that there are other ways by which universities all over the world are using ICT, which is in the area of development of electronic reference and learning tools using hyper media, consisting of databases structured to allow rapid movement through information and user interface.

The under listed were identified by Adedeji (2002) as contending issues in electronic services:

- i. Economic of electronic services
- ii. System and technical issue
- iii. Collection development
- iv. User issues
- v. Organization issues
- vi. Staff and Skills

He further observed that no Nigerian library is known to have developed procedures for selecting, acquiring e – materials which entails such criteria as functionality, licensing, and digital preservation.

Pradham (2004) declared that in spite of the internet the library will continue to be relevant as the internet has missed a very significant societal role in the preservation and diffusion of human knowledge through ages and generations ----- . Asserting that the library profession is complementing the internet

with the introduction of metadata which is defined as “data about data” or information about information.”

Aina (2004) observed that ICT is heavily utilized in the storage, processing and dissemination of information. It has made the organization of information very efficient, the delivery of basic information services very effective and the dissemination of information easier to the user.

Reiterating on ways libraries and librarians can make themselves relevant in the ever – changing world of IT information Technology; Ayodele (2001) is of the view that reorientation in the mode of delivery of library services can make library facilities available to the reading public in a modern and effective way within and outside the library through the E – Library. Further reinstating the fact that the distance learning project of the Federal Government should of necessity be supported by an Open University with libraries not physically built in all the nooks and crannies of Nigeria, but with services which have to be delivered on –line nation wide.

The Technological advancement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century according to Iloeje (2002) has revolutionalized the education and learning process from the traditional teacher-led, linear media, text-book and lecture fed, audio, video and printed matter approach to the new interactive non-linear mode characterized by hyper-text, hyper-media, optical disks, satellite, cable, on-line and computer-based e-learning medium. These developments in education and learning process have certainly necessitated a revolution in the way libraries and librarians act as custodians of our educational and learning resources. To remain relevant and sustain the ever changing new knowledge age, and to continue to contribute meaningfully in delivering life long learning across space and time; our libraries and librarians must explore and invent new ways of rendering continued services that are apt to the demands of this e-age. One such way is the introduction of the e-libraries; and on the part of the learners, they contribute in a mutually interactive mode to the visual library both as users and as custodians of e – info in the e – library.

Chima Akwuja (2007) reveals that information Technology according to latest findings is being increasingly harnessed to improve the efficiency, reliability, accessibility and quality of business processes. He went further to state that the shortage of skilled IT work-force in Nigeria have made companies to resort to poaching the existing few skilled workers which results to passing on of secret information to new employers by workers. The

short-fall in supply of proficient IT skilled workers has resulted in the emergence of private IT training centers providing training on skills needed by today’s dynamic global economy. Further stating that the most sought after IT skills are those with business and IT skills, professionals with skills and certification in business intelligent (ITIL), and customer relationship management (CRM), cyber marketing, cyber law, enterprise resource planning (ERP), disaster recovery, networking and internet, mobile and wireless, security, storage, services and data centre, hardware, software, multimedia, outsourcing, are in hot demand. To bridge the gap between supply and demand, it is suggested that a partnership of professional skilled based institutions like APTECH, NIIT, New Horizons, Expert Edge and the Polytechnics/Universities be entered into.

### Results and Discussion

The data generated from the study are presented in the tables and discussed below.

#### Sex Distribution of Students Use for the Study

The table below shows that 77 (53.1%) are male and 68 (46.8%) are female. The findings reveal that a slightly higher number of male students use the E – journal than their female counter parts.

TABLE 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
MALE	77	53.1
FEMALE	68	46.9
TOTAL	145	100

#### Distribution of Respondents by Programmes

The distribution of respondents by programme are indicated as follows: National Diploma 1 (ND 1) 23 (15.9 %); National Diploma 2 (ND 2) 35 (24.1 %); Higher National Diploma (HND 1) 27 (16.5 %); and Higher National Diploma 2 (HND 2) 60 (41.4 %). The respondents’ distribution by programmes shows that students in the higher classes who have spent longer period in the college are higher in number among those using the E – journal resources than those in the lower classes who have spent lesser period in the college. Those in the higher classes would have utilized their longer period in the college

to get acquainted with the E – journal resources and so are in a more advantageous position to access it more than those in the lower classes.

**TABLE 3: Distribution of Respondents by Programmes**

Programmes	Frequency	Percentage
ND 1	23	15.9 %
ND 2	35	24.1 %
HND 1	27	16.5 %
HND 2	60	41.4 %
TOTAL	145	100 %

**Students Awareness of the Existence of e-journal Resources in the College Library**

With regard to students response on the question of their awareness of the existence of the E – journal resources in the college library; 108 (74.4 %) stated that they are aware of the existence of the resources; while 37 (25.6 %) indicated that they are not aware. The higher percentage of students that indicated their awareness of the existence of the E – Journal resources in cheering, but the others that stated that they were not aware should be not be neglected, because they form part and parcel of the students population who should know and make use of the resources to their advantage

**Table 4: Students Awareness of the Existence of e-Journal.**

Students Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
YES	108	74.5 %
NO	37	25.5 %
TOTAL	145	100

**Students Ease of Access of e-journal resources in the College Library.**

114 (78.6 %) of the students population which forms a greater percentage of the respondents indicated that they usually have easy access to the E – journal resources in the library; while 31 (21.3 %) stated that they do not have easy access to the resources. Ease of access should of necessity be provided for the

remaining students’ population to motivate and encourage them to use the resources.

**Table 5: Students ease of Access of E-journal Resources**

Students Ease of Access	Frequency	Percentage (%)
YES	114	78.6%
NO	31	21.4 %
TOTAL	145	100

**Frequency of Use of e-Journal Resources**

In response to the frequency in which the respondents use the E – journal resources; 18(12.4%) indicated that they made use of the resources frequently; 42(28.9%) stated that they use it occasionally; 8(5.5%) rarely use the E – journal; while a greater population of 77(53.1%) affirmed that they do not use the resources at all. The response is discouraging and does not justify the huge expenses made in the acquisition of the

E- journal resources. Possible ways should be sought to motivate the students to always use the E – journal resources.

**Table 6: Frequency of Use of e-journal Resources in the College Library.**

Rate of Use	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Frequently	18	12.4%
Occasionally	42	28.9%
Rarely	8	51.59%
Not at all	77	53.1%
TOTAL	145	100

**Problems Encountered in Using the E-Journal Resources**

On whether the respondents encountered any problems in their bid to make use of the E - Journal

resources; 93(64.1%) affirmed that they encounter problems; while 51(35.1%) indicated that they do not come across any problems.

As a follow up, the respondents were asked to indicate the nature of problems they usually encounter and their responses were as follows: 34(23.4%)indicated time constraint; 28(19.3%) negative staff attitude; 6(4.1%) inadequate staff; 43 (29.6%) inadequate computers; 57(39.3%) power outage; 4(2.7%) were not satisfied with the information they got; 36(24.8%) lack of skill and the other 5(3.4%) in their comments suggested that more computers and awareness should be created on the existence of the

E – Journal resources in the library.

The number and percentage of students who encounter problems in their bid to use the E – journal is quite significant and the nature of the problems they encounter varies though at different magnitudes going by their percentage responses. Time should be deliberately allotted to various classes according to their levels of needs of skill to enable them possess the needed skills to use the E – journal. Staff on their part should be trained on skill and on how to be polite and courteous to students. More staff and computers with a very good standby generator should be provided to be able to offer effective, consistent and satisfactory services.

**Table 7 : Problems Encountered by respondents in Using the E-journal Resources by Respondents**

Nature of Problems	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Time Constraint	34	23.4%
Negative Staff attitude	28	19.3%
Inadequate staff	6	4.1%
Inadequate Computers	43	29.6%
Power Outage	57	39.3%
Not Satisfied with Information got	4	2.7%
Lack of skill	36	24.8%
Other Comments	5	3.4%

**Respondents Skills on the Use of E-journals Resources**

In response to whether the respondents possess the skill on how to use the

E – Journal resources, a greater percentage of 98(67.6%) indicated that they have the requisite skill, while 47(30.3%) indicated that they do not possess the skill. The students require requisite skill to maximize the usefulness of the E – journal resources to their academic programme and so concerted effort should be made on the part of the college management to provide training programme to impart the skill on those students that lack it.

**Table 8 : Students Distribution of Skill on the use of e-journals Resources.**

Skill on the Use of e-journal	Frequency	Percentage (%)
YES	98	67.6%
NO	47	32.4%
TOTAL	145	100

**How Skill on the Use of E-journal resources Was Acquired.**

On the question on how respondents acquired the skill on the use of E – journal resources, the following responses were given: 56(38.6%) indicated personal effort; 6(4.1%) fellow students; 22(15.1%) library staff; 2(1.3%) lecturer; 10(6.9%) cybercafé staff and 36(24.8%) stated that they acquired the skill to use the E – journal resources through formal training. As a matter of urgent importance, the college authority should view the acquisition of skill by students as an important aspect of the college curriculum and use the orientation period to create a formal awareness of the existence of the E – Journal resources among students. As a follow-up, a conscious and deliberate effort should be made to introduce E – journal skill acquisition as an aspect of the computer appreciation course. This is very essential, bearing in mind the background of the students which is a product of our peculiar society.

**Table 9: How Skill on Use of E – Journal Resources was Acquired by Students.**

Means of Skill Acquisition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Personal effort	56	38.6%
Fellow students	6	4.1%
Library staff	22	15.1%
Lecturer	2	1.3%
Cybercafé staff	10	6.9%
Formal Training	36	24.8%

**Determination of The Importance of E-Journal Resources to Students Academic Programme.**

To ascertain the value of E – journal resources to the academic programmes of the students, they were asked whether the resources was of any importance to accomplishing their academic goals and a majority of 133 (91.7%) answered in the affirmative and 12(8.3%) did not respond. When asked further to comment on their awareness, access and use of E – journal resources the respondents comments were as follows: 30(20.7%) suggested that more computers should be provided to create more access points for users, 52(35.9%), stressed the need to create more awareness to motivate students to make greater use of the E- journal resources. One can assert from the responses and the comments from the students that the E – journal resources is of immense use and importance to the students in accomplishing their academic goals now and in future.

**Table 10 : Distribution of Students Response on the importance of E-Journal Resources to their Academic Programme.**

Students Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
YES	133	91.7%
NO	NIL	NIL
TOTAL	145	100

**Discussion**

The findings of the study have far reaching implications on students’ awareness, access and use

of E – journal resources in the library of Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos. The study revealed that even though students are aware of the existence of the E – journal resources in the library, the level of usage is quite low when viewed against the intension of the college management and the huge cost expended in its acquisition. The implication is that the students will not have access to current information in their area of study and as a result will be unable to justify college management objectives and the huge expense incurred in the acquisition of the resources.

Another basic discovery of the study is that students lacked the skill to use the

E – Journal resources. This points to the fact that most of the students are not literate in the use of computer and the E – journal resources in particular and will naturally find it extremely difficult to benefit from the potential the new technology will offer and more so, for a future meaningful academic endeavour. A direct consequence of their lack of skill could be seen in the non response of 12(8.3%) students on the question on the importance of the E – journal resources to their academic programme.

Another fundamental discovery in the study is the issue of power outage and inadequate computers. This implies that power outage and inadequate computers could go a long way to mare the good effort and intensions of the college management in the provision of the E – journal resources in the first instance.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings of this study shows that a good percentage of the students are aware and have easy access to use the e – journal resources. They are also aware of the potential benefits they stand to derive by exploiting the resources. However, they were hindered by some problems, among which is lack of skill in the use of the E – journal resources, power outage which limits access to the resources; inadequate computers which may hinder students from having access to the resources even when there is power supply from the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) due to fewness of the computers to go round the users. To motivate and encourage the students to better patronize the E – journal resources in the library to justify management effort, good intensions and the huge expenditure invested in the provision of the resources; the following recommendations are made:

- i. Ensure information literacy skills training is pitched at a level which is appropriate to the individual needs of the students.

- ii. Information retrieval skills training to be embedded in the curriculum, undertaken at an appropriate time and supported by academic staff.
- iii. Lecturers should emphasis and popularize information technology and its usage by talking about it and giving assignment that will motivate the students to have no option, than to use the electronic resources. This entails cooperation between faculty members and the library. The library should of necessity keep the faculty members abreast of the latest acquisition of the electronic resources into the library to help them in the preparation and delivery of effective and relevant lectures.
- iv. Library should provide more computers, staff and a stable power supply to be able to reach out to the students, provide constant and consistent services.
- v. Library manpower is the driving force to actualize management goals in the area of library services. The staff should be trained to be polite, courteous and have good public relations with the students. This will go along way to motivate and encourage them.  
The college management should be willing and courageous at all time to ensure continuity and consistency in any policy that is geared toward improvement and uplifting of library services.

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