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Blog Technology: Constraints to Implementation in Public University Libraries in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study was on blog technology and constraints to implementation in public university libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The study design was descriptive survey. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The sample size was 49 respondents. The study revealed that the respondents' level of awareness regarding the use of library blog was very high. Also, inadequate electricity provision and inadequate skilled librarians to manage the technology were the main bane of use of Library weblog and other social media tools in the libraries. It was recommended that Library Authorities should provide adequate funds to the libraries to enable them provide alternative means of electricity (for example, solar backup).

KEYWORDS

Library blog; implementation constraints; university libraries; South-East Nigeria

Introduction

Suitable and satisfactory incorporation of blog technology will advance library services, because it will achieve more vibrant, stimulating and stress-free reference services provision (Okoroma 2018). As a result of the spread or increase of Internet-based information resources, libraries globally are determined to make available to users access to the numerous resources. Librarians have come up to take care of the increase in information resources, and using their role as information practitioners they filter out unrelated online resources from related ones (Greenle and Steck 2011). Consequently, librarians are now constrained to establish their comprehension of the growing and complex universe of information resources. Librarians' skills or Know-how could be demonstrated through the deployment of virtual outreach tools, and the blog is one of them. Providing a link on the home page or a Really Simple Syndication (RSS), and notifying users in the course of reference communications or in lessons are some of the ways to encourage the use of blogs.

According to Okoroma (2018), researches have established that the degree of application of blog technology for services by librarians in Nigeria is poor. The following challenges were identified by the researcher as impediments –

inadequate awareness, training, infrastructural and technical difficulties, to mention but a few. Attitudinal transformation by librarians, awareness and support for the deployment of blog inside the academic community, and supplying of suitable ICT equipment were some of the solutions for implementation.

Therefore, this research sought answers to the following research questions:

- (1) What is the librarians' level of awareness regarding the purposes that blogs serve in university libraries?
- (2) What are the constraints to library blog implementation in university libraries in South-East zone of Nigeria?

Literature review

Librarians' awareness of blog's use

A lot of the services that librarians deliver to patrons are short of their responsibilities as information resource providers. Undoubtedly, the old-style library and information services require upgrading because of some limitations and failures. Therefore, university libraries now more than ever, are bringing in new social media tools like blogs so that they can remain important in their institutions and satisfy information resource requirements of their clientele (Adewoyin, Adeleke, and Ikonne 2017). Blog technology has transformed library processes. The media site is with us now and is at present impacting on library housekeeping processes (Mishra 2008). The period of handbill and handout printing for individuals to collect has elapsed. What is in vogue now is pasting information on the bulletin board as means of marketing library products as well as services through social networking structure. Collins and Quan-Hasse (2012) acknowledged that the blog has progressively become a familiar technology used by academic libraries to publicize services and resources to clientele. An investigation of respondents in Europe, Asia, and North America, revealed that 71% of academic libraries were reported using blog and other social media tools in their library service delivery (Chu and Du 2013).

Furthermore, Obasola and Mamudu (2015) revealed in their study in Nigeria that a significant difference exist in the level of adoption of blog sites among academic libraries (privately owned, State owned, and federal universities' libraries, $F = 4.404$, $df = 58$; $p < .05$). The level of adoption of sites in private universities was the highest (Mean = 4.84, SD = 4.33) than their colleague at the State (Mean = 3.13, SD = 1.41) and federal category (Mean = 3.64, SD = 2.87). In a nutshell, the use of the blog technology for the provision of information services is still at its infancy.

Weblogs are not recent Internet wonder because their use has been on from the late 1990s (Adeleke 2010). Lee and Bates (2007) noted that some definitions of blogs are based on its structural characteristics or on practical and structural put together. According to Bar-Illan (2007) weblogs are pages made up of a number of posts or large piece of information per page generally organized in reverse sequence of events. Furthermore, Walker (2003) defined a weblog as an often updated website that is made up of dated entries organized in opposite sequential arrangement so that the first post to be seen is the most current. Additionally, Mathes (2004) described weblogs as websites that show opposite consecutive ordering of posts in structuring. A fairly short chunk of content anywhere is termed a Post. These descriptions give emphasis to the methodological and essential physical characteristics of weblogs.

Pedley (2005) enumerated the characteristics of weblogs in more details as follows:

- Blogs are known to be used to respond to any observation on current information on newsworthy matters.
- Several blogs give person who reads them chance to remark on the postings or have access to author contact information straight away.
- A collection of earlier posted entries are available as well as easily reached by blog readers.

Chitumbo and Chew (2015) reported that the respondents listed the following as benefits of the use of blogs and other social media tools: 1. Delivery of numerous and up-to-date information like world news notices. 2. Social media tools major users (the youth) are easily reached. 3. Easier means of circulating information. 4. Enabling communication amongst the library and clientele. 5. Sharing of Information, outside school and library periods. The researchers further reported that there were a good number of issues like inadequate internet access, workstations, and connectivity. For the deployment of social media technologies to be fruitful, these challenges need to be taken care of. Nevertheless, a majority of the respondents acknowledged the benefit of using the tools in library service delivery.

Adeleke (2010) described weblog as an independent and facilitating entity that permits individuals short of web ability skills or technical understanding to announce their opinions as well as share them with others. This technology fits easily into the library web setting. It fits into the library setting because it can be deployed to supplement present and prevailing library services in developing world. Libraries create weblog for a number of reasons. Pedley (2005) emphasized some motives behind libraries' creation and maintenance of weblogs. The reasons consist of circulating information to librarians, attraction of traffic (readers) to a library's website, circulating

information to users about library news, resources and services, enhancing the library's website search engine ranking.

Blog can also be created as a means of raising funds for the libraries. Libraries in advance nations are using blogs creatively to stimulate library use. Blogging is a kind of discussion arrangement available on worldwide web and includes separate, but sometimes informal diary-type text records. University libraries in Nigerian have a very good opportunity to start blogging using Blogger.com. because it is free. After connecting the blogs to the websites of libraries they should also be networked to other social network platforms such as the libraries' Facebook page and Twitter account. Subsequently, libraries would apply for Google AdSense account as soon as there are sufficient blog entries. How does it work? Google put up advertisement in the library account. The moment somebody discovers and buys something as a result of the advert, the library receives a cut (pay) or commission (Simisaye, Salisu, and Awodoyin 2018). Blogs should be associated meaningfully and with good Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Making Google to rank library pages better is the idea behind the SEO. The more the blog is used, meaning more page hits, the more the commission. Nigerian libraries can introduce academic blogs that patrons would be required to pay certain token in order to use them. Also, when this is accomplished, additional monies and great compliment will be given to Nigeria libraries.

Some studies on blog's use in libraries

Any library wanting to remain relevant in this present age to its community must ensure that user-centered library services that meet the information needs of the 21st century patron are delivered. The main aim and emphasis of the present age library model is directed at the patron (21st Century Library Blog 2011, para, 3). According to Adewoyin, Adeleke, and Ikonne (2017), some studies have reported that the prevalent social media technology sites in use were Facebook, WhatsApp, You-tube, and Instant Message (IM) in that order in Nigerian information landscape.

Also, a study in New York revealed that below 42% of the libraries utilized blogs and other social media tools. In the study, Instant Messaging led the trail in relation to rate of use, and tailed by blogs, in addition to RSS (XU, Ouyang, and Chu 2009).

Obasola and Mamudu (2015) examined the usage of library 2.0 tools by academic libraries. The researcher inspected the websites of 230 academic libraries selected and 184 patrons, to look at the degree of implementation of the functionalities. The study revealed that RSS and blogs were extensively implemented by academic librarians, while some users make use of the bookmark function.

Chitumbo and Chew (2015) finding showed that blogs and Facebook were the media technologies commonly used to promote library and information resources and services. Results also revealed that librarians' use of blogs encourages two-way communication, by making interaction with library users stress-free. Also, the study by Oyemike, Okorafor, and Ekeruche (2017) revealed that blogs are used for reference services, current awareness services, and library news. The study also pointed out that a lot of rewards are derivable from implementation of the blog in service delivery in libraries. The numerous benefits derivable aside, implementation of library weblog was bedeviled with very low bandwidth and slow internet connectivity among other challenges the study further revealed.

Blogs' use challenges

Publicizing library resources, services, and packages virtually could be made stress-free with the help of a blog. Deployment of the technology, which is meant to enhance library services, could be unsuccessful due to limitations such as electricity generation and distribution. Writers have emphasized a number of negative effects of electricity outage on library services in Nigeria. Nok (2006) studied the issues involved in automating or mechanizing a university library in Nigeria and found that constant electricity outage was a major challenge, because the cost of using generator to power the system is too expensive. Likewise, Faloseyi (2011) cited electricity provision as a key issue for institutions of higher learning offering online services to their users in Nigeria because online libraries depend on electricity in addition to computer networks before it will be available for use. Similarly, Ossai-Ugba (2012) equated services delivered by university libraries in Nigeria with those in technologically advanced nations, and discovered that Nigerian students are denied access to their libraries for 7 h or more in a day due to constant electricity outages.

Still on challenges, Mathes (2004) noted that one of the issues with respect to a good number of weblogs includes inadequate metadata (bibliographic details) with respect to the information resource defined. The researcher argued further that a good number of weblog gears/tools define posts as a chunk of writing, and in some cases, with a date. Bibliographic details such as author, date of publication, subject detail, information about the institution, are usually not indicated in weblog posts.

Another challenge is that a number of weblogs group or classify their short chunk of content (posts), although several others don't (Mathes 2004). Post classification arrangement is generally an arrangement that is not of a continuous nature but developed by weblog writers. Librarians, who want to, may look for an enhanced and controlled terminology for their weblog

post classification, and deliberate on ways to incorporate into them prevailing schemes like Bliss, Dewey and Library of Congress classification.

Also, another challenge arising from categorization or classification is while the reverse sequential format/arrangement is completely valued for quick and easy recalls, it is imperfect for browsing a collection of information resources later.

Omeluzor, Tinuoye, and Abayomi (2016) in their study identified some challenges impeding the use of social networking tools in academic libraries as unpredictable electricity supply, insufficient expertise in the use of social networking technologies and other ICT facilities, inadequate consciousness of the importance of using the technologies, inadequate bandwidth, indifference arising from apathy toward innovative tools in addition to poor internet connection. Training and retraining of librarians in the use of emerging technologies should be prioritized and provision made for current internet resources, power supply, adequate bandwidth, and internet connection in order to improve information delivery.

Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) look at how Nigerian libraries can use social media tools and skills to provide dynamic library services in their investigation. The researchers agreed that social media tools have important part to play in libraries because librarians can use these tools to promote library and information services. In the study, the challenges identified that that were faced by Nigerian libraries in the use of social media were inadequate awareness of what social media can do in services delivery, inadequate trained staff, bandwidth issue, inadequate Government involvement and unpredictable power provision.

Odunayo and Adeyink (2017) examined entire 36 university libraries located in South Western Nigeria, where a thorough interview was done for units heads in the libraries. The examination reported that social media tools application to library services is presently noticeable amongst librarians in university library environment in the study area. The investigation identified Blog, Facebook, Twitter, amongst others as the social media in use by librarians, but Facebook site was noted to be mostly used. Furthermore, the assessment supports the fact that the libraries studied are using social media chiefly to interact with their Clienteles, deliver reference services, and circulate information to patrons on library services.

Higher Education institutions have cut down their reliance on old-style library service provision (Farkas 2007). This situation has made universities libraries to recognize that through social media platforms, services could be delivered to the users. Some higher institution libraries are presently making adequate use of the technologies to reach out to users in their various locations. In advance nations, researches have shown that blog technology has had major influence on university libraries' dispensing of information

(Muhammad and Khalid 2012). The allusion above cannot be said of university libraries in Nigeria.

Thanuskodi (2012) also in India surveyed the level of awareness of Library 2.0. integration among 60 library and information professionals at Annamalai University. The study found that 46.66% respondents were not aware of Web 2.0 applications being used in libraries while 53.33% respondents were aware. This shows that lots of the subjects investigated were aware of the web 2.0 tools (blogs, Twitter, etc.). Therefore, there is no doubt that blog technology has gradually made its mark in the university libraries in India.

Methods

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all sixty-four (64) librarians in the geopolitical zone. Since the population was not large, the entire 64 librarians were used as sample. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. The items in the instrument were structured on a 3-point Likert scale. Frequency counts, simple percentage, and mean were used to answer the research questions.

Findings and discussion

The questionnaire response rate is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 reveals that sixty-four copies of questionnaire were distributed to the librarians but 49 (76.6%) of them were retrieved and used for the study. This response rate was high.

Research Question 1: What is the librarians’ level of awareness regarding the purposes that blogs serve in university libraries?

The data in Table 2 were used to answer this question.

Table 2 indicates that all the 49 respondents were highly aware that library weblogs are used to “keep users informed about news, services, and

Table 1. Response rate.

Institutions	Librarians	No. Administered	No. Retrieved	%
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Library, Nsukka.	32	32	21	42.9
Federal University of Technology Library, Owerri.	16	16	13	26.5
Prof. Festus Aghagbo Nwako University Library, Awka.	9	9	9	18.4
Michael Okpara University of Agric. Lib. Umudike.	7	7	6	12.1
Total	64	64	49	100%

Table 2. Level of awareness of purposes of library blogs.

Purposes				
I am aware that Library blogs:				
	Highly Aware	Neutral	Not Aware	Mean
Keep users informed about library News, services and resources.	49	–	–	3.0
Draw users to a library's website.	40	–	9	2.6
Improves the sites search engine Positioning.	20	1	2.8	1.8
Are used to disseminate Information to Library staff.	49	–	–	3.0
Provide research tips to users.	43	4	2	2.8
Provide information or news to Trustees.	36	3	10	2.5
Grand Mean	2.6			

Source: Adeleke (2010).

resources” and “Disseminate information to library staff” with 3.0 as mean scores, respectively. Other items had scores above the cutoff point (2.0), except “To improve the sites search engine positioning” (1.8). The study concluded that with 2.6 as grand mean the librarians were highly aware of the purposes of library blogs.

Research question 2: What are the constraints to library weblog implementation in university libraries in South-East zone of Nigeria?

The data in Table 3 were used to answer research question two.

The data in Table 3 reveal that frequent electricity interruption is the greatest constraint to library blog implementation in federal universities in South-East, Nigeria with 3.0 as mean score. This followed by “Inadequate means of marketing the blog effectively” and “inadequate skilled librarians to manage the technology” with 2.9 mean scores, respectively. The study

Table 3. Constraints to implementation of library weblogs.

Constraints	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Mean
Frequent electricity interruption.	49	–	–	3.0
Inadequate means of marketing the Blog effectively.	42	7	–	2.9
Consistency in publishing blog posts overtime.	40	1	8	2.7
Inadequate development of readership Strategies.	28	13	8	2.4
Inadequate skilled librarians to Manage the technology.	47	2	–	2.9
Grand Mean	2.8			

Adeleke (2010).

concluded that aside other items listed as challenges, electricity provision is the greatest problem to the use of library weblog in university libraries.

Findings

Below are the findings:

- (1) Respondents are highly aware that library weblogs are used to keep users informed about news, services, and resources.
- (2) Frequent electricity interruption is the greatest constraint to implementation in federal universities in South-East, Nigeria. Electricity challenge was followed by inadequate skilled librarians to manage the technology, while inadequate means of marketing the blog effectively attracted the lowest response. This means that electricity provision is a challenge to weblogging activities in university libraries.

Discussion of findings

Respondents are aware that library weblogs are used to keep users informed about news, services, and resources. This finding is in line with Clyde (2004) finding cited by Adeleke (2010) and Anari's (2013). They revealed that a lot of libraries, whether public, private and those in academic institutions the world over are making use of blogs to deliver services to users. The technology is also used to create a friendly atmosphere for interaction, sharing visions and philosophies, as well as experiences with colleagues and significant others. Mishra (2008) noted that social media platforms can be deployed to start a library blog, podcast, as well as used to interview clientele and members of the public, and that 90.4% of librarians' in a study approved that blog platform is imperative for advertising and stimulating library services. From the foregoing, it is apparent that libraries use weblogs more for providing news and updates for library users than for other purposes.

Frequent electricity interruption is the greatest constraint to implementation in federal universities in South-East, Nigeria. Electricity challenge was followed by inadequate skilled librarians to manage the technology, while inadequate means of marketing the blog effectively attracted the lowest response. This means that electricity provision is a challenge to weblogging activities in university libraries.

The findings of this study corroborate Nok (2006) who found in his study on challenges to computerization of library services, that power outage is among the main challenges. The low level electrification has affected several areas of Nigerian lives. Also, Ossai-Ugba (2012) while likening services rendered by university libraries in Nigeria and those in industrialized nations observed that students in Nigerian cannot access their libraries for

7 h in a day as a result of a number of challenges which includes inadequate power supply. Electricity provision's role in the socio-economic and technological development of every nation cannot be overemphasized. The nation is encountering severe electricity challenge, and this is impeding advancement in the face of availability of enormous natural assets. Generally, it has been established that a strong correlation exist between access to adequate electricity and socio-economic improvement (Sambo et al. 2010).

Adewoyin, Adeleke, and Ikonne (2017) investigated the influence of social media use on library service delivery by librarians in the Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Unreliable electricity provision, pitiable and inadequate internet access as well as insufficient ICT equipment were some of the challenges occasioned in the deployment and usage of social media tool such as the blog.

Awareness regarding the use of the blog for effective and efficient library functions should be made to bear on library management and Chief librarians. The Management of these institutions of higher education should fashion a facilitating atmosphere for the training and retraining of librarians. The training should be on web technology generally, make provision for adequate internet access as well as take care of the erratic power supply challenge.

Inadequate Internet access is a serious limitation in the application of the blog in library service delivery, and this is tied to low bandwidth (Ezeani and Igwesi (2012)). The researchers noted further that a lot of institutions have limited bandwidth and this situation could discourage effective virtual integration and involvement.

The relationship between library weblog and electricity provision cannot be exaggerated. This finding agrees with Omeluzor, Tinuoye, and Abayomi (2016) and Sambo et al. (2010). The relationship is glaring. The electricity provision crisis in Nigerian is a difficult challenge and it originated from problems that have been there for a very long period. This is about the inability of the Nigerian power segment to make available sufficient electricity in order to develop quickly. At present, merely 40% of Nigerians are connected electricity-wise (Aliyu, Ramli, and Saleh 2013), and the normal day to day electricity provision is projected at 4 h, however, a number of days passes devoid of electricity (Kaseke and Hosking 2013). Adequate power supply is a compulsory requirement to the use of blog as a social media technology. Electrical energy generation, transmission and sharing require enormous sum of money and adequate staff. According to Sambo et al. (2010), in Nigeria, the usual state of affairs where access to funds is gradually decreasing, innovative answers are needed to remedy the electricity provision challenge.

Research implication

Actually, energies have been dispensed in the United State of America and other advance nations to encourage the use of social media technologies such as blogs in academic institutions' libraries. However, very limited research effort has been done in the developing world such as Nigeria to foster the deployment of social media technologies in libraries in higher education institutions.

In order to sustain the application of blogs and other allied social media technologies, university libraries should source for alternative power supply. With the funds generated from alternative source(s), the use of generators or solar energy could be maintained.

Conclusion

Information about library news, resources as well as services are the main purpose of creating and maintaining blogs in university libraries. However, this laudable purpose has been constrained by epileptic nature of electricity provision in the university communities as indicated by respondents. Also revealed in the study is the challenge of inadequate skilled librarians to manage the blogs. Managing e-resources in libraries entails managing change. As new skills evolve librarians must also change to enable them fit into e-resources environment.

It was recommended that Library Authorities should train and retrain librarians on the nitty-gritty of weblog technology, and that government should provide adequate funds to the libraries to enable them provide alternative means of electricity supply.

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