Accessibility And Use Of Internet in Prof. Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library At Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

Authors

Aghauche E.E, Ogbodo E.U, Nwosu C.C.

1,3Department of Library & Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria,
2Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria,
Email- ogbodoeu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study was aimed at examining the use of the internet in Prof. Festus Aghagbo Nwako library, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The population of the study was 4,000 registered users in the 2010/2011 academic session, out of which 10% was randomly sampled which is 400, and 6 library staff heading various departments in the library. In all the sample size were 406 respondents. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The findings revealed among others that the level of accessibility of the internet by library users was high, most of the respondents use the internet facilities provided by the university library and most of the respondents also depended on the point of internet access provided by the university library more than how they depended on cyber cafés and laptops. It was also revealed that challenges confronting users were problems of accessibility, hanging of the computer, poor electricity supply among others.

INTRODUCTION

Inadequacy of current and relevant information for teaching, learning and research has been the bane of university education in Nigeria. Efforts had also been made to improve the situation through inter library loan and documentation delivery services, but the challenges persisted (Adika, 2003). It was in the light of this that the introduction of the internet served as a relief measure in bridging the existing information gap. The internet began in 1969 as ARPA Net (Advanced Research Project Agency Network) by the US Department of Defence to share military intelligence and research with university sources. The internet has since 1990’s become a widely used civilian tool for communication, research, entertainment, education, advertisement and so on. The internet has become an integral part of university education as it plays an...
undisputable role in meeting information and communication needs of staff and students. The internet has made it possible for scholars at different locations on the globe to exchange ideas on various fields of study and also allows students and lecturers to communicate both within and across international borders (Luambano and Nawe, 2004). Internet accessibility and use in Nigeria started in 1991 when a few pioneering groups began to offer limited e-mail services (Eshekels Associates, 2001). Users had to pay for both access and usage for sending and receiving e-mail messages, with the billing system being based on the length of message being sent.

The history of the internet has long been linked to university education. This is because of the adoption of the intensified access to email messages, web boards, online services, e-publications and so on. Professor Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, was established alongside the mother institution in 1982. Internet services became available in the library in 2009. Though the service was slow, it was made available for every authorized user. The focus of this study therefore is to find out the accessibility and use of internet in the university library.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM
Since the introduction of ICT into library operations, the use of internet has become an integral part of university library system. However it appears that the level of internet service provided by the university libraries differs. It also seems that there are factors that affect the level of accessibility and usage of internet service by library patrons. Hence, this study seeks to determine the level of accessibility and use of internet by library users.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The main purpose of the study is to determine the level of accessibility and use of internet services by library patrons in Professor Festus Aghagbo Nwako library, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is aimed at determining:

i. accessibility of internet in the library
ii. users knowledge on internet usage
iii. how often and the type of materials they use the internet for
iv. point of internet access
v. the purpose for using the internet
vi. the problems users encounter in using the internet services provided by the library.

Research Questions
The following research question guided the study:

I. To what extent is the internet accessible to library users?
II. how knowledgeable are the users on the use of internet?
III. how often do the users surf and what type of materials do they use the internet for.
IV. to what extent does the point of internet access influence its use?
V. for what purpose do they use the internet.
VI. what are the challenges of using internet in the library?

LITERATURE

The internet is a network of linked computers which are located at different points all over the world that provided easy communication between persons and organizations no matter where they are located. The internet is used mainly in obtaining information. The major functional advantage of the internet stems from its willingness to share information with others so that everyone might benefit. It is the largest network in the world that allows computer users to communicate and access electronic databases with ease.

The digital age has brought with it innovations such as internet services to bridge the seemingly gap that had existed between traditional and modern methods of information organization and delivery in libraries. The advent of computer networks has ushered a new path to the library and has given a new dimension to the traditional jobs of the library. Oduwole et al (2002) noted that one of the major characteristics of the information age, today is the growth of information services of various kinds in archives, libraries, museums and formal educational institution which accounted for the bulk of what could be classified as information. The growth in technological development in the field of computer networks is boosting the functions and operations of Nigerian libraries. Daramola (2004) maintained that an observable trend in the internet is that more and more resources are moving to it and in some cases being made available on in the internet. In line with this, Rahman (2002) observed that the process of retrieval and dissemination of information services in libraries has witnessed a rapid growth because of the computer networks. Hence, Nigerian libraries can successfully manage the exponential growth of information with the help of this technology. In the same vein, Oduwale et al (2002) stated that internet is the best innovation the world has ever embraced.

Internet usage has increased over the years, with contained growth expected. Gatenby (2003) stated that the greatest phenomenon of recent years has been explosion of the internet. it was reported that overwhelming majority of faculty members use internet resources frequently (Ciolek, 1999) Luambano and Nawe (2004) also pointed out that installation of the internet at the university of Dares Salaam changed the learning environment by facilitating access to a wide range of journal databases in various academic disciplines. It provides them with full-text journal articles, abstracting and indexing services, etc. On the other hand, Ojedokun and Owolabi (2003) in their study, found out that lecturers perceived the internet to be more useful for research and teaching than the traditional university library. Moreover, libraries which have been hard pressed to meet the rising cost of printed journals, found their burdens eased somewhat by cheaper
access to a vast range of electronic journals accessible on the internet. With the internet, researchers and students can obtain information which previously would have required trip to a specialist library. However, its relevance notwithstanding, internet accessibility and use seem to bedeviled with some challenges. These challenges tend to hamper the exploitation of information resources in the internet. It is in the light of this that Salaam (2003) identified poor telecommunication system, unreliable electricity supply, lack of internet service providers in some parts of the country, and poor funding of the university system as major problems militating against accessibility of internet facilities. Also, Kamba (2008) discovered the problem of I.T especially internet use in Nigerian libraries to include inadequate and poor information infrastructure.

On the other hand, lack of requisite skill has negative effect on internet use. Nwokedi (2007) posited that lack of searching skills is still hindering good use of internet. He asserted that acquisition of internet skills can lead to discovery of valuable research and teaching resources, which would in turn cause the users to use the internet to enhance their research and learning capabilities. Internet access ability would be expected to stimulate regular use of the internet and minimize the perceived barriers to its use. In addition, Oyesika and Oduwale (2004) in their study of the use of academic libraries discovered that majority of the users do not have the requisite skills and as such shy away from the use of information technology.

**METHOD**

The research design used for the study was case study. Questionnaire was used to collect data from 406 respondents randomly selected from the registered users in 2010/2011 academic session.

**RESULTS**

Research Question 1

To what extent is the internet accessible to the library users.

**Table 1: Accessibility of internet to library users**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very accessible</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>87.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly accessible</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>12.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not accessible</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I shows that 355 (87.44%) of the respondents said that the internet was accessible to them while 51(12.56%) of them were of the opinion that the internet was slightly accessible to them. No respondent said that it was not accessible to him. This implies that internet services are very accessible to majority of the respondents.

Research Question 2

What is the point of access?
Table 2: Point of access of internet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal laptops</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber cafés</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>24.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University Library</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>50.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/colleagues laptops</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from table 2, 206 (50.74%) of the respondents access the internet through university library, 100 (24.63%) of them through their friends’ or colleagues’ laptops and only 30 (7.39%) of the respondents access the internet through their laptops. There is clear evidence here that majority of the respondents access the internet through the university library.

Research Question 3
Do the library users have knowledge of internet usage?

Table 3: Knowledge of internet usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>99.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures on table 3 indicated that 402 (99.01%) respondents affirmed that they were knowledgeable in internet use, while only 4 (0.99%) stated otherwise. This simply showed that quite a good number of the respondents have knowledge of internet usage.

Research Question 4
How often do you use the internet facilities in the university library?

Table 4: Use of internet facilities in the library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>57.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>26.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very often</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have not used at all</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that 234 (57.64%) of the respondents used the internet very often, and 108 (26.60%) respondents use it often. On the other hand, 53 (13.05%) did not use the internet very often while 11 (2.71%) have not used the internet in the university library at all.

Research Question 5
What is the purpose for using internet?
Table 5: Purpose for using internet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sending and receiving mails</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>73.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For assignment</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>73.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To supplement course materials</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>50.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For literature review</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>32.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To publish articles</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>34.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For current awareness</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>73.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To register courses</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>49.26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures on table 5 shows that while 298 (73.39%) of respondents send and receive mails through the internet, 300 (73.89%) use it for assignment and 204 (50.25%) respondents use the internet to get information to supplement course materials.

The figures on table 5 show that 300 (73.89%) of the respondents use the internet for assignments and current awareness services, 298 (73.39%) of them use it to send and receive e-mails, 204 (50.25%) use it to get information to supplement their course materials, 200 (49.26%) use it to register courses, 140 (34.48%) for publishing articles while 130 (32.02%) use it to get information for literature review.

Research Question 6
What are the challenges the users encounter during usage?

Table 6: Challenges users encounter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem of accessibility</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>66.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging of the computer</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor electricity supply</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to download information</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude of the attendants</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 reveals that as many as 310 (77.5%) of the respondents saw the attitude of the attendants as a major challenge in the course of using the internet, 300 (75%) of them were of the opinion that hanging of the computer was a problem, 265 (66.25%) saw accessibility of the internet as a hindrance, 200 (50%) of them said poor electricity supply was one of the problems hindering internet use, while 90 (22.5%) of the respondents also saw inability to download information as a problem.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were reached:

- Internet facilities provided by the university library are easily accessible to the library users: the level of accessibility of the internet by the library users were very high.

- Most of the respondents depend on the point of internet access provided by the university library more than how they depend on cyber café’s and the use of laptops.
- Library users possess knowledge of use of the internet.
- Most of the respondents use the internet very often.
- Most of the respondents use the internet facilities provided by the university for writing assignments, sending and receiving mails, getting information for supplementing course materials, reviewing of literature current awareness and for registering courses.
- Problems encountered by internet users in the library include accessibility, hanging of computer system, poor electricity supply, inability to download information and poor attitude of the attendants.

Thus, the following recommendations are suggested:
- There should be an improvement on the internet facilities provided in the university library in order to limit the problems encountered by users in the course of usage.
- Recent models of computers and high speed telecommunication facilities should be provided. More band widths should be sought to provide faster access.
- A maintenance programme should be put in place in preparation for regular maintenance, up-grading and repairs.
- Users should also be provided with opportunities for formal training to acquire skills on effective internet use.

**REFERENCE**

1. Adika, G. (2003) Internet use among faculty members of Universities in Ghana
2. Library Review 52(1) 22- 37.