



The Place of Library and Computer on Provision of Information Services

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to assess the prospects of computerization in public library Onitsha in Anambra state. The purpose of the study is to know the future possibilities and benefits of computerization in the storage of information, retrieval, and to find the effects of computerization on information services. In order to educate the public on the importance of computerization and internet data base library. It includes the problems and how it could be solved, to enhance and create our atmosphere conducive and comfortable for learning. The descriptive survey design was adopted, while the simple random sampling techniques was used to select a sample size of (50) fifty persons and (45) forty-five were retrieved as respondents. Data was collected were compiled and analyzed in frequency table and percentage method. The findings obtained; consequently, revealed that computerization is a welcome idea which enables the clientele of the library and staff to be motivated. It has been discovered that computerization of the library service will enhance information storage, packaging and retrieval in the establishment. On the above findings, conclusion was drawn and recommendation made for further studies.

INTRODUCTION

Computerization as a form of mechanization is a sophisticated process of replacing human labour and more particularly that of house-keeping task with computers. Therefore, the processing of all routine clerical function “leading to the showing process of retrieval of library material”, with the assistance of computer mechanized and semi-automatic process is made easier and this is known as computerization. As computerization is implied above, it is then the basic application of computers and other forms of technologies for the processing of library operation. “Public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. These are maintained from public funds and can be found in towns and cities. Their services are generally available free of charge in the public and their collections tend to cover all fields of knowledge. Most public library services are extended to remote areas through a mobile library service. Over the years, before the implementation of computerization in the public library, storage and retrieval of library materials has not been easy and proper documentation is inevitable. This process started in the year 1995 by UNESCO’S CDS/ISIS software package, which enables us (librarians to create a text database, it was first in Delhi public library). This application help library users to enjoy and motivate the use of library materials.

In Nigeria educational activities started with the arrival of white men who introduce their religion to us. In process, churches and schools were established. They also set up some reading rooms which existed in various part of Nigeria. These reading rooms were set up by the public relation department. This was done to disseminate information about the war. The earliest libraries in Nigeria were special libraries which were set up by colonial masters for the exploitation of Nigeria resources. Seminars were organized about public libraries in Africa and it was held at University College Ibadan, between 27th July and 21st August, 1953.

The Libraries in Africa Countries and Some UNESCO Experts were Participated in the Seminar

During that time, Eastern library Board was established to cater for the need of the people within the region. They established four divisional libraries; Onitsha library was among the libraries established with civil war that took place in Nigeria in 1967. Libraries were greatly affected which resulted to the abolition of some libraries for instance Onitsha divisional library was established in 1965 and during the civil war the library was used at Onitsha High Court until 1972 when the library was renovated and opened for users for consultation. Following the creation of nineteen states in 1973, the Anambra state was created out of region, just like Imo state. This board was set up to serve the people within their community. The acquisition of this library was mainly through the study flow of processed materials from Enugu which includes adult and junior reference materials, lending materials such as fiction and non-fiction categories, local and overseas newspapers and periodicals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Statement of the Problem

Computerization of library services seemed to be very complex to use because most users are not computer informed. According to Okwor (1996), there are many problems facing computerization in public libraries such as inadequate power supply, lack of communication infrastructure and scarce human resources. These have slowed down the activities of public libraries in utilizing the global information for the service of the clientele.

Research Questions

1. What areas of library operation are computerized in your public library?
2. What are the factors considered in computerizing the public library?
3. What effects will computerization have in your public library?
4. What are the possible problems of computerization in the public library?
5. How will the problem be solved in public library?

In decades ago the access point to some library materials were difficult due to the overcrowding populace who are library explorers, everyone needed to access the library materials in order to acquire knowledge through process of searching books and non-books materials; due to the volume of some of these materials, library users were discouraged because before they could get the information they need for their use in their various field of study, they have to read a high volume of chapters which makes study un-encouraging and tedious for them; during this period library users were lukewarm and are not interested in research and study.

However, there has been steady increase in the current awareness that computers can be used to enhance the overall library effectiveness. This trend was largely due to widespread availability of computers and production of convenience cheap model.

The application of system in accessing fact from library materials by users becomes easier and fast which tends to encourage the library user to be more effective in the library.

METHODOLOGY

The Benefits of Computerization in Public Library Onitsha

The computer as an electronic device has contributed immensely on the aspect of library due to its efficacy in processing data and is very fast in the retrieval of information, points out some benefits of using computers in libraries which includes:

- a. Speed: Computers help to process information very fast. The speed with which computers perform their work approximates the speed of light. In libraries such routine duties as circulation control, listing of serials holdings, acquisitions and cataloguing are performed faster than the traditional manual method.
- b. Improved performance: When the clerical routine in the library are performed by computer, librarians will have more time to formulate

- policies and take management decision. This in turn will lead to improved planning and also equitable distribution of work load.
- c. Permanent storage of information: (Edem, 1989) state that expressed computerization is likely to be of great help in information storage and retrieval. This reduces the amount of time spent in keeping records and also helps to combat space problems. With computers storage facilitates, records can be kept for a longtime and protect from unforeseen circumstance.
 - d. Dependability: Though computers may occasionally breakdown, they are not bored and more dependable than human beings.
 - e. Creation of new services: With computers, libraries can offer a series of new services where there is need for such services. These services include; relent accession lists, listing of the library holdings in a special way, current awareness services (SDI) selective dissemination of information. Also interpreting books borrowed by subject, clientele and form of materials. (Uchedili 2006) stated that there are other facilities that the library has also created through computers; examples are; reduction of cost in purchase of material, and control of library materials in a perfect order without defacing or stealing.

The Problems of Computerization in Public Library

There are problems, which can hinder effective computerization of library services. These problems include the following:

- a. Inadequate funds: The cost of installing a computer can be high some popular makes of mainframe computers cost immensely to purchase. Many libraries in developing countries cannot source funds for this sort of purchase. Also, the cost of training and paying the highly specialized technical manpower is high.
- b. Computer space parts are not available locally (Technological man powers are limited): This implies that these parts will have to be imposed. In addition, there are problems of air fight charges and custom duties. These difficulties sometimes cause considerable delays in restoring a damaged computer and sometimes lead to abandonment of equipment (Abubakar, 1994).
- c. Problems of condition of use: Computers are efficient which they are used to process large amount of numeric information such as industrial and business organization. However, libraries are the greatest users of non-numeric information. This means that the potentials of computers are not fully exploited in libraries. The work load is concerned with the annual rate of acquisition.

The Effective Use of Computerization in Public Library

The articles "computerization efforts in Botswana libraries, a state of art review" described various partial computer applications in Botswana libraries (Adeniran 1997).

In a fully computerized library system, the various operations and services are integrated. In this sort of situation, library users can access catalogue details, serial information and so on from one of the computer terminals located within or outside the library building. In buttressing this further, expressed that computerization is likely to be of great help in

information storage and retrieval. The computer's ability to survey and review a large body of information in a short place of time is exactly what any user, a professional librarian needs when he seeks to draw attention to important facts. He explained the storage capacity of computer or storage and shows that an America laser process can now deposit 650 million bits of information one square inch tape.

Table 1. Summary of Educational Background of the Respondents

| Background | No of respondent | Percentage |
|------------|------------------|------------|
| Literate | 40 | 89% |
| Illiterate | 5 | 11% |
| Total | 45 | 100% |

From the above table showed that 89% respondents are literate while 11% are illiterate.

Table 2. Summary of Occupational Status of Respondents

| Occupation | No of respondent | Percentage |
|------------|------------------|------------|
| Skilled | 40 | 89% |
| unskilled | 5 | 11% |
| Total | 45 | 100% |

From the above table 89% are skilled (worker) while 11% are unskilled (worker).

Table 3. Summary of Respondent Personnel Categories

| Personnel | No. of respondent | Percentage |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| professionals | 10 | 22% |
| Para professional | 30 | 67% |
| Non-librarian | 5 | 11% |
| Total | 45 | 100% |

From the above table the professionals in Onitsha public library comprises of three staff members who head the acquisition and administrative wing of the library.

The chief librarian who is the overall head of the library sees tp the whole administration of the library. These are 22% while the para-professionals are 67% and this comprises of 30 staff, who handle various activity in the library and 11% are non-librarians who take care of security operation and cleaning of the library.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

What area of library operation do you want to be computerized?

Table 4. Presentation of Result

| Options | Responses | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Cataloguing | 15 | 33% |
| Acquisition | 5 | 11% |
| Serials control | 5 | 11% |

| | | |
|----------------------------|----|------|
| Current awareness services | 20 | 44% |
| Total | 45 | 100% |

In the table above the survey carried out revealed that 33% of the respondents agreed that the library need computerized cataloguing system, 11% opined for acquisition and another 11% suggested for serials control renumbering be computerized whole 44% agreed that current awareness services should be computerized.

What are the factors considered in computerizing the public library?

Table 5. Research Question Two

| Options | Responses | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Improvement in information retrieval | 20 | 44% |
| Storage retrieval | 10 | 22% |
| Information dissemination | 15 | 30% |
| Total | 45 | 100% |

The above data gathered from the question on what factors are considered in computerizing the public library 44% of the respondents indicated that improvement in information retrieval will improve in information, 22% of the respondents consider storage and retrieval help to ease circulation process in the library. While 15% agreed that information dissemination will aid the computerization of the public library.

What effects will computerization have in your public library?

Table 6. Research Question Three

| Options | Responses | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Improvement in information dissemination | 30 | 67% |
| Economy of time | 5 | 11% |
| Improvement in information circulation | 10 | 22% |
| Total | 45 | 100% |

Data gathered from the above shows that 67% agreed that computerization will improve information dissemination in public library, 11% says that it will improve in economy of time, 22% will be highly improved in information circulation in computerization of public library. This result shows that computerization has a wild benefit on the library operation.

What are the possible problems of computerization in the public library?

Table 7. Research Question Four

| Options | Responses | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Maintenance problem of equipment | 20 | 44% |
| Funding | 10 | 22% |
| Technological man power are limited | 9 | 20% |
| Inadequate power on the equipment | 6 | 13.3% |
| Total | 45 | 100% |

From the above table; the data gather shows that 44% says that the problems of computerization is maintenance of equipment. 22% says is funding (finance) to run the computerized services, 20% says it is lack of technological

man power. 13.3% says it is the insufficient air conditioning process. This shows that for computerization to be effective there must be equilibrium of material and human resources.

Table 8. Research Question Five

| Options | Responses | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Organizing seminars on computerized library | 15 | 33% |
| Creating awareness of computer usage | 20 | 44% |
| Installation of database in the library | 10 | 22% |
| Total | 45 | 100% |

In the table above the survey carried out revealed that 33% respondents says that the computerization problems in the library can be solved through seminar and workshop, 44% says it can be remedied by creating awareness of computer usage, while 22% says the problems can be solved by installation of data base in the computerized system in the library and with this it is clear that the appropriate knowledge of computer and cuter rate can solve the problems in computerized public library.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the evaluation of the data obtained, it was noticed that the computerization of public library will be able to keep the library clientele abreast of new development in their research work. And this shows that the staff needs in service training to upgrade their knowledge of the computer so as to be able to handle the computer when finally installed. And this will make the services in Onitsha public library to enhance information storage, packaging and retrieval of information easily. The prospects of computerization are high, considering the fact, that storage and retrieval of information in library is like a living organism. Finally, the application of computer in public library Onitsha will definitely be a well appreciated venture of the library.

From the above research, the following are recommended to ensure that the prospects of computerization in public library will be effective in Onitsha public library.

- There should be continuous educational training for staff
- There is need for staff (professional and non-professional) to have the update knowledge of computer to ensure effective knowledge.
- Government should also allocate funds and equipment needed for internet accessories and computers to the library.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research is still needed on this topic "The Place of Library and Computer on Provision of Information Services".

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