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DIGITAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICES (CAS) IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN BENUE STATE

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ABSTRACT

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The study investigated the digital training requirements for Current awareness service in the University Libraries in Benue State. Two specific objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population for the study was 190 Library staffs from 3 university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria (Joseph Sarwua Tarka University Makurdi, Benue State University, Makurdi and University of Mkar, Mkar). All the 190 library staffs from the three Universities were used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire titled "Assessment of Digital Training Requirements for Service Delivery in University Libraries" (ADTRSDUL). The questionnaire was validated by three experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. Data collected was analyzed using Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that librarians possessed skills such as searching network databases among others for information service (IS) in University libraries in Benue State. The Findings of the study also revealed that librarians required digital training skills such as Effective use of social networking among other for Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University libraries in Benue State. The study concluded that, there are a plethora of digital training requirements for current Awareness Services in the University libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. Recommendations were made that Librarians should take training serious to acquire digital skills required for current awareness services for effective information service delivery in the University libraries in Benue State. The study established that Librarians required digital training for information service delivery particularly Current Awareness Services (CAS) for service delivery in University libraries in Benue State. In conclusion, University libraries without doubt have move to a trend of digital economy through rich digital skills, resource and services.

Keywords: Digital, CAS, E-Library, Library, Resources, Universities.

INTRODUCTION

It is a generally accepted fact that Librarians in the University Libraries particularly in Benue State are being faced with challenges in keeping users up-to-date with current literature and required services occurring in the library. Current awareness service (CAS) is one of the fore most information services in university libraries particularly in this digital age. Current awareness service generally according to Kpakiko, (in Agor and Omekwu 2013) means the information in brief regarding any particular topic or group of topics. Though, it depends upon the users specifications of information need.

The main purpose of current Awareness service is the informing of users about information in their libraries. Current awareness service is a key tool for information service delivery in University libraries and even in information centers at large. The main important for CAS is making users to stay current in their area of specializations thereby play a significant role in keeping library users abreast in different areas of their need and the users need it in their respective area of studies for contributing to the transformation and development of a society and the societies at large.

The 21st century has witnessed an unprecedented information services particularly current awareness services by digital technologies. Digital libraries are information organizations that offer digital information resources and services to information seekers because of the high level of library users' demand. This has compelled librarians into digital training on new technological applications to enhance service delivery. In terms of infrastructures, libraries now devote much space to computer facilities, and librarians undergo additional training to be well-equipped for effective use of social networking, Web publishing, Web publishing, Digital archiving and preservation, Database management systems, email alert, Internet surfing, Internet surfing, Online databases, among. There were numerous studies on digital training yes Librarians must be empowered with all necessary digital training skills to embark on rigorous training and retraining programs, workshops, conferences and seminars. (Abdulkadir in Mantilla 2023).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the years University libraries have being played the traditional roles of Contents-by Journal Service, Documentation Bulletins or Current Awareness Lists, Research-in-Progress Bulletins, Newspaper Clipping Service, Library bulletin and newsletters List of latest resources acquired (New arrivals), Topical bibliographical on demand, Contents page service , Routing of periodicals, News clipping service, Abstract bulleting, List of microform documents, Commercial current content service, Telephone service among others. Its inadequacies of the services have lead to the

application of digital technologies, however, today wherein we are living in a world of digitals with Google Assistant, where libraries have come to rely on technology to find information and provide answers to users information needs. This means that the emerged digital library has come to add enormous values to information service delivery in University libraries.

The importance of digital trained librarians particularly in the digital environment is in the area of improvement of information services delivery such as current awareness. The researcher has also observed that most of the above listed advantages are yet to be fully actualized by several university libraries despite the availability of digital infrastructures in many of the university libraries. This could be attributed to the lack of required digital training to utilize the digital information systems.

Therefore, this has necessitated this study in order to assess the digital training requirements for current awareness services in the University libraries in Benue State.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to assess the digital training requirements for current awareness service in university libraries in Benue State. Specifically, the study sought to assess the;

1. Digital training skills possessed by the librarians for information service delivery in Universities in Benue State, Nigeria
2. Digital training required for Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University libraries in Benue State

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the digital training skills possessed by the librarians for information service in the University libraries in Benue State?
2. What are the digital training required for Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University libraries in Benue State?

CONCEPT OF CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE

One of the key responsibilities of a library is to scrutinize publications immediately after receipt, and make a selection of publications pertinent to the programme of the organization and bring individual item to the attention of the users to whom it concerns. Current Awareness Services (CAS) has to do with keeping patrons' up-to-date about their newly existing information need purchase by the library. The library ensures that the users' information needs are satisfied through enlightenment or awareness programs or channels such as routing of periodicals, current contents of information resources, list of the bibliographic records, current

awareness bulletins, press cuttings, list of on-going and anticipated seminars, conferences and workshops (Emmanuel, 2018). University library is constantly on the job of informing the library patrons of current information resources available in any format.

While considering the aims of current awareness service in the service delivery in the library, Kpakiko and Shehu (in Kpakiko, Suleiman *and* Abubakar) opine that university libraries should emphasize on user friendly, modern and dynamic technological tools such as university website, library portal, Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds, mobile Short Message Service (SMS), email services, facebook, whatsapp group, library blogs, twitter, online discussion groups among others to notify users timely what the library has for them. Users needs update information in their respective area of studies. Information needs of library patron demand for a specialized and timely information delivery in various formats particularly digitals that will keep them abreast no their daily functions and research work.

Digital library is a new trend, in this regards Uzohue and Yaya, (2016) state that tools needs for CAS include internet and web 2.0 technologies, Online medical and Bibliographic databases like; (Medline/pub med, Hinari, Ajol, Elsevier, Science direct, EBSCO and OPAC- online catalogues), Use of social networking Media like (blogs, rich site summary, Face book, MySpace, YouTube among others.), Mobile phone services such as sending of bulk text messages, e-mail and e-alert services, packaging of information to meet specific demands, analysis and interpretation of information. In this context if I may ask "how can librarians cope with delivering services they did not have the skills to offer? The answer is that librarians earnestly required digital training such as; Communication literacy, Attention to details, internet surfing, online databases, effective use of social networking. It is a known fact that Current Awareness Services is an attempt to inform the library patrons of current library information resources available in any format which required the skills mentioned above particularly skills on social networking. Some examples of web-based current awareness services are Entry Point myZD-Net IDEAL ALert, Wiley Book Notification Services, listserv, webzines among other (Madu, as cited in Emmanuel, 2018).

The key important reason for CAS is making users to stay current in their area of specializations. The required digital training ensures that the users' information needs are satisfied through enlightenment channels like routing of periodicals, current contents of information resources, lists of the bibliographic records, current awareness bulletins, press cuttings, list of on-going and anticipated seminars, conferences and workshops (Emmanuel, 2018). One very impressive and effective revolution brings by digital technologies is the enhancement in the speed of information service deliveries in University libraries.

CONCEPT OF DIGITAL LIBRARIES

Digital libraries are virtual organizations that comprehensively collect, manage and preserve for the long depth of time rich digital contents, and offer to its targeted user communities. Digital libraries are much more than a random assembly of digital objects. Digital library provides a collection of a very large numbers of digital objects (documents, images, and sounds) stored in a distributed information repository and access through national Digital libraries are information organizations that offer digital information resources and services to information seekers.

The main purpose of digital libraries is to meet the far broader information challenges of the university communities thereby improve the existing services. Mbajorgu, (2012) contributes that, the basic reasons for digitizing the university libraries resources and services include; library continuous better services delivery to patrons and better options of the library services. The Importance of the digital libraries over the traditional libraries is emphasized due to its benefits of improved access through internet and compact Disc-Read only memory (CD ROM) virtually from anywhere anytime, wider access through multiple interfaces, improved information sharing and improved preservation. In the light of this, Kumar and Kaur (in Mbajorgu 2012) note that, digital library emerged as the powerful tool for creating awareness to information. With digitals, information is just at a finger touch away from the users.

Development of digital libraries in Nigerian Universities started with the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) gradually evolved into computerization of libraries in 1970s. However, the widespread efforts of computerizing and automating library operations and services started in the early 1990s which metamorphous into digital libraries. The giant step associated with the digital libraries development in Nigeria is the Nigeria Virtual Library Project in early part of 2002 by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the National workshop organized by UNESCO on the Pilot Virtual Library Project in May 2003. The mission was to provide, in an equitable and cost effective manner, enhanced awareness and access to national and international library and information resources and for sharing locally-available resources with libraries all over the world using digital technology (Magoi, 2014).

There are three major components of digital library. These includes; digital information systems, digital librarian and the digital information resources.

DIGITAL TRAINING SKILLS

Digital Training: This is an organized training on digitals for librarians to attain or acquire the required digital knowledge, skills, value and positive attitude on the digital library. According to Kennan (2022) digital literacy skills are important because they enable access

to information and engagement with government and support services that are increasingly provided online. The aim of digital training is the intelligent facilitation of knowledge accessibility and use through appropriate interrelation with digital information systems. Digital training skills play a distinctive and dynamic role in easy accessing of computer-held digital information including abstracts, indexes, full text databases, sound video recording in digital formats so that they are always available and accessible for use by the intended user communities via constant informing. Therefore without well- digital training, digital libraries cannot reach their full potentials. Many university libraries have suffered deviant services despite the availability of enormous digital infrastructures as a result of lack of digital skills. Shidi and Nwachukwu (2015) on the research work "Acquisition of Digital Library Skills by Library Staff in Benue State" reveal that library staff in tertiary institutions, Benue claimed to have attained the training required of them to effectively work in the digital environment but observe the lack of the basic training skills needed to work well in the library. Productive service requires competencies even where the infrastructural facilities are adequately made available. This justifies the needs for training for librarians working in the digital library for better provision current literatures and users' awareness

Some of the areas required digital training that are fundamental to Librarians in this digital trends to handle task for current awareness services includes social media, web publishing, Software applications and installations, Microsoft word application and graphic presentation, Internet and web browsing, Desktop and publishing, Digital photograph and video editing.

CONCEPT OF DIGITAL TRAINING SKILLS POSSESSED BY THE LIBRARIANS

Digital training fully focused on accumulation and dispense of expert knowledge and skills. The expert knowledge here linked with prescribed abilities or competencies. Shidi and Nwachukwu, (2015) reveal that library staff in tertiary institutions in Benue State do not possessed the required knowledge and skills to fully take the advantage of the upsurge information available in the digital information world. The authors discover the lack of computer operation skills like turning computer on, opening a folder, copying a file from one disc to another, scanning among others, which they recommend the mastery of the use of application software such as word processor, print out a document and operating in a networked environment.

Library and information centers are services oriented organizations therefore needed the digital skills standard for operation of compact disk, visual compact disk, DVD, CD-ROM searching service, digital electronic mail, world wide web, user net, telnet, file transfer Protocol, remote access, internet chat, internet feeds, create share and collaborate on documents online, video

and teleconferencing, live online help from librarians, social medias such as blog) among others needed by the lecturers, students, non-teaching staff and the entire member of the local communities where the library is established. There is wider gap between the digital trained staff and those who had not in terms of service delivery hence services are offer based on intellectual ability. The emerging global digital libraries centers on competence digital librarians to manage the digital knowledge resources to improve existing services. In every career, especially in the library and Information profession, expert knowledge is linked with prescribed standards of operation and services. Qualified digitally librarian play a distinctive and dynamic role in easy accessing of computer-held digital information including abstracts, indexes, full text databases, sound video recording in digital formats so that they can always be available and accessible for use by the intended user communities, otherwise digital libraries cannot reach their full potentials. Some other digital training skills possessed by librarians particularly in the University libraries includes knowledge of software, hardware, operating systems, and their installations, word processing, spreadsheets, graphic presentation, web browsing and internet searching, Database design and implementation, conversion of records from and to various formats, Compiling joint databases and publishing database, and internet, Data analysis with statistical techniques, Hypertext markup language (HTML) and markup language (XML) coding and advanced level (library portals), Creation of local contents through digital libraries and institutional repositories, Desktop and e-publishing, digital photography and videos, and pod-casting techniques.

CONCEPT OF DIGITAL TRAINING REQUIRED FOR CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE

Digital training skill is considered as the basic requirements particularly for librarians in the present age of digital libraries. It remains the fundamental tool and driving-force for effective and efficient service delivery in university libraries. It is a fact that skill is a way of demonstrating the knowledge, abilities, experience that qualifies an individual to carry out a defined function successfully if acquired. Training not only strengthening the knowledge and the skills necessary for efficient operations and affairs of information services but also build the values and the positive attitudes necessary for proactive current awareness service delivery among librarians whereas lack of the required training and the skills cause redundancies and poor service delivery particularly in the areas of provision of current literatures that will keep user up-to-date in the field of their studies.

For Librarians to serve between the digital information systems, electronic information resources and the library user communities, digital training for current awareness service in substantial areas such as university website, library portal, Really Simple

Syndication (RSS) feeds, mobile Short Message Service (SMS), email services, facebook, whatsapp group, library blogs, twitter, online discussion groups among others. This implies that as digital technologies have transformed reading and learning, it is also transforming the Services render in the library including the knowledge and other abilities of librarians in both function and the mode of delivering them. Librarians have always been needed as guides and providers to assist in learning and discovery. Librarians in the information age play a critical role in access to and application of knowledge (Crockett in Mantilla 2021). In agree with this Khan and Rafiq (2013) observe that adequate training has becoming part and parcel of every successive organization policy because it responsible for capacity building of the workers and has been a ladder for attaining success in business world. In other word, without well digital training, digital library cannot reach its full potentials in any University library. One of the important of trained digital personnel is the intelligent facilitation of knowledge accessibility and use through appropriate interrelation with digital information systems. Many Nigerian university libraries have suffered deviant services delivery despite the availability of enormous digital infrastructures as a result of inadequate digital training skills needed.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprised 190 professionals, para-professionals, and clerical Library staff from 3 University libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. The population includes Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Library with 80 library staff, Benue State university library Makurdi with 87 library staff and University of Mkar library, Mkar with 23 library staff (Data obtained from Duty rosters in the three Universities). Since the entire population of 190 library staff is relatively small and can be effectively managed by the researcher, there would be no sampling. The instrument was administered to 190 respondents in the three Universities, 187 questionnaires were returned. The internal consistency and reliability of the instrument were determined using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach Alpha method yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81, which was reliable. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One:

What are the digital training skills possessed by librarians for information Service delivery in Universities in Benue State, Nigeria?

To answer this research question, data on the digital training skills possessed by librarians for information

service delivery in University libraries in Benue State were collected and analyzed as presented on Table 1.

Table showed the digital training possessed for information Services (IS) in University libraries in Benue State. As revealed on the table, the respondents rated possessed on all items with mean values ranging from 2.60 – 2.92. The table also revealed a cluster mean of 2.75 and SD = 0.72. With this cluster mean of 2.75 which is above the benchmark of 2.50, it can be deduced from this finding that all the items (21-46) are the digital training possessed for Information Services (IS) in University libraries in Benue State.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO:

What are the digital training required for Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University libraries in Benue State?

To answer this research question, data on the digital training required for Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University libraries in Benue State were collected and analyzed as presented on Table 2.

Table 2 showed the digital training required for Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University libraries in Benue State. As revealed on the table, the respondents rated required on all items with mean values ranging from 2.60 – 2.92. The table also revealed a cluster mean of 2.74 and SD = 0.73. With this cluster mean of 2.74 which is above the benchmark of 2.50, it can be deduced from this finding that all the items (1-12) are the digital training required for Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University libraries in Benue State.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

From the data analysis, the following major findings emerged:

- i. The findings revealed that digital document analysis, browsing, filtering, navigation, searching network databases, creating home pages, content conversion, digital storage, preservation, internet connectivity, web authoring, retrieving and accessing, downloading techniques, graphics application, web publishing, ability to work under pressure, online databases, digital information management, processing data into digital information, digital reference services, building of digital library collection, uploading and downloading, users' needs, digital information systems, trouble shooting, and digital document editing are the digital training possessed for information services delivery (IS) in University libraries in Benue State.
- ii. The study found that the digital training required for Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University libraries in Benue State includes;

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the Digital Training possessed for information service delivery in University libraries in Benue State

S/No	ITEMS	N	Mean	SD	Decision
21	Digital document analysis	190	2.70	0.71	possessed
22	Browsing	190	2.77	0.73	possessed
23	Filtering	190	2.89	0.69	possessed
24	Navigation	190	2.61	0.77	possessed
25	Searching network databases	190	2.92	0.76	possessed
26	Creating home pages	190	2.61	0.80	possessed
27	Content conversion	190	2.80	0.70	possessed
28	Digital storage and	190	2.60	0.63	Possessed
29	Preservation	190	2.69	0.69	Possessed
30	Internet connectivity	190	2.71	0.80	Possessed
31	Web authoring	190	2.88	0.69	Possessed
32	Retrieving and accessing	190	2.73	0.81	Possessed
33	Downloading techniques	190	2.82	0.75	Possessed
34	Graphics application	190	2.75	0.72	Possessed
35	Web publishing	190	2.89	0.69	Possessed
36	Ability to work under pressure	190	2.73	0.67	Possessed
37	Online databases	190	2.72	0.69	Possessed
38	Digital information management	190	2.81	0.73	Possessed
39	Processing data into digital information	190	2.78	0.70	Possessed
40	Digital reference services	190	2.70	0.65	Possessed
41	Building of Digital Library collection	190	2.61	0.80	Possessed
42	Uploading and downloading	190	2.80	0.70	Possessed
43	Users' needs	190	2.60	0.63	possessed
44	Digital information systems	190	2.69	0.69	possessed
45	Trouble shooting	190	2.71	0.80	possessed
46	Digital document editing	190	2.88	0.69	possessed
Cluster Mean			2.75	0.72	Possessed

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the Digital Training Required for Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University Libraries in Benue State

S/No	ITEMS	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Communication literacy	190	2.70	0.71	<i>Required</i>
2	Internet surfing	190		0.73	<i>Required</i>
3	Problem solving	190	2.89	0.69	<i>Required</i>
4	Online databases	190	2.61	0.77	<i>Required</i>
5	Effective use of social networking	190	2.92	0.76	<i>Required</i>
6	Web publishing	190	2.61	0.80	<i>Required</i>
7	Digital archiving and preservation	190	2.80	0.70	<i>Required</i>
8	Multimedia electronic	190	2.60	0.63	<i>Required</i>
9	Digital information management	190	2.69	0.69	<i>Required</i>
10	Bulk text messaging	190	2.71	0.80	<i>Required</i>
11	Knowledge base through digital libraries	190	2.88	0.69	<i>Required</i>
12	Emailing	190	2.73	0.81	<i>Required</i>
Cluster Mean			2.74	0.73	<i>Required</i>

communication literacy, internet surfing, problem solving, online databases, effective use of social networking, web publishing, digital archiving and preservation, multimedia electronic, digital information management, bulk text messaging, knowledge base through digital libraries, and database management systems.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are discussed in line with the research questions formulated by the study.

Firstly, the findings revealed that digital document analysis, browsing, filtering, navigation, searching network databases, creating home pages, content conversion, digital storage, preservation, internet connectivity, web authoring, retrieving and accessing, downloading techniques, graphics application, web publishing, ability to work under pressure, online databases, digital information management, processing data into digital information, digital reference services, building of digital library collection, uploading and downloading, users' needs, digital information systems, trouble shooting, and digital document editing are the digital skills possessed for information services delivery (IS) in University libraries in

Benue State. This finding agrees with that of Imbajorgu (2012) who looked at training Needs of Librarians for Digital Library Project and found that various trainings are required by librarians in the university digital libraries to have understanding of hardware/software, cataloguing and indexing of digital resource, networking and other technological tools for storing information, developing institutional repository, digital presentation and archiving, information retrieval techniques, e-instruction skills. The finding also agrees with that of Khan (2013) who found that university librarians possess skills to use computer, operating systems, internet and digital tools. This finding is an implication that librarians possessed a plethora of skills for the delivery of information services (IS) in University libraries in Benue State. These training skills are important because librarians with the competencies can inform users anywhere at any time about newly information resource acquired for use. Hence, it has become important for librarians to acquire these skills to share information in online medium. Information can be kept updated. It is possible to search the desired information in short-time

Secondly the findings of the study revealed that communication literacy ,internet surfing, problem solving, online databases, effective use of social networking, web publishing, digital archiving and preservation, multimedia

electronic, digital information management, bulk text messaging, knowledge base through digital libraries, and database management systems are the digital training required for Current Awareness Services (CAS) in University libraries in Benue State. This finding agrees with that of Imbajorgu (2012) who looked at training Needs of Librarians for Digital Library Project and found that librarians in the university digital libraries required understanding of hardware/software, cataloguing and indexing of digital resource, networking and other technological tools for storing information, developing institutional repository, digital presentation and archiving, information retrieval techniques, e-instruction skills. The finding also corroborates that of Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) who found that students possess skills in Online cataloguing, Networking/internet services, Information literacy, Knowledge management, Information technology and establishing and maintaining libraries for organizations. These skills are in relation to digital training required for Current Awareness Services (CAS) in university libraries. The finding also corroborates that of Emmanuel (2018) whose study on the "Influence of Information and Communication Technology on current awareness services found that there is a high relationship between availability of ICT facilities (digital requirements) and current awareness services in libraries.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that librarians in university libraries in Benue State are digitally skilled for information service delivery while some specific digital training are required for current awareness in the University libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. Among these digital skills are; communication literacy and internet surfing among others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Librarians should work harder to acquire digital skills required for current awareness services in the University libraries in Benue State.
- ii. There is need for University libraries to collaborate to enhance digital training in the areas of digital information services (resource sharing) among library staff to enhance competencies among librarians.

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