



Awareness and Use of E-Resources in Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) By Staff and Students

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Abstract

This study was undertaken with a view to finding out the level of awareness and use of e-resources by lecturers and students of Federal University of Technology, Owerri. Six (6) objectives were set out to guide the study. The study adopted the survey design. The sample of fifty (50) lecturers and two hundred (200) students was drawn from the lecturers and students population of Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) who use the University library. The findings of the study reveal that lecturers and students of FUTO possess acceptable level of awareness of e-resources available in the University library. The lecturers and students make use of these e-resources in meeting their information needs. The study also found out that in spite of this high level of acceptance and use of e-resources in the University library, some challenges still pose a clog in the wheel of progress in terms of effective access and use of e-resources in the University library. Finally, the researcher made some useful recommendations for the way forward.

Keywords: *E-resources, Awareness, Use, Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO).*

1.1 Introduction

Electronic resources (e-resources) in libraries play important role in facilitating access to required information to users in an expeditious and seamless manner. The story of academic libraries reveals of earlier times chained and closed-access libraries to present day hybrid, digital, and virtual libraries using the latest technology for the provision of information through various services. Today, academic libraries are surrounded by networked data that is connected to vast ocean of the internet-based services accessible to the academic community – students and the faculty alike (Bhatia, 2011).

Awareness is the basic pre-requisite

for the use of information resources, more especially e-resources, which are not visible like the print information resources that are displayed on our library shelves. E-resources can only be accessed through electronic devices. Awareness of available e-resources can be created in our University communities through flyers, library orientation programmes, seminars and library bulletin. It is noteworthy to mention that access to e-resource is as important as the e-resources itself. For this reason, many renowned publishers and archiving institutions of e-resources permit free access to their e-books and e-journals. Libraries of all kinds are now spending larger share of their budgets to gain

access to electronic resources from vendors and publishers. Oyelude (2011) is of the opinion that the world's intellectual output in electronic format would have been useless, if e-resources were not gathered, analyzed, catalogued, classified and accessed.

The availability of e-resources in our university libraries is gradually becoming a common thing today. Academic libraries are going digital and acquiring e-resources for service delivery. However, the proper and maximum use of these e-resources does not paint an encouraging picture. Aliyu (2013) identified six barriers that must be overcome to enable information access to be achieved.

They are:

1. Identification – a suitable source needs to be identified;
2. Availability – the inquirer needs to be able to inspect the source or a copy of it;
3. Price to the user – the toil and trouble of acquiring it must be acceptable to the user;
4. Cost to the provider – what has to be expended by the provider of the information?
5. Cognitive access – the sufficient expertise of the enquirer to understand it;
6. Acceptability – the reluctance of the enquirer to accept a particular source as credible.

Each of these dimensions must be satisfied if access is to be achieved satisfactorily. Access to e-resources is achievable when the intellectual property owners recognize the right of access to these resources by others and as such package the resources in such a manner that will ease their accessibility.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- To determine the level of awareness, by staff and students, of available e-

resources in Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) library.

- To ascertain the rate of use of e-resources by FUTO staff and students.
- To ascertain the different types of e-resources used by staff and students in FUTO library.
- To determine the purpose of using e-resources and services by staff and students in FUTO library.
- To ascertain the accessibility challenges faced by FUTO staff and students in the use of e-resources.
- To recommend measures to improve access and use of e-resources by staff and students in FUTO library.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

The researcher consulted a number of sources found to relate with the present survey. Some of those studies are what is presented under this sub-heading – literature review. Bhatia (2011) discussed that College libraries should play pivotal role in facilitating the students and the teachers in the use of the internet, e-resources and other library and information services. The College library, he added, should organize awareness and training programmes and seminars to educate the users on seeking information from e-resources and to maximize the use of library resources and services. Aliyu (2013) in his study on access and use of e-resources by lecturers and students of School of Management and Information Technology in Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola in Nigeria recommends that the University authority should, as a matter of urgency, provide infrastructure and training programmes as per requirements; the University authority and the central library need to train lecturers and students in the use of e-resources and also provide enabling environment for access and use of the e-resources.

Posigha, Asagba, and Onah (2018) discussed that e-resources have come to stay particularly among academic community and researchers, and that major actions should be taken to address the challenges of inadequate management of e-resources, access, technical know-how, and inadequate utilization. They recommend training and re-training of staff for the process of management and as well provision of access to e-resources for users to effectively exploit the resources. Sinha (2012) discussed internet literacy skills and internet usage patterns for accessing e-resources and made suggestions and recommendations for the dire need of empowering the library users through internet literacy/awareness training programme for the optimum utilization of the internet facilities and access to the available e-journals. He recommended *inter alia*:

- More computer terminals with latest configurations so that users can use internet, e-resources, e-journals and other useful services of the internet effectively;
- Training in electronic resources management for library staff, so that they can properly guide the novice library users and research scholars.

Again, Johnson et al. (2012) discussed key issues for e-resources collection development. They looked at licensing considerations for e-resources and opined that e-resources, unlike print publications, are not purchased outright and they usually require a license agreement to be acquired. They recommend that, preferably and where possible, a standard model license agreement that describes the right of the library in easy-to-understand and explicit language should be obtained before any acquisition is made. Kenchakkanavar (2014) in his paper 'types of e-resources and its utilities in library' maintains that most of the libraries resources

in the recent past are being made available in electronic formats such as e-journals, e-books, databases, etc. He observed that libraries are moving from print to e-resources either by subscribing individually or through consortia agreements because of the advantages of e-resources over print resources.

Benry (2015) recommends, in his study on selection and acquisition of e-resources in academic libraries, that College Librarians should take more initiative in participating in online consortium for fulfillment of information needs of users. He asserts further that in so doing, "they develop the e-resources of the library now that every library is faced with the problem of limited budget, inadequate staff and time with ever changing needs of users."

Kumari (2015) discussed e-resources operation, maintenance and oversight. He asserts that in e-resources access control, each user of a multiplier user system shall be assigned a unique user identifier. The user ID must be authenticated before the system may grant that user access to the system. He further maintained that 'shared' or group accounts may be used when absolutely necessary, but their use is usually discouraged. Bajpai, Mal, and Bajpai (2009) discussed that electronic resources are generally accepted because of their ease of accessibility, usability, readability and affordability. They further stated that the advantages e-resources have over print publications derived from their multi-access, speed, functionality and rich content.

3.1 Methodology

The research design for the study was survey and limited to lecturers and students of Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) who use the University library. A structured questionnaire was designed and used as instrument for data collection. Data was collected from only the users of the

library to find out impact of e-resources amongst them. The population of the study comprised of all lecturers and students of FUTO from which a sample of fifty (50) lecturers and two hundred (200) students, who make use of the library, were randomly selected. The questionnaire was personally

distributed to the two hundred and fifty (250) respondents and the completed ones were collected and used for analysis. A time frame of five (5) working days was used for the distribution and collection of the instrument. Data collected was analyzed with the simple of simple percentage technique.

4.1 Results and Findings

Table 1. Awareness of Available E-resources in FUTO library

Respondents	Total	Yes	No
Lecturers	50	48 (96%)	2 (4%)
Students	200	154 (77%)	46 (23%)

Table 1 above represents the responses of the lecturers and students on the awareness of availability of e-resources in FUTO library. The table reveals that majority of the lecturers, 48 (96%), and students, 154 (77%), are aware of availability of e-resources in FUTO library.

Table 2. Rate of Use of E-resources. VH (Very High), H (High), L (Low), VL (Very Low).

Respondents	Total	VH	H	L	VL
Lecturers	50	27 (54%)	6 (12%)	13 (26%)	4 (8%)
Students	200	42 (21%)	71 (35.5%)	62 (31%)	25 (12.5%)

Table 2 shows the responses on the rate of use of e-resources in FUTO library. The table reveals that majority of the lecturers and students sampled use e-resources of the library. Data in the table confirms that 27 (54%) and 6 (12%) of the lecturers use e-resources of the library in a high rate. Also, combined number of 113 (56.5%) of the student respondents attested to using the library e-resources to a high rate.

Table 3. Types of E-resources Used by the Respondents.

Type	Lecturers (n=50)	Students (n=200)
Database	48 (96%)	123 (61.5%)
E-journals	48 (96%)	102 (51%)
E-books	46 (92%)	130 (65%)
CD-ROM Databases	12 (24%)	71 (35.5%)
E-theses	31 (62%)	29 (14.5%)
E-magazines	19 (38%)	73 (36.5%)
E-newspapers	34 (68%)	92 (46%)
E-data archives	17 (34%)	25 (12.5%)
E-research reports	27 (54%)	56 (28%)
E-technical reports	29 (58%)	64 (32%)

Table 3 presents the responses on the types of e-resources used by the respondents in the University. The table reveals that majority of the lecturers consult mostly databases - 48 (96%); e-journals - 48 (96%); e-books - 46 (92%) and e-newspapers, 34 (68%). The lecturers also consult electronic theses, electronic research reports and electronic technical report resources of the library. Similarly, majority of the students consult only databases - 123 (61.5%), e-journals- 102 (51%) and e-books - 130 (65%). This shows that only the lecturers use e-theses, e-newspapers, e-research reports and e-technical reports.

Table 4. Purpose of Using E-resources and Services.

Purpose	Lecturers (n=50)	Students (n=200)
For academic assignments / purposes.	47 (94%)	150 (75%)
Preparing for competitions and conferences	42 (84%)	152 (76%)
For career development and growth.	46 (92%)	93 (46.5%)
More convenient to use.	30 (60%)	126 (63%)
More informative.	36 (72%)	102 (51%)
Currency of content.	43 (86%)	110 (55%)
To keep up-to-date	48 (96%)	114 (57%)

Table 4 presents the responses on the purpose for which the respondents prefer to use e-resources in FUTO library to print resources. Data in the table indicates that majority of the respondents affirmed that their preference for e-resources is informed by academic assignments/purposes, learning to prepare for competitions, to keep up-to-date, convenience of use, being more informative and currency of their content. Amongst the lecturers, 47 (94%) indicated academic purposes, 42 (84%) indicated using e-resources to prepare for conference papers, 48 (96%) indicated using them to keep up-to-

date in their field, 46 (92%) use them for career development and growth, while 43 (86%) find the contents of e-resources more current. Also some of the lecturers find e-resources more convenient to use and informative. For the students, 150 (75%) of them use e-resources for academic assignments, 152 (76%) use them to prepare for competitions, 114 (57%) use them to keep up-to-date just as 126 (63%) and 102 (51%) respectively find e-resources more convenient to use and more informative. Also 110 (55%) use e-resources of the library because of currency of contents.

Table 5. Challenges in Accessing and Using E-resources of the Library

Challenges	Lecturers (n=50)	Students (n=200)
Limited access to computers.	46 (92%)	138 (69%)
Low internet bandwidth.	43 (86%)	140 (70%)
Lack of IT skills and knowledge.	19 (38%)	97 (48.5%)
Inconsistent access due to denied access and change of publishers.	41 (82%)	124 (62%)
Inadequate library operation hours.	10 (20%)	82 (41%)
Lack of awareness of available e-resources.	8 (16%)	20 (10%)
Lack of steady power supply.	47 (94%)	149 (74.5%)

Table 5 above presents responses relating to challenges the respondents encounter in accessing and using e-resources of the library. The table reveals that majority of the respondents complained about low internet bandwidth for accessing e-resources, limited access to computer systems, inconsistent access to e-resources due to denied access and change of publishers and lack of steady power supply. 46 (92%) lecturers and 138 (69%) students affirmed limited access to computer systems, 43 (86%) lecturers and 140 (70%) students indicated low internet bandwidth just as 47 (94%) lecturers and 149 (74.5%) students indicated lack of steady power supply. There are also 41 (82% lecturers and 124 (62%) students who were of the view that inconsistent access resulting from denied access from publishers is a problem to their access and use of the library e-resources.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The level of use of available e-resources in FUTO library by staff and students is determined by extent of awareness of availability of the resources. The result of this study has shown that majority of the respondents have acceptable level of awareness of availability of e-resources in FUTO library, and this awareness translated to the high rate of use of the e-resources of the library. It is not just enough to stock your library with large number of e-resources, but to acquire e-resources that will avail users the opportunity of accessing the right information contents that will meet their information needs. FUTO library may not have so many e-resources in the library, but the result of this study has shown that the users are satisfying their information needs with the available ones in the library.

FUTO library stocks relevant e-resources like e-journals, e-books, e-theses, academic databases, e-data archives, e-technical reports, e-research reports, e-newspapers and CD-ROM databases. These

e-resources are helping to meet the information needs of lecturers and students of the University who make use of the resources for purposes of academic exercises and assignments, to keep up-to-date, prepare for competitions and for career development and growth. The lecturers and students have continued to use the e-resources of FUTO library because they find them more convenient to use, more informative and the contents are more current than the print resources.

In spite of the wide acceptance and high rate of usage of e-resources in FUTO library, there are still some challenges affecting effective access and usage of the library e-resources. As discovered in this, some of these challenges include: low internet bandwidth, regarded as one of the common problems of digital library services in developing countries; lack of steady power supply; limited access to computer systems; inconsistent access to e-resources due to denied access, change of publisher and archiving problems.

Conclusion

The lecturers and students of Federal University of Technology, Owerri are very much aware of availability of e-resources in their library. The use of these resources is common among the lecturers and students. Majority of them depend on e-resources in meeting relevant and desired information needs. However, some challenges, such as low internet bandwidth, lack of steady power supply, limited access to computer systems, inconsistent access and archiving issues have continued to constitute impediments to effective access and use of e-resources of FUTO library.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

- The University library should improve on their infrastructural facilities by providing adequate computer systems for use by lecturers and students.
- The University authority should provide alternative power supply system like back-up generators and inverters for the library to ensure steady power supply for the library.
- The University authority should also provide robust and dedicated bandwidth for the library and the entire campus area to improve on the internet connectivity and access to e-resources of the library.
- More funds should be provided for the library to always renew their e-resources subscription and update membership of academic repositories to avoid access denial to databases and repositories.

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