ACCESSIBILITY AND USE OF INTERNET FACILITIES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: A STUDY OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF PETROLEUM RESOURCES, EFFURUN

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ABSTRACT

This study is to examine the availability of Internet services in Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun {FUPRE} library. The total population for this study comprises of 2,850 students and staff of FUPRE among which are 1,890 students, 540 academic staff and 420 non academic staff. A total sample size of 285 was drawn from the total population using the purposive sampling technique and questionnaire was used for data collection. Findings of the study revealed among others that though the Internet facilities available in FUPRE library are functional and accessible to the students and staff of the institution, they are irregular and inconsistent in terms of availability and as such do not satisfy them; staff and students make use of the Internet facilities when available for accessing newly published materials online, for study purpose, research and academic development and gathering recently published information materials for project work. The following among others were suggested to improve on the accessibility and use of Internet facilities in academic libraries: Government and university management should increase the yearly allocation of the library so that they can subscribe to reliable high speed internet service providers that will allow users to enjoy full Internet service, more bandwidths should be sought so as to provide faster access that will save much of the users' time and be a source of motivation to users and the computer systems acquired for the library should be recent models and the telecommunication facilities should be high-speed models

Keywords: Accessibility, Availability, Use, Internet, University, Library.

Introduction

The advent of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and network information has improved the overall access to information worldwide. Internet network therefore has become the vital tool for quick access to information. The traditional library is gradually becoming a thing of the past as

cheaper and more up-to-date information materials become available on the Internet. The Internet, as an information source, is uniquely important to the library. Oketunji (2001) states that Internet gives us access to a vast wealth of knowledge and access to tools that facilitate research. It allows the library to provide information beyond the confines of its own collections. Libraries provide Internet access to support the teaching, learning, and research activities of their parent institution and their host community. Access to information can stimulate change and create an environment that makes learning more meaningful and responsive. The Internet offers the opportunity; to conduct remote classes, allow access to remote libraries and create an innovative and co-operative learning experience. Internet connectivity is no longer a luxury, but a necessity. It allows tertiary institutions to leverage the teaching and learning process. This will ensure a brighter future for students by providing access to IT and help in closing the global information gap (Omagbemi, Akintola, & Olayiwola, 2004).

Bamidele and Odunola (2002), quoting Oketunji (2004) submitted that the internet and other ICTs provide a golden opportunity for the provision of value-added services by libraries. The indexing, abstracting and publication of local research and their digitization are a means of facilitating learning. Digitization is a window of opportunity to libraries that can strengthen Nigerian academic research libraries' contribution to the Web. The Internet provides challenges to the formal educational system in the developed and developing nations and has fostered a collaborative approach to learning that differs from the more solitary learning of traditional methods. Odenewu and Olasore (2009) citing Adebisi (2004) submit that Internet facilities and services are useful for the following:

1. as an expert system;
2. as reference resource;
3. allow communication with any professional colleague around the world
4. permits access to libraries and library catalogs around the world; and
5. valuable information in electronic libraries, books, journals, magazines and newsletters is made available.

However, information on the Internet may be outdated, biased, inaccurate, unreliable or restricted from access. Information users evaluate the validity of information found on the Internet, just as they do with print materials. Library patrons use the Internet to retrieve and disseminate information. While the Internet offers rich information for users to develop themselves professionally, academically and culturally, it should not be misused in any form. Facilities in the library should only be used to support the educational, research, and administrative goals of the university. Patrons are encouraged to use the Internet to advance their research and to reduce frustration and dilemma in search for information resources because students' addiction to the Internet in this 21st century is a cause for concern. Particularly considering the gradually increasing amount of time undergraduate students spend online. In Nigeria, undergraduates spend more time on Facebook, Twitter and the numerous problems of internet usage have recently been the major focus of attention worldwide. Issues of fraud, identity thefts, pornography and countless other negative influences associated with World Wide Web in general have been a cause of concern for scholars and authorities worldwide.

Statement of the Problem

Inadequacy of current and relevant information for teaching, learning and research had been the bane of university education in Nigeria (Okonofua, 2008). Efforts had also been made to improve the situation through interlibrary loan and document delivery services, but the challenges persisted (Adika, 2003). It was in this light that the Internet was introduced into the educational system to bridge the prevailing information gap (Okonofua, 2008). The Internet began in 1969 as ARPANet (Advanced Research Project Agency Network) by the US Department of Defense to share military intelligence and research with university sources. The Internet has since the 1990s become a widely-used civilian tool for communication, research, entertainment, education and advertisement and has made changes in the educational achievement in universities in developing and developed nations.

However, certain undesired outcomes such as fraud, theft of intellectual property, pornography, infecting systems with viruses are also associated with the Internet. Such undesired outcomes have negative effects on students, especially on heavy users, which can affect their academic performance (Hanson, 2005). In some universities in Nigeria, there are no regulations guiding the usage of electronic information resources in the library. As a result, some students explore the Internet in a negative way rather than availing themselves with the vast educational resources online. This situation spurs the need for this study, with a view to determine the accessibility and use of Internet facilities in FUPRE libraries

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the accessibility and use of the internet facilities in a Nigerian university.

The specific objectives were to:

  (i)   find out if there is Internet services in FUPRE libraries;
  (ii) know the accessibility level of the internet facility to staff and student;
  (iii) determine the purposes for which the Internet was being used;
  (iv) find out if there are Internet usage regulations in FUPRE libraries; and
  (v)   know if users encounter any problem in their effort to use internet service if available.
        Appropriate research questions were drawn in response to the stated objectives.

Literature Review

The Internet, sometimes called simply "the Net," is a worldwide system of computer networks - a network of networks in which users at any one computer can, if they have permission, get information from any other computer (and sometimes talk directly to users at other computers). It was conceived by the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the U.S. government in 1969 and was first known as the ARPANet (Rouse, 2015).For the present study the primary as well as the secondary source of literatures has been consulted. Some journal articles and theses have also been consulted. Many studies have been carried out in recent years on the use of Internet in university libraries. Majid, Amineh, Mostafa, and Zoreh, (2011) conducted a study on the impact of Internet usage on increasing students' social skills (Assertiveness and Haughtiness) and its effects on their scientific success and on improving their social relations which has been done by using survey method based on SSRS questionnaire. The sample size includes 288 students studying at universities in North West of Iran, who were chosen by random method. The results show there is strong correlations between two aspects of social skills and internet usage. Internet usage helps the growth of special aspect of social skills and abilities among students to bring success in the social and educational relationships.

Ali, Abu-Hassan, Yusof and Daud (2009), carried out a case study on the Information Literacy of Engineering Students at a Malaysian college which aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of engineering students' information literacy knowledge. It also identifies the common misconceptions and mistakes students make. The results of this study show that the respondents seriously lack information skills especially in evaluating Internet information, identifying the most efficient search strategy and using information ethically. Robinson (2005) examined the Internet use among African-American college students. The results of the study indicated that most of the African-American college students (76%) had used the Internet for more than three years. The use of the Internet for most African-American college students occurred at school or at the work place with 49% of the responses at home. 47% of the responses indicated that they spent an average of two hours per day on-line. Azubogu and Madu (2007) did a research study on the use of computer and the Internet technology in Imo state University, Owerri. It was gathered that 89.1% use the computer and the Internet in accessing information materials while 10.9% did not make use of such.

Asemi (2005) in his study on Internet use in academic libraries found out that all the respondents were using the Internet frequently because all faculties were provided connection to the Internet. It was

revealed that the researchers of the university were getting quality information through the Internet. Fifty-five percent of the respondents searched for scientific information through the Internet because the university library had provided access to various databases and online journals for all the students and staff. Mishra, Yadav and Bisht (2005) conducted a study to know Internet utilization pattern of the undergraduate students of G B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar. The findings of the study indicated that a majority of the students (85.7%) used the Internet. Out of the Internet users 67.7% were male students and 32.3% female students. The findings of the study also showed that 61.5% males and 51.6% females used Internet for preparing assignments. Some 83.1% male and 61.3% female respondents indicated that they faced the problem of slow functioning of Internet connection. The study of Tiemo, Bribena and Nwosu (2010) on Internet usage and regulations in Niger Delta university libraries shows that 54% of the respondents agreed that there is no internet use regulation in their library.

Laite (2000) surveyed 406 graduates and undergraduates students from Shippensburg University; the result shows that the most used internet service was e-mail. Rajeev and Amritpal, (2004) studied the use of Internet by teachers and students in ShaheedBhagat Singh College of Engineering and Technology and they found out that 46.7% teachers and 36.7% student's daily use the internet. About 90% respondents use internet at their college. Yahoo is found as the favorite search engine. Only 31.7% respondents were fully satisfied, whereas 36.7% were partially satisfied with internet facilities. Brenner (1997) has conducted a survey on Internet use, abuse and addiction from the 563 users and the respondents reported the problems of managing time for Internet use which interfere with their normal routine works and also multiple usage related problems which is addictive in nature. The study by Alison, Kiyingi and Baziraake (2012) on factors affecting utilisation of electronic health information resources in universities in Uganda shows that poor Internet connectivity was one factor affecting its use (41%); limited number of computers(14%); Another 4% was dissatisfied with the passwords, which were sometimes long and complex. Faculties and students are educated through using Internet and media because it is a veritable tool for self-learning. It is obvious that internet has a key role in human life. So we need to obtain a lot of important information about internet, also about relations with other variables especially in educational contexts that are important for the younger generation.

Methodology

Survey research was adopted for this study. The total population for this study is 2,850.Comprising 1,890 students, 540 academic staff and 420 non academic staff. A sample of 10% was drawn from each group using the purposive sampling technique due to the large population of the study giving a total sample size of 285. Questionnaire was used to collect data and a total of 285questionnaireswasdistributed, duly completed and all found usable. The questionnaire is divided into two sections namely: (A) Background Information and (B) Level of accessibility of Internet facility, the use of Internet facility, Internet usage regulations and problems/difficulties that staff and students encounter in their effort to make use of the internet service in FUPRE. The data collected for this study was analyzed using the descriptive statistics of the simple percentage and frequency counts.

Data Analysis

A total of 189 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the students, while 54was distributed to the academic staff, 42 was distributed to the non-academic staff who are regular users of the library, making a total of 285 questionnaires distributed. All the questionnaires were duly completed and all found usable, thus there was 100% response rate. The result of this study was analyzed and data presented using descriptive statistics of the simple percentage and frequency counts for clarity and easy understanding.

Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Sex	Frequency			Percentage (%)	Total Frequency	Total (%)
	Students	%	Staff	%		
Male	130	46	58	20	188	66
Female	59	21	38	13	97	34
Total					**285**	**100**

Table 1 showed the gender distribution of the respondents. About 188(66%) of the respondents were males, with 130(46%) being male students and 58(20%) being male staff. Whereas 97(34%) were females with 59(21%) being female students and 38(13%) being female staff. This result shows that male respondents have highest number of responses than the female respondents in FUPRE library

Table 2: Respondent's designation

Designation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	189	66.3
Academic Staff	54	18.9
Non Academic Staff	42	14.7
Total	**285**	**100**

Table 2 above contained the designation of the respondents. It was however revealed that 189 (66.3%) of the total respondents are student of the university, 54 (18.9%) are academic staff of the university and 42 (14.7%) of them are non academic staff of the university. This shows that majority of the respondents are students.

RQ 1: Is there internet services in FUPRE libraries

Table 3: Internet service in the library

S/N	Items	SA		A		SD		D	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Internet facility in my library are functional and accessible	285	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Internet connectivity is regular and consistence	-	-	-	-	200	70.2	85	29.8
3	Internet services in my library are satisfactory	-	-	-	-	197	69.1	88	30.9
4	There is no Internet connectivity in my library	-	-	-	-	285	100	-	-

Key: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree

When asked about Internet service/facilities in FUPRE library, 285(100%) of the respondents strongly agree that Internet facility is functional and accessible in FUPRE library, when asked if the internet connectivity is regular and consistence, none of them strongly agree and none agree to that fact while 200(70.2%) of them strongly disagree and 85(29.8%) of them also disagree to the claim that Internet connectivity is regular and consistence in FUPRE library. None of the respondents strongly agree or agree when asked if the Internet services in FUPRE library are satisfactory while 197(69.1%) of them strongly disagree to that claim and 88(30.9%) of them disagree. So also, when asked if there is no Internet connectivity in FUPRE library, none of the respondents strongly agree, none agree and none disagree while 285(100%) indicating all the respondents strongly disagree to that claim. This means that all the respondents strongly agree that there is Internet facility in FUPRE library and also that the Internet

facilities are functional and accessible, so also that majority of the respondents are in total disagreement with the claim that internet facilities in FUPRE library is regular and consistence or satisfactory.

RQ 2: What is the accessibility level of the Internet facility to staff and students in FUPRE?

Table 4: Level of access to Internet facility in FUPRE library

S/N	Frequency of use	Response	
		F	%
1	Daily	267	93.7
2	Weekly	18	6.3
3	Forth nightly	-	-
4	Monthly	-	-
	Total	285	100

From table 4 above, 267(93.7%) of the respondents use the internet service daily and only 18(6.3%) of them are using it weekly with none of them using it forth nightly or monthly. This means that staff and students of FUPRE use the internet services in the library daily.

RQ 3: What do staff and students of FUPRE use Internet facility available for in the library?

Table 5: Purpose of the use of Internet in FUPRE library

S/N	Purpose	Response	
		F	**%**
1	Access newly published materials online for studying	273	95.8
2	Research and academic developments	285	100
3	Project works	187	65.6
4	Article publishing	161	56.5
5	Assignment purposes	188	65.9
6	To exchange ideas via social network sites	163	57.1
7	To view phonographic sites and pictures online	-	-

From table 5 above, 273(95.8%) of the total respondents admits that they use the internet use the internet service available in the library to access newly publish information resources available online for complementing their studies, 285(100%) indicating all the respondents that they use the internet service for research and academic development, 187(65.6%) affirm that they use it to gather information for their project works, 161(56.5%) of the respondents say they use it for article publishing, 188(65.9%) admits that they use it for assignment purposes and 163(57.1%) of them accepting that they use it for exchange of ideas among colleagues via social networks with no response when asked if they use the internet service available at FUPRE library for viewing of phonographic sites and pictures. This means that the internet facility/services available in FUPRE library are used by the users majorly for their academic development.

RQ 4: Are there internet usage regulations in FUPRE libraries?

Table 6: Internet usage regulation in libraries

S/N	Items	SA		A		SD		D	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	There are internet usage regulation in the library	285	100	-	-	-	-	-	-

2	Internet usage regulation in the library are not effective	-	-	-	-	285	100	-	-
3	Internet usage regulation is on time usage only	-	-	-	-	83	29.1	202	70.9
4	Internet usage regulation allows access to any websites.	-	-	-	-	285	100	-	-
5	Internet usage regulations in the library do not allow other activities except educational research.	173	60.7	52	18.2	-	-	60	21.1

From Table 6, 285(100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there are internet usage regulation in FUPRE library with no disagreement to that claim, 285(100%) indicating all the respondents strongly disagree with the claim that internet usage regulation in FUPRE library are not effective, when asked if internet usage regulation is on time usage only, 83(29.1%) of the respondents strongly disagree while 202(70.9%) of them disagreeing to the claim with none of them strongly agreeing or agreeing to that claim. Also, when asked if internet usage regulation allows access to any website, 285(100%) indicating all the respondents strongly disagree.

Meanwhile, 173(60.7%) of the respondents strongly agree to the claim that internet usage regulation in FUPRE library do not allow other activities except educational research, 52(18.2%) of them disagreeing to that with no strong disagreement to that claim from any of the respondent and 60(21.1%) of them disagreeing to that claim. This means that there are internet usage regulations in FUPRE library and these regulations are functional and effective; that the internet usage regulations are not on time usage only; that the internet usage regulations do not permit access to any choice of website for users; that the internet usage regulations in FUPRE library majorly support educational research and activities only.

RQ 5: What are the difficulties staff and students encounter in using the Internet service?

Table 7: Problems in Internet Use

S/N	Problems	Response	
		F	%
1	Slow internet service	273	95.8
2	Internet connection failure	285	100
3	Shortage of funds for internet services	279	97.9
4	Copyright and access restrictions	14	4.9
5	Inadequate hardware support	22	7.7
6	Unavailability of support for maintaining internet facilities	179	62.8
7	Restriction of access by library staff	12	4.2
8	Power failure	-	-

From Table 7, 273(95.8%) of the respondents agree with slow internet service as one of the impediments to proper use of internet service in FUPRE library, 285(100%) indicating the total number of respondents admits that internet connection failure is one of their major problem, 279(97.9%) of them are of the view that shortage of allocated funds from the management is one of the impending factors. Also, 14(4.9%) of the respondents are of the view that copyright and access restrictions is of a challenge to them, 22(7.7%) of them says inadequate hardware support is one of the challenges, 179(62.8) of the respondents admits that unavailability of support for the maintenance of Internet facilities is a major challenge among others and none of the respondents see power failure as an impending factor. This means that the major challenges faced by staff and student in their quest to use the internet service in FUPRE library is, Slow internet service; Internet connection failure; Shortage of funds for internet

services among others and none of the respondents see power failure as a major challenge, indicating that there is constant power supply in FUPRE library.

Discussion of the Findings

Table 1 showed the gender distribution of the respondents. However, more male members of staff and students use the FUPRE Library than females. Table 2 contained the designation of the respondents. The study revealed that the majority of users of the FUPRE library are students, representing 66% of the population of this study. It was however revealed that more academic staff uses the library than their non academic counterparts. It was however revealed that 189 (66.3%) of the total respondents are student of the university, 54 (18.9%) are academic staff of the university and 42 (14.7%) of them are non academic staff of the university. This shows that majority of the respondents are students. From Table 3, regarding the availability of internet services/facilities, there is functional internet facility available to the users of FUPRE library. However, based on the responses of the respondents that the Internet connectivity is not regular and not consistently available, users of the library are not satisfied with its use.

Table 4 revealed that the respondents use the Internet service daily, which is in line with the study of Robinson (2005) which showed that most of the African-American college students (76%) had used the Internet for more than three years and the use it to solve most of their research needs. Also, finding in a study by Azubogu and Madu (2007) on the use of computer and the Internet technology in Imo State University revealed that 89.1% use the computer and the Internet in accessing information materials. Table 5 showed that students and staff use the Internet service available in the library to access newly published information resources online, complement their studies, boost research and academic development, gather information for their project work, article publication among others. This corroborates the findings of the study by Mishra, Yadav and Bisht (2005) on Internet utilization pattern of the undergraduate students of G B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, showing that majority of students who use the Internet were getting information for the purpose of assignments, research and educational development. Table 6 revealed that there is a high level of Internet usage regulation in the library; which gave preference to the usage of academic-based sites to promote educational research and regulates/limit the usage of websites that are not academic-based even if it appeals to the user. Also, the time of usage of the internet facility is regulated.

This finding however disagreed with the findings from a study by Tiemo, Bribena and Nwosu (2010) on Internet usage and regulations in Niger Delta university libraries, which showed that 54% of the respondents agreed that there is no Internet use regulation in their library. From Table 7, on the difficulties to proper use of internet service in FUPRE library, the respondents admits that internet connection failure is one of their major problem, this is in line with the study of Alison, Kiyingi and Baziraake (2012) which revealed that poor internet connectivity was one factor affecting the utilization of electronic health information resources. Also, majority of the students and staff of FUPRE attributed the shortage of allocated funds from the management to the library as one of the factors affecting the use of Internet. Also, copyright policy, lack of maintenance of Internet facilities, among others, was highlighted as problems facing internet usage. However, none of the respondents see power failure as a challenge thereby indicating that there is constant power supply in the FUPRE library. This means that the major challenges faced by staff and students in their quest to use the internet service in FUPRE library is slow internet service; Internet connection failure; shortage of funds for internet services among others.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study concluded that there are Internet facilities in FUPRE library and they are functional and accessible by the students and staff of the institution subject to subscription by the management of the institution. Though functional and accessible when subscribed to, they are inconsistence and unsatisfactory. Majority of staff and students use the Internet because they have access to recently published information resources online. Thus, Internet users are motivated by the adequacy,

recency of information resources available on the internet and the convenience that internet usage offers. Staff and student make use of the internet facilities when available for accessing newly published materials online, for study purpose, research and academic development, gathering recently published information materials for project works, article publication, assignment purposes and exchange of ideas via social networks. Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

i.   The university library and the ICT department of FUPRE should work together in order to ensure that internet access in the library is always available so as to increase staff and students level of Internet usage;

ii. The computers to be provided should be recent models and the telecommunication facilities should be the high-speed models;

iii. More bandwidths should be sought so as to provide faster access that will save much of the users' time and be a source of motivation to users;

iv. A maintenance programme should be put in place in preparation for regular maintenance, up-grading and repairs;

v.   Adequate security measures should also be put in place to ensure that only authorized users have access to the services; and

vi. Government and university management should increase the yearly allocation of the library so that they can subscribe to reliable high speed internet service providers that will allow users to enjoy full Internet service.

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