

INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS AND UTILIZATION OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

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Abstract

This paper recognizes the importance of Information literacy, as tool in enhancing the Information need of user. It define the concept of Electronic resources, sources Types of Electronic recourses, then went on to highlight the skill to acquire for effective utilization of information resources, the challenges that confronts the use of electronic resources and a way forward. This paper concludes that library educators should be ready to educate user on the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) also educate themselves in other to remain relevant in their profession.

Keywords: Information literacy, Electronic Information resources, Information literacy skills, Utilization

Introduction

One of the objectives of setting up any university is to encourage and promote scholarship and conduct research in most fields of learning and human Endeavour, with this objective in mind, a university design designs its programme of study and provides the Library infrastructure so as to meet this goal. The Library is the heart of university, and users benefit more from well-equipped library with computers for accessing E-resources. Udumukwu (2014).

The concept of information literacy (IL) was introduced in 1974 by Paul Zurkowski in a proposal submitted to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), recommending that a national programme be established to achieve universal information literacy clarifies that during the 1980s this term gradually started to replace the concepts of user education and library skills. According to McCaskie (2004), the first advocates of Information Literacy were mainly school librarians in the U.S., but it was not until the 1980s that the use of the term and the concept became more widespread. The personification of the concept Information Literacy is stipulated in McCaskie (2004) who exposes its importance by giving the significant events of its lifespan which includes the establishment of the American Library Association's (ALA) Presidential Committee on the Information Literacy (PCIL) in 1987 and its subsequent report which followed in 1989. While emphasizing the importance of Information Literacy, it is important to link Information Literacy to the goals of lifelong learning and effective citizenship. Unagha (2011).

There are several definitions of Information Literacy none of which is universally applicable. Nonetheless, the American Library Association provides what has come to be recognized as an all-encompassing definition of an information literate person. The Association describes an information literate person as "one who recognizes when information is needed and has the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" (ALA 1989; 2000). According to the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2008), Information Literacy refers to one's ability to:

- Recognize his/her information needs.
- Locate and evaluate the quality of information.
- Store and retrieve information.
- Make effective and ethical use of information.
- Apply information to create and communicate knowledge.

Opinion is divided on whether Information Literacy is a new concept or it is merely a progression from the library instruction that has been in existence since the 1960s (Grassian & Kaplowitz 2001). The traditional role of libraries as custodians of information sources is slowly changing. Johnson & Webber (2003) observe that libraries are increasingly regarding themselves as teaching institutions which can assist students in their learning process. Wright (2007) agrees with this view

by observing that libraries have changed over the last 25 years, especially with the emergence of information technology. Not only has the means of accessing information changed but also the format in which information is stored and made available.

Electronic Information is now available in multimedia formats such as CD-ROMs, e-journals, the Internet and e-databases, librarians are urged to embrace other duties such as those outlined by Wright (2007) teaching the library users to determine their information needs, help users locate and access authoritative information and help them understand how to use the information ethically. Rockman (2006) however argues that Information Literacy is no longer a library issue, but is the critical campus-wide issue in the twenty-first century. The importance or necessity of IL in the information age is underscored. The new world order characterized by abundance and ready availability of digital information through computer networks means that information has become ubiquitous, and therefore can be obtained at any time and in any location no matter the distance as long as the necessary infrastructural devices and the skills to retrieve information from global networks are available. She further observes that the use of the internet has revolutionized the education sector, making a formal education system more versatile and flexible. Rockman (2006) observes that the increasingly complex world in which we live now contains an abundance of information choices, print, electronic, image, spatial, sound, visual and numeric, all of which indicate the availability of too much information in various formats with unequal value. The need for tertiary graduates to acquire and develop information literacy skills has been emphasized in recent years in a world where, many analysts believe, access to information is not only important for survival but the key to prosperity. Feast (2003)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of information literacy skill and utilization of electronic resources for successful information literacy intention, specifically the study seeks to find out:

1. Information literacy skills expected for Library and information Students graduates for successful learning.
2. Types of electronic resources for Library and information science Students graduates.
3. Challenges in Utilization of electronic resources skill for Library and Students graduates.

Understanding Information Literacy Skill

For successful Information Literacy programmes in institutions of higher learning, students' attitudes 'towards information foraging and use require total change. Similarly, the integration of information literacy into university curricula is possible through the understanding between the librarians, students and faculty. There should collaboration between the libraries and academic departments as an exercise that can be used to assist students. True collaboration is based on shared goals which the Properties have negotiated and made explicit; calls for a 'contract' between the parties, or a strategy plan, where each part's responsibilities and competencies are made clear and recognized; and takes place at all levels within a higher education institution. These are following skills required: Communication Skills is the most essential and crucial among the library and information professionals. This skill helps to clearly understand the users and to be understood by them properly good communication skills are essential for library professionals at all levels. Librarians have to interact and send good written Communication to faculty members, students, publishers/suppliers, external agencies, etc. They should also have etiquettes for communication." (Kumar, 2010) An important dimension of communication skills from the part of library professionals can be to encourage two way communications by soliciting feedback and suggestions for providing better services. However, the users should not confuse the right to suggest, provide feedbacks, with the right of determination of forcing their views on their terms. Libraries may decide to design a feedback form to capture the "Things Gone Wrong" to improvise on user services.

Time management efficiency is the only way forward in the global trend of downsizing and desk-killing. The LIS professionals are expected to manage increasing workload and multitask. They would require managing their time wisely and smartly, as time is a highly perishable resource. They will have to finish their routine work as well as attend to the user requests for help. In time management terminology, they will have to effectively manage the interruptions. Service Orientation and High Self-Esteem a library- professional with healthy self-esteem, motivation and commitment may find it easy to cope with the stress of work overload and of handling difficult users. Motivated LIS professionals have to be effective in oral, written, and electronic communication with users, colleagues, and supervisors. They have to be effective in promoting and marketing their services, as well as promoting the value of their service to the parent organization. (Kumar, 2010).

Teamwork the ability to work effectively with the team will enhance the ability of the Library and Information professionals to cater for the needs of the users. If a user, is not aware that an organizational set up of particular library He may wrongly request a resource available in other department. Library and Information professional help desk can direct the user, by providing the resources leveraging his/her rapport the department concerned, Interpersonal skill. This skill facilitates working together, manage one's behavior and emotions better, assert and persuade others better to get the results, which are best for the stakeholders involved. Conflict Management In general, this skill helps one to understand and handle conflict situations, and to solve and manage the relation with the users. Often, the users and were we have conflicting interests. The amicable resolution of such situations by handling conflict effectively would be a win-win for the user as well as the library staff.

Presenting skills many a times, library professionals engage with the user community to increase the awareness of the resources available in the library. The skill would be very handy. There may be many other occasions like interacting with the senior managers. Making a case for more financial resources, the superior presentation skills would make life easier. The library professionals may have to master the skills of removing barrier to effective presentations like gestures which can dilute or distract the intended communication. The proper presenter would have to prepare his/her message and modulate his voice appropriately while maintaining right body language and giving appropriate signals with his gestures.

Electronic Information Sources and its Utilization Electronic Information Sources (EIS) may be defined as all those documents that are available in the electronic or digital form. The tools employed by traditional Libraries, the environment and the whole concept of library services have undergone drastic changes owing to the advancements in the fields of information, communication and technology. Card catalogue which was reckoned as a convenient device for easy bibliographic search has become out dated when compared to the facilities offered by electronic applications. This scenario enjoins information skills training for both staff and readers and has drawn in a radical transformation within Library and Information system LIS). From physical providers of information, libraries have become gateways to networked information providing access rather than holdings. A database, a structured collection of related data, is one of the most familiar types of EIS.

Electronic information sources offer vast opportunities for the readers. The information needed can be delivered from the most appropriate sources instantly and then sharpen his needs dynamically. Electronic information can therefore provide a number of advantages over traditional print based sources. Retrospective information search has become very effective. The data base can be accessed using combinations of keywords. They open up the possibility of searching multiple files at one time, a facility accomplished more easily than when using printed equivalents. The search results can be printed and searches saved for reference at a later date. They are updated more often than printed materials. Magnetic tapes were introduced in the 1970s. But today electronic sources are available on CIJ-ROMS and on the internet. In the common parlance sources of information that are available on the internet are called online sources. These sources include E-journals, research publications, encyclopedia, dictionaries, atlases and the Like Internet, which was first developed in USA. In 1969, it is called the network of networks and is the largest computer network in the world.

Utilization of these resources is when, the Library users are akin to customers, who may or may not pay for the service. However, the Library Professionals who focus on 'catering to the needs of the customers while taking full responsibility may improve the acceptability of the library and the library professional engaged. The Library Professionals can act as the brand ambassador by delivering excellent customer services. The academic trainings like Bachelor and Master Degrees in Library and Information Sciences provide LIS Professionals superior technical knowledge, or hard skills in information resources, information access, technology, management and research, but little of soft skills. While visualizing a solution for the development of soft skills among the LIS professionals, we need to take into consideration the present library staff and the future professionals.

Major challenges faced are in the acquisition and collection development of electronic resources is budget constraints, collection development strategies, E-Book standard and technology challenges, digital rights management software, and cataloguing and metadata standards. There are also access challenges like cataloguing and indexing of E documents, circulation problems of E-Books etc.

Recommendation

When librarians are equipped with some of this soft skill a mile stone would have been achieved in delivering of information needs like self- study: The working professionals can look at acquiring skills through online and web-based trainings (WBT5), and distance mode self-paced learning modules. Mirroring: They can employ the mirroring technique of Neuron Linguistic Programming. They can mirror the choice of words, metaphors, and attitude of a person considered possessing excellent soft skills. Some training sessions or call in external experts, who could help you quickly. Also, Get a Mentor: Guidance of a mentor helps you understand the nuances of the skills you want to work on. Finally, Role Play Practice forms a staff club and practice role plays. It can provide avenues to think about a superior way to handle a difficult situation. Peer discussions will provide ways to improvise. Whatsoever is included in the syllabus, future professionals should be encouraged to adopt the deep learning approaches to facilitate conclusion-oriented learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Technology is advancing so are we, a lot of changing; is taking place in the library there is no need to shy away from the reality beholding professionalism. There is need to equip ourselves to be relevant, Not only the technology is evolving, but the users are also becoming demanding. To be successful and serve the user community better, library professionals will have to develop soft skills in addition to their technical, academic knowledge related to library management. They would benefit by engaging themselves in the lifelong learning path utilizing deep learning approaches to acquire soft skills, which will help them to respond in every normal situation.

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