

MARKETING LIBRARY DATABASES FOR UTILISATION BY PATRONS: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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Abstract

Library as an agent of literacy plays the major role of preservation and accessibility of resources. It preserves rich information resources as its product and provides access to them as part of services. Although there are several library and Information resources and services in university libraries, users are not adequately informed of the existence and benefits of these resources and services thereby leading to low patronage of the library. It is against this backdrop that the paper conceptually reviewed the issues of marketing library databases for utilization by patrons. It explained the concept of marketing, marketing at library and information science. It also highlighted library databases, its benefits amid types. Strategies for marketing library databases, challenges and way forward were also highlighted. The major highlights are that marketing has been applied to library and Information science profession to market its products and services. Databases whether online or offline are rich and reliable information resources but are yet to be fully utilized by patrons hence the need to market them becomes imperative. Several marketing strategies such as promotion through social media, email, publications, blogs, institutional websites and library website could be utilized to market library databases. Challenges noticed in policy implementation, non-adoption of library website, denote skills, lack of cooperation among library staff and lack of infrastructure due to poor funding of the library.

Keywords: Library databases: Marketing. Promotional strategies

Introduction

The need for electronic resources in this computerized period has brought forth electronic assets as there is high demand for information. However, the digital era of electronic information resources has opened a new kind of avenue whereby electronic learners have access to an overwhelming range of information sources which are easily available at their fingertips by the click of a mouse. Furthermore, digitization of contents, advancement in technologies, social media contents, Internet of Things (IoT) as well as data captured from Agriculture, agencies, industries, institutions, medical organizations even from social media contribute to adoption of database in the organization and management of information for services. Now libraries have become the electronic Information center where collection of electronic information resources are accessible via internet, World Wide Web and also from open access journals, open access archives, websites and database. To meet the needs of the

users, academic libraries have moved towards digital databases and formed consortiums in order to share materials to enable users to meet their needs. Information in the database can be accessed via the Internet, song devices such as CD-ROMs, pen drives, and other peripherals, using compotes as a medium. The information resources in database include electronic journals (e-journals), electronic books, (e-books), internet resources, electronic magazines (e-magazine), electronic newspapers and archives, e-theses conference papers, government documents, monographs and research reports, all in these electronic forms

Users of the library database have access to different web-based databases, including access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA) EbscoHost. Health Internetwork Access to Research Initiative (HINAR), Information Management Research Kit (IMARK), Net (NUC) Virtual Library, Online Access to Research in Environment (OARE) Directory Open Access to Journal. Pubmed, Digital Archives for Biomedical and Life Sciences Journal Literature, Scientific Information (SUIRUS) Dgroups Store LAN-TEEAL ProQuest, Reliable Dspace. Databases usually have materials for all programmes offered in the university which are accessible at any time. It is important to stress that this electronic database a readily accessible in the library due to constant availability of power supply Besides, WI FI facilities available in the wary enable students to come into the library with their devices (laptops) and browse the databases.

But a close look at the university libraries it seems users are not utilizing library database to their full capacity despite the paradigm shift to electronic Information resources. This could be attributed to lack of awareness as rightly put by Aken and Nsirim (2017). According to them awareness of database when users of the library have acquired information and knowledge about the existence of the database in the library. When users of a library are exposed to information resources available in a particular library, they stand a chance of accessing and utilizing them to satisfy their information needs. Awareness of international resources in libraries by users is an issue of much concern, though availability may be guaranteed to complete usage. Therefore, optimum, utilization of information resources by users depends on the awareness of the resources (Ebenezer & Duna, 2018). According to Adeleke and Nwalo (2017), awareness is put of availability and indicates the extent to which users have information and knowledge of electronic resources being subscribed to. When users of libraries have adequate information on the electronic resources being subscribed to, they are encouraged to use them.

Therefore, availability of database and e-resources must be known to the users because lack of awareness could be a major hindrance to use of library database. Based on the foregoing to create awareness libraries have to inform their users and potential users about the availability of database through marketing.

The Concept of Marketing in Library and

Information perspectives generally marketing is buying and selling for profit. it is the process of bringing product or service to the audience it entails assessing consumers' needs and

competitors' products which involves creating, testing pricing, and distributing products Marketing as defined by Adekunmisi (2013) in the strategies taken by the management to identify, anticipate and supply customers requirement efficiently Marketing according to the American Marketing Association (2013) is the activity and processes for creating communicating and exchanging goods or services that have value for customers.

Edewor et al., (2016) observed that there considerable misunderstanding within the library and information environment as to what constitutes marketing. According to them, some equate it with buying and selling while others view it as production of brochures, advertising leaflets and low-level marketing communication (Gupta, 2013). Edewor and Omosor (2012) attributed this misinterpretation to the "free library culture" in which libraries and no revenue-driven establishments whose primary objective is non-profit service delivery are opposed to monetary benefit. Ravichandran (2012) defined marketing in terms of librarianship as the act of planning, negotiating or pricing, promoting and distributing library products for exchanges to satisfy the library and the user. Libraries have all types of collections and deliver various services. To this end, it is necessary to market its services (Patil & Pradham 2014). With the proliferation of commercial information services providers such as cyber cafes mega-bookstores, online book dealers the internet community, consultants and bloggers, librarians have to see marketing as a tool for promoting library services if they have to survive in the future.

Marketing activities include "inbound marketing", such as market research to find out, for example, what groups of potential customers exist, what their needs are, which of these needs can be met, how should one meet them, etc. Traditionally, libraries have been engaged in marketing library and information resources and services through display of new books, exhibitions, bulletins, service orientation programmes, memoirs, production and issuances of library guides, library week outreaches and other publicity programmes (Edewor et al. 1016) Demands in innovative approach in reaching out to users requires that university libraries embrace social media such as Facebook, blogs. Twitter and email for marketing library services (Olike & Onyenyi, 2019). There are different services offered including selective dissemination of information, Current services, Internet services reference services, and database services. This study focuses on database services and how it can be marketed to awareness and promote usage.

Library Database

Database is regularly updated digital file of digitized information Including Images, bibliographic records, documents, abstracts directory entries related to a specific subject or field, consisting of records of uniform format organized for ease of access and retrieval usually managed with the database management system software (Abubakar & Aka, 2017) According to Encyclopedia Britannica database also called electronic database, is a collection of data, of information, specially organized for rapid search and retrieval by: a computer. Library database is a repository of reliable electronic information searchable using library dedicated access point. Library databases gives access to a quality of research materials be it library web pages books, academic journals, newspapers, magazines or any other Information resources acquired by the library. The information deposited in databases is either originally created or harnessed

from different. A database is similar to an online catalogue comprising hundreds of thousands of items on various subject areas. However, the library provides access to many key subject specific databases. Navigating through a database is different from searching the internet because in database one only get the resources in that particular database Abubakar and Aker (2017) stated that databases are mostly characterized by the kind of data they contain that is well, numbers or by their subject matter. Word related databases comprises, word of text as the main data while numbers related databases often regarded to us databanks comprising numbers, series, symbols, graphs and tables. Database can be online and or offline. Online database requires internet connection for accessibility. Such databases include EBSCO (Library and Information Science Source), ProQuest, gale information science and library issues collection, emerald, informed librarian online and ulrichsweb. On the other hand, offline databases do not require internet connection to Offline databases include CD-ROM (Compact Disc-Read Only Memory)

Benefits of using a Database

Databases are useful because

- ❖ one can search for articles or books on a topic for assignments from a variety of sources
- ❖ one can read the full text of the books and most of the articles that one finds
- ❖ information on library databases are reliable
- ❖ Library databases cover tens of thousands of books and full text journals containing hundreds of thousands of articles on many different academic subjects.
- ❖ a subject database will give you a more detailed search and fewer but more relevant results
- ❖ greater access to information

Strategies for Marketing Library Databases

According to Aderinigbe and Farouk (2017) marketing of library services in academic libraries involves placing Information on notice boards, using publicity and public relation strategy, user's orientation, devising training programme, advertising in print media or directories, sending out newsletters, brochures and flyers, word mouth endorsement and also personal sales by the librarians. In order to successfully market library services. Odine (2011) opined that marketing mix must be applied. The marketing mix is the combination of elements which are used to market a product or service. They include product planning and promotion:

- **Product Planning/Market Plan:** While Jestin and Parmneswati. (2002) see product planning as a marketing activity that is concerned with developing a product that satisfies customers. Marketing plan should ensure that library products and services are well packaged and or repackaged in captivating manner to motivate patrons and enhance the use of the library. The services and products should include current awareness services,

selective dissemination of information and information packaging and repackaging, e-books, e-journals c projects, e-theses and e-dissertations

- **Pricing:** Pricing is the marketing activity that determines the price of the product on the basis of costs as well as market factors such as distribution channels, discount structure. Competitors' prices, ability be willingness of customers to pay. In the conventional library and information services like the academic library, although a lot of costs are involved in the generation of products and services, services in academic libraries are mainly for free to us user groups, which and students, Staff and researchers However, some specialized services such as information repackaging and selective dissemination of information can be offered for a fee.
- **Promotion:** This is the activity that covers all ands to sales Promotions stimulates demand and Increases sales Promotion entails the strategies and techniques that can aid to communicate a product or service to people. It is an attempt by marketers to inform persuade, or remind consumers and users to their opinion or elicit a response. The aim of promotion to showcase ones product or services and differentiate it from others to increase demand. It is the basic element of marketing Promotion keeps product or services in the minds of the customer and helps stimulate demand for the product. Promotion involves ongoing advertising and publicity.

Libraries can highlight the benefits of using databases to motivate users or catch the attention of the audience. Highlights may include:

- finding reliable resources for your assignment
- access e-resources
- access to e-projects, Theses and dissertations
- training and skills on the use of library database
- free internet to access library databases

Any promotional campaign may be geared towards increasing the amount and frequency of use, identifying target customers, touching the out other strategies for marketing library databases include:

Social Media:

Perhaps the commonest and the most used channel of advertising is social media, Social media are online platforms designed to facilitate information sharing and exchanges of views. They are web-enabled interactive tools which make room for communication among people and allows the creation, dissemination and communication or exchange of information and ideas (Igwela & Nsirim, 2018). They are trendy media of communication and accommodate users from all walks of life. They are gradually being utilized in libraries all over the world for services delivery. Libraries use social media to connect to their patrons even outside the

physical library buildings while building relationships with them. They facilitate communication between and among libraries and their users while also serving as channel for information dissemination and the promotion of current awareness services. Social media are also used to announce news and for fundraising and promotion and marketing of library products and services (Adewoyin 2017). Social network advertising has potential to be a cost-effective means of marketing academic libraries and library should have a Facebook page with a large number of fans that is beneficial to an academic library's marketing effort. But LIS professionals in Nigeria have not completely comprised these social networking sites in library and information services. Khan & Bhatt 2013¹ reported that the respondent's behavior towards the use of social for marketing of library resources, services was positive and suggested that libraries should be connected with the Internet services and develop their web page and social media page.

Social media applications help their users to acquire interconnections among the library members and remix the library services and products to brand them visible in a wider way. Tools such as Facebook, Weblog, LinkedIn and Twitter are being used to connect and share knowledge with user groups, to promote libraries and provide information services. Social networking sites were being used by a number of academic libraries and were perceived to be helpful in promoting library services and interacting with students (Usiam & Umme 2015). Most public libraries are using Facebook as a platform for marketing themselves and their services and to uplift their collections. Libraries can use social media to market databases. For example, since social media can be linked to a university library's web page is to enable users' have a conversation with a library personnel on issues relating to the use of the library and also allow the libraries seize the opportunity to market their databases.

- **Email marketing:** Not every user that visits the library is aware of library databases. Library keeps users' records like their phone numbers and emails. With small library can invite subscribers to events, share news and products and services. Increase both patron's retention and loyalty by sending emails. Emails can be sent individually to patrons.
- **Influencer marketing:** Sometimes people are not influenced by the services, they would rather be influenced by individuals who they hold in high esteem or trust. Therefore, libraries can use influencers whose opinion does matter to clients. It could be lecturers of the university management like the Vice Chancellor informing the student maybe during orientation programmes of newly admitted students.
- **Referral marketing:** Recommendations from friends or colleagues can also be a strategy to promote library database. Some students use the library database but have friends who are not even aware of the availability of database in the library. This could be in form of advocacy marketing where customers will be asked to talk about products or services offered. Libraries can plead with students to inform their friends about the availability of database in the library.
- **Tagging:** Most students have social media accounts such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp. Libraries can connect with the students and tag them. One advantage of tagging

is that once one is tagged all other friends of that student seen the post tagged. Libraries can tag students and inform them about library databases libraries as well as the provision of free internet connection to access the databases. Most students are unaware of free Internet connection that library offers and this can get them in use the database.

- **Traditional Media:** Traditional media. Includes television, radio and newspaper. Librarians sometimes are invited to have a round table talk on television and or radio with the media personnel on topical issues in library and information science or any other topic necessary, Librarians may utilize the opportunity to market or talk about databases and its values. On the other hand, libraries can take through newspaper publications to market it databases.
- **School website:** All admitted students both undergraduate and postgraduates must access the university website for registration or information. Having them as a target audience, libraries can have a space on the university website to inform the users about its databases further, a link of library databases can be provided on the university website where the students will at a click of a button direct them to the home page of the database.
- **Library Website:** Library has a website for Information provision: Although most libraries do not have websites due to inadequate funding. However, libraries can take through its website to highlight its services including its databases.
- **Journals/Books:** Librarians are publishers' and Journals editors. At the back some Journals and books there are some promotional or advertisement pages Library databases can be advertised as well By the anyone who find the journal or book, handy and glances through it will be informed of library database.
- **Research Articles:** Librarians the researchers who write and publish articles. To inform the public about library databases, articles should be written on library databases. Those who come in contact with the research article will definitely be aware of library database

Why Market Library Databases

- ❖ Marketing is an effective way of engaging patrons
- ❖ Librarian have to market their databases in order to improve the image of their libraries and themselves.
- ❖ Libraries have to market because of the need to maintain relevance and remain connected to the communities they serve and have some bearing on the present day's event and real world issues.
- ❖ **Marketing is a communication channel used to inform customers:** Through marketing library can inform its potential users about the database services they offer Through marketing, the users get to know about the value of the database, their usage and additional info that might be helpful to the users. It creates awareness and differentiates the database from other sources of information like the internet.

Patange (2013) stated the reasons libraries, should market their services which include the following:

- ❖ Marketing enables librarian or information manager to understand the real needs of users for taking good management decisions which will in turn help in providing maximum information services to users more efficiently and effectively.
- ❖ Librarian or information manager is not only interested for the people who do use the services regularly. He is also interested in non-user groups, Marketing play a vital role to identify the information needs of non-users and helps to provide them with necessary information.
- ❖ Librarians and information managers need to present their services as an indispensable part of the organization and try to justify the claim that their clients/users cannot do their job efficiently or effectively without a library service.
- ❖ Marketing may help to improve the image of the library and information profession through collection of revenue performing different services to users

Challenges Facing Library in Marketing Library Databases

The major challenges militating against effective marketing of library and Information services according to Olorundemi and Ipadenla (2018) are in-adequate fund management lack of marketing policy, lack of facilities to market library services, lack of media access to market academic library services, poor access in information technology, lack of training in marketing, and lack of effective communication between librarians users. This assertion is a confirmation to the earlier study carried out by Aderibighe and Farouk (2017) who found that inadequate fund, irregular power supply, inadequate infrastructure like photocopier computers, air conditioner for the marketing of library services, unavailability of staff, low computer literacy among staff, lack of professional training in marketing, under staffing, limited media access, dearth of library materials to market, and lack of marketing policy are the challenges of marketing of library products and services. Some of the Identified challenges are outlined below:

- **Policy/Implementation:** A policy that deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is statement of intent, and is implemented A procedure protocol Policies are generally adopted by a governance body within an organization. Libraries lack policy that will motivate marketing of its services. If policies are put in place, and implemented libraries will be forced to leverage some promotional strategies to market their services.
- **Non-adoption of library website:** Libraries are lacking in their promotional activities Library websites are not totally used by 115 professionals as a marketing toolkit and as enabler to spread out to the community for advertising of information services and collections. Functionality of these sites, by library staff was found to be challenged by perceived inadequacy of the staff to keep pace with the development of technology.

- **Poor Skills:** skills are necessary in marketing apart from digital skills which librarians need to market their services in digital environment skills such as Communication skills are necessary to be able communicate with the audience effectively. When these skills are lacking librarians cannot market their services.
- **Inadequate library fund:** Poor funding is the most affecting factor that has impeded development or progress of various endeavors. Advertisement is a strategy for marketing is very expensive especially when using traditional media like the newspaper and radio. Although the advent of social media has reduced cost, yet internet subscription and gadgets are needed or even Website development or creation of blog is costly. Most of the libraries have inadequate fund to create website and or blogs. Even the few that have managed to digitize their libraries have inadequate funding for subsequent maintenance of their databases to provide them a better services to market.
- **Lack of infrastructure:** In a digital information service system, infrastructure such as software, hardware, internet facilities and other physical equipment are required to provide easier, faster and comprehensive access to information. Infrastructure is required for managing big data. In the absence of the relevant infrastructure becomes a challenge in managing big data.
- **Lack of cooperation of staff members:** The support and cooperation of staff members, programmers and technical staff are very essential to market and provide effective service in a digital environment but some staff have non-committal attitude towards marketing of library products and services,

Way Forward

- Librarians should communicate: technology skills, ability to acquire good query, ability to sell idea/library services.
- State of the art infrastructure should be provided for the management of database. When database is well managed and is in good condition, it stands a good chance of being marketed because in marketing and promotion the major values of a service is highlighted.
- Every year new batches of students are admitted in the Institution, they are not well versed with the existing system of the library. Therefore it is a responsibility of the libraries to work out the planning of promotion and marketing of library services at the beginning of the academic year and it should be strictly followed according to plan.
- Find out the students who do not use the library so that we can concentrate users and turn them to use library.
- The use of mass media which includes Radio Television AV Cassette, Video Programmes prepared for users and organised talks from experts, seminars, e-cultural programs etc to attract users.

Conclusion

One of the library's improved service utilization of library databases by library users is important to the library. The paradigm of the information seeking behaviour of users to electronic information resources has influenced libraries to respond by digitization of its resources and the provision database for users to digital materials. Database have become a rich and reliable information resource in the age of formation explosion, But despite the rich and reliable contents in the database, its usage and patronage by library users still need to be improved therefore, creation of awareness to the users about its values and the need for access is imperative. Different promotional strategies contribute to creating this awareness al library databases to both the existing and potential users Librarians are therefore required to employ various marketing strategies and utilize various channels especially social media in marketing library and information services particularly databases.

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