

Contemporary Media for Library Users' Instruction in Academic Libraries in South-West Nigeria: Contemporary Library Instruction in the Digital Age

Saturday U. Omeluzor, Imam Abayomi, Philomena Gbemi-Ogunleye

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Abstract

This chapter focused on contemporary media for library users' instruction in academic libraries in South-west of Nigeria. Library user instruction is a complex activity that entails educating the users how to utilize library information resources and enlightening them on the benefits of using information resources in the library. Prior to the use of contemporary media in library instruction, several other methods were predominantly used including teaching and library tour, etc. Advancement in information communication and technology (ICT) has augmented those instructional methods. Some of the contemporary methods are articulated in this chapter and its application in Federal University libraries in South-west, Nigeria is examined. Findings showed that contemporary media such as OPAC, ask a librarian, FAQ and Blog, etc. are important in library instruction and were used for instructing users in academic libraries. Some challenges facing contemporary media in academic libraries are inadequate Internet access, inadequate training of librarians, lack of skill and unreliable power supply.

Chapter Preview

Introduction

Academic libraries are established to acquire, organize, process and disseminate information to the library users. Secondly, they support the learning, teaching and research work of their parent institutions. These key concepts cannot be achieved without adequately instructing new and current library users about the materials that are acquired, how it will be used and where to find them in the library to meet their information needs. Mahammadi, Moghaddan and Yeganeh (2008) stated that teaching and research depend upon the library, and achievements in teaching and research are not possible without the library. Library instruction is one of the core duties of academic libraries since it helps the users (mostly students) to know the rules and regulations on the use of the library and its information resources which to an extent determine the success/failure of students in their academic works (Madukoma, Onuoha, Omeluzor and Ogbuiyi, 2013).

Academic libraries in the past used traditional methods to instruct its new and current library users. For example, Madukoma, et al. (2013) studied library instruction and academic performance of undergraduates at Babcock University, Nigeria and found out that users'

guide, orientation, library tour, referral, teaching, one-on-one guidance and reference services were used. Although, such programs for instructing users differ from library to library. In some academic libraries, it is referred to as 'user education', and takes the form of teaching in the classroom. However, current trends and proliferation in information provision have given rise for the adoption of modern technologies to instruct the library's new and regular users. Moreso, users of academic libraries are no longer limited by neither space nor confined to the library but dispersed in different geo-political locations around the world.

Advancement in information and communication technology (ICT) no doubt left academic libraries with no option than to use new methods and technologies for library instruction. In addition, ICT usage in libraries has provoked new dimensions towards providing holistic and users' 'target' services using contemporary media such as ask-a-librarian, frequently ask question (FAQ), email services, text messaging, online public access catalogue (OPAC) services, Blogging and website publishing among others.

The use of contemporary services for library instruction as enunciated in this study created a mutual relationship between academic libraries and its users and reveal how best the librarians can assist new library users in making effective use of library resources. This chapter focused on some of the contemporary media that can be adopted in academic libraries for provision of library instruction to the library users in the digital age. It is guided with the following research objectives, which is to:

- 1. Know the contemporary media used by academic libraries for library instruction in South-west of Nigeria;
- 2. Find out the challenges facing contemporary library instruction in academic libraries; and
- 3. Suggest ways of improving use of contemporary media for library instruction in academic libraries.

Background

Library instruction is an academic program that is organized by academic libraries to sensitize, create awareness and educate new and potential library users about library resources and services. Library instruction helps to guide library users to effectively utilize and make adequate use of library information materials in their learning, teaching and research. Consequently, Bhatti (2010) stated that the changing nature of higher education worldwide, along with ever increasing growth of library collections, technological developments in handling and retrieving techniques, and information and fundamental changes in the nature of reference services justifies the need of change in user-education (library instruction) services. According to Igbena (1990), library instruction is a process of making library patrons to learn how to make effective and efficient use of library resources and information through the acquisition of skills in identification, location, search, retrieval and exploitation of information. Bhatti (2010) asserted that library education arose within an assumption that the information environment is complex and dynamic. In making library users active in using library resources, Bamdele (2015) opines that librarian can develop reading and library use by delving into a series of lectures under user instruction or user education or library orientation programme.