

Vol. 9(5), pp. 234-241, June 2021

doi: 10.14662/ijarer2021.200

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Full Length Research

# Digital information resources' use in the Federal University Library, Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria

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Accepted 7 June 2021

## Abstract

This study examined the digital information resources use in the Federal University Library, Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey method was used for the study. The population of the study comprises all the staff in digital library of Federal University Library, Lokoja whose number is put at 17 representing the entire population was used. A total of 17 copies of the questionnaires were administered and collected. Four research questions were formulated in line with the purpose of the study. Statistical tools used for this analysis was mean scores of the data. Analysis and discussion of the study were based on major findings of the study. The findings revealed that digital information resources available are e-project, e-reference materials, e-newsletters, e-thesis, e-dissertation, e-books and e-journals. Challenges such as inadequate technology infrastructure, funding problems, constantly changing software and hardware, lack of technical expertise, deterioration of digital media, technological obsolescence and legal/copyright issues impede the use of digital information resources in the library under study. The study recommended that adequate funds should be provided on a regular basis to maintain the digital library resources and their media; proper maintenance culture should be exhibited so as to elongate the lifespan of these digitized resources; adequate technology infrastructure should be provided so as to be able to use these digitized resources to their fullest extent; library staff should be trained on the utilization of these digitized resources so as to improve their level of ICT literacy among others.

**Keywords:** Digitalisation, information resources, library

**Cite This Article As:** Oladokun, B.D., Salihu, A.M., Seidu, A.E. (2021). Digital information resources' use in the Federal University Library, Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria. *Inter. J. Acad. Res. Educ. Rev.* 9(5): 234-241

## INTRODUCTION

Digitization is the process of converting data to digital format for processing by a computer. In information systems, digitization usually refers to the conversion of printed text or images (photographs, illustrations, maps,

etc.) into binary signals using some kind of scanning device that enables the result to be displayed on a computer screen (Olagoke, 2017). Digitization is the conversion of hard texts into soft copies that can be manipulated (Akintunde and Anjo, 2012). Digitization is the process of converting hardcopy documents into a

form that can be read by a word processor. It includes scanning, optical character recognition and proof-reading.

Aswal (2006) added that digital library operations is essential to library adequacy since it expands staff profitability, upgrades housekeeping operations, empowers headway in innovation, and empowers access to outer data through the Internet. Since the commencement of library digitalization, scholarly libraries have experienced noteworthy changes in the ways they store, list, and get to data. Innovative advances made configurations other than the physical book, accessible, for example, microfilm and microfiche. The advancements of the nineteenth century are presently obsolete and considered superfluous to new innovation. The use of digitalization of information resources is to help the library in playing out a double part: one to the supporters towards their data needs in the school, while the second is showed in the day by day routine work inside the library condition where library work is found in the two administration units, reader administrations and technical segments of the library.

The high rate of the use of these digital information resources could be credited to the way that they for the most part contain current data which is exceedingly prized by scholastics. The use of these electronic data assets realized an insurgency in the movement of data arrangement and spread (Olagoke, 2017). The use of electronic data assets gives a superior stage and more open doors for clients since it has preferences over the print assets. A portion of the benefits of the use of electronic data assets when contrasted and print data assets incorporate the preservation of space and time. The client can have fast access to data by making a mix of likely catchphrases identified with his/her pursuit. The speed in recovery of required data is a noteworthy favourable position that electronic asset has over the print asset. Electronic data assets are of various sorts which are electronic diaries, electronic books, electronic magazines and daily papers, CD-ROM databases, electronic meeting procedures and online databases. Maybe the most utilized electronic asset in libraries today is online database.

Digital information resources helps in dealing with the library's assets better while sparing time, cash, and labour. According to Moghaddam (2009), digital information database is an accumulation of information that is sorted out for simple storing and access to. These incorporate paper-based devices like word references and libraries of print materials. From this, we can state that online databases are accumulations of information which are sorted out for simple get to and recovery through the web; that is get to is made accessible through the web.

The use of digital information resources could be easily overseen in the library with the presence of essential foundation, for example, web offices, transmission

capacity, competent specialized support, computer frameworks and power supply. Oketunji (2006) said that the eventual fate of libraries is particularly connected to their capacities to outfit and manage availability to accessible framework as a base for giving powerful and effective access to data by their demographic. That is, the accessibility of important framework is the underlining component for successful arrangement of electronic assets in libraries. It is commensurate to wastage of the constrained accessible assets of the college library if a ton of cash is spent on procuring electronic assets and these assets are not put to most extreme usage by the college group and those from the outside setting.

One of the primary elements of the library is to help individuals discover data; sort out it, recover and keep up the framework which permits access to fit or show individuals how to utilize the data in our environment. With these digital information resources in the library, it can work past the working hours of their obligations attributable to the way that they can work anyplace whenever to take care of their clients. It is in the light of the foregoing that the study seeks to examine the digital information resources' use in the Federal University Library, Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Digitalization of information resources aids library operations and services. However, the ability of libraries to perform their job effectively and efficiently is influenced by their capacity to use electronic resources. Though, digitalization of information resources in libraries may affect their daily operation with the aim to promote librarian's performance and enhance productivity. As the library helps in providing these information sources, there is need to make digital information resources available for users, at all time. Sadly, some libraries in Nigeria do not have sufficient skills and competence especially on the aspect of digitalization.

In spite the digitalization to libraries, users of libraries still face challenges in access and retrieval of resources and services which grossly affect effective research activities. If improvement and innovation for access and retrieval of resources and services are not put into consideration, the users of the library would be scared to patronize the library and that would culminate into low research output and falling standard of the University library services. However, the importance of digitalization to users in academic libraries cannot be over-emphasized. Despite these anomalies associated with the advent of Information and Communication Technology which today has synthesize with the use of library materials and resources in academic libraries as well as the impact of digitalization is seemingly tremendous as its users have gained easy access to

information resources without stress. The library has helped the divergent users of the library in academic environments for easy and quick retrieval of information resources. Especially with the use of other digital facilities like OPAC, database management for automation of library materials, etc have assisted different users for the accessibility of their information needs in areas where the academic librarian may not be forthcoming. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that the study seeks to examine the digital information resources use in the Federal University Library, Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to examine the digital information resources use in the Federal University Library, Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria. But, specifically to:

1. Determine the level of availability of digital information resources in Federal University Library, Lokoja.
2. Determine the effect of digital information resources' use in Federal University Library, Lokoja.
3. Identify the challenges affecting the use of digital information resources in Federal University Library, Lokoja.
4. Strategies for enhancing digital information resources use in Federal University Library, Lokoja.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Digital information resources (DIRs) comprises of those information resources which before now were in print form, but currently found in non- print form ( soft copy) and are accessible through computer machines and other corresponding ICT tools (Obaseki, Umeji and Krubu, 2010). Similarly, Digital Information Resources (DIRs) includes music, games, stories, articles from magazines, published journals and books, encyclopaedias, pamphlets, cartographic materials and other published resources that are in soft copies. They also include sound animated graphics, pictures and movies.

In studies conducted by Fatoki (2007), the materials considered for digital resources include, published articles, theses, dissertations, conference papers, reports, technical and working papers, photographs, newspapers, government official publications, data/ statistics, artefacts, maps, charts, artistic paintings, historical documents and African documents and manuscripts.

The methodology for digitization varies from library to library depending upon the policies and guidelines of the parent institution. The basic steps involved in digitization are setting clear-cut objectives for digitization, selection of materials to be digitized, selection of technology

(hardware and software) for digitization and the archiving or preservation of such digital materials (Pandey and Misrac, 2014).

In the context of materials to be digitized for digital library are divided in four distinct categories, i.e. legacy, transition, new and future. Pandey and Misrac (2014) stated that legacy resources are largely non-digital resources, including manuscript, print, slides, maps, audio and video recordings. Transition resources, primarily designed for another medium (mostly print), which are being or have been digitized, making transition into the digital world. New digital resources are designed with a particular use in mind employing new Internet and web technologies embodying a great variation and value addition. There is an increasingly wide range of digital resources from formally published electronic journals and electronic books through databases and datasets in various formats, i.e. bibliographic, full-text, image, audio, video, statistical and numeric datasets. Future resources may contain data sets which are not formally specified. The object-oriented world of digital objects, packaging the data resources and the access of processing methods as an entity holds out the best for resources of future.

The proliferation of electronic information; the dwindling budget for acquisition of library stocks; the desire to access materials in remote locations; the quest for collaboration, partnerships and resource sharing; and the ever increasing cost of preserving analogue materials, and so on , are some of the forces that prompted digitization of archives and records. According to Pandey and Misra (2014), the aim of digitizing library materials is for preservation and easy access by any user or researcher. Digitization improves access to library resources. By digitizing library collections, information will be accessible to all instead of a group of researchers.

The benefits of digitization cannot be over emphasized. Digitization has transformed scholarship and brought with it tremendous changes and easy access to resources which were formerly restricted. Carr (2000) observed that in academic institutions, digital information resources such as theses, research papers, manuscripts, images or specialized monographs are of very high value. To retain the original copies of rare publications emanating from institutions, digitization becomes the best option. Academic institutions are leveraging on the benefits of digitization to preserve their original publications while promoting surrogate copies.

Otubelu and Ume (2015) said that the obvious benefit of digitization is that it enables greater access to collections of all types. According to them, digital materials can be made available to a broader audience than those who have the resources or ability to travel to see the analogue collections, and access can be expanded to non – traditional audiences such as lifelong learners. Igwe and Uzuegbu (2013) identified five reasons behind the digitization of library resources

include preservation, resource sharing and service delivery, prestige and visibility and technological development. The aim of digitizing library materials is for preservation and easy access by students, researchers and other users.

Unfortunately, digitization of library resources poses a great deal of challenge to the major stakeholders, that is, the library management, employees and library users. Despite everything that digitization can accomplish, there are some good reasons librarians and archivists in developing countries may regret embarking on such project (Pandey & Misra, 2014). Some of the challenges facing the successful digitization of library resources in academic environment, according to Pandey and Misra (2014), include legal aspects, constantly changing software and hardware, funding, technophobia, technical expertise, inadequate technology infrastructure, technological obsolescence and deterioration of digital media. Eke (2011) found that security for digital information is a great challenge that demands attention. Piracy has been a great problem that needs a solution while virus attack on the files and systems is posing a lot of threat to digital information resources in academic libraries.

## METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study is descriptive survey. Descriptive survey involves collecting data in order to answer questions concerning conditions or relationships that exist, practices that prevail beliefs, points of view or

attitudes that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are being felt or trends that are developing (Ifidon, 2007). The area of the study is Federal University Library, Lokoja Kogi State. Federal University Lokoja is situated at the Capital city of Kogi State – Lokoja which is the confluence city between several other states in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. The population consists of library staff in digitalisation unit of Federal University Library, Lokoja. The respondents will include library staff that works in the digital library. According to Library Record Statistics, the total number of library staff in digitalisation unit is 17 which was used as the population of the study and the sample size. This agrees with Ifidon (2007) who stated that where a population is small and manageable, the entire population should be replicated as the sample. The 17 respondents are a representation of the total population drawn from Federal University Library, Lokoja. Purposive sample was employed. The data collected for this research was presented and analysed using the four point of Likert Scale in finding the mean scores. It therefore follows that any factor with a mean of 2.50 and above indicated agreement while those with mean less than 2.50 indicated disagreement.

## Presentation of Data and Result

The data collected are presented in tables and analysed using the mean. A total of 17 questionnaires were distributed to digital library staff of Federal University Library, Lokoja, and all the copies were filled and returned. The findings of this study are presented according to the research questions which guided the study.

## Observation Checklist

**Table 1.** Level of availability of digital information resources in the Federal University Library, Lokoja

S/n	Digital information resources	A	NA
1	E-project	√	
2	E-conference proceedings		√
3	E-technical reports		√
4	E-reference materials	√	
5	E-newsletters	√	
6	E-thesis	√	
7	E-dissertation	√	
8	E-books	√	
9	E-journals	√	

Key: A=Available, NA=Not Available

Table 1 above shows the digital information resources available in Federal University Lokoja, Library. Out of the nine (9) resources listed, item 2 (e-conference proceedings) and item 3 (e-technical reports) are not available for use. The digital information resources available are: e-project, e-reference materials, e-newsletters, e-thesis, e-dissertation, e-books and e-journals. This implies that most information resources were digitalised in the library.

### Research Question 2: What are the effect of digital information resources' use in Federal University Library, Lokoja?

**Table 2.** Effect of digital information resources' use

**N = 17**

S/n	Effects	SA	A	D	SD	X	Rank	Decision
1	It enables greater access to collections of all types.	8	4	2	3	3.1	4 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted
2	It raises the profile of the library and the institution.	7	5	3	3	3.2	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Accepted
3	Ability to search for library resources electronically without difficulties.	5	6	4	2	2.8	5 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted
4	Opportunity to develop strategic liaisons with other institutions.	9	5	1	2	3.3	1 <sup>st</sup>	Accepted
5	Digitization helps to reduce handling and use of fragile documents.	8	4	2	3	3.1	4 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted
6	It helps to save the time of the library user.	7	5	3	3	3.2	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Accepted

Key: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, X=Mean, R=Rank

The table 2 above shows the effect of digital information resources' use in Federal University Library, Lokoja. Responses show the mean value ranging from (3.3) to (2.8), all of which agree that there are effect of digital information resources' use in the library under study. These ranged from greater access to collections of all types, it raises the profile of the library and the institution, ability to search for library resources electronically without difficulties, opportunity to develop strategic liaisons with other institutions, digitization helps to reduce handling and use of fragile documents and it helps to save the time of the library user.

### Research Question 3: What are the challenges of the use of digital information resources in Federal University Library, Lokoja?

**Table 3.** Challenges facing the use of digital information resources

**N = 17**

S/n	Challenges	SA	A	D	SD	X	Rank	Decision
1	Inadequate technology infrastructure	10	4	1	2	3.3	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Accepted
2	Funding issues	11	3	2	1	3.4	1 <sup>st</sup>	Accepted
3	Technophobia (Fear of Technology)	9	5	3	0	3.3	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Accepted
4	Constantly changing software and hardware	8	3	4	2	3.0	6 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted
5	Lack of technical expertise	7	7	2	1	3.1	4 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted
6	Deterioration of digital media	5	6	4	2	2.8	7 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted
7	Technological obsolescence	7	4	2	4	2.8	7 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted
8	Legal/copyright issues	8	5	2	2	3.1	4 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted

Key: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, X=Mean, R=Rank

The table 3 above shows the challenges facing the use of digital information resources in Federal University Lokoja, Library. Responses show the mean value ranging from (3.4) to (2.8), all of which agree that there are challenges facing the use of digital information resources in the library under study. These challenges ranged from inadequate technology infrastructure, funding issues technophobia (fear of technology), constantly changing software and hardware, lack of technical expertise, deterioration of digital media, technological obsolescence and legal/copyright issues.

#### Research Question 4: What are the solutions to the problems of use of digital information resources in Federal University Library, Lokoja?

**Table 4.** Solutions to the problems facing the use of digital information resources **N = 17**

S/n	Strategies	SA	A	D	SD	X	Rank	Decision
1	Adequate funds should be provided on a regular basis to maintain the digital library resources and their media.	9	5	1	2	3.3	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Accepted
2	Installation of alternative to power supply such as standby power generating set, solar power system, utility power systems, etc.	8	4	2	3	3.1	4 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted
3	Proper maintenance culture should be exhibited so as to elongate the lifespan of these digitized resources.	5	6	4	2	2.8	6 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted
4	Update of software data applications and hardware devices	11	3	2	1	3.4	1 <sup>st</sup>	Accepted
5	Provision of adequate technology infrastructures	8	5	2	2	3.1	4 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted
6	Library staff should be trained on the utilization of digitized resources	10	4	1	2	3.3	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Accepted
7	Management should increase the library budget Quota	7	4	2	4	2.8	6 <sup>th</sup>	Accepted

Key: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, X=Mean, R=Rank

The table 4 above shows the strategies to improve the use of digital information resources in Federal University Library, Lokoja. Responses show the mean value ranging from (3.4) to (2.8), all of which agree that there are strategies for effective use of digital information resources by students in the library under study. These strategies ranged from adequate funds should be provided on a regular basis to maintain the digital library resources and their media; installation of alternative to power supply such as standby power generating set, solar power system and utility power systems, proper maintenance culture should be exhibited so as to elongate the lifespan of these digitized resources; update of software data applications and hardware devices; provision of adequate technology infrastructures; library staff should be trained on the utilization of digitized resources and management should increase the library budget. By implication, this shows that there are ways to improve effective use of digital information resources in the library under study.

#### Discussion of the Findings

A total of 17 questionnaires were distributed to digital library staff of Federal University Library, Lokoja and were filled and returned. The findings of this study are discussed in line with the objectives that were formulated to guide the study. Therefore, the study was discussed according to the following sub-heading:

#### Level of availability of digital information resources in Federal University Library, Lokoja

The result of the findings in table 1 revealed the digital information resources available in Federal University Lokoja, Library. Out of the nine (9) resources listed, item 2 (e-conference proceedings) and item 3 (e-technical reports) are not available for use. The digital information resources available are: e-project, e-reference materials, e-newsletters, e-thesis, e-dissertation, e-books and e-journals. Nevertheless, the finding negates the study by Gbaje (2007) in Urhiewhu, Okeke and Nwafor (2015) who noted that most university libraries in Nigeria do not have available electronic resources for their patrons. The availability of these electronic resources is in varying levels. However, it is imperative to note that the availability of electronic resources for users will go a long way in making university libraries to be more relevant to their users as well as be up to date so they can handle effectively the ever growing information need of their users. While supporting the findings of this study, Oduwole (2003) in Urhiewhu, Okeke and Nwafor (2015) in a similar study identified the following as e-resources available in Nigerian university libraries: OPAC, CD-ROMs databases, e-mail and internet browsing.

#### Effect of digital information resources' use in Federal University Library, Lokoja

The findings of the study in table 2 shows effect of

digital information resources' use in Federal University Library, Lokoja. These ranged from greater access to collections of all types, it raises the profile of the library and the institution, ability to search for library resources electronically without difficulties, opportunity to develop strategic liaisons with other institutions, digitization helps to reduce handling and use of fragile documents and it helps to save the time of the library user. This finding is in line with Otubelu and Ume (2015) who affirmed that the benefits of digitizing library resources can be summarized as access, support of preservation activities, collection development, institutional and strategies benefits, research and education. This analysis supports the words of Pandey and Misra (2014) who posited that the proliferation of electronic information; the dwindling budget for acquisition of library stocks; the desire to access materials in remote locations; the quest for collaboration, partnerships and resource sharing; and the ever increasing cost of preserving analogue materials, and so on are some of the forces that prompted digitization of archives and records.

#### **Challenges faced in the use of digital information resources in the university library**

The results of the study in table 3 shows the challenges facing the use of digital information resources in Federal University Lokoja, Library. These challenges ranged from inadequate technology infrastructure, funding issues technophobia (fear of technology), constantly changing software and hardware, lack of technical expertise, deterioration of digital media, technological obsolescence and legal/copyright issues. This analysis revealed that there are so many challenges facing the digitization of library resources in academic libraries which is in line with Pandey and Misra (2014) who posited that despite the tremendous benefits involved in the digitization of information resources in academic libraries, there are a lot of challenges bedeviling digitization exercise. In line with this, Ezeji (2008) found that the major problem that affects students' use of electronic resources is erratic power supply. For instance, one may be in the middle of an important work and suddenly there is power outage which results in wasted efforts and time and even frustration.

#### **Strategies for enhancing digital information resources use in the university library**

The findings of the study in table 4 show the strategies to improve the use of digital information resources in Federal University Library, Lokoja. These strategies ranged from adequate funds should be provided on a regular basis to maintain the digital library resources and

their media; installation of alternative to power supply such as standby power generating set, solar power system, utility power systems, etc; proper maintenance culture should be exhibited so as to elongate the lifespan of these digitized resources; update of software data applications and hardware devices; provision of adequate technology infrastructures; library staff should be trained on the utilization of digitized resources and management should increase the library budget quota. Prior to these findings, Ibinaiye (2012) has suggested that the library management provides effective solution to the problems faced in the digitization unit by purchasing more equipment for the services such as digital camera, Photoshop software, a standby generating set, standardization on the supplied paper size and CD-ROMs, upgrading of the systems in order to meet the needs of modern day's technologies. The findings agreed with the study of Adeniji, Adeniji and Oguniyi (2010) who are of the opinion that the problem of power outage should be addressed; adequate funding should be made available to promote learning and research which the university institutions are known for; the university library management should imbibe the culture of manpower development programme on ICT regularly for her work force and among others.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Digitization of library resources has been found to be a key developmental factor in the present day libraries especially in an academic environment. This present development has continued to revolutionize library services delivery. For libraries to co-exist with the rapid growing information technologies, it has indeed become pertinent for libraries especially in developing countries to add up to their effort to digitize their local content for preservation and easy access.

This study has attempted to examine the digital information resources use in the Federal University Library, Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria. Findings from this study have shown that university libraries in Nigeria are digitizing their local contents for improved library services, increased access, speedy retrieval of documents, and effective preservation. The study revealed despite the librarians possessing the prerequisite skills and competencies for digitization process, emphasis should be made on retraining of librarians to acquire complex digitization skill in order to face the consequential challenges.

Notwithstanding all benefits inherent in digitization of library resources, there are still a lot of challenges to the effective digitization of library resources in Nigerian university libraries. In order to achieve effective and efficient digitization of library resources in university libraries in Nigeria, adequate attention must be given to

the strategies and recommendations given in this study.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Adequate funds should be provided on a regular basis to maintain the digital library resources and their media.
2. Proper maintenance culture should be exhibited so as to elongate the lifespan of these digitized resources.
3. Adequate technology infrastructures should be provided so as to be able to use these digitized resources to their fullest extent.
4. Library staff should be trained on the utilization of these digitized resources so as to improve their level of ICT literacy.
5. The management of academic libraries should encourage the constant training of library staff so as to be kept abreast of changes in the digital world.

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