



Promoting Resource Description and Access (RDA) as Panacea for Enhanced Accessibility to Electronic Library Resources among Librarians in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on encouraging Resource Description and Access (RDA) among librarians in Nigeria as a panacea for improved users' accessibility to electronic information resources. To determine the existing level of understanding and knowledge gaps about the RDA and enhance users' accessibility to electronic library resources, a thorough study of the pertinent literature was conducted. The part that libraries play in utilising RDA has also been looked at in order to improve their operations. The study found that prior studies had demonstrated that RDA improved users' access to electronic library materials. In order to increase users' accessibility and proficiency in accessing library resources, libraries required to offer education and comfort in addition to being educated about the many information technologies that are currently available. The study's conclusions suggest that libraries and librarians should be able to take the lead.

Background to the Study

The new, unified cataloguing standard, known as RDA, is an extension of the AACR2 classifying principles (Muhammed, Baffa & Garba,; Chollom & Abubakar, in Ajani,2022). According to Bamidele, Madukoma, and Onoyeyan (2020) the new rules from AACR2 created for the digital age are Resource Description and Access (RDA). At the 30th Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing Section Workshop in October 2010, RDA was first introduced to professional catalogers in Nigeria in order to raise their awareness of recent advancements in cataloguing standards and principles. The third version of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, formerly known as AACR3, was renamed to Resource Description and Access (RDA).

To put it another way, AACR2 was examined and created to describe things in a way that makes information resources more accessible. The International Cataloguing Principles and Functional Requirement models served as the foundation for the new terminology. However, RDA is the successor to the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2) in its second iteration. RDA, on the other hand, is the new cataloguing standard that resulted from an invention of the AACR2 cataloguing principles. As a standard for descriptive cataloguing that provides instructions and standards for creating bibliographic data for resource description and discovery, these criteria have been approved by professional librarians in Nigeria (NLA, Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing Section in Bamidele, Madukoma, & Onoyeyan, 2020).

The structuring of knowledge in the field of cultural heritage is greatly aided by resource descriptions, which provide users with access to data held by memory institutions like libraries, archives, and museums. Accessibility is crucial because it focuses on persons with disabilities and their ability to interact with institutions, frequently using assertive tools like screen readers, web browsers, and catalogues that leverage modern technology (Nwachukwu, e tal. 2014). Resource description is managed by shared standards, like several other civic initiatives. For libraries, this activity, also known as cataloguing, is governed by the RDA standard (Dobreski , 2019).

Libraries should effectively catalogue and categorise these items using Resource Description and Access in order to make them accessible and provide educated, professional help. Interlibrary borrowings, loan services, research services, information services online, and instruction in information literacy are some of the tools and services that libraries offer their patrons to help them find the information they need. (Onifade .& Babarinde, 2020). Among other print and non-print information types, the library's resources include books, periodicals; newspapers daily, weekly magazines, the World Wide Web, indexes, video recordings, tapes etc.(Eke, 2020; Ezeala, 2022). Libraries are essential for the spread of knowledge and must be useful and accessible to all the diverse groups that make up the larger community (Tella, 2019).

Access to electronic library resources by users is a presumed indicator of how well their information needs are met. In fact, the ability of consumers to access electronic library resources would increase their capability to meet their information demands. However, researchers have discovered a number of problems that users face when trying to access electronic library resources, and these problems have a negative effect on how effectively they meet their

information needs. For users to be prepared to meet their informational demands, they must have access to library resources (Adeniran et al. in 2016). However, observations revealed that these users are probably compromised by their nature because they lack access to the data they need to fulfill their mandate, even when it is available. The users' ability to use it is further hampered by their frequent struggles to locate information that is timely, accurate, and relevant. One could argue that the inaccessibility of these resources is what prevents people from using them (Obande, et al. 2020).

The library wants to create a learning environment where patrons can access a variety of goods and services that will eventually help them become informed consumers. Libraries have developed strategies over time to attract and retain customers by improving the quality of their resources and offerings. And it's crucial to remember that some patrons who continue to visit the library do not use the majority of its services or resources, despite the addition of new library services (Eke, 2020). The situation has persisted in having a detrimental effect on both the expansion of knowledge and library services.

According to Nwachukwu, et al. (2014) Accessibility to the library's resources also seems to be a problem. This can be the result of improper processing of the library materials. Libraries today have access to new kinds of information and information sources, as well as creative methods for spreading knowledge, thanks to recent technological breakthroughs (Kiruki et al., 2021). Uriel (2016) noted that the use of technology like digital databases, online resources, and Internet access exacerbates the issue of accessibility as it relates to the dissemination of information resources. While Awodoyin, et al. (2018) the availability of search engines, smart phones, electronic books, and social collaboration tools has raised demand for various means of access, and research and observation demonstrate that people prefer them to traditional subscriptions. E-mails, social media, and instant messaging are just a few of the new interactive channels for communication that the internet has introduced to the reference desk. As a result, libraries and, by extension, reference services, are no longer restricted to only face-to-face interactions. Before the internet was created, reference librarians answered calls on the phone, sent faxes, and spoke to customers in person.

Users don't appear to be aware of the electronic library services and materials offered by the library, which is likely the result of their lack of information literacy or their unfamiliarity with the setting or features of a library in the twenty-first century. It is worrisome how people are using the electronic materials provided by the library. However, due to a lack of information

materials, libraries are unable to meet all of the needs of the users (Asogwa, et al. 2020). According to Osaheni, et al. (2021) and Eke, (2020), Lack of accessibility and inadequate information literacy abilities are the primary obstacles to people utilising library services. A issue with how library resources are used as observed at the library is that users don't seem to be aware of the information materials provided there, either because they are illiterate or because they are unfamiliar with the location or usage of the library (Nwachukwu, et al.2014).

Accessibility is an aspect of literacy in information. Access is the capacity to locate the required library materials. The viability of any organisation, business, or institution is significantly influenced by a number of critical factors, including accessibility (Osaheni Oni, Oshobughie & Eshiemokhai, 2021). A library's resources include its personnel, collections, offerings, attributes, capabilities, methods, and services (Asogwa, et al. 2020). Libraries should make these resources available and provide educated, expert help in order to promote effective use of them (Oyetunji, 2018A). Library resources lay the groundwork for goal-setting and offer crucial services to users (Ntui, & Udah, 2015).

Libraries are crucial for the spread of knowledge, hence it is important that all users have access to them (Tella, 2019). Also, Libraries provide study and research services (Sejane, 2017). This could be accomplished by searching local and internet databases of books and information using keywords, subjects, titles, and authors (Azonobi, 2021; Obande, Osakwe, Ujakpa, Iyawa, Ikechukwu & Amunkete., 2020). Libraries use websites to provide access to e-resources (Kiruki & Mutula, 2021). Users need access to library resources in order to fulfill their information needs because their duties are research-based. The accessibility of a library's materials refers to how easily data may be found and retrieved from a storage medium. If users can locate and use the resources in the libraries, they are available (Nwachukwu, Abdulsalami & Salami, 2014). Adeniran et al. (2016) state that accessibility is the ability to access and retrieve information from multiple sources. Libraries use websites to provide access to e-resources (Kiruki & Mutula, 2021).

Access to electronic library materials by users is assumed to be a sign that their information needs are being met. In actuality, user performance would be impacted by satisfied information needs. However, users' ability to access electronic library resources is restricted by a number of

problems, and these problems negatively affect how effectively they complete their various office tasks.

Essence / Rationale for Promoting Accessibility of Electronic Library Resources

The integration of technology like digital databases, online resources, and Internet access compounds the problem of accessibility as it relates to the dissemination of information resources (Uriel, 2016). According to Osaheni, et al. (2021), some of the main issues preventing the use of library resources include a lack of awareness of its availability, a lack of publicity, and a lack of computer training. Numerous access issues were caused by the website's design (Kiruki et al., 2021). Eke (2020), although accepting the problem of ignorance, claimed that perception and orientation towards libraries are significant factors that influence how easily accessible electronic library resources are.

According to Asogwa, et al. (2020), the lack of resources and information sources makes it difficult for Nigerian libraries to meet the needs of their patrons. According to Uriel (2016), there were not many informational materials available at the library, and those that were there were not well catalogued and categorised for accessibility. Another problem mentioned by Nwachukwu et al. (2014) is that users don't seem to be aware of the information resources and services offered in the library, which according to Oyetunji, (2018B), is probably because they are information illiterate or are unfamiliar with the setting or use of the library. This may be because of insufficient processing and Users don't appear to be aware of the services and informational resources the library offers.

The aforementioned difficulties have gotten to be concerning. In light of this, this study looks at how Nigerian librarians are advocating Resource Description and Access (RDA) as the solution for better accessibility to electronic library materials.

Accessibility to Electronic Library Resources

Accessibility is a term used to describe how easily a system may be utilised by a variety of people, according to Nwachukwu et al. (2014). To put it another way, it describes how easy it is to go to a particular spot from other areas. It can also be compared to having access to a system's features and prospective benefits (Nwachukwu et al. 2014). Accessibility of library resources refers to how easily a piece of information can be found and retrieved from the storage media, according to Akobundu in Ntui, et al. (2015). Adeniran et al. (2016) state that being accessible

may be defined as having access to records or information from a number of information media. Another facet of accessibility is the users' capacity to find and use library resources (Nwachukwu et al. 2014). According to Adeniran et al. (2016), information is comparable to raw materials that no nation should ignore because it must be accessed in order to be used meaningfully.

Another facet of accessibility is the users' capacity to find and use library resources (Nwachukwu et al. 2014). This might be done utilising keywords, subjects, titles, and authors on both local and distant library and information databases (Azonobi, 2021; Obande, et al., 2020). To guarantee that information resources are used and accessed to the fullest extent feasible, many libraries are making access available to a range of information through their websites (Kiruki, et al., 2021). According to Adeniran et al. (2016), information is comparable to raw materials that no nation should disregard because it must be accessed in order to be used meaningfully.

Trends and Methods for Enhanced Users' Accessibility of Electronic Library Resources

According to Oyetunji and Akpan-Abasi (2018C), information literacy skills like the capacity to recognise information needs and the use of ICTs to conduct information searches are excellent resources that both users and librarians may utilise to meet their information needs. Library materials must be made more accessible through digital tools (Obande, et al. 2020). Digital tools are known to users including eJournals, eNewspapers, and eBooks since Internet services and online databases are widely accessible (Oduwole et al. in Umar, 2015). People today choose quick and easy access to scientific publications over traditional subscriptions, according to observation and research. This is due to the accessibility of ICTs like search engines, smart phones, electronic books, and social collaboration platforms. E-mails, social media, and instant messaging are just a few of the new interactive platforms for communication that the internet has introduced to the reference desk. As a result, libraries and, by extension, reference services, are no longer restricted to only face-to-face interactions (Awodoyin, et al. 2018). Hypertext language allows content to be shared across the WWW. According to Asogwa et al. (2020), the web is the quickest, easiest, and most economical tool for data collecting, communication, and sharing.

Before the development of ICTs, libraries utilised printed catalogues and periodicals lists to find information. These have since been superseded with online public access catalogues (OPAC). OPAC and Email enable users to exchange messages and data files (Obande, et al. 2020). Digital

libraries are essential for resource sharing, as they make it easier to send and receive electronic documents to participating libraries (Eyiolorunshe et al. 2017).

Conclusion

Information literacy abilities are necessary to search for, access, analyse, use, and meet information demands. The 21st century marks the emergence of the information era. It is becoming increasingly clear that the legislature's limited time in libraries will not be enough to meet their informational needs. They must develop the necessary skills, such as information literacy, to become independent lifelong learners.

Recommendations

1. Libraries ought to encourage information literacy by educating users;
2. Libraries should provide information support systems that can enhance the information literacy skills of users;
3. Librarians should have technical know-how, be able to troubleshoot issues, and help consumers decipher unclear information or work around difficult solutions.
4. Keeping up with advancements in telecommunications, information storage and retrieval, computer applications, and instructional design is crucial for librarians and users.
5. In addition to being knowledgeable about the many information technologies that are currently available, librarians and users must be able to collaborate among themselves in order to instill information literacy skills.

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