

**NIGERIAN SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN AN EMERGING INFORMATION  
AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) ENVIRONMENT**

**BY**

**UMAR IBRAHIM, BLS, MLS, PhD (A.B.U.. ZARIA)  
Department of Library and Information Science.  
Faculty of Education, A. B. U. Zaria**

**Being a paper presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the Nigerian School Library  
Association (NSLA), held at Kaduna on the 22-26 March, 2004**

### Abstract

The paper shows that the Nigerian society is an emerging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) society and that the best place to nurture information handling skills and information literacy for life-long development is the Nigerian school library. Discussing the challenges of Nigerian school libraries in an emerging ICT environment, the paper highlights funding and capacity building as the major problems towards successful ICT applications and use in Nigerian school libraries.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Indeed! It is obvious, as can vividly be seen that Nigeria is experiencing a climate of rapid and of course radical change in all segments of its society. It is a fact that in the areas of communication, one can communicate with any one anywhere, especially at the state capitals, in Nigeria within a twinkle of an eye. The Electronic money (e-money) transfer in the banking industry is no doubt becoming a relieve to many Nigerians. The recent launching of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) and virtual Library programming are signs that Nigerian Education sector is prepared for total transformation and development.

One catalyst that is responsible for these changes in the country is the quick adoption of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by the Nigerian society. Therefore, it can safely be said that the Nigerian society is today an emerging ICTs society. This can clearly be seen from the fact that:

- (i) Computer and by extension automation has permeated all the sectors of the Nigerian Economy.
- (ii) Availability of telephone system – Landline, mobile, fax machine.
- (iii) Presence of Audio-visual systems.
- (iv) Availability of CDs, CD-ROMs, etc.
- (v) Installation of Orbit, VSAT and other satellite communication systems.
- (vi) Enabling environment for networking – LAN, WAN.
- (vii) Past growth in Internet café industry.

## 2.0 THE NIGERIAN SCHOOLS AND THE ICTs

As rightly pointed out by Omoniwa (1995:2), the concept of Education and its contents has been changing systematically and very radically too over the last few decades. The quantum of knowledge available to the learned today is such that it is beyond the capacity and capability of teachers to impart all the knowledge and information available to the pupil/student in the classroom situation.

Salisu (1996:16) averred that because of the radical transformation in Nigerian Education sector and by extension the library, it became inevitable to introduce technologies into the classroom and the library. This invariably led to the adoption of the concept of Educational Technology. Educational Technologies in the form of Fibre communication technology, Audio video information system (Audio video cassettes, films) etc. are today freely used in our secondary schools and some primary schools to simplify, enhance and make learning more interesting. Computer games that arose children imagination, Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) and Computer Managed Instruction (CMI) are equally used in the organization of information, enhancement of teaching, learning and progress monitoring. No wonder Okpal (1992), observes that this new method of teaching has indeed replaced the "talk and chalk" method.

The technological and information revolutions taking place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century "knowledge age" have introduced yet another concept that is transforming the nature and pattern of information acquisition, processing, handling, transfer and service. This concept is no other than Information and communication Technology (ICT). Many scholars, such as Zaki (2000), Oketunji (2001), Mohammed (2003) etc. have defined Information and communication Technology (ICT) in variety of ways. However, the term can simply be referred to as the

combination of computer and telecommunication devices used for data and information gathering/acquisition, processing, storage, retrieval, dissemination and transfer to the relevant users. The ICTs devices include: Telephone; mobile phone, Private Automatic Box Exchange (PABX), Photocopier, scanners, Cable Television (CATV), communication satellites, such as Direct Broadcast Satellites (DBS), video phones, fibre optics, ultra microfiche, fax machines, VSAT, computers and Internet.

Mohammed (2003:3) has reported that authors such as Daranton (1997), Murtala (2000), Okechukwu (2000) and Mohammed (2002) have extensively discussed the importance and the need for the application of ICTs in Librarian and Information Centres. The general consensus among them is that the application of ICTs in libraries and Information Centres will among others

- ❖ Enhances information service provision, dissemination and transfer
- ❖ Increases efficiency and effectiveness in library and information work.
- ❖ Makes education/learning more immediate productive, individual and powerful and more importantly provide equal accessibility.
- ❖ Facilitates resources sharing among libraries and information centers, and
- ❖ Increases staff productivity.

Having realised the importance and application of ICTs to education and learning, it is

Interesting to note that today there is an appreciable presence of ICTs in the Nigerian secondary and some primary schools, especially private schools. Computers, telephone, Video, Internet and other ICTs devices are not only available in the schools but that a whole subject called Introductory Technology, in which IT and ICTs are discussed, is now taught to pupils/student. The Nigerian home is also not left behind in ICTs acquisition. Computers, telephone, Video and Internet are very common in most homes of wealthy and working class Nigerians. Therefore, with the presence of ICTs in the Nigerian society in general and the home and school

environments in particular, it can safely be said that the Nigerian pupil/student and their teachers are very much aware of the importance and application of ICTs.

### 3.0 THE NIGERIAN SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND THE ICTs

The adoption of Educational Technology in our secondary schools in the early 1980s has indeed transformed the School Library into a place where variety of information resources are acquired, systematically organized and effectively used to enhance learning and impart knowledge. Apart from books, multi-media resources such as Television, Radio, Projector, Films, Audio/Video cassettes, e.t.c. became other dominant information resources in the school libraries. This new outlook of the school library led it to assuming such title as School Library Resource Center (SLRC); School Library Media Center (SLMC); School Media Center (SMC) and Instructional Media Center (IMC). Because of this new name(s) and roles, the functions of school library have also drastically changed. The main function of school library or school media centers, according to Mohammed (1998:110) and Elaturoti (1998: 49), is to stimulate and encourage the creation and utilization of variety of information resources by both the pupil/students and the teachers. It serves to ingrate teaching and learning using both print and non-print media resources. The goal of multi-media in school library is to provide both the pupil/students and teachers information resources and services in a variety of media to meet their individual and collective educational, informational, and recreational needs.

Although ICTs is not yet very much present in Nigeria school libraries, but the fact that it is present in the Nigerian society and to some extent the school and home environments, it became pertinent for the school library and school librarian to, as a matter of fact, prepare for the use of the device in the library. This is because any success in ICT in school libraries should be nurtured early. ICTs have come to stay; the sooner pupils/students and their teachers accept the

striving) and work behavior. Research demonstrated that achievement striving is related to sales performance (Bluen, et al., 1990) and in role behavior (Lee, 1995) achievement also interacts with other variables to influence performance. For example, Barling, Kelloway, and Cheung (1996) found achievement striving interacted with time management to predict sales performance.

Longitudinal studies on achievement motivation demonstrated that achievement predicts future performance. Stein, et al., (1993) found lower adolescent achievement motivation significantly predicted more negative job behaviors and lower job satisfaction in young adulthood. McClelland and Franz (1992) found parenting achievement pressure in the first two years of life as associated with adult need for achievement and earned income.

There have, however, been a lot of doubts expressed about the applicability of motivation theories developed in the western industrialized world to the Nigerian worker. This is largely due to differences in the socio-cultural and economic situation that greatly influences the work orientation or attitude of Nigerian workers, with particular reference to the motives and needs theories.

Anikpo (1982), argues that none of the theories can be applied to the needs of the Nigerian worker, without modifications, and expect it to tell us anything concrete about the needs of the Nigerian worker which has culturally determined peculiarities. He went further to say that if Maslow's need theory is true for the Nigerian situation, the need can only be identified in terms of lower order and higher order drives, which in

the author's need theory falls into two categories: lower order and higher order.

reality the better. The emphasis in school curriculum today is on information literacy. Infact learning to learn and learning to handle information are key points of the school curriculum. Information literacy is therefore a progressive and cumulative process, which should start from early childhood. Apart from providing accurate, timely, effective and efficient information and information related service, ICTs can enrich and enhance the acquisition of Information literacy. The learner is now provided with the opportunity to actively seek knowledge, make observation, formulate definition, make judgment, analyze and synthesize facts, think, imagine and draw conclusion. The possibilities of ICTs in education are limitless. Infact research has shown that where ICT has been provided in the school library

- Independent learning was fostered
- Individual learners were motivated to higher levels of achievement
- Students gained access to sources of information well beyond normal capacity of the school
- Multi-media helped learners understand difficult concepts
- Skills were transfer from ICT to other subjects
- Critical skills and visual literacy were enhanced.

#### **4.0 THE NIGERIAN SCHOOL LIBRARIANS AND THE CHALLENGES OF ICTs**

The challenges of ICTs application in Nigerian school libraries can basically be grouped into four broad categories:

- Provision of ICTs in school libraries
- Funding
- Capacity building, and
- Provision of qualitative ICTs services.

#### **4.1 PROVISION OF ICTS IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

With regards to the first challenge, it is indeed a fact that most school libraries in Nigeria are still begging for attention even in terms of provision of basic needs and traditional learning

resources. The presence of multi-media instructional resources in the library is still very negligible. Although computers and telephone have found their ways into many schools, especially Federal Government schools, science schools, model schools and private schools, these are often kept in separate places other than the library.

Therefore, the first challenge to the school librarian is to see how he can secure computers into the library. Those computers kept at the designed places often called computer rooms are just meant for teaching the subject-Introduction to Computer – now inserted into the school curriculum. The pupils/students and their teachers often use these computers to learning appreciation courses and other relevant courses.

The computers to be kept in school library should therefore be loaded with different instructional programmes in various subjects so that pupils/students could freely and easily make follow-up after classroom work. Today, there are a lot of computer Assisted Instructional programmes such as Typing tutors. There are also a lot of computer games that both amuse and educate. There is no doubt that the school is the best place to have all these because it is one central place that is freely accessible to all, from lower to higher grades, and their teachers. If there should be Internet connectivity and accessibility in the school, again, the best place to have it is the school library.

#### **4.2 FUNDING**

Funding is central to the success of any programme. Unfortunately, the school library is the worst heat among all the types of libraries in Nigeria in term of funding. This is despite to the numerous ways of generating funds for school library suggested by many advocate of school library, such as Elaturoti (1998), Ibrahim (1997), Ayeni and Oyenbaji (1997), e.t.c. The reason for the continue suffering lie squarely on the non-implementation of these suggestions. It is the

---



believe of many that if the ETF, certain percentage of budgets of NPEEC, MOE, LGEA, school fees and library fees are really deducted and use for school library development, the issue of ICTs provision in Nigerian school library can be a reality.

#### 4.3 CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building simply means manpower or personnel development. It is a conscious and deliberate effort on the side of the staff to acquire new or improve existing skills with the view to enhancing their performance and productivity. There is no doubt to the fact that the school library or media centre of today more than before need highly skilled and experienced professional with adequate capacity and ability to effectively and efficiently manage ICTs.

Since the emphasis in school curriculum is today on information literacy, it is then very important for the school librarian to acquire information handling skills in order to support effective access to information sources across the school curriculum. To do this effectively, therefore, the school librarian need to:

- Understand the information content/skill of curriculum subjects
- Map information skills across the curriculum
- Identify sources of information for subjects
- Develop strategies for working with subject specialists
- Make information resources accessible to staff/pupils in a classroom context
- Identifying opportunities for developing joint approaches to teaching information skills
- Consider how to move information skills forward within the school
- Exchange ideas on teaching activities with other librarians

In view of the above and in order to accomplish these and other tasks it became necessary that the school librarian should undergo training and retraining. It is very important for the school librarian to be ahead of not only the students but also the teachers because both would always look towards him for help and guidance. The school librarian should therefore not wait until the school authority sponsors him to attend training programmes, rather he should strive to

participate in short courses, workshops, etc on his own. It is significant that he become computer and ICTs literate and fully registered with any Internet café.

#### 4.4 PROVISION OF QUALITATIVE ICTS SERVICES

With the provision of ICTs in school libraries and well-groomed school librarians, the stage for the provision of qualitative ICTs services is, no doubt set in place. ICTs can effectively be used to advance the course of reading. In fact, Holderness (2002) remarks that today's readers have to become literate in a wide range of areas. They have to learn how to "read" film and video, cartoons, comics, and advertisements, and to be able to access texts stored on and presented by computers, hypermedia packages, and the www-internet.

In all these critical literacy is very crucial. This is why Hoggart (2000) observes that in a society marked by so many persuasions, most of them wooing if not cooing, we all need to develop a well-muscled critical sense. We all need critical literacy!! Similarly, Cheng (2001) recommends that in the face of a knowledge-based society, we must strive for life-long learning so as to equip ourselves with the many challenges ahead.

Therefore, the school librarian should develop materials to support pupils as they use ICTs. There are lot of "computer study made easy" textbooks and software available in the country. There are abundant web sites dedicated to providing teaching-learning materials, instructional materials and teaching methodologies. For instance, there are a lot of web sites created in order to promote and sustain reading culture. JUST FOR KIDS WHO LOVE BOOKS (<http://www3.Sympatico.ca/alanbrown/>) is a web site that is ideal for young users. The site promotes interest in reading for leisure. It has information about popular Children's authors and interviews with them. LITERACY HOUR ACTIVITIES ([http://www.Amble\\_side\\_Schoolzone.co.uk/ampleweb/literacy\\_Htm](http://www.Amble_side_Schoolzone.co.uk/ampleweb/literacy_Htm)) is another web site created by a British School for children, teachers and parents. It is an interactive English lesson on homophones, poetry, and comprehension. Aiming to promote interest in art and art history in young users, THE @ART

**ROOM** (<http://www.arts.ufl.edu/art/rtroom/>) web site gives art teachers resources, activities on various topics

Although there are many services that can be derived from ICTs, the school librarians should however concentrate on those services that can be utilized to support teaching, learning and curriculum development. The effective and efficient use of ICTs for these entire lies centrally on adequate acquisition of information skills and information literacy. Therefore, other ICTs services the school librarians should pay attention to are those that can enhance quick acquisition of these skills, Focusing on how to select materials from the mass of information that are available via ICT and how to evaluate it

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The presence of past growing Internet café, the recently installed orbit satellite and the Ever willing Nigerian citizenry to acquire and utilize information and by extension knowledge points to the fact that Nigeria has indeed join the information super highway and is fully in the information age-the digital age. To promote and sustain the acquisition of information handling skills and information literacy for life-long development, the school library is the best place to catch Nigerians young.

## REFERENCE

- 1 Omoniwa, M (1995) Staffing of School Libraries: Recruitment, Qualifications, Training, Promotion and Appraisal. A paper presented at the workshop on standards and management of school libraries, held at Kaduna on 13<sup>th</sup>- 14<sup>th</sup> September.
- 2 Salisu, S. O (1996) "New Trend in educational technology and the implications for School Libraries". *Lagos Librarian* 17 (1&2)
- 3 Mohammed, Z (1998) Curriculum Innovations in Library Education and Training For school libraries (Teacher-Librarians) for Nigerian Schools. In Elaturoti, D. F.

- (ed) *Nigerian School Librarianship: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Ibadan:
- 4 Elaturoti, D. F (1998) *Learning Resources and Development for Nigerian School Libraries*. In Elaturoti, D. F. (ed) *Nigerian School Librarianship: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Ibadan: NSLA.
  - 5 Oketunji, I (2001) *Computer Application to Libraries*. In A Compendium of papers presented at the 39<sup>th</sup> NLA Annual Conference & AGM held at Owerri on 17<sup>th</sup> June
  - 6 Mohammed, Z (2003) *Re-Engineering public libraries in Nigeria: The case of ICT Application*. A paper presented at National Workshop on Strategies for the Implementation of ICTs in publishing libraries in Nigeria, held at Nassarawa State Library Board Complex, Lafia on 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> December
  - 7 Mohammed, Z (2002) *A Study of the Status of ICT Availability and application in Nigerian Libraries and Information centers*. *The Information Manager* 2 (1) pp.15-17.
  - 8 Elaturoti, D. F (1998) op cit.
  - 9 Ibrahim, Umar (1997) *Strategies for effective funding and management of school libraries in Nigeria*. A paper presented at the 35<sup>th</sup> National Conference and AGM of the NLA, held at Arewa House, Kaduna. 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> May
  - 10 Ayeni, E. O and Oyebanji, V. A (1997) *The present state of Nigerian school libraries and Strategies for their effective funding*. A paper presented at the 35<sup>th</sup> National Conference and AGM of the NLA, held at Arewa House, Kaduna. 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> May
  - 11 Holderness, J (2002). *Reading activities in Microsoft Encarta Reference Library*