



INFORMATION DISSEMINATION IN CONTEMPORARY ERA: TOOLS AND METHODS DEPLOYABLE

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ABSTRACT

From a conceptual research perspective this paper discussed information dissemination in contemporary era: tools and method deployable. The concept of information dissemination and contemporary are defined Importance of information dissemination highlighted as well as the technology and techniques deployed to disseminate information in the 21st century information environment. The paper further discussed online public Access catalog (OPAC), personal speed, short message services (SMS), social media network among other techniques used to disseminate information in the contemporary era. The requirements for effective information dissemination in a mobile based library environment were also highlighted. The paper finally provided various advantages and challenges of deploying technologies in disseminating information in the contemporary era. The paper recommended that libraries/information managers should deploy various information techniques to provide services to diversity of their system users.

INTRODUCTION

Information dissemination in contemporary era has been revolutionized by technological breakthrough and rapid advances in ICT technological development has greatly changed the way in which information is stored and transmitted to users. Technology is permeating people lives like never before and it is been used in all sector, information seeking, manufacturing among others and at the center of all technological developments is the growing use of the internet and mobile technologies (Aleioaylil (2014) and (Barnhart & Pierce 2011). ICT is now an indivisible part of individual's different disciplines and sphere of life. The tidal wave of technology has increased access to diverse information, thereby continuously changing user's needs. Today libraries are operating in a more advance technological

are, hence the need to remodel library sources, kind of services to fit into the 21st century era (Bruiju, 2009)

Importance of Information Dissemination

The information dissemination has become the life wire of every society Boutin (2013) highly has the importance of information dissemination as follows:

- i. Information is often disseminated with the hope that individual and entities in an organization will improve their knowledge based and subsequently make better judgment in future situations.
- ii. Information is often disseminated in other to educate, explain or promote a concept, process or principle.
- iii. The principal objective of information dissemination is to promote awareness.

21st Century Information Dissemination Technology Techniques

The advancement of technology and continuous ICT development are changing and revolutionizing information services in terms of acquisition, storage, organization, maintenance and the method of rendering services (Fagbola, Uzoigwe & Ajegbomogun 2011). The author further listed technologies and methods use in dissemination information in the 21st century era. Most of these methods are self-services techniques which involves the use of technological equipment's/ machines such as laptops, smartphones, PDA's PP3s, computer and many more.

(a) Online public access catalogues and networked databases

Due to online presence of catalogues, users are able to retrieve and access information resources in a timelier manner. Current OPACs can be accessed through the use of mobile technology such as cell phones. Library users no longer need to be within the library walls for them to access OPACs and library databases. Information seekers retrieve various information sources through mobile online, public access catalogue and mobile based databases such as the New York public library, University of Liverpool library. Jefferson



county public library and Nashville public library are some of the best practices example in the use of mobile OPACs in information dissemination.

(b) Personal space/ my Library

This is a self-service platform where information seeker and managers, manages the personalized accounts with custom made collections. With this platform, users can set up and manage their profile, preferences for catalogue scanners, receive alerts on reserved items, check their record, track interlibrary loan request, renew borrowed items and document delivery requests. According to Jain (2013) the library makes use of this technology by embedding the items call number, location, title and ISBN. This platform presents a new opportunity for electronic data interchange and selective information dissemination.

Information provided are able to send customized scanned documents, images, audio books to users personalized account (Saxena & Yadav, 2013). This library services is also a good platform for e-learning and distance learning. Academic libraries can harness the advantages of mobile technologies to implement structures for distance learning by making ubiquitous's, Example: Duke University implements a free iPhone application called Duke Mobile, it contains information on digital library resources. It also allows widespread access to the library digital library photo archive, personalized user accounts and library collections helps the user to feel in control of their information resource and increase more interest in accessing library resources (Halder, 2009).

(c) Short message service (SMS) notification

It entails the use of mobile telephone systems to disseminate information in the form of text messages and multimedia content such as videos, images and audio files. Libraries use this service to alert patrons regarding outstanding fees, revenues, provision of call numbers, interlibrary loan, and issues return notification, item on hold and new arrivals. An integrated library management software is used to generate such notification. Examples of these application includes (i) Libsys O.7 (ii) AIM Hack, (iii) My Infor Quest, (iv) Mosio's Text a Librarian. Etc.

(d) Social media Network

Information professionals make use of this social platform for information dissemination. Social networks are more appropriate for use on marketing information and delivering personalized information resource to group of people or individuals. SMS notification can also be used through the use of social media network; example (i) WhatsApp (ii) Imo (iii) goggle (iv)Twitter (v) Facebooketc.

(e) Quick response (QR) Codes

These are two dimensional bar code that directs users to the desired website. It is time saving technology that acts as a pointer to indexed or programmed URLs. The barcodes contains information about an item to which QR is attached. Users with smartphones use their camera features to scan images and decode the information. QR code are also known as mobile tagging (Verna & Verna 2014).

Information professional use this technique to direct users to relevant or important website, either on a certain topic or library adverts.

(f) Online reference services

Most times the high volume of inquires received by libraries can be overwhelming at time. Without being able to help users within the least reasonable time affects user services satisfaction technology has made it possible for librarians and information providers to attend to multiple users queries at the same time (Lippincott 2010); live video calling can be done through skype, Imo and WhatsApp to chat with a reference librarian. Online platforms allows reference librarian to create a bond with patrons and improve their efficiency through provision of a 24/7 reference service.

(g) Library Website

Library website are being used invarious libraries for marketing purpose and announcing news or upcoming events to their users Application such as CSS (cascading style sheet) or ADR (Auto-Detect and Reformat software) are used to enable website to rearrange and adapt to the size of the mobile device being used. With the influence of mobile technology, librarians are transforming website into mobile friendly interfaces. Every library should



have a website that will enable information dissemination and access by types of user.

(h) Mailing list

This is most common method of information dissemination using email in library to receive personalized information at the same time. Information service on the internet support/dissemination groups and list) are usually along special user group or order areas

Requirements for Information Dissemination in a Mobile based Library Services

Today's information seekers are technology driven. The absence of mobile technology library services may inhibit the success of information dissemination by librarians. Successful information dissemination in their contemporary era, requires the use of various mobile technologies that will enable a constant connectivity to user. To provide basic mobile services, libraries/librarians must ensure that the following thing are in place.

(A) Automation:

Automation refers to the techniques or system of operating process reducing human intervention to a minimum. Library management systems (e.g.) Libsys, VIRTUA, Alice for windows Techlib and NETLIS) are used to automate library operations such as circulation, acquisitions, cataloguing and classification these system also have inbuilt functions such as registration and payment notification (Uzuegbu & Mealbert 2017)

(B) Trained staff:

Mobile library services should be operated by trained staff. According to Prabhakower & Kalyanc (2024) Dissemination of information in using mobile technology can only be harnessed when librarians are competent enough to use online library application and be able to operate various application and mobile devices. Lack of skills among staff in the use of mobile technologies will only demotivate them also inhibit quality customer services. It therefore expected that libraries should train and retrain

their staff in the use of mobile technologies. This can be informing in houses through workshops seminars any others.

(C) Access to internet:

Operating websites, access to social media platforms and the use of mobile technologies requires internet connectivity

(1) Library of congress (2) Toronto public Library (3) Brooklyn public library and (4) Alexandria Library in Egypt offers free wireless access to library users. Internet connectivity is fundamental in provision of mobile library services. In Nigeria, many university and research libraries are deploying internet to provide service to users.

(D) Security Mechanism:

The online platform pose a risk to user privacy and confidentiality librarians need to establish effective security mechanism such as encryption of data to prevent hacking, installing of anti-virus software that prevent distorting or loss of information due to malware is important. Areas where mobile devices are use should be secured through the use of CCTV cameras.

CONCLUSION

It's clear that ICT allows simultaneous and multiple information access. It is time saving and increases innovativeness. Though it provides various advantages; it has brought with it challenges in the information management profession as roles and skills are changing to suit the era. Information managers and libraries can employ various information dissemination techniques such as personalized collection, SMS notification, QR Codes online references services, ;social network, websites, mailing lists and OPACs technology, especially mobile technology is changing the way information is delivered and accessed. Therefore it is only appropriate for information repositories to challenge themselves to cope with the changes and adopt appropriate information dissemination methods.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- There should be training and retraining of information providers in the area of handling modern equipment to be able to fit in contemporary era which will translate to effective provision of information.
- There should be adequate budgeting for the information centers so as to be able to provide necessary facilities needed to secure information in the contemporary society where cybercrime is the order of the day.
- The government all over the world should make provisions for resources needed to provide information by information providers.
- The telecommunication service providers should increase the bandwidth so as to increase the speed of accessing the internet which has been a hindrance to free flow of information.
- The government should also increase the power (electricity) supply so as to avoid losing of important information due to power failure.
- The network providers should also cut down the charges of subscription in order to make it affordable to all information seekers.

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