DIGITAL PERSEVERATIONS OF LIBRARY RESOURCES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Digital preservation of library resources bestows enormous benefits to the users and by extension helps to broaden the image and development of the library as an information service institution. Therefore, this study examined digital preservation of library materials. The study examined the prospect and challenges of digital preservation of library as well as recommended among others that the federal, state, local Government, private and multinationals to intervene in funding library projects consistently and adequately in order to enhanced digital preservation of library material.

Keyword: Digital, Preservation, Library, Resources, Technologies, Information

Introduction
Libraries play a critical role in organizing, pre-serving and providing access to the information resources of the society. The various components of the library such as books, serials, audio-visual materials, buildings, furniture and fittings, library staffs and users complement one another in making the provision of services a reality. When all these components are available, the library will be well positioned to deliver services. However, the current development in science and technology, the evolution of information communication technology and the subsequent interest of library patrons to access information resources anywhere and at all time has made it inevitable to consider alternative option in reaching out to library users. Since the ultimate goal of the library, is to deliver service to the users in relevant, appropriate format and in a timely fashion, it has become necessary to adopt digital technologies for information production, distribution and storage and preservation of library resources to be able to meet the information need and behaviour of users. Digital preservation of library resources will enhance timely access to information, improve information searching, offer unlimited access to information and help to reduce stress on the users in having to visit physically the location of the library to access the needed information resources.

The Concept of Digital Preservation
Digital preservation according to Yale university library digital preservation policy (1999) is used to mean the whole activities and process involved in the physical and intellectual protection and technical stabilization of digital resources through time in order to reproduce authentic copies of these resources. In essence, the whole activities and processes are geared toward reproducing
authentic copies of these resources. The decisions to preserve digital resources are premised on the basis of the library policy, strategic plan, the digital resources enduring value, and the feasibility of the digital resources preservation. The need to preserve the digital resource is possibly made at the time of creation, acquisition or licensing of the resources. Furthermore, the selections, curators and bibliographers in consultation with technical experts must specify the preservation requirements for the digital resources. Preservation of digital resources may include any actions necessary to preserve continued access to the digital material, ensure its authenticity, mitigate or reverse the effects of hardware and software obsolesces and media. Decay Issues such as continued access, authenticity of digital materials and ensuring the currency of the hardware and software are of utmost importance to preservation of digital resources.

Digital library according to Ominyi (2003) is the conversion of the content of a document from print copy into electronic machine. In other words, print documents are converted into electronic machine and then accessed through the same medium. Similarly, Bridge (2003) states that digital library is taking traditional library materials which are in form of books and papers and converting them to electronic form where they can be stored and manipulated by a computer. Fatoki (2005) explained further that digitization is the conversion of analog media to digital form. While Akintunde (2007) on his part defined digitization as a process of translating a piece of information such as sound recording, picture or video into bits.

Digital preservation of library materials is more than conversion of print or analog materials of library materials is more than conversion of print or analog materials into digital format. It includes organization of digital resources, scanning to know the relevant information, processing the digital contents into navigable format for increased access, preservation, and effective dissemination of the digital content to the target audience.

Achebe(2008) defined digitations as the process of translating a piece of information from books, sound recordings, pictures or video into bits. Bits are the fundamental units of information in a computer system. Digital library according to Okoro(2008) is the library in which a significant part of its resources are available by means of computer basics steps in digitization of library resource includes: compilation of physical library catalogue and provision of the electronic version, organization and compilation of periodicals and references works in large quantity and quality as a prelude to establishing a database, and publishing content of the database in book form and provision of electronic version of it.

Digital library collections may be born (digital originated or through the process of digitization from existing print materials Mutula and Ojedokum (2008). According to Reitz (2004) Digital libraries do make it possible for the seamless integration of the scholarly electronic information, help in creating and maintaining local content, and strengthen the mechanisms and the capacity of the library’s information systems and services. They increase the portability, efficiency and access, flexibility, availability and preservation of digital objects.

Digitizing according to the federal Agencies Digitization Guideline Initiatives (2009) is the creation of digital objects and submission of digital resources to delivery systems and into repository environment, and assessment and evaluation of the digitization effort.

Reiterating that digitization processes may involve the following phases:
Project planning: processes occurring prior to digitization, digital conversion and post-digitization.

**Usefulness of Digital Preservation of Library Resources**

Digital preservation of library resources confers immense benefits to the users and by extension helps to broaden the image and development of the library as an information service organization. Such benefits are seen in the following areas:

i. Unlimited access to global information resources. Digital preservation of library resources has made it possible for users to have unlimited access to information globally. This is made possible through using electronic database, online services, CD-ROM and the internet.

ii. Digitization offers opportunities for collaboration and co-operation among libraries worldwide. Some of the usefulness of collaboration according to Chowdhury and Chowhury (2010) include among others:

   iii. Reduction of the digital divide;
   iv. Improved use of information;
   v. Timely access to information sharing;
   vi. Improved searching and manipulation sharing

   vii. Digitization resources has given rise to the use of sophisticated technologies such as computers, facsimile and other internet gazettes as well as appropriate and relevant software such as digital image software, optical character recognition (OCR) scanner software etc.

   viii. Reduction of stress in going to the physical library on the part of user is one of the benefits of digital preservation of library resource. With digitization, users can access information resources from the library wherever they may be.

   ix. Contribution to global knowledge and information base. Digital preservation of library resources enables libraries to contribute positively to the global knowledge and information base thereby increasing their visibility and extending their services frontiers.

   x. Digital libraries have the capacity to deal with issue of preservation of library resources. It offers solution to the problems of storage and maintenance cost. The version storage devices such as CD-Rom, digital image software, optical character recognition (OCR) scanner software proffer solutions to storage and maintenance cost.

   xi. Ubiquitous access and simultaneous use of library resources are some of the benefits offered by digital preservation of library materials. In essence, many users are given access to the same materials from their different locations.

**Challenges of Digital Preservation of Library Resource**

Digital preservation of library materials, though a novel and innovative idea with great prospects is faced with various challenges. Thus, any organization that opts for digital preservation of information resources is likely to face technical, organizational, resource and legal challenges in the process. According to Hedstrom and Montgomery (1998) digital materials are especially vulnerable to loss and destruction because they are stored in fragile magnetic and optical media that deteriorate rapidly and that can fall suddenly from exposure to heat, humidity, and air borne contaminants, or faulty reading and writing devices.

Another challenge of digital preservation of library resources is the possibility of keeping pace with the dynamics of constant and consistent changes and upgrading of software devices that
translates digital information from machine to human-readable form or the non availability of such important gadget.

Institutions may face legal obstacles in fulfilling their mandates to preserve valuable information when copy right or licensing agreements prohibits duplication or local storage of digital information. These are instances where certain conditions have to be fulfilled before certain information bearing resources can be harnessed, processed, and preserved by library and information centres. For instance, there are certain places that photographs cannot be taken and access cannot be granted except official permission is granted.

Challenges could also arise when repositories need to access technical resources and expertise knowledge that support digital preservation in order to maximize the benefits effectively. Technical and expertise knowledge are often shrouded in mysteries and are often not easy to come by.

Water (2005) and Anasi (2010) indicated inadequate funding of the library and by extension digital projects as some of the challenges of digital preservation of library resources.

Lack of infrastructures is yet another big challenge.

Another major challenge of digital preservation of library resources is the issue of luck of standard policy protection for digital intellectual properties.

Other challenges identified by digital opportunity Task Force (DOT) are:

i. Socio-economic in equalities
ii. Lack of locally created content
iii. Inability to derive economic and social benefits from information intensive activities.

**Solutions to Digitalization Challenges**

Digitization of libraries resources is a project that has to be addressed with great determination bearing in mind the intense emphasis on the importance of information and the need to make it accessible to the users in the relevant format and in the most appropriate time.

i. Adequate funding should be earmarked for digital projects bearing in mind the fact that libraries are operating in an intense information age where information resources are highly prized.
ii. Infrastructural facilities should be provided so as to provide enabling environment to carry on digitization projects with ease.
iii. Standard policy protection in line with what is obtainable globally should be put in place to guide, direct and protect digital intellectual properties.
iv. Manpower training and development should be intensified to be able to implement, monitor and maintain digital projects.
v. Effort should be made to initiate and create local content so as to derive maximum benefits and help portray our rich cultural heritage thereby contributing to the global culture and knowledge base.
Conclusion

The call for digital presentation of library resources is premised on the option to meet the user’s need of accessing information anywhere and at all times without being stressed to visit the library physically. Moreover, the need to have unfettered access to the avalanche of information available in the various electronic databases has the potential to impact positively on the users and on the image and development of the library as information service provider.

Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned challenges, this paper recommends the need for Governments at the federal, state, local Government, private and multinationals to intervene in funding library projects consistently and adequately.

i. Basic infrastructure should be providing so as to provide basic facilities to implement digital projects in the country.

ii. Regulation and legal framework should be put in place to provide policies for digital intellectual properties, and this should be in line with global best practices to avoid clash of interest at all levels of operation.

iii. Universities, polytechnics, and training centers should be used for long, medium and short terms measures for development and training of manpower in the area of ICT and its application to library services operations with particular emphasis on digital preservation of library materials.

iv. Governments at all levels should exercise political will by vigorously pursuing, monitoring and implementing ICT policies that will make computers and internet facilities available and affordable. Projects like computer for all and the establishment of cyber café centers with simple technologies will go a long way in addressing these challenges. Projects that will make the provision of information available at all levels is worth pursuing because we live in an information intense society where information is valued as other valuable resources such as gold and oil.

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