



### LIBRARY OF THE MODERN TIME

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#### **Abstract**

*The paper dwells on traditional to digital the general concepts of library and its numerous and divergent users, it also explain various library service base on the information needs of its users, that constantly patronize the library and further categorized the users. The paper as well talks on the sudden changes of libraries from*

*traditional to digital services. It also highlights current trends in librarianship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as elating its*

**Keywords:** *Library, Modern, Automated, Digital, Virtual*

*impact on information communication technology (ICT). The paper also identified various advantages*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The word library is derived from the Latin word “liber” meaning “book”, the library actually precedes the book, as collection of clay tablets papyrus and scrolls were housed in libraries long before the concept of book emerged. It means different thing to different people. In the English speaking world today, library connotes a body of recorded information brought together for a specific purpose, organized for use and made available to users.

Many people have wrong perception on what a library and librarianship as a profession means. To a layman, it is just all about building a room; buying books and keeping them inside; having people that can arrange those books, dust them and guide them from being stolen. It is in fact far much

*and challenges. It also contents of the paper as making summarized the and concludes as well recommendations.*

- m**ore than that; this paper is interest to point out/write up to:
- i. Give a picture of what library is.
  - ii. State the functions of a library.
  - iii. Make a layman appreciate the place of a library in the society.
  - iv. Modern libraries and there challenges

### **Concept of Library**

As a social institution, AGUOLU and AGUOLU (2002) affirm that library are created to conserve knowledge, preserve the cultural heritage, provide information, undergird and underpin education and research, and to serve as a fountains of recreation. This is to say that if knowledge must stand the test of time, libraries must play a vital role since it is aimed at conserving and preserving such information resources for future use.

To the public, Babalola (2004) sees a library as a community portal to information, knowledge and leisure. As a store of knowledge, ZGOJANIN (2005) defined libraries and archive as repositories of collection and individual memories, knowledge and achievements.

From the above view, we can sum up the definition of a library as “a collection of information resources in books form such as books, journals, periodicals, pamphlets and non-books form such as audio-visual resources like film strips, microforms, computers, tape cassettes, etc. organized systematically and made readily available for consultation and retrieval of information It can also be a building where such collection are acquired, processed and made available for use by information seekers. The basic purpose of libraries according to Buckland (1988) in Ochogun (2000) is to provide access to information. With this assertion we can see that a library is indeed not just a building or store house.

Although the format of the printed word has changed considerable over the centuries, the basic function of the library be it special, academic, public, private or school have remained remarkably constant. These functions according to Horrocks (2001) are categorized into three:

1. Collection and preservation of information

2. Organization of information
3. Dissemination of this information to readers

In order for libraries to specifically provide services that will meet the specific

Need of their users, Aina (2004) state that there is a need to further delineate the various groups of library and information users into specific homogenous groups such as:

- i. Pupils: These are essentially pre-primary schools children. It is important that they are introduced at an early stage to a place where they can entertain and educate themselves. Children's need graphics and audio-visual materials consisting mainly of photograph, drawing, pictures and painting; two or three dimensional objects and toys etc. which will enable them to learn the basic alphabets and figures. This group of users will also be interested in storytelling. The children department of a public library is best suited for these activities.
- ii. Children: These are children and youth in primary and secondary schools obtaining formal education. They are generally teenagers. Thus, apart from using library for educational purpose, they also use it for recreational and other activities. Schools and public libraries are expected to meet their need.
- iii. Students: These are primarily those studying at colleges, polytechnics, universities and other tertiary institutions. They required the library to serve their learning purposes. They also use the library for recreational and cultural activities. These users must have obtained a basic education up to secondary level. Some of these students could be studying fulltime or part time.
- iv. Adult: This group of users could be young adult or the elderly, employed. Most of this group generally have visible means of livelihood. Some of them could be pursuing informal education such as distance or continue education, in order to improve their educational qualification; the elderly could include pensioners or those who are very advance in age. The public library is expected to provide a variety of services to these people.

- v. Professionals: These are highly educated men and women that are expert in various areas. They are highly skilled and many of them have gone beyond secondary school education. They are engines of development in the society. They are found in both public and private sectors of the economy. Mainly special, national and public libraries serve them.
- vi. Researchers and Lecturers: These are highly educated users with advanced degrees in their subject of specializations. They work in universities and other tertiary institutions. They patronized mainly academic and special libraries. The services require by these group of users are highly specialized.
- vii. Policy Makers and Planners: These are mainly politicians and top government and private sector officials. They occupied various positions such as ministers, permanent secretaries, head of parastatals and government department, chief executive officers of private companies, etc. They formulate policies. They are serving mainly by special library and occasionally public libraries.
- viii. Hearing & Visually Handicapped Users: These are users of library who are either fully or partially deaf and those that are fully or partially blind. They cut across all the above groups, but in order to use the library services effectively, they require special equipment which **must** be provide by the library. For instance, it is important to provide material in braille, which can be used by those that are visually impaired. Similarly, audio cassette should be purchased for hearing --- impaired users.
- ix. Physically Handicapped: These users include wheel chair carrying users. Because they can stand on their feel, it may be difficult for such users to browse the stocks. Many libraries have provision for ensuring that wheel chairs carrying client can use the services of a library with little hindrances. Also include in this group are users who are in prison and hospitals, ageing people who are immobile and generally stay in their homes. Public libraries provide these services for this group of people.

### **Methodology**

The paper is explaining the library in the modern time and was subjected to a rigorous literature search in both areas of library and relevant

research carried out in the area. Literature were reviewed i.e. the modern libraries such as paper, virtual, digital etc. advantages and challenges of the modern libraries were also reviewed and discussed. Therefore, this paper is a reviewed work.

### **Modern Library**

According to Ochogwu (2007) modern library have to passed through three stages, these stages are: paper library, automated library and electronic library.

### **Paper Libraries**

The development of paper library stated when Guttering introduced printing techniques that made publishing of human knowledge on a paper, as again the proceeding method of writing on papyrus scroll, animal skins, stones, leaves etc. these enhance the grow of libraries of whatever type as any attempt made publish a document aimed at developing record, which ended of a library. Paper library traditionally depend on appraising, evaluation, selection, acquisition, organisation, storage and retrieval of printed information resources. In this system, the work of librarian and even users is poise with difficulties in executing library function.

### **Automated Libraries**

Automated libraries are characterized by materials on papers and accessing them through the use of machine in performing some services like retrieving a book, shelving and shelved — reading, accessing the catalog of the library etc.

Oketunji (1998) define library automation as “the application of modern information technologies in canying out library processes.” Computer play a vital role here, as it makes things works accurately with grade speed, effective and efficiently.

### **Electronic Libraries**

According to Aina (2002) an electronic library is basically that library that can consist of materials and services in electronics format rather

than print format. He further categorized electronic libraries into two: digital and virtual libraries.

**Digital Libraries:**

A digital library consists mainly of digital materials and services. The items in digital libraries are stored and processed using digital device. They: are transmitted over networks. According to Oiedukum in Aina (2002) a digital library is listed as including electronics data bases on the Internet, www, CD-ROMs and proprietaries services such as dialog, infor America, etc, thus a digital library is viewed as a collection of full text and bibliographic information sources rather than building and incorporate human services and Information technology tools.

**Virtual Libraries:**

A virtual library on the other hand can be confined within a building it can be virtual, that is it is not located within any building it is more or less in space. A virtual library has been defined by Poulter (2002) sees a virtual library as "an information service or resources which a user accessed via telecommunication network and which may be an Amalgam of services and resources housed in a number of different location". When an electronic or digital library is not located within a building, it is said to be a virtual library. It is not a "real life" library as a library is commonly known, it is uses mainly computers and computer network by linking with many separate libraries.

**Advantages of Modern Libraries**

There are many advantages of digital and virtual libraries. Neal (1999) and Sloane (1997) enumerated these advantages which included: Accessibility, availability, search ability, integration of text, image, sound and video, unlimited capacity of the computer to store a large amount of information, up to date and relevant information, wealth of simple information of direct applicability to every subject, many users can access information simultaneously from single electronic site from many

locations, hand copies of the information can be delivered with electronic speed.

### **Challenges of Modern Libraries**

Despite the numerous advantages of modern libraries in information handling most especially in the developing world, it is however faced with challenges that if not properly addressed, may date the effectiveness of the trend. This challenge, out of many includes:

1. **High Cost of Maintenance:** The spare parts of electronic devices are so expensive that maintaining a digital and virtual library to some extent receives a great setback. The economy strength of the developing countries may not adequately permit for maintenance and servicing culture, thereby leading such devices into ruin and waste.
2. **Unskilled Manpower:** The use of such electronic devices requires to some extent professional skills. For instance, a mere computer operator who is not knowledgeable about a subject matter may find it difficult to do literature searching for a clientele. Such people are not easy to come by, hence leading such libraries to ransom.
3. **Incessant: Power Outrage:** Inconsistency of power supply affects utilization of these modern libraries. It is an undeniable fact that such libraries cannot operate without the use of electronic power supply. Most developing countries are poised with these problems.
4. **Administrative Problem:** Some administrator may not have interest in maintaining virtual or digital library may be due to some political reasons like not abiding by the policies of the past administrators, etc. this creates a problem.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

A library is a very important medium of communication. It contains collection of information resources in both book and non-book form, where information seekers consult and retrieve such information for whatever purpose. This

information consists of ideas, knowledge and discoveries of researchers of the past.

From the foregoing, it can be tentatively concluded that a library is not just a building. In fact, it warehouse of information, citadel of learning, heart of knowledge, researchers, engine — room, etc. every researcher should desire to use a library much more effectively and efficiently.

### **Recommendations**

However, the above mentioned problems can be tackled when the interest of having: -

1. A modern library is in the heart of the policy makers or a nation or organization.
2. Highly trained personnel can be employed to serve;
3. Standby generating plant can be made available in order to avert power outages and
4. Enough budget plans to be executed.

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