# Electronic Library Support Services and Resources for Law Students in South East Nigerian University Libraries

**Ifeanyi J. Ezema**
*University Library,*
*Enugu State University of Science and*
*Technology, Nigeria*
*ifeanyi.ezema@esut.edu.ng,*
*ifeanyi.ezema_@esut.edu.ng;*

*and*

**Akpom Chinwendu Chizoba**
*University of Nigeria Library*
*Enugu Campus, Nigeria*
*chinwe.akpom@unn.edu.ng*

## Abstract

*This study investigated electronic support services and resources for law students in Nigerian university libraries. Descriptive research design was adopted. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The overall population of law students in the five selected universities was three thousand five hundred and sixty-four (3564). One hundred (100) students were randomly sampled from each of the five universities. In all, 475 (95%) responses were retrieved as sample size for the study. The findings revealed that law students were aware of and could access e-resources such as CD ROM, Law Pavilion, Open access journals, e-magazines, DOAJ, JSTOR, LexisNexis and electronic journals. Though result showed a remarkable accessibility of electronic information resources in the law libraries, the core legal e-resources appear to be inaccessible to users. However, among the core legal e-resources, Law Pavilion and LexisNexis recorded highest accessibility and Law Pavilion was frequently used by law students. Majority of the respondents acquired information literacy skills through assistance from the library staff. The study identified some challenges experienced in access to electronic legal resources. The study recommends that there should be regular subscription to important law databases that will be highly beneficial to law students in order to enhance legal education and research.*

## Introduction

The primary mission of any university library is to support teaching, learning, research, and community service through dissemination of information. Over the years, there has been an exponential increase in global publications and the library has increased roles to play in the management, organisation and accessibility of these publications (Pareek and Gangrade, 2016). The library is at a vantage position in the provision of relevant information necessary for research and scholarship, especially in electronic form. The critical roles of the library transcend all fields of study, including legal education and scholarship. Apparently, legal information to a large extent contributes in the success of law students and practising lawyers. Law librarianship is meant to provide library and information services for the legal profession.. There is no class of men, professional or otherwise, as dependent upon books as the lawyers. There is no library of whatsoever kind or nature which so directly pertains to the interest which it is designed to serve as the law library.

Berring (1997) notes that legal practice in the United States of America is usually built around law books, but predicts an imminent revolution in the use of electronic resources for legal information as print resources continue to decline.  Margolis and Murray (2013) in their remark confirmed that legal practitioners need to acquire information literacy skills to flow with the new information environment. The adoption of electronic information service delivery is even more crucial now because many libraries are experiencing budget cut by their parent organisations (Fitchett, Hambleton, Hazelton, Klinefelter and Wright 2011; Chase and Barnes, 2014). In that regard, Wu (2005) advocates for the existence of both print and electronic resources side by side. Literature seems to suggest that as the legal profession expands, so are the law library facilities growing accordingly in different formats. Therefore, in the present information environment where greater emphasis is placed on the accessibility of information in a digital platform, the information sector is witnessing a paradigm shift in the method of acquisition, organisation and accessibility of legal information.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) currently propel library and information services in many law libraries resulting in the development of digital law libraries in many parts of the world including Nigeria. This is why Harker (2013) underscores the need for law students and the young legal practitioners to acquire the necessary skills for accessing legal information in the new environment. Harker (2013) observed further that law librarians are better placed to assist law students in developing these skills in the ICT information environment.

An electronic library can be referred to as a library in which collections are stored in digital formats and accessible by computers. Its content can be stored locally and accessed remotely through computer networks (Aneru,Yakub, Nweke and Makintami 2014). Developing and providing an electronic library support service, in the views of Odeh (2011), is one of the current challenges for university libraries, and the level of interest as regards this has continued to increase, as a great number of institutions consider it critical in library and information service delivery.

E-resources, on the other hand,  are those materials that require computer access whether through a personal computer, mainframe or handheld mobile devices (Konappa, 2014). They may either be accessed from the Internet or remotely with local area networks (LANs).  Similarly, Okiki and Asiru (2011) defined electronic resources as information stored and transmitted in digital, electronic or computerized formats such as diskettes, CD-ROM databases, DVDs and online public access catalogues (OPAC). From the definitions above, one can deduce that electronic resources require computer and the Internet for easy access from any location of the user. It increases flexibility of search and increased access through networking. Hence, electronic resources in this study are those that are subscription-based, and resources on open access platforms, made accessible by the institutions to law students.

The use of electronic resources has gained prominence in universities across the globe, and many academics are availing themselves of the opportunity to exploit these resources to access relevant, current and updated information for diverse purposes. While libraries approach a crisis point in financing collection development, these new technologies offer possible ways to reduce costs and revolutionise ways to access information. Studies have shown that electronic databases are convenient for searching huge amounts of data with efficiency (Aregbesola and Oguntayo, 2014).

The legal profession depends largely on constant update of information and knowledge (Kerins, Madden and Fulton, 2004), therefore, a good understanding of the information needs of the legal professionals is needful for efficient library and information service delivery (Haruna and Mabawonku, 2001). Apart from the traditional print materials that law libraries often use to provide the required information services, there are numerous legal databases and software that are of great help to law students and the legal profession as a whole. The need for legal information to students and legal practitioners facilitated the 2009 Durham Statement on Open Access to Legal Scholarship (which advocates for open access publication of legal information) with the intention of reducing print publication of law journals and commitment to keeping the digital versions available in open, consistent and electronic format (Danner, Leong and Miller, 2011; Danner, 2012). However, the global information environment has transformed legal information and legal education and research

(Germain, 2007), resulting in some law libraries digitising their printed and pictorial documents (White, Bordo and Chen, 2015). This has given rise to different methods of accessing legal information in electronic platform. They include but are not limited to JSTOR LexisNexis academic and professional, Westlaw international, EBSCOHOST, DOAJ, Law pavilion, Law of the Federation (LFN), Easylaw, Legalpedia and OPAC for online bibliographic access of legal materials on the shelves. Anaeme and Akpom (2013) indicated that the present legal professional can walk to a computer and access virtual law library, a world of almost limitless information resources open to the professional. In their views, much of the renewed interest in classification, organising and retrieval device for information resources has been sparked by the growth in usage of the internet and World Wide Web (www). As a result of information glut, Kahlthau and Tama (2001) believe that the use of user profiling for personalized electronic information service delivery would be ideal for legal professionals.

However, the global trend now is characterised by a fundamental shift from traditional information environment to an e-environment where emphasis is placed more on the acquisition of e- resources such as e-books, e-journals, as well as online databases (Abubakar, 2011). Therefore, the emergence of electronic resources in the views of Sethi and Panda (2011) has revolutionized reading experience and introduced production of library resources for instant worldwide distribution. That is the more reason why libraries generally and law libraries in particular are shifting their focus of operation, in addition to their basic functions from library-oriented to information-centered, from library as an institution to the library as an information provider, and to the librarian as skilled information specialist functioning in all related information environment; from using technology for the automation of library functions to utilizing technology for the advancement of information access and delivery not physically contained in the four walls of the library. Omekwu (2004) also indicated that the use of digital technology has led to migration of lawyers' instrument of trade to electronic formats. Judicial decisions and all other sources of information germane to the work of lawyers are now available in electronic format.

However, it appears that there is lack of research on the electronic library support services in Nigerian law libraries. It is based on the importance of the use of e-resources in teaching, learning and research in legal education that this study was initiated.

## Research Problem

Much as there are numerous benefits to the use of e-resources, law students seem to face a lot of challenges in access to and use of electronic resources. Pre-research visits to some of the universities studied revealed that providing access to legal resources more especially the core legal databases with an efficient access support service, has been a major challenge. This situation is worrisome. The study therefore was an attempt to examine the electronic library support services and resources, its usage and access by law students of five university libraries in South East Nigeria. The study also attempts to find out the core legal e-resources accessible and investigate their frequency of use.

## Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the electronic library support services, usage and access among Nigerian law students. Specifically, the study was intended to:

- determine the level of awareness and accessibility of electronic library support services in the law libraries studied.

- identify the core legal resources accessible in the law libraries.

- Investigate the frequency of use of these core legal resources.

- find out how law students accessed information literacy skills for the use of electronic resources and services.

- identify benefits students derived from the use of electronic library support services.

- identify the challenges faced by law students in accessing electronic support services.

## Literature Review

The last decade has witnessed growth in the acquisition and utilisation of electronic resources in many academic libraries in Nigeria. Print-based information resources are increasingly giving way to electronic information sources (Sharma, 2009). Electronic resources, such as CD-ROM, online journals, e-books, OPACs, and the Internet, are gradually replacing the use of print resources (Aregbesola, and Oguntayo, 2014). Consequently Dadzie (2005) and Bhatia (2011) remark that the availability and accessibility of electronic resources (e-resources) in a library plays a prominent role in facilitating access to required information to the users in an easy and expeditious manner. It is expected that when library users are aware of the available materials, they would likely access and use them.

It is imperative that one should be familiar with the use of e-resources for the promotion of research and academic excellence. A recent study by Thomas (2015) on use and user perception of e-resources of post graduate students at Thomas College, Thrisur India reported that the students were aware of the e-resources in their field and most of them could access the resources from the library. He further reported that majority of the students preferred e-books and acquired electronic and information literacy skills through their teachers. The major challenge facing students in the use of the available e-resources was slow downloading. Also, in India, a study was carried out by Nazir (2014) on the use and adequacy of e-resources by the research scholars and students, and findings indicated that lack of awareness regarding the different types of e-resources and lack of library assistance are major causes behind low usage of e-resources. Therefore, awareness is part of availability, and it indicates the extent to which users have information and knowledge of electronic resources being subscribed to. When users of a law library have adequate information on the electronic resources being subscribed to, they are encouraged to use them.

These resources are being subscribed to by institutions in Nigeria, thereby making them available for use by law students. A study by Justiss (2011) found that some law libraries use other online legal database such as Loilaw, Bloomberg Law, Fastcase, Casemaker and Versuslaw as alternatives to LexisNexis and Westlaw which have dominated the legal information sector for a long time. However, the use of these resources solely depends on its availability. Adediran (2013) presented the results of a study assessing the usage of electronic resources by undergraduate students at the Redeemers University in Nigeria. The study revealed that even though the students were aware of the different types of electronic information resources available in the university library, their use rate of these resources was low. More so, some factors posed as challenges to the students. Among the factors were: large mass of irrelevant information, the need to filter the results from search, download delay, failure to find information, inadequate or lack of search skills, high cost of access, inaccessibility of some electronic resources, difficulties in navigating through electronic resource, etc. In the same vein, Dadzie (2005) investigated the use of electronic resources by students and faculty of Asheshi University, Ghana to determine the level of use, the type of information accessed, and the effectiveness of the library's communication tools for information research and problems faced in using electronic resources. Results indicate that 85 per cent of respondents used the Internet to access information, and that respondents mainly accessed information in the library by browsing the shelves. Another study in Ghana on the use of electronic resources by undergraduate students by Amankwah (2014) revealed that, although students were aware of electronic resources, they did not fully utilise them to support their academic pursuit due to poor level of information literacy skills. Some of the major problems indicated by the students using electronic resources include inadequate computers in the library, poor internet connectivity, power outages, and insufficient search skills.

Given the critical nature of electronic information resources in legal education and research, users of these resources need adequate information literacy skills in order to access such resources. Kuhlthau and Tama (2001) found that due to the complex task of lawyers, most of them would prefer printed texts, particularly when there are no mediators like librarians who would assist them in filtering and evaluating electronic resources. In a related study, Kerins, Madden and Crystal (2004) examined information seeking behaviour of law and engineering students and found that they have difficulties in accessing electronic materials because

of their ignorance of assistance they would get from librarians. They therefore advocated for greater information literacy training among the students. Peoples (2005) also found that modern legal researchers prefer the use of electronic platform in accessing legal information to traditional printed resources but lacked the required skills. He therefore recommended that law librarians should get more involved in electronic database instructions. In Nigeria, Haruna and Mabawonku (2001) investigated the information needs and seeking behaviour of legal practitioners and found that their information needs revolved round most recent legislations, court rulings, application of legal knowledge and available conferences and workshops. The study also found that the use of electronic resources was quite low, as most of the libraries surveyed lacked ICT facilities and skills.

However, numerous benefits abound when electronic resources are used by library users, especially law students. Mafix Digital (2010) emphasised the usefulness of electronic resources and the need for their adoption by law faculties in Nigeria. He opined that electronic legal information sources are designed specifically for law students, legal professionals and lecturers. They make research work fast, save time and also enhance efficiency due to powerful searching and cross-referencing technology. A combination of electronic legal sources is a formidable information powerhouse for any institution, law practice agency, courts, etc. Looking at the above mentioned benefits of electronic legal information sources, one can deduce that the resources have reduced time needed to access print legal resources thereby eliminating monotony and stress associated with it.

In the challenges encountered by users in accessing electronic resources, Evans and Zarnosky (2000), cited in Salaam and Adedigba (2012), opined that the use of electronic resources requires regular power supply which sometimes increases library operating cost, and it often presents new challenges for staff in terms of acquisition of new digital skills. Similarly, in another study carried out by Ezema (2013), low Internet bandwidths, lack of funds in developing countries such as Nigeria, poor power supply, waiting time for files to download, waiting to have a server accept queries or being abruptly cut off in mid-session are sources of frustrations that do not exist with paper-based resources, and these

usually pose serious challenges for students in accessing e-resources.

The high cost of law information resources has also been underscored by many studies ( Runyon 2009,  Fitchett et al 2011). In such a situation, acquisition of electronic resources will go a long way in improving the collections of such libraries. Also, a study by Runyon (2009) found a low percentage expenditure on legal e-resources among law libraries in the United States of America, and this is likely to be poorer in developing countries where interest is minimal. Other challenges of adoption and use of electronic resources in Nigeria have been revealed in the literature. Igbo and Imo (2010) identified lack of electronic resources and irregularity in subscription to electronic journals as major challenges of access to e-resources, while Ezema and Ugwu (2013) found lack of information and communication technology (ICT), infrastructure such as power supply and good Internet bandwidth as serious barriers for access to e-resources in Nigeria. Watts and Ibegbulam (2006) examined some of the barriers to the use of electronic information resources available at the medical library of College of Medicine, University of Nigeria, Nsukka and found that lack of ICT infrastructure, high cost of online access, absence of in-depth ICT skills and information searching skills are some barriers to the use of electronic resources. These are corroborated with earlier findings by Oduwole and Akpati (2003) who found that the major constraints to information accessibility and retrieval of automated library services were infrastructural: the limited number of terminals available for use and power supply outages. Madukoma, Onuoha and Ikonne (2014) identified lack of awareness as major contributing factor to non-use of e-resources.

## Methodology

Law faculties in two federal and three state university libraries in the South East zone of Nigeria were studied. The universities were purposively chosen based on their better funding than other universities in terms of adoption of information communication technology (ICT). The population of law students in the five universities was 3564.  One hundred (100) students were randomly sampled from each of the

five universities. The questionnaire was purposively administered to third, fourth and fifth year law students of these universities because they are expected to have more exposure to the use of e-resources accessible than the first year and second year students. The researchers personally visited the universities and distributed copies of the questionnaire. A total of 500 law students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; Ebonyi State University, Abakiliki; Enugu State University of Science and Technology; and Abia State University, Uturu participated in this study. Out of this, 475 (95%) copies of the questionnaire were returned and found valid to be used for the analysis.

## Results

### Background Information of the Respondents

Data was analysed using percentages in relation to the objectives of the study and presented in charts and tables. Table 1 shows the distribution of students accross the five universities and the level of study.

**Table 1:  Distribution of the Respondents**

| S/N | University | 3rd Year Students | 4th Year Students | 5th Year Students | Total | Per Cent |
|-----|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | UNN | 25 | 35 | 40 | 100 | 100% |
| 2 | UNIZIK | 20 | 35 | 40 | 95 | 95% |
| 3 | ESUA | 23 | 38 | 26 | 87 | 87% |
| 4 | ESUT | 19 | 41 | 36 | 96 | 96% |
| 5 | ABSU | 21 | 38 | 38 | 97 | 97% |

### Awareness/Accessibility to Electronic Library Support Services

Findings from Table 2 indicate that the law students were aware of and could access eight (8) electronic resources. Top on the list was CD ROM (87%), followed by Law Pavilion (85.4%), Open access e-journal (83.3%), e-magazine (83.2%), DOAJ (83.2%) JSTOR (81%), LexisNexis (79%), and Electronic Journal(65%). On the other hand, some respondents had a negative view pertaining to awareness and accessibility of some electronic support services in their libraries. 87.3% of the respondents indicated that they were not aware of OPAC and cannot access it. This is preceded by Legalpedia (84.4%), e-thesis and dissertation (84.4%), Easy law (84.2%), EBSCOHOST (84.2%), Law of the federation (84.2%), Database of law report (64%) and e-books (62.1). From the table above, among the five core legal e-resources, law pavilion and LexisNexis recorded highest accessibility in the libraries studied. LexisNexis could be assessed in all the five libraries studied while just two university libraries (UNN and UNIZIK) could access Law Pavilion.

**Table 2: Ranked Order Distribution of Awareness/Accessibility to Electronic Library Support Services in the Law Libraries. (N = 475)**

| Rank | Electronic information resources | Yes/% | No/% |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| 1 | Law Pavilion | 406 (85.4%) | 69 (15%) |
| 2 | Open Access e-journal | 396 (83.3%) | 76 (16%) |
| 3 | e-magazine | 395 (83.2%) | 80 (17%) |
| 4 | DOAJ | 395 (83.2%) | 80 (17%) |
| 5 | JSTOR | 385 (81%) | 90 (19%) |
| 6 | LexisNexis | 375 (79%) | 100 (21%) |
| 7 | Electronic-journals | 309 (65%) | 166 (35%) |
| 8 | e-book | 180 (37.8%) | 295 (62.1%) |
| 9 | Database of law reports | 170 (36%) | 305 (64%) |
| 10 | Easy law | 75 (16%) | 400 (84.2%) |
| 11 | Legalpedia | 75 (16%) | 401 (84.4%) |
| 12 | EBSCOHOST | 75 (16%) | 400 (84.2%) |
| 13 | e-thesis and dissertation | 401 (84.4%) | 74 (16%) |
| 14 | LFN (law of the federation) | 75 (16%) | 400 (84.2%) |
| 15 | OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) | 60 (13%) | 415 (87.3%) |
| 16 | CD ROMS | 412 (87%) | 63 (13.2%) |

## Frequency of Use

From responses in Table 3, 92% indicated that Law Pavilion was frequently used by the law students. This is was followed by LexisNexis with 76%. Law of the Federation (12%), Legalpedia (19%), Easylaw (20.4%) respectively were the least used.

**Table 3: Frequency of Use of Core Legal E-Resources**

| Rank | Items | VO 4 | O 3 | S 2 | N 1 | % of positive response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Law Pavilion | 285 | 150 | 27 | 13 | 92% |
| 2 | LexisNexis | 265 | 96 | 70 | 44 | 76% |
| 3 | Legalpedia | 30 | 60 | 229 | 156 | 19% |
| 4 | Easylaw | 35 | 62 | 121 | 257 | 20.4% |
| 5 | LFN (law of the Federation) | 32 | 25 | 155 | 263 | 12% |

**\*VO = Very Often; O = Often; S = Seldom; N = Never**

**Sources of Information Literacy Skills**

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents acquired information literacy skills through assistance from the Library (98%), assistance from IT (computing) staff in the library (98%), and self-taught

(93%). From the negative responses, the respondents disagreed with the fact that they acquired information literacy skills through guidance from lecturers (83%), assistance from fellow students (83%), ICT training from outside the universities (80%) and ICT training offered by the universities (71%).

**Table 4: Ranked Order Distribution Sources of Information Literacy Skills for Access to Electronic Resources in the Law Library (N = 475)**

| Rank | Sources of information literacy skill | SA 4 | A 3 | D 2 | SD 1 | % of positive responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Assistance from the librarians | 236 | 228 | 8 | 3 | 98% |
| 2 | Assistance from ICT (computing) staff in the Library | 237 | 225 | 7 | 6 | 97.2% |
| 3 | Self-taught | 242 | 200 | 20 | 13 | 93% |
| 4 | ICT training from outside the universities | 30 | 64 | 158 | 223 | 20% |
| 5 | ICT Training offered by the universities | 40 | 100 | 140 | 195 | 29.5% |
| 6 | Guidance from lecturers | 53 | 29 | 231 | 162 | 17.2% |
| 7 | Assistance from fellow students | 20 | 62 | 165 | 228 | 17.3 |

**SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree**

**Benefits of Electronic Information Sources**

All the respondents as shown in Table 5 agreed to the listed benefits of electronic resources were ranked highly.  However, the benefits with high percentage scores are economy of time spent in access to print materials from the library (97.2%), easy access to materials for class assignments and projects (96%),  reduction of cost of buying books and other learning resources (95%),  up-to-date access to newspapers and magazines (95%), access to online databases globally (84%), easy flow of information for collaboration with other students(80.6%), allows the use of social media for contacts with friends and colleagues(78%), access web dictionaries and directories (77%), robust metadata for information retrieval (74%), creates opportunities for access to online legal databases such LexisNexis and  Law Pavilion (71.1%), timely access to online law reports locally and internationally (59.1%) and access OPAC (online public access catalogue) for library holdings (53%).

**Table 5: Benefits of Using Electronic Information Sources (N = 475)**

| S/N | Benefits | SA | A | D | SD | % of Positive Responses | % of Negative Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Provides up-to-date access to newspapers and magazines | 301 | 150 | 6 | 18 | 95% | 5.% |
| 2 | Reduction of cost of buying books and other learning resources | 250 | 200 | 9 | 16 | 95% | 5.2% |
| 3 | Faster means of accessing legal information | 264 | 179 | 7 | 25 | 93.2% | 4.3% |
| 4 | Economy of time spent in accessing print materials from the library | 185 | 277 | 4 | 9 | 97.2% | 2.7% |
| 5 | Easy access to materials for class assignments and projects | 181 | 275 | 7 | 12 | 96% | 4% |
| 6 | Provides access to online databases globally | 195 | 204 | 48 | 28 | 84% | 16% |
| 7 | Provides easy flow of information for collaboration with other students | 186 | 197 | 55 | 37 | 80.6% | 19.3% |
| 8 | Allows the use of social media for contacts with friends and colleagues | 169 | 202 | 62 | 42 | 78% | 21.9% |
| 9 | Access web dictionaries and directories | 175 | 191 | 57 | 52 | 77% | 23% |
| 10 | Provides robust metadata for information retrieval | 164 | 186 | 55 | 70 | 74% | 26% |
| 11 | Creates opportunities for access to online legal databases such LexisNexis, Law pavilion etc. | 137 | 201 | 78 | 59 | 71.1% | 28.8% |
| 12 | Timely Access to online law reports locally and internationally | 105 | 176 | 138 | 56 | 59.1% | 40.8% |
| 13 | Access OPAC(online public access catalogue) for library holdings | 165 | 85 | 110 | 105 | 53% | 45.3% |

## Challenges of Law Students in Accessing Electronic Support Services

Table 6 presents the results of the challenges law students encountered in gaining access to e-resources and services. Indications from the finding show four major challenges: poor electric power supply, low Internet bandwidth, irregularity in subscription to legal electronic databases, and lack of broader subject coverage during subscription.

As reflected in the table based on negative responses, the respondents did not agree that accessing e-resources takes a lot of time (93%); was associated with poor awareness of electronic resources (66%); was as a result of inadequate ICT skills among students (58%); and had to do with problems associated with reading from computer screens (57%).

**Table 6: Challenges on Access  to Electronic Support Services (N = 475)**

| Rank | Challenges | SA 4 | A 3 | D 2 | SD 1 | % of Positive Responses | % of Negative Responses |
|------|------------|------|-----|-----|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Poor electric power supply | 275 | 174 | 17 | 9 | 94.5% | 5.5 |
| 2 | Low Internet bandwidth in the library | 164 | 190 | 88 | 33 | 75% | 25% |
| 3 | Irregularity in subscription to legal electronic databases | 168 | 185 | 79 | 43 | 73.2% | 26% |
| 4 | Lack of broader subject coverage during subscription | 170 | 178 | 75 | 52 | 73.2% | 27% |
| 5 | Absence of functional network among Nigerian Universities | 175 | 172 | 75 | 53 | 73% | 27% |
| 6 | Lack of printing facilities in the libraries | 154 | 189 | 98 | 34 | 72.2% | 27.7% |
| 7 | Limited number of computer terminals in the libraries | 160 | 180 | 82 | 53 | 72% | 28% |
| 8 | Problems associated with reading from computer screens | 60 | 143 | 176 | 96 | 43% | 57% |
| 9 | Inadequate ICT skills among the students | 68 | 132 | 166 | 109 | 42% | 58% |
| 10 | Poor awareness of electronic resources | 75 | 88 | 168 | 144 | 34% | 66% |
| 11 | Much time is spent in accessing e-resources | 10 | 23 | 265 | 177 | 6.9% | 93% |

## Discussion

The results of the study present a very good insight to the electronic library support services in law libraries in South East, Nigeria. While it is interesting to see a remarkable awareness and accessibility of electronic information resources in the law libraries investigated. The findings reveal that core legal e-resources appear to be inaccessible. According to Omotayo (2010), some of these e-resources such as  e-magazines, CD ROMs and open access e-journals,  are freely available online, while libraries have to subscribe to the core legal resource. It is, however, interesting to observe the high awareness and accessibility of Law Pavilion and LexisNexis which are very important legal databases in many of the libraries. It appears that these two legal databases are the most common among law libraries studied. The libraries may not have the required funds to subscribe to all the legal databases as a result of poor funding of education and particularly libraries as it has been reported as one of the major challenges of acquisition of e-resources in Nigeria in extant literature (See Oduwole and Akpati, 2003; Watts and Ibegbulam, 2006; Igbo and Imo, 2010; Ezema, 2013; Ezema and Ugwu, 2013). The low accessibility of Law of the Federation in electronic format from the findings is an obvious source of worry because it is one of the major sources of legal information in the country. Perhaps, the libraries still rely heavily on the print version of this important legal information. While it is true that the level of accessibility of electronic library support services in the law libraries is encouraging, it is important to subscribe more to the core collections.

From the findings, Law Pavilion and LexisNexis top the list of core legal e-resources accessible in the law libraries. It is interesting to observe that Law Pavilion is frequently used by the students. Evidently, these e-resources are available in the university law libraries. However, down the list are the less used e-

resources and among these are core legal e-resources such as Easylaw, Legalpedia and Law of the Federation. The low usage is a reflection of their unavailability which relates with Aina's (2011) position that availability correlates with access and use. The core legal e-resources that are often used are Law Pavilion and LexisNexis, which is in line with the findings of earlier studies of Justiss (2011).

Findings indicate that the law students acquire information literacy skills mainly through assistance from the librarians and ICT (computing staff) in the library.

One of the major challenges law students encountered in accessing electronic support services in Nigerian university libraries is the issue of power supply. This has been mentioned in several studies in Nigeria and Ghana (Oduwole and Akpati, 2003; Ezema, 2013; Ezema and Ugwu, 2013) and from the findings of the present study, the situation is yet to improve. The frustrations which often result from epileptic power supply in Nigeria discouraged libraries from subscribing to these e-resources.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study did examine the electronic library support services in law libraries in selected South East Nigerian universities. A large proportion of the electronic resources and services were those freely accessible online which in most cases do not support core collection of legal education. However, access to existing e-resources and services to the students is hindered by a number of challenges such as irregular power supply, irregular subscription of e-resources and low Internet bandwidth. These challenges require efficient policy framework from libraries, universities and government. It is based on this that the following recommendations are made:

- Provision of good Internet services as priority in their development agenda. This is because teaching, learning and research can only be driven through efficient internet services. There should be dedicated internet bandwidth sufficient enough to enhance access to online resources.
- There should be regular subscription to important law databases that will be highly beneficial to law students and their lecturers to enhance legal education and research.

## Reference

Abubakar, B. M. (2011). Academic Libraries in Nigeria in the 21st century. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. Available at https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~mbolin/abubakar.pdf Aina, R. F. (2011). *Foundation of Information Studies*. Lagos: Emaphine Reprographics Ltd.

Adediran P. (2013). Usage of Electronic Resources by Undergraduates at Redeemers University, Nigeria. *International Journal of Library and Information Science,* 5(10), 319-324.

Amankwah, P. (2014). Use of Electronic Resources by Undergraduate Student of the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration.

Available at *ugspace.ug.edu.gh/.../Prince%20 Baffour%20Amankwah_Use%2...*

Anaeme, F. O. and Akpom, C. C. (2013). Emerging initiatives in Nigerian Law Libraries: Future and Possibilities. Proceeding of the 13th Annual Conference and General Meeting of Nigerian Library Association, Enugu State chapter, 43-49.

Aneru, A. Yakubu, M., Nweke, P. and Makintami, A. (2014). Training Librarians for Electronic Library Services in State University Libraries in Nigeria, *Scholarly Journal of Education,* 3(5), 46-51.

Aregbesola, A. and Oguntayo, S. (2014). Use of Electronic Resources by Faculty Member in Landmark University. *Computing, Information Systems, Development Informatics and Allied Research Journal.* 5(2), 53-58.

Berring, R. C. (1997). Chaos, Cyberspace and Tradition: Legal Information Transmogrified, *Berkeley Tech Law Journal*, 12, 189-209. Available at *http://scholarship.law. berkeley. edu/facpubs/1951*.

Bhatia, J. K. (2011). Use of Electronic Resource in Degree Collage Library in Chandigarh, *Journal of Library of Library and Information Technology*.31 (6), 480-484.

Chase, A. K. and Barnes, E. C. (2014). Collection Analysis and Development in a Modern

Academic Library, *Collection Management,* 39, 196 – 210.

Chawinga, W. D. and Zinn, S. (2015). Lecturers' Use of Web 2.0 in the Faculty of Information Science and Communications at Mzuzu University, Malawi. *Mousaion: South African* Journal of Information Studies, 33(4), 62-85.

Available at *http://www.upjournals.co.za/ index.php/LIS/article/view/699*

Chawinga, W. D. (2016). Teaching and Learning 24/7 using Twitter in a University Classroom: *Organisations* 26(5): 28–31. Available at: http:/ /dx.doi.org/10.1177/2042753016672381

Chawinga, W. D. and Zinn, S. (2016). Use of Web 2.0 by Students in the Faculty of Information Science and Communications at Mzuzu University, Malawi. *South African Journal of Information Management,* 18(1). Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajim.v18i1.694

Dadzie, P. S. (2005). Electronic Resources: Access and Usage at Ashesi University College. *Campus–wide Information Systems*, 22 (5).

Danner, R. A. (2012). Open Access to Legal Scholarship: Dropping the Barriers to Discourse and Dialogue. *Journal of International Commercial Law and Technology,* 7(1), 65 – 79.

Danner, R. A., Leong, K.  and Miller, W.V. (2011). The Durham Statement Two Years Later: Open Access in the Law School Journal Environment, Law Library Journal, 103(1), 39-47.

Dhanavandan, S., Esmail, S. and Nagarajan (2012). Use of Electronic Resource at Krishnasamy College of Engineering and Technology Library. Cuddalore, *Library Philosophy and Practice.*

Egberongbe, S. H. (2011). The Use and Impact of Electronic Resources at the University of Lagos. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal).* Paper 472.

Egberongbe, H. (2011).The Use and Impact of Electronic Resources at the University of Lagos. *Library Philosophy and Practice.*

Evan, G. E. and Zarnosky, M. R. (2000). *Developing Library and Information Center Collections* (4th ed.). Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, pp. 180-206.

Ezema, I. J. (2013). Local Contents and the Development of Open Access Institutional Repositories in Nigeria University Libraries: Challenges, Strategies and Scholarly Implications. *Library Hi Tech*, 31(2), 323 – 340.

Ezema, I. J. and Ugwu, C. I. (2013). Electronic Theses and Dissertations in Nigerian University Libraries: Challenges and Strategies. *The Electronic Library, 31(4),* 493 – 507.

Fitchett, T . Hambleton, Hazelton, Klinefelter and Wright (2011). Law library budgets in hard Times, *Law Library Journal*, 103(1), 91 – 111.

Gilbert, F. (1908) ."The law Library" L.L.J.1-5, 6-10.

Harker, Y. S. (2013). "Information is Cheap, but Meaning is Expensive": Building Analytical skill into Legal Research Instruction.  *Law Library Journal*, 105(1), 79 – 97.

Available at : www.aallnet.org/gmnode/42874. aspx

Haruna, I. and Mabawonku, I. (2001). Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Legal Practitioners and the Challenges to Law Libraries in Lagos, Nigeria, *International Information and Library Review*, 33, 69 – 87.Available at :  *http://www.idealibrary.com*

Igbo, U. H. and Imo, N. T. (2010). Challenges of Accessibility of Information Resources by Post Graduate Library Users of a Nigerian University. *An International Journal of    Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*, 7(2), 1-10.

Joseph, U.  and Urhiewhu, L. (2016). Roles of Academic Libraries in University Accreditation in Nigeria: Challenges and Way Forward. *Journal of Applied and Information Science and Technology .*9(2)

Justiss, L. K. (2011). A Survey of Electronic Research Alternatives to LexisNexis and Westlaw in  Law Firms. *Law Library Journal*, 103(1), 71-89.
 Available at:  *www.aallnet.org/products/pub llj_v103n01/2011-04.pdf*

Kerins, G., Madden, R. and Fulton, C. (2004). Information Seeking and Students Studying for Professional Careers: the Engineering and Law students in Ireland. *Information Research: An International Journal*, 10(1).

Konappa, K. (2014). Use of Electronic Information Resources in University Libraries of Tirupati (A.P): An Analytical Study. *International Journal of Library and Information Science.* 6(1), 5-13.

Kuhlthau, C. C. and Tama, S. L. (2001). Information Search Process of Lawyers: A call for "just me" Information Services. *Journal of Documentation,* 57(1), 25 – 43.

Lipinska, D., Marcinek, M. and Matoga, U. (2010). E-resources – Value Added by Libraries to Enhance Usage. INFORUM:16th Conference on Professional Information Resources, Prague, May 25-27. Available at: www.inforum.cz/pdf/ 2010/marcinek-marzena-1.pdf

Lwoga, E. (2012). E-learning and Web 2.0: Transforming Higher Education in Africa: Recommendations for Successful Implementation. *Development and Learning in Organisations,* 26(5): 28–31

Madukoma, E., Onuoha, U. D and Ikonne, C. N. (2014).Electronic Resources Information Behavior of Faculty Members at Babcock University Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. *Information Trends*, 11:60-68.

Mafix Digital (2010). Online Legal Products Advertorial. Nigerian Law Times. August, 2.

Margolis, E. and Murray, K. E. (2013). Say Goodbye to the Books: Information Literacy as the New Legal Research Paradigm. *University of Dayton Law Review,* 38(1), 117 – 156. Available at: *http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/ papers.cfm?abstract_id=2125278*.

Ministerial Committee on ICT Policy Harmonization (2012). National ICT Policy. Available at: *nigeriacomputers.com/.../ National_ICT_Policy_DRAFT_090112.*

Natarajan, K., Suresh, B., Sivaraman, P. and Sevukan R. (2010). Use and User Perception of Electronic Resources in Annamalai University*: Annals of Library and Information Studies.* \ 57, 59-64.

Nazir, T. (2014). Use and Adequacy of E-resources by the Research Scholars and Students of the University of Kashmir in Science and Social Science Faculties: A Case Study. *Available at: basessibi.c3sl.ufpr.br/.../12/ pdf_f4487b07b8_0000017347.pdf*

Odeh, P. (2011). Utilization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by Students in Federal University Libraries in North Central Zone of Nigeria. Available at: *www.unn.edu.ng/publications/ files/images/ODEH'S.pdf*

Oduwole,A. A. and Akpati, C. B. (2003). Accessibility and Retrieval of Electronic Information at the University of Agriculture Library, Abeokuta, Nigeria. *Library Review,* 52(5), 228-233.

Okiki, O. C. and Asiru, S. M. (2011). Use of Electronic Information Sources by Postgraduate Students in Nigeria: Influencing Factors. *Library philosophy and practice.* Available at: http://unllib.unl.edu/ LPP/. okiki-asiru.htm.

Omekwu, C. O. (2004). Information Technology Fundamentals for Lawyers. Paper presented at Staff Seminar of Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS). Oct. 2004, 1-28

Omotayo, (2010). Access, Use and Attitude of Academics towards Electronic Journals: A Case Study of Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife. *Library Philosophy and Practice.* *Available at:* https://www.webpages.uidaho. edu/~mbolin/**omotayo**.pdf.

Pareek, N. and Gangrade, A. (2016). Role of the Libraries as Information Resources in Globalization. *International Journal of Librarianship and Administration,* 1(2), 13-23. Available at: http://www.ripublication.com.

Peoples, L. F. (2005). Use and Impact of E-Resources at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (India): A Case Study. *Electronic*

*Journal of Academic and Special Librarianship,* 10 (1), 58-64.

Runyon, A. M. (2009). The Effect of Economics and Electronic Resources on the Traditional Law Library Print Collection. *Law Library Journal,* 101(2), 177 – 199.

Salaam M. and  Adegbore  A. (2010). Internet Access and Use by Students of Private Universities in  Ogun State, Nigeria .*Library Philosophy and Practice* .Available at:

http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/salaam adegbore.htm

Sethi, B. and Panda, K. (2011). Use of E-Resources by Life Scientists: A Case Study of Sambalpur University, India. *Library Philosophy and Practice*.

Sharma, C. (2009). Use and Impact of E-Resources at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (India): A Case Study. *Electronic Journal of Academic and Special Librarianship,*10 (1), 58-64.

Thomas, B. (2015). The Issues and Challenges Facing a Digital Library with a Special Focus on  the University of Calgary. Library Review, 8/9(64), 533–551.

United Nations Foundations (2014). Accessing the Enabling Environment for ICT for Health in Nigeria: A Review of policies. Available at: www.unfoundation.org/assets/pdf/nigeria-policy-report.pdf/

Watts, C. and Ibegbulam, I. (2006). Access to Electronic Healthcare Information Resources in Developing Countries: Experience from the Medical Library Collage of Medicine, University of Nigeria. *IFLA journal*, 32(34). Available at: http://sagepub.com/content/32/1/

White, H., Bordo, M. and Chen, S. (2015). Digitizing and Preserving Law School Recordings: A Duke Law Case Study. New Review of Academic Librarianship, 12, 232 – 240.

Wu, M. M. (2005). Why Print and Electronic Resources are essential for the Academic Law Library. *Law Library Journal*, 97(2), 233 – 255.

Yetunde, Z. A. (2008). A Study of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) by University Libraries in Borno, Nigeria. *Journal of Library, Archival and Information Science,* 7(1).

**Ifeanyi J. Ezema** is the University Librarian, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria and Research Fellow, University of South Africa. He holds PhD.



**Chinwe Akpom** is a doctoral student and currently a staff of University of Nigeria Enugu Campus Library.