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CONTENTS

- S. M. Lawani, A. A. Azubuike and G. O. Ibekwe
Large-Scale Automation: An African Success Story
- Kingo Mchombu
Information Needs for Rural Development: The Case Study of Malawi
- Albert Kantumoya
Public Libraries and Community Information Services in Africa
- Viola Ifeoma Ugwunze
An Examination of Records Management in The University of Lagos Registry ...
- Degife Gebre Tsadik and Sushma Gupta
Library Services to the Visually Handicapped at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia
- W. A. Akinfolarin
Towards Improved Security Measures in Nigerian University Libraries
- Short Communications — Bostid Project on Science and Technology
Information (STI) Networks in Africa
- Spotlight — Faculty of Information Sciences, Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya ...
- Personality Interview — Diana Rosenberg
- Professional News and Events
- Forthcoming International Conferences and Workshops
- Reports of Conferences and Workshops
- Completed Research
- Current Research
- Abstracts of Selected Professional Literature Published in Africa

LARGE-SCALE LIBRARY AUTOMATION: AN AFRICAN SUCCESS STORY

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ABSTRACT

In 1984, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan, Nigeria computerized its library services. Acquisition, catalogue, and circulation records were integrated in one database which can be accessed 24 hours a day from 70 computer terminals located in and outside the Library. This article outlines the specifications of the system and describes the process which led to the choice of BASIS as the software package. The procedures adopted and the problems encountered in the retrospective conversion of 170,000 card catalogue records are reported.

Once the on-line public access catalogue (OPAC) became operational, the traditional card catalogue cabinets were discarded. A user manual was written and intensive training of users was started. Initial resistance to OPAC by some users had to be countered.

Automation has made many operations, including orders, circulation, bibliographic compilation, and literature searching, easier and much more efficient. Following automation, a new staff manual was written, and a new organizational structure with three departments — Technical Services, User Services, and Database Development — was implemented. Librarians with no computer science background have had no difficulty operating our automated system. Even clerical staff learn to work with the system quite effectively within a short time. Finally, the management implications of the great interdependence of departments and the increased visibility of errors in an integrated library system are outlined.

INTRODUCTION

The library services of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan, Nigeria, were computerized in an integrated fashion in 1984. Card catalogue cabinets were replaced with computer terminals providing on-line access; acquisition files and circulation records were similarly computerized. As a consequence of automation, various operations have become much easier and more efficient. And some services became possible for the first time.

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In this article, we seek to share our experiences in the planning and implementation of the computerized system and sub-systems. Inevitably, this large-scale automation called for modification in management practices as well as reactions from library users. It has also made the IITA Library an important regional resource for those who seek hands-on training in modern information systems for libraries and documentation centres. This article outlines the broad issues; technical details of specific sub-systems will be provided in other papers. Two such papers — one on the on-line public access catalogue (OPAC) and the other on training — were presented at the 1991 Annual Conference of the Nigerian Library Association (Adedigba, et al., 1991; Adeyomoye, et al., 1991).

We know that interest in library automation has increased tremendously, and we believe that because of the microcomputer revolution, the chances for successful automation by African libraries have increased considerably. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that this paper can serve more than an academic purpose; that it can provide some practical guidance for those planning automation of library operations and services in Africa and elsewhere. At a time of predominant gloom and doom, we also think that it is necessary to demonstrate that there is hope, and that there are, indeed, pockets of successes in Africa.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), is an autonomous, non-profit organization established in July 1967. It is a member of a system of international agricultural research and training centres around the world. At present, there are 16 such centres, of which five, including IITA, have headquarters in Africa. They are funded by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), an informal donor group of governments and private foundations organized by the World Bank, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). All the centres work towards increasing the quantity and improving the quality of agricultural production in the less developed countries of the world.

IITA employs about 200 scientists and senior managers. Many of the scientists are stationed at widely dispersed research sites and stations around Africa. Among about 1,500 support staff in Ibadan, there are about 120 research associates/assistants and specialists in various fields who hold Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Another category of primary clients of the IITA Library is trainees including research students registered for Master's and doctoral degrees in universities in Nigeria as well as in North America and Europe. Other trainees are engaged in non-degree programmes of varying durations, from a week to four months or more. IITA operates as a bilingual (English and French) organization.

The Board of Trustees of the Institute, that is, its governing body, approved the following policy for the Library:

The Institute recognizes that, to work productively and cost-effectively, researchers must be familiar with their professional literature so that they may identify the most important problems, avoid unnecessary duplication of previous research, apply the most appropriate methodologies, correctly interpret their results to the wider research community, and achieve scientific credibility for themselves and for their employers. The Institute also realizes

its obligation to provide the educational and reference materials that staff and trainees need for good and efficient performance.

The IITA Library will, therefore, provide access to the various types of information required by Institute scientists, trainees, technicians, and other support staff, and it will also serve the Institute's African collaborators in the performance of their functions to the extent practicable.

Cognizant of the great deficiencies in scientific literature provision in Africa, IITA accepts the obligation of making its library serve as the central reference library for materials on the tropical agriculture of West and Central Africa, the region of its primary focus. And, for the same reason, the IITA library will grant reading privileges to all bonafide researchers.

Based on the above policy, the Library and Documentation Centre engages in a variety of scientific information activities, the objectives of which are outlined in *A Guide to the Library and Documentation Centre* (IITA, 1989). They are to:

- * acquire, organize, and maintain literature, microforms, and audiovisual materials pertinent to the research and training activities of the Institute.
- * disseminate scientific and technical information to staff and trainees through various means, including reference, bibliographical and current awareness services.
- * develop computerized databases and acquire those developed elsewhere on subjects pertinent to IITA's research and training agenda.
- * publish and distribute retrospective and current bibliographies and bibliographical reviews on subjects that have high priority in IITA's work.
- * provide scientific literature services to researchers in the national agricultural research systems (NARS) as budgetary resources permit.
- * help strengthen the capacities of agricultural libraries and documentation centres in West and Central Africa and enhance the levels of professional practice of librarianship and documentation through training, organization of workshops and conferences, as well as participation in agricultural information networks.

In pursuance of these objectives, the Library collects and organizes publications in fields relevant to the Institute's mandate, and provides a variety of library and information services to its primary clientele, which include the Institute's researchers, senior executives, other staff and trainees as well as to thousands of external users made up of researchers, staff of universities, postgraduate students and agricultural practitioners.

COMPUTER FACILITIES AT IITA

From its very beginning, IITA had a computer department responsible for computer applications in the Institute. Its first piece of hardware was a PDP computer used for statistical analyses of experiments as well as for accounting. The limited capacity of the PDP was fully utilized for these two purposes, and it was, therefore, not possible to use it for the services of the Library and Documentation Centre.

It should be remarked, however, that despite this limitation, it would have been possible to computerize certain library activities in a batch mode. But the leadership of the Library was neither impressed nor interested in the kinds of applications that were then feasible. Following extensive reviews of the professional literature on library automation, we had concluded that we had to work towards an integrated

system. Many of the applications described in the literature of that period amounted to no more than substituting computers for typewriters; doing the same old tasks in a much more expensive and frustrating manner. We were not going to make such mistakes. But it should be remembered that in those days it was quite tempting to do so, since it was highly fashionable to be known to be applying computers for library operations, no matter how inefficiently or even irrationally! The profession has since made considerable progress, and the mistakes of that period are now widely recognized. However, it is still necessary to be intellectually alert to avoid misapplications and mistakes that are of a more subtle nature.

Over time, the hardware situation improved, and by 1983 when we were seriously planning the automation of library services, the Institute had acquired two units of the more sophisticated VAX 750 minicomputer with the appropriate peripherals and communication facilities. The new hardware had surplus capacity after catering for the needs of research and accounting; the computer department recruited a maintenance engineer; and the computers were connected to an uninterruptible power supply system (UPS). Thus, computer hardware on which one could reasonably build an on-line integrated library system became available for the first time.

SPECIFICATIONS OF THE SYSTEM

In 1975, the Library and Documentation Centre established the International Grain Legume Information Centre (IGLIC), with a grant from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada. This is a special information analysis and dissemination centre mandated to collect, process, store and disseminate information on tropical grain legumes. The array of documents involved in this project and the depth of services expected required that a responsive and flexible retrieval system superior to the card catalogue be used. Hence the centre acquired the Termatrix information retrieval equipment which operates on the principle of optical coincidence. This system could only be used for small collections, such as those of IGLIC. The Termatrix was a stop-gap arrangement, and the records processed on it have subsequently been reprocessed into the computerized system. We needed a system beyond the card catalogue that would provide multiple access to the entire collection of books, pamphlets, maps, microform, reprints, unpublished conference papers, technical reports, periodicals, periodical articles, chapters in books, portions of annual reports and other publications. This unified access system was necessitated by the desire of the library management to give maximum scientific information services to its clients.

The desired system was expected to provide for acquisition, cataloguing, serial control, circulation and on-line public access. It was therefore required to be integrated in two ways — by accommodating records of all forms of publications in a single database, and through the unification of operational records.

We decided that the system we wanted must facilitate the following operations:

- * fast and efficient pre-order checking;
- * acquisitions record keeping and correspondence;
- * efficient vendor monitoring;
- * precataloguing checking and processing;
- * speedy and reliable serial tracking and control process;
- * high fidelity indexing of documents;
- * consistent organization of library materials through controlled description;
- * production of shelf lists and appropriate collection guides;

- * adequate, easy and fast access to the library's information resources;
- * current awareness services, including Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI);
- * circulation operations;
- * data and facilities for the production of bibliographical lists, like serial lists, list of publications by staff of the Institute, and bibliographies on various subjects of interest to individuals in the Institute; and
- * On-line public access from various offices and laboratories in the Institute.

It is clear from the above specifications that the system would require a large computer storage capacity and a rather sophisticated software for database management.

SELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF THE SYSTEM

The leadership of the Library having clearly defined what computerization should do to improve scientific information processing and use in IITA, had to identify a software that could be used with the VAX/VMS computer facilities available, and that could support integrated library management system while meeting the following additional criteria: perform the tasks specified above without undue redesigning, obtainable at a reasonable cost, and could be run cost effectively. In a long-drawn process, many software packages were evaluated against the stated requirements. Short-listed were the Food Research Association's CAIRS (Computer Assisted Information Retrieval System), Avater's ILS (Integrated Library System), Battelle Memorial Institute's BASIS (Battelle Automated Search Information System), Bibliographic Retrieval Service's BRS/Search Software.

Apart from considerations related to the available hardware and the stated operational requirements of the Library, the four packages were also assessed on the following criteria: producer/vendor reputation and reliability based on the performance of previous installations; software functional flexibility and expansivity; indexing and searching capabilities; interactiveness of input and output interfaces; system security provisions; good system documentation and manuals; cost; scope of customer training; and possibility of system upgrading. Moreover, since IITA was pioneering library automation in the CGIAR system, we wanted to select a software package that would also meet the needs of our sister institutes in the CGIAR. Finally, we wanted software that had reasonable assurance of being well supported and that would be continually improved by its producer.

CAIRS met many of our requirements. However, we thought that it had both technical and management drawbacks. On the technical front, it was slow, even when serving no more than three or four simultaneous users. We found that the library of the producing organization (the Food Research Association) was not applying CAIRS; the reason was that the library could not afford it! This meant that the computer programmers who developed CAIRS did not have immediate access to, or first-hand knowledge of, the performance of their system in day-to-day large-scale operations. One could, therefore, presume that CAIRS might still harbour more bugs than were normally acceptable.

At the time of our investigation, there were few CAIRS installations. This fact reinforced our concern that the software might still have an unacceptably high number of bugs. Finally, we judged that the professional support for CAIRS was inadequate. They had two programmers at the time, and one of them seemed to be actively looking for another job. Therefore, we decided against CAIRS even though we considered it

relatively inexpensive. We would like to emphasize that what we state here refers to CAIRS as it was in 1983. All the negative points may no longer be valid.

Avater's Integrated Library System while meeting most of our requirements could be faulted on at least two important fronts. We were not sure that this U.S. based small company could provide adequate support for their product installed in Nigeria. Moreover, it was developed as a stand-alone system. In other words, the system included a computer (a PDP) exclusively devoted to the library system.

The leadership of the IITA Library and Documentation Centre was against stand-alone systems in principle. This was because it was feared that such a system might not get adequate maintenance attention from the computer department. If the computer broke down, it would be the sole problem of the Library, and depending on the situation, it might not get prompt attention. In contrast, a computer serving the entire Institute would always be promptly attended to whenever problems arose. Moreover, it made sense for the Institute to standardize on one make of computer. Since the Institute had acquired a VAX, the Library would be unwise to purchase a stand-alone system such as Avater's ILS which was developed on another type of computer. Thus, the reality of organizational politics and economics decided against Avater's ILS.

We rejected BRS/Search software because it was strictly a retrieval software. It would, therefore, be incapable of many of the operations required of the system we sought to develop.

BASIS met absolutely all our requirements, except that it was not cheap. It is a modular system with a central module and many optional modules. It was eminently suited to the processing and retrieval of large bibliographical data. Not only would it meet the needs of the Library and Documentation Centre, it could also be used to implement various other information systems for other departments of the Institute. Indeed, it has been used subsequently to implement a sophisticated mailing list database for the whole Institute, for a database of Institute's assets (inventory), a database on trainees, and for a personnel database. This diversity of potential applications was a strong factor in our final selection of BASIS.

BASIS was developed by the Battelle Memorial Institute, a highly reputable multinational research and development organization with headquarters in the United States. BASIS is now serviced and marketed by a subsidiary of Battelle known as Information Dimensions, Inc. which has many offices around the world, including in the United States, Switzerland, Germany, and the United Kingdom. A large number of organizations have installed BASIS, and there are active user groups in the U.S., continental Europe, and U.K.

We stated earlier that we wanted a software package that would meet the needs of our sister international agricultural research centres. We were convinced that our choice of BASIS was excellent and believed that other sister centres embarking on large-scale library automation would wish to acquire it. Following negotiations, we succeeded in having a clause included in the terms of purchase which gave substantial discounts to any of our named sister institutes that might decide to purchase. To date, three other sister institutes — the centres in Lima (Peru), Mexico, and Hyderabad (India) — have installed BASIS, and benefitted from the negotiated discounts.

Acquisition of BASIS was made through the Geneva office of the company. They sent two of their staff members to install it in July 1984. A three-day intensive training seminar was conducted for all Library and Computer Centre staff who would be involved with the system. The training programme was based on practical data input

and output situations and database management problems. The aspects covered included the use of the manuals, input procedures, field characteristics, retrieval processes, data manipulation, and database management. After this hands-on learning with the system, intensive self-education continued among staff. The manuals became the main working tool for the first few months. In addition to the on-site seminar, two librarians attended group training seminars in London in November 1984. One of them later went for a follow-up BASIS Users Meeting in Geneva in 1985, (both persons have since left the Institute — a constant problem with staff training).

RETROSPECTIVE CONVERSION OF RECORDS

Retrospective conversion of manual records started in July 1984. The card catalogues, book catalogues, special lists of publications, acquisitions and circulation records were revised and input to create a single database. This process demanded a great deal of effort from all the staff of the Library. Acquisition records were converted first, so that once the books arrived, the records would be augmented with relevant data that would make them function fully as catalogue entries. Details of vendor information — vendor name, address and relevant comments about the vendor — were also input.

The most complex aspect of the operation was the conversion of card catalogues into computer records because it involved many painstaking, and labour intensive procedures. Each shelf-list card was withdrawn and checked against the book stock. If a carded book was found on the shelf then the main entry card was withdrawn for editing. If not, circulation records were checked to see if the book was out on loan or in the Bindery. If out, the main entry card was withdrawn. If not, the book was suspected lost and cards left in the cabinet to allow for repeat checking at a later date, after which the book was considered lost. Main entry cards of books on the shelves and those on loan or in the Bindery were revised for input.

The traditional card catalogue did not contain enough information that could provide the level of flexibility and outputs required of the new database being built; the card information had to be augmented and modified. The changes in the main entry cards included:

1. Addition of bibliographic elements not provided for in the card system; examples include corporate source of publication, publication type, copy number, and language. We needed to code each publication by language to enable us restrict searches by language; for example, when conducting a search for a user who can only read French.
2. Recasting of certain elements to conform to an agreed form of entry; thus, names of well-known organizations were reduced to their acronyms, e.g. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to FAO;
3. Indication of approach word had to be made for publisher and corporate source entries.
4. Additional descriptors had to be added to increase the retrieval capability of the system.
5. Pre-coordinated Library of Congress subject terms had to be converted to post co-ordinate terms.
6. Term verification had to be done for unclear subject terms.
7. Corrections to wrong entries.
8. Indexing of authors which had been entered as tracings.

9. Other tracings had to be put in the appropriate fields, e.g. series information was transferred to the series field, editors to author field, etc.

The conversion exercise reduced some 170,000 card catalogue records, some hundreds of circulation and acquisition records, and thousands of entries of seven bibliographies, hitherto used as book catalogues to about 30,000 integrated database records which have since increased to 80,000. The computer-based records, though by far fewer than the manual records from which they were derived, were exceedingly more useful. For instance, records of the *Cowpea Abstracts* for the period of 1900 to 1982 hitherto accessible only as four printed volumes, can now be accessed through the computer by author, descriptor, keyword in the title, etc. Also integration gave unified access to details of acquisitions, bibliographical and circulation information relating to a given book. Unified access saves the time of both the user and the librarian, for example, by obviating many futile shelf searches.

STAFFING AND CO-ORDINATION DURING IMPLEMENTATION

Our strategy was to convert the existing catalogue, acquisition, and circulation records first. We would then process new materials and records on-line. In July 1984, when the implementation of the system started, there were only four librarians, one library attendant, one library assistant and two clerk/typists on regular employment in the library. The Director of Information Services, a librarian himself (and the first author of this article) conceived and directed the project. In August 1984, a bibliographer, indexer and a secretary joined the team.

Retrospective conversion from card catalogues to computerized database was an arduous and most challenging job. To assist with the enormous clerical operations involved, five temporary staff had to be employed. Two of them were undergraduate students on vacation and the others were typists. Given the heavy reliance of the research staff and trainees on the Library, the option of closing the Library during this period of conversion could not be entertained. It was thus a most hectic period for library staff. And we were under pressure to complete the conversion very quickly.

Librarians met daily to discuss specifications and procedures and also had consultations among themselves during the course of each day as frequently as necessary. Modifications agreed on were documented and circulated among staff. The documentation formed part of the training materials used to train new project staff and evaluation of work output. Morale was high and there was great excitement, particularly among the librarians who realized that they were making history — developing perhaps the first automated large library in the continent.

The IITA Computer Manager who acted as the database administrator and his staff had regular meetings with senior library staff to take note of fresh requirements and any comments on the system that needed their attention. The staff of the Computer Department were most helpful throughout. They were also having to learn about the intricacies of BASIS with which they were quite impressed.

PROCEDURAL PROBLEMS, OMISSIONS, AND ERRORS

Direct conversion of the manual records to computer-based database was quite tedious and labour intensive, but that was about the best method available to the library under the existing circumstances. First, the collection was made up of a variety of materials containing a large number of non-formal literature on tropical agriculture. This made

it somewhat unreasonable to buy MARC records of other libraries. The method also offered the library the opportunity to revise the catalogue, circulation, acquisition and vendor records. Another very significant gain was the opportunity taken to expand subject description, verify terms and provide records for as many as 38 fields in the database.

At the beginning, updating was done at the end of each day's work but repeated failures in updating occurred. This resulted in massive losses of records. When it was suspected that the updating at 5.00 p.m. was interfered with by the operations of other departments, a change was effected. Updating was programmed to take place automatically late in the night when the computer was virtually idle. This action greatly reduced the incidence of update failures. Let it be said that each failure caused considerable frustration — to put it mildly!

A number of omissions and errors occurred during the conversion. Some errors were carried over from manual records, others had to do with wrong conceptualization of fields, and there were inputting mistakes. In some cases field structures were not fully considered against retrieval requirements. For instance, phrase-match indexes were made for journal titles of articles, but these were later found to be unsuitable, and were subsequently changed to key-word indexes. Other errors had to do with indexing, incomplete records, wrong use of fields, improper entry of multi-volume works, and wrong ascription of language of publication to books. Most of the errors were rectified as they were discovered, especially those involving wrong conceptualization, incompleteness, and incorrect handling of multi-volume works.

Directly converted databases can be full of errors. Dyson (1984) described such errors in some detail. Our advice is that there should be a balance between speedy conversion and accuracy of output, if possible. After a few hundred inputs (records) thorough re-examination of input practices and analysis of errors should be made. But in our case, we could not afford to be any less speedy. Many library users were on our back anxious for us to get the conversion completed. After the initial rush, we made time subsequently for corrections.

DISCARDING THE CARD CATALOGUES

On-line Public Access Catalogue. In July 1985, barely one year after the implementation of the computerized information system started, an on-line public access catalogue was implemented using the BASIS Menu Language (BML). The Menu driven system is a user friendly interface that makes it possible for an inexperienced database user to find information using a variety of access points. Through this, a search can be conducted by author, any keyword in the title, subject, publisher, journal title, corporate source of publication, language, call number, year of publication, etc., or a combination of as many of them as are required.

Users can access the database through any of about 70 terminals in various offices and laboratories in IITA. Access is also possible through microcomputers linked to the VAX computer on which the database resides.

Six terminals are physically located in the Library. But more are required. At present, the connecting points from the Library building to the VAX computer located in a separate building are fully utilized. The cost of additional links through fiber optics is currently being investigated. In the meantime, staff of the Library sometimes have to go to terminal rooms outside the Library to do some of their work.

Our on-line public access catalogue has made the resources of the Library accessible to an extent that is absolutely impossible with a card catalogue system. What Library can make duplicates of its card catalogues and place them in 70 widely dispersed locations in the organization? This is, in effect, what we have achieved with our system. Moreover, the computer is on 24 hours a day, seven days a week; one may, therefore, do one's literature searching at one's convenience — not necessarily during office hours or during Library opening hours.

Once the on-line public access catalogue was functioning, we had to decide what to do with our card catalogues. We had the option of leaving them in place as a back-up for the computerized system. But the card catalogues would become increasingly outdated and be less and less useful as a back-up with each passing year. Moreover, their availability would help entrench old habits among users; some would continue to use the card catalogues and not bother to learn how to use the computerized catalogue. Furthermore, if the card catalogues were retained, they would have to be maintained. For example, whenever a publication was withdrawn from the collection, it would be necessary to withdraw all the cards pertaining to it. We took the decision to discard the card catalogues altogether. The cards were subsequently trashed and the cabinet donated to two libraries — a special library and a university library.

User Resistance. But doing away with card catalogues was not without some concerted resistance. One scientist thought a library without card catalogues was unheard-of; no matter what the library did, it must continue to maintain a card catalogue system. He was not about to learn any newfangled library system. And he was from North America — the cradle of advanced computer applications.

This scientist was also of an activist turn of mind. He spoke to some scientists and succeeded in getting a few to sign a letter virtually commanding the leadership of the Library to restore the card catalogues forthwith! Their command was, of course, obeyed. Months later, they became embarrassed about their action and recognized the unprogressive nature of the position they had taken. Today, we do not know any staff of our Institute that still misses the card catalogues. And we librarians are glad to do away with the costly and inflexible retrieval tool.

Back-ups and Contingencies. Any computerized system malfunctions sometimes, and has to be shut down. This happens too at our Institute. On a number of occasions, the system has had to be shut down because of damage occasioned by lightning or for other reasons. Two types of considerations are involved; first, one must ensure that the database is not destroyed as a result of a system shut-down. This is assured by the creation of a back-up tape which is updated daily by the staff of the Computer Centre. This means that if the records were destroyed or damaged for any reason, they can be re-created using the back-up tape.

The second type of back-up required is to ensure that access to the library collection is not completely lacking whenever the computer is shut down. We have done this by printing out records that amount to "main entries" in an alphabetical order by author. These printouts are bound and used as book catalogues. Supplements are produced periodically. In addition to serving as back-up, copies of these book catalogues can also be deposited in our stations located outside Ibadan. The book catalogues do not, of course, constitute adequate access to the Library collection; but they help in locating items on the shelves. We realized from the beginning that it would be too costly to construct a more comprehensive back-up system.

User Training. Having discarded the card catalogues, we embarked on an intensive programme of training library users on how to search the on-line public access catalogue. We had built into the system simple instructions on how to do various types of searches, and there were also HELP commands to bail a searcher out of difficulties.

From the beginning, many readers, particularly those who were already fascinated and familiar with computers, were delighted with the system. Others were too shy to learn or were strangely awed by the computerized system. Gradually, the number of our primary clients who could confidently do their own searching increased. Eventually, most people became convinced of the many advantages of the new system. They could, and can, search the Library collection in their own offices, and at any time. They were, and are, able to tell immediately if the publications needed were on the shelf or out on loan. And they could also find out from the computer the names of the persons who borrowed the publications they needed.

Training on the use of the system is a continuing activity. The HELP commands have been revised from time to time. A pocket-size manual on how to search the database was written and distributed widely (Ibekwe and Lawani, 1987). This manual has also had to be revised to reflect changes in the system. Any Library client can request instruction on the use of the system, and the User Services section of the Library arranges group training regularly.

ENHANCEMENTS TO THE SYSTEM FOLLOWING INITIAL INSTALLATION

Subject-Authority Control with a Thesaurus. Initially, the practice of free indexing, with its characteristic advantages of great specificity and "literary warrant", was adopted. But this created problems in literature searching, particularly for users not sufficiently conversant with their subjects to be able to come up with appropriate synonyms. This led to low rates of recall, in accordance with the classic principle of the inverse relationship between recall and relevance (enhanced by specificity).

From 1986 we adopted the thesaurus developed by the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux (CAB), now called CAB International. But we modified it by adding many terms specific to IITA's special subject interests which were not in the CAB Thesaurus. These additional terms were structured, made consistent with and combined with the CAB Thesaurus terms to form an expanded thesaurus. The expanded thesaurus on computer disk was mounted in 1990 for subject authority control. Since the installation of the thesaurus, index terms selected by our indexers are automatically cross-checked against the thesaurus by the computer. Invalid terms are automatically rejected. Subject access has also become linked to the thesaurus.

Retrospective Processing of Library Materials. In January 1985, at the end of the conversion exercise we began to capture relevant literature into the database to increase its size and make it more useful. From then all periodicals received in the library are scanned to select and index all articles relevant to the work of the Institute. We also do 'inside-out' processing of books, especially composite publications like proceedings and research reviews. This is to expose individual articles or contributions to our intensive indexing procedures, and facilitate their subsequent retrieval and use.

The high level of success scored with in-depth processing of current literature has encouraged us to embark on retrospective processing of all relevant articles and chapters of other publications in the collection acquired before automation. This exercise does not only enrich the database but serves as a mechanism for activating

the older portion of the Library's collection through much improved accessibility. This is a long-term task, since at present we can afford to devote only one professional indexer to retrospective processing.

CD-ROM Databases. A new dimension was added to the application of information technology in IITA Library when in 1990, CD-ROM database service was introduced. About 15 CD-ROM databases on various subjects are presently in use in the Library. The acquisition and use of these databases largely obviate the need for us to subscribe to use the large commercial and international on-line databases.

To further the goal of expanding access, we are developing procedures for selective downloading of relevant current and retrospective literature from CD-ROM databases into our Library database. We hope that this will reduce the labour we devote to processing. It should be noted that most databases were started less than 15 years ago. Thus, even when we succeed in downloading from other databases, we will still need to do in-house processing of the literature predating the development of agricultural databases.

Creation of Operational Profile and Report Processes. BASIS is a modular database management system. PROFILE and REPORT modules are two modules that are used to prepare sets of logically arranged instructions defining computer operations required to achieve desired outcomes.

With the Profile Module, we prepare and save well-designed search procedures meant for various technical operations, create menus, and generally establish schemes to simplify the use of the database. These two modules enhance considerably the automatic performance of many activities that depend on the database.

With the Report Module, we are able to design and store programs that can be used to access any field in the Library database and produce outputs in the format desired. Outputs include overdue notices, book orders, address labels, and bibliographies. With the appropriate logical statements, the Report Module can be used to effect sophisticated data processing tasks, arrange and write data in external files, merge database data with data from external sequential files, etc.

We have to date created and stored 200 system Profiles and 298 Reports. These are used singly or in combination to carry out a number of operations in library acquisitions, circulation, bibliographic services and selective dissemination of information. These Profile and Report instructions are important enhancements to the system.

NEW OR MORE EFFICIENT OPERATIONS

Orders Preparation. All operations related to acquisitions have been made simpler. Pre-order checking, vendor monitoring, recording and correspondence have become faster and more efficient.

Once details of a set of books to be ordered are entered in the database and the appropriate Profile is used to invoke the necessary search commands, the document set required is generated from the database and the appropriate Report directive is activated to arrange the entries in the appropriate format. This is in the form of a listing with the letter to the supplier; the names and addresses of suppliers appear at the beginning of the lists. Once printed, the order is ready for dispatching. This process eliminates a host of time-consuming chores that have to be done in manual systems.

Bibliographic Compilation. Some bibliographies can now be produced straight from the database using a combination of Profile and Report instructions. For example, the fifth volume of the *Cowpea Abstracts* was produced in 1987 direct from a set of records of cowpea literature in the database (International Grain Legume Information Centre, 1987).

After the appropriate search procedures, a computer program was used to sort the entries by subject category and to generate author and subject indexes. The categorized entries and indexes were copied onto diskettes using a communications program called Red Ryder. The files on the diskettes were reformatted with Microsoft Word 3.01 on an Apple Macintosh Plus microcomputer. Finally, a camera-ready copy was produced on an Apple Laser Writer Plus laserprinter.

Any one who, like us, has compiled bibliographies manually, with full subject categorization as well as subject and author indexes, would readily appreciate the convenience of not having to fiddle with catalogue cards, and not having to retype and repeatedly proofread entries from other sources.

Circulation Operations. Circulation operations have also been made exceedingly easy with the computer. The apparent chaos common with manual circulation systems is absent because the normal myriads of files kept in paper jackets are not needed. A book is recorded only once, during acquisition or cataloguing; loan transactions only involve segmental addition or subtraction from existing records.

Circulation correspondence are also produced automatically from the system using Profile and Report instructions. Overdue notices for example, are generated by the computer in the form of letters requesting borrowers to return or renew the books listed as overdue against them. The borrower's name and address are arranged on the letter in such a way that the letter can simply be folded and dispatched.

Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) Service. This is another service made easy by the system. The IITA in-house SDI service is based on the classical concept of selective dissemination of information in which an individual is notified of only items of information of interest to him based on highly structured and formalized procedures. Formalized system profiles run against each monthly set of new additions to the database to select and file or print items relevant to each beneficiary's interest profile. Each person's list comes out of the computer printer with his name and address placed on it, and a library assistant simply mails the printouts to the beneficiaries of the service.

This type of highly personalized service would be too labour-intensive and would demand an inordinate amount of professional time in a traditional library system. We are able to do it because of the facility available in BASIS for storing the complex searching, formatting and filing instructions involved.

The SDI programme is a major contribution to our scientific information service. It helps us to ensure that scientists working in remote research sites and outreach stations around Africa, where there are no good libraries, do not lose touch with developments in their areas of interest.

The SDI service is a definite improvement on the omnibus accessions lists produced and circulated monthly by the Library before automation. Our *Journal Contents* service complements the SDI, and both constitute the Library's current awareness package to all scientists; a package designed to alert them to new research and the

authors working in their areas of interest and to help them avoid waste of time and money in needlessly duplicated research efforts.

Outlined above are the ways by which we have used technology to provide greater access to the materials in our library collection. We are continuing to exploit the capabilities of the computer to expand access to our collection. However, we realize that even if the Library, through the computer, achieves 100 per cent accessibility to the individual bibliographical units in its collection we would still not be self-sufficient; we would still need to use other databases and the resources of other libraries. No library is self-sufficient. And this remains an axiom, with or without technology.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

Seven years after the installation of our system, we can express great satisfaction with it. Looking back, we are generally pleased with the choices we made and the procedures we adopted. Given the rapid pace of development of computer technology, seven years are a long period. Today, there are many more software packages for documentation and library management than there were when we chose BASIS. But we have no reason to regret our selection of it. BASIS is still supported by a virile organization which has continued to improve the package. A completely new version of BASIS which takes advantage of the latest developments in software technology is now available. It is reported to be even more versatile, faster and more user friendly than the version we have. We intend to acquire this latest version. But we think that it is wise to wait for now to allow others to detect any bugs in it and give the company time to correct them. We believe that the criteria on which our software selection were based are still valid. But we would not at all be surprised if the same set of criteria applied now were to rank other software packages higher than BASIS.

At the time we were planning our system, we did not consider microcomputers at all. They were not as powerful then as they are today. Thus, any one starting now would be well advised to give microcomputers much greater consideration than we did. In this regard, it should be pointed out that a version of BASIS for microcomputers is now available. This fact should make the development of an integrated library system on microcomputers quite feasible for small special libraries, branch libraries, or departmental libraries of universities.

Automation has enabled us to offer a greater number of services and to improve the quality of our services greatly. We have abundant evidence that these services are appreciated by our various clients. We believe that through the services made possible by automation, the respect and recognition for the Library which were always high, have continued to grow.

Over the years, we have found that librarians have had no difficulty coping with our automated system. Even clerical staff learn to operate the system quite effectively within a short time. This implies that, provided they acquire a reasonably user-friendly software, library managers need not be too concerned that they do not have enough staff knowledgeable about computers. It is relatively easy to acquire the necessary skills. But we would recommend that there be at least one staff member who has educational qualifications in computer science.

Errors in a computerized integrated library system such as our own are carried over into many service products, thus increasing their potential to cause embarrassment. For example, an error committed at the time a book is being ordered may be carried over into the catalogue record and become potentially widely visible to the users of the

on-line public access catalogue. The same error could be further transmitted in SDI printouts, show up in circulation records as well as in bibliographies. Thus, it is extremely important that deliberate efforts be made to edit and review the records in the database regularly.

A related issue in a computerized integrated library system is the great interdependence of all the departments of the library. A mistake in one department of the library affects all the other departments. Therefore, all library staff must work much more closely than is traditional. Even in our relatively small library (as compared with large university library systems), we quickly found that co-ordination was, and is highly essential. All proposed changes should be discussed with all the professional librarians and concurrence obtained. Decisions must be made through close consultation and with all staff acting as a team. Whenever individual staff members have made changes unilaterally, even minor changes, problems have arisen. To get all professional staff to think not only of their own departments but to consider themselves as only members of one team can be a great managerial challenge. We find that it is not easy to get new professional staff members appreciate that they should not make changes or adopt new procedures without consulting staff in other sections.

We have also had to implement a new organizational structure to reflect our new ways of doing things. The Library is now organized into three sections: Users' Services; Technical Services; and Database Development. Users Services section is responsible for circulation, for SDI and other specialized services, as well as for organizing training courses for readers in the use of the on-line public access catalogue. The Technical Services section creates and maintains the records for acquisitions, catalogue, and vendors, has primary responsibility for editing the database, and maintaining the expanded CAB Thesaurus.

The Database Development section is responsible for the computer programming aspects of all operations. It seeks continually to improve the technical performance of the system, and develops new applications. While the Technical Services section creates records for current acquisitions, the Database Development section has responsibility for identifying pre-1984 journal articles in our collection that are particularly pertinent to our Institute's research, and for creating records for such articles in the database. Finally, the section is in charge of installing databases on CD-ROM and writing manuals for their use by other librarians and readers. Once the Database Development section has installed a given CD-ROM database and written an appropriate manual for it, the Users' Services section takes over the day-to-day use of the databases, including instruction of readers on its use.

In conclusion, we acknowledge our good fortune in working for an organization that is reasonably well-endowed financially, and that provides an environment which encourages and supports innovation. We know that most librarians, particularly in Africa, operate under much less favourable circumstances. In line with the policy of the Management of IITA, we will endeavour to assist our African colleagues by providing hands-on training and advice on library automation as well as on the appropriate applications of the new information technologies.

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INFORMATION NEEDS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE STUDY OF MALAWI

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the findings of a study undertaken to find the need for information support for rural development. The overall purpose of the study was to look into the information provision system of rural communities, including the information exchange patterns and needs. Another group studied was extension workers, their role in information communication and their effectiveness. The findings suggest that information is needed in the areas of health, agriculture, and income generation activities. Information is exchanged mostly on social occasions, utilizing personal and inter-personal sources. The efficacy of extension workers as providers of information was found to be rather low.

INTRODUCTION

Rural Communities have two information systems which have become uncoupled, the indigenous knowledge system and the external knowledge system. Our assumption in this research project are: that the indigenous knowledge system has to link up with the external knowledge system; that an information system cannot be created as an isolated island but as an organic part of a community, and that the beneficiaries, the end-users of information should be involved as main actors and decision makers in the creation and maintenance of an information system.

The provision of information to rural communities in this sub-region of Africa is a responsibility fragmented among several government ministries, non-governmental agencies and parastatals. With the exception of library services, most of the other agencies supply information to rural communities as a small package within a larger package or services and inputs. This is certainly the case with the extension agencies in agriculture, health, community development, and adult literacy.

Despite the efforts of these agencies to supply information to rural areas, there is a feeling that in spite of considerable expenditures by government, donor agencies, and policy shifts in favour of rural development, the amount of usable information for rural areas is dismally low, and its impact in creating conditions which foster rapid rural development negligible. There is a serious gap in the information exchange process and in the information transfer chain, linking rural communities with other knowledge centres both within and outside Africa countries. (Chambers, 1983; Swaminathan, 1985; Temu, 1984; Hannah-Anderson, 1985).

Although there were many conceptual papers in the literature advocating African rural information provision, very few research studies have actually been done on the patterns of information seeking and transfer, vis-a-vis development in African rural communities. Some of the studies may already be out of date (Baregu 1972), others were too library based and failed to take into consideration other rural information systems e.g. the extension services and the indigenous knowledge system (Aboyade 1984). It is now necessary to collect more detailed and current data on the situation in Southern Africa, and also study the two knowledge systems side by side, and the information needs and exchange patterns, and utilize such findings in the design of a new information strategy for rural development.

The objectives of this study are:

- (a) to find out how the information provision systems in rural communities operate, with specific reference to indigenous knowledge and knowledge originating from external sources;
- (b) to explore the inter-relationship between information needs and rural development activities;
- (c) to investigate the extent of use, storage and communication patterns of indigenous knowledge;
- (d) to explore the existing channels of information transfer and exchange and determine the most suitable channel;
- (e) to identify some key rural development issues and map out broad information requirements which might satisfy them;
- (f) to identify extension organisations which produce information materials for rural communities, to collect, list and abstract such materials; and
- (g) to investigate the role of rural information providers like extension agents, change agents, teachers etc. and their functions as information transfer middlemen.

METHODOLOGY AND STUDY DESIGN

By its very nature, information needs assessment is quite difficult to establish, partly because the demand for knowledge is derived demand, i.e. the supply of information knowledge alone may not satisfy a human need because information is required as a means to an end (Wilson, 1982; Dervin, 1976). In this study, this problem was partly overcome through the use of both diagnostic techniques and direct questioning of respondents. The selection of villages was accomplished through correspondence with counterparts in the Malawi National Library Service, and a one week visit paid to Malawi to verify the suitability of selected villages. Essentially, while not believing that we could select villages which would be representative of all villages in the country, efforts were made to locate villages in which the main economic activities of Malawi are represented, that is farming — rice, maize, tobacco, fishing and livestock husbandry. Another set of criteria considered to be important was to identify a village involved in the development concept of rural growth centres, and another which was still at the periphery of the Malawian government rural development efforts.

The procedure for conducting the research in the villages was as follows: letters were written to the village heads explaining the aims of the proposed research project, and seeking appointments for further explanation and possible discussions. Permission was also sought to conduct this study in the villages. The research team (including interviewers) also spent two days in the villages talking to people explaining our proposals for the next few weeks, and meeting with extension staff and seeking their co-operation.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN MALAWI

The Republic of Malawi, formerly a British colony, gained independence in 1964. Politically, Malawi is a one party state, under the Malawi Congress Party—(MCP) led by the life president, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda.

Geographically, the country covers 118,484 square kilometres. It is a long narrow country, about 840 kilometres from North to South, and its width varies 80 kms to 160 kms. The physical features of Malawi are dominated by the rift valley, a continuation of the East African rift valley and formation, and highlands. The highlands include the Shire highlands, and the Zomba and Mulanje mountain ranges. Mt. Mulanje at 9,050 feet above sea level, is the highest in central Africa. Malawi has a range of climatic and vegetational conditions because of the variation in altitude and latitude position noted above.

The rainy season is from November to April, and over 90% of the total rainfall is at this time of the year. Most of the country, normally receives ample rainfall, the annual total is from 750mm —1, 015mm for most of the country, while in the higher plateaux, the rainfall index is normally about 1525mm per year. So the highlands are generally wet, while the rift valley is hot and slightly dry.

Malawi's is estimated to have 8.55 million inhabitants, and a large proportion 990%0 of the population lives in rural areas. The population is estimated to grow at 3.5% annually, so Malawi is among countries with the highest population growth in the world.

GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

At independence, Malawi with an income per capita of US \$ 63, was one of the poorest countries in Africa. However, this had improved to US\$ 155 by 1987. (Turner, 1989). From independence, Malawi has followed a pragmatic economic policy aimed at increasing agricultural production and productivity. Up to the late 70's, Malawi was able to register a growth rate of about 6% (Economist, 1990).

While the economic policies of Malawi (which are rural development oriented), were agricultural based, and hence relevant to rural development they have a number of aspects of interest to this study. In the mid — 1960's, Malawi without any mineral resources, or industrial sector, had to decide how best to bring about rapid economic growth which is wholly agriculture based. Having no other choice, the government and individuals invested heavily in agriculture. Various policy instruments, were designed to favour estate owners rather than small holders. The former were seen as capable of assimilating modern agricultural practices and promoting the rapid economic growth desired by the government. According to a number of writers, estate holders were given (and still have) the exclusive right to grow profitable crops such as barley and flue cured tobacco which they can sell in open auctions. Small holders, however, are only allowed to produce dark fired, skin cured and oriental tobacco and must sell directly to accredited government buying agents. In certain situations, such as tea growing, small holders have been allowed to diversify into growing it, but they have to sell to the state owners, at lower prices, who in turn sell the tea to overseas buyers at more profitable prices.

Access to land also is in favour of estate holders, small holders have access to customary land which is allotted by the tribal chief headman of a locality. However, the government has jurisdiction over private land, and public land. Estate holders have access to private land on a leasehold or freehold. Renade (1986) has pointed

out that this has led to unequal distribution of rural land, whereby small holders suffer from land shortage, while estate holders have excess land which they cannot fully cultivate. It has for example, been pointed out in a recent tobacco sector study that in the Central Region of Malawi, where population pressure is severe, 75% of the estate land is unused. (Renade, 1986).

The contribution of agriculture to GDP was at 50%, 1990 but this reflects the trend that has been on the decline since the early 80's. However, because Malawi does not have mineral resources exploited, the contribution of agriculture to export earnings is very high (90%) (Economist, 1990). This means that although the contribution of agriculture to GDP may be at 50% its role and contribution in the national development process is critical because the country lacks other exportable commodities.

The main subsistence crop is maize grown by the majority of small holders, but there are other crops, such as sorghum, millet, rice, root crops, fruits. The main cash crops grown by small holders are: maize, cotton, rice, groundnuts, tobacco, coffee, rubber and macadamia nuts.

Slightly over 50% of the land is suitable for arable cultivation, but only half of this is cultivated. In spite of increased use of fertilizers by farmers especially small holders (60%) productivity by small holders has fallen slightly as soil exhaustion, and occasional droughts set in.

One of the conditions of the World Bank Agricultural Adjustment loan is that the government would halt the transfer of land from customary tenure to freehold tenure (Economist, 1990). The Malawi government with assistance from donor agencies embarked on four integrated rural development projects, the most famous one being the Lilongwe integrated rural development project. Although only partially successful the experience provided a useful basis for launching the National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) in 1978 which is to last for 20 years. The programme is aimed at benefitting a greater number of small family farms through infrastructural services, e.g. health services — under the primary health care approach.

The NRDP gradually lost momentum as it became increasingly clear that although it had a positive impact with estate holders whose production growth improved to 7%, it had very little impact on the small holders whose output grew slowly (2.6%), some of the problems facing small holders were identified as limited access to credit, withdrawal of fertilizer subsidy since 1986, high transport costs and land shortage. Since 1989, under the influence of the World Bank and IMF the government has also embarked on a structural Adjustment Plan.

With this brief overview of Malawi, and a brief review of the government's main policies on economic and rural development, we now turn to the findings of the research project in the two villages studied in Malawi.

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL COMMUNITIES SELECTED

The two rural communities in Malawi which were used for this research project were: The Chiwamba Cluster of villages which will be referred to in the report as Village (1). The second rural community is the Bandawe cluster of villages, which will be referred to in the report as Village (2). The Chiwamba cluster of villages is located about 45 kms from Lilongwe City which is Malawi's capital. It lies in a highland area which receives adequate rainfall and has fairly fertile agricultural land. Chiwamba area is also among the few areas where the government has built the 'rural growth centres'.

which are expected to act as a catalyst in Malawi's rural development. The Bandawe cluster of villages lies along the shores of Lake Malawi, about 20 kms from the small district headquarters town of Salima. It thus lies in the lowlands, an area which does not receive as high an amount of rainfall as Chiwamba and is also less fertile. Bandawe was not yet served by a 'rural growth centre' of any sort during the time of this study.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Table I below shows the gender distribution of respondents. A conscious effort was made to ensure that at least 55% of the respondents are female. The main reason behind this decision was the realisation that while women are heavily involved in rural development socio-economic activities, many research projects tend to concentrate on male members of the community as decision makers in the household, thus underplaying and under representing the needs of women.

TABLE I: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

	Village (1) N = 253		Village (2) N = 277	
Males	94	= 37%	128	= 46%
Females	159	= 63%	149	= 54%
Total	253	= 100%	277	= 100%

The majority of the respondents were married 86% in village (1) and 82% in village (2). While the singles category was represented by 6% of the respondents in village (1) and 6% in village (2). 7% of the respondents in village (1) and 12% in village (2) were either widowed or separated. The age distribution of respondents show that the majority of respondents (77%) were between 15 - 45 years of age, while 24% were above 46 years. Our main objective in selection of the two communities was to concentrate on the economically active age group with an average of 30 years. The number of respondents who are head of households in village (1) was 44% while in village (2) the number of households heads among the respondents was slightly higher at 56%.

The educational background of respondents shows that the majority were semi-literate (52%). Overall, 45% were from village (1), while 58% were from village (2). The next category are those who are having primary school education, which accounted for an overall 42% of the respondents. Village (1) had 50% of the respondents with primary school education, while 35% of the respondents in village (2) were primary school leavers.

Graduates of the national literacy program constitute about 4% of the respondents. A tiny percentage of respondents had secondary school education, or other types of education.

TASK ANALYSIS

TABLE II: PATTERN OF TASKS PERFORMED BY RESPONDENTS
PERCENTAGE OF ALL RESPONDENTS

Tasks Performed	Village (1) N = 253	Village (2) N = 277
Household work and food processing	67%	64%
Farming	88%	80%
Building/House repair	28%	25%
Fishing/fish selling	0.3%	30%
Hand crafts	1%	9%
Seasonal wage employment	2%	5%
Shopkeeping/teashop	0.3%	4%
Local beer brewing	4%	2%
Selling cooked products	0.3%	4%
Other tasks which were mentioned by less than 1% of the respondents include selling firewood, boat repair, bricklayers and carpentry etc.		

Table 2 shows that in both the villages, the task which is performed by the greatest number of people is farming (including livestock husbandry). In village (1) it is mentioned by 88% of the respondents while in village (2) it is mentioned by 80%. However, it is important to note that not everyone in the rural areas is engaged in farming. It is often assumed that rural people are all occupied in farming as their sole occupation.

Comparing the two villages, one can see that more people in village (1) are engaged in agriculture but slightly less in village (2), where fishing/fish selling was reported as the major occupation of 30% of the respondents. House work was reported as a task performed by 67% of respondents in village (1) and 64% of respondents in village (2). Household work here includes: cooking, washing, looking after children, fetching firewood and other domestic chores. An important feature of the pattern of task performed by respondents is the high level of specialisation by gender in the performance of the tasks.

In an effort to find out the information exchange behaviour of rural communities the study wanted to find out how information flows in the different situations in the community.

The respondents were asked to indicate the person who they trust most to inform them when something needs to be done which concerns development in their community.

TABLE 3: A RANK ORDER OF HUMAN INFORMATION SOURCES

Persons	Village (1) N = 253	Village (2) N = 277
Headman	78%	67%
Extension Officers	53%	14%
Chairman of MCP	30%	46%
Members of Parliament	9%	3%
Teachers/Primary School	5%	5%
Pastor/Sheik	5%	4%
VDC/AG	5%	0.3%
Woman League Leaders	4%	0.3%
MCP Youth Leaders	—	3%
No response	1%	6%

In both communities, most of the respondents still have high confidence in traditional leaders to tell them what needs to be done. In village (1) it is 78% while in village (2) it is 67% who indicated so. However, extension officers in village (1) who are active and effective are ranked 2nd by 53% of the respondents while their ineffective counterparts in village (2) only score a 14%. Primary school teachers are not highly regarded in either of the communities for this purpose, neither are religious leaders. The local ruling party bosses are trusted quite significantly in both the communities — in village (1) by 30% of the respondents while in village (2) it is by 46%.

The implications of these findings are that there is need to involve the leaders who are trusted in the community in introducing new ideas; and the headman is obviously important, as well as the extension officers in village (1) and the party chairman in village (2). The fact that the headman/woman in both villages who represent traditional authority, are highly trusted, and the political leaders (i.e. Chairpersons of MCP) are also among those highly trusted would appear to indicate that both are regarded as legitimate authority office holders from whom the rural community expects to receive communication on what actions should be taken to bring about development. The respondents in village (1) show more confidence in extension workers than those in village (2).

FLOW OF PROBLEM SOLVING INFORMATION

Respondents were asked to narrate a problem which they or close members of their families faced recently. In order to trace the flow of problem solving information they were asked to indicate the persons who they consulted for advice in order to solve the problem.

TABLE 4: TYPES OF PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY RESPONDENTS

Problems	Village (1) N = 253	Village (2) N = 277
Health Problems	59%	30%
Farming Problems/Crop Diseases	30%	2%
Fishing Problems	—	7%
Economic Problems	9%	7%
Social Problems	13%	12%
Earth Tremors	1%	8%
Animal Husbandry Problems	1%	1%
None/No Response	14%	19%

Using the critical incidence technique respondents were able to provide some interesting data (see table on how they search for problem solving information.) The table above is a summary of the various problems which respondents encountered. Topping the list are health problems in both communities various diseases were mentioned, malaria, diarrhoea (particularly for children), dysentery, cholera, asthma, snake bites (when working in the fields, all snakes are believed to be poisonous), heart diseases, colds and influenza, and rheumatism. The most frequently cited disease were malaria and diarrhoea especially in village (2). Unclean drinking water as a source of health problem was also cited. Other problems are social, economic or are related to animal and fish farming.

TABLE 5: PERSONS FROM WHOM ADVICE WAS SOUGHT BY RESPONDENTS

Persons	Village (1) N = 253	Village (2) N = 277
Friends and Kinsmen	19%	23%
Traditional Leaders	15%	11%
Traditional Medicine Men	4%	3%
Party Leaders	2%	5%
Government Officers	28%	30%
None/No response	23%	38%

The largest percentages in (45%) village (1) and (38%) in village (2) are of those who either didn't respond or reported that they did not seek advice from anyone. Some respondents indicated that the problem was of a very personal nature so there was no need to involve other people in personal matters. Government officers (dispensary staff, extension workers, and community development officers) make up the category of people who were consulted for most of the problem solving advice. However, friends and kinsman also were often consulted for advice by 19% of respondents in village (1) and 23% of respondents in village (2). Traditional leaders hold third place among the persons consulted, and 15% of respondents in village (1) and 11% of respondents in village (2) consulted them. The dominance of government officers among persons consulted most, is partly explained by the fact that a large proportion of the

problems were concerned with health matters and staff in the clinic/dispensary were often approached for prescriptions. Also, a number of the agriculture related problems were concerned with inputs which can only be obtained through government aided channels e.g. fertilizer, pesticide and credit.

The traditional leaders such as chiefs, headman (or headwoman) are perceived reliable and wise people by the majority of respondents in both village (1) and (2) 68% and 49% respectively. Slightly lower down on the ranking, are extension workers who are perceived as reliable and wise by 21% and 13% by respondents in village (1) and (2) respectively. The party leaders – the MCP chairperson are also among those who are perceived as reliable and wise, and a source of new ideas.

TABLE 6: PLACES/OCCASIONS WHEN INFORMATION/NEWS IS TRANSFERRED

Places	Village (1) N = 253	Village (2) N = 277
Church/Mosque	42%	40%
Village School	9%	4%
Market Place	42%	39%
Health Centre	26%	26%
Bus Stand	4%	5%
Beer drinking places	12%	7%
Communal Well	16%	14%
Friends Home	7%	15%
Chiefs Place	13%	8%
Lake Side	—	16%
Official Meetings	7%	7%
Radio	2%	4%
Grain Grinding Places	1%	2%
None/No Response	10%	5%

Respondents were asked to indicate the places or occasions in the community where they normally obtain information or news. Data from the responses is presented in table 6. In general, it is revealed that information sharing takes place in a number of places where people congregate: places of worship, the market place, the health centre, the communal well, beer drinking places, the health centre, the public/political meetings, and in the case of the lake side village, the point at which fish catches are landed. A comparison of the two villages in which intensive interviewing took place produces an interesting pattern of the traditional and modern: place of worship and market place rival health centre as the most common location for information exchange, whilst the traditional power structure (the chiefs place), although slightly diminished, compares favourably with political/public meetings. Beer drinking places are favoured by men, the women's equivalent was the communal well, and friend's place was among the important places cited. Other places mentioned by fewer respondents were: Radio, grain grinding places, sports ground, and even funeral occasions.

Although we cannot term the places identified by the villagers as information exchange centres, in any formal sense, they do serve as important staying posts in the informal information dissemination process.

The type of information exchanged as indicated by recipients is given in Table 7. General news ranks highest, with 57% of respondents in village (1) and 73% in village (2) citing it as among items of information exchanged. Information on diseases, their prevention and cure, family problems, farming ideas, ways of earning money, development, are all cited as being important areas in which information is exchanged. One can categorise the main areas as:

1. News (what's happening around us)
2. Health information
3. Social information
4. Agricultural information
5. Economic information
6. Survival information.

Table 7. Types of Information Exchanged by Respondents

Type of Information	Village (1) N = 253 (%)	Village (2) N = 277 (%)
General information	57	73
Family problems	24	18
Disease prevention/cure	15	21
Farming information	9	5
Development	6	12
Ways of earning money	4	10
Home crafts	2	4
Fishing	—	10
News of traditional initiation ceremonies	—	3
Do not get news	4	0.3
Do not remember	1	—

THE USE OF LITERARY SKILLS

The use and need for literary skills by respondents was determined by asking them the frequency of writing or receiving letters, for official and private communication, and also filling official forms. The frequency of filling official forms and receiving official letters is less than for private written communication. Apart from indicating that the level of contact between respondents and government organs is higher in village (1) than village (2) these data would seem to indicate that while literacy skills are used significantly in the realm of private communication, they are not yet used heavily in the area of official communication. Fifty nine percent of the respondents in village (1) have never received or filled any official forms, while the figure for village (2) is 81%. Respondents in both villages do not carry out much official correspondence and about 90% of the respondents claim never to have received or written an official letter, and only 3% and 2% of respondents in villages (1) and (2) respectively can be said to have had any communication by letter with government agencies prior to this study. However, only 41% and 24% of the respondents in villages (1) and (2) respectively claimed never to have received a private letter in their lives. 47% and 64% of the respondents from villages (1) and (2) respectively claimed that they had received at least one private letter in the last 6 months.

This may show that literacy skills are utilised by a fairly small proportion of the population for official communication purposes, but there is a higher utilisation of literacy skills at the level of private communications hence providing an important focal point from which literacy skills can take a firmer root in the respective communities.

The respondents who are illiterates were asked to state the person who reads/writes for them, when they have to, and their responses are given in table 8 below.

TABLE 8: PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY OF TYPES OF PERSONS WHO WRITES/READS FOR ILLITERATE RESPONDENTS

Person	Village (1) N = 253	Village (2) N = 277
Husband	3	3
Brother	1	3
My children	3	1
Friend	1	2
Neighbour	1	1
Not applicable	6	18
No response	81	71

The responses reveal that husbands, brothers, children and neighbours are all utilised for writing/reading letters. Literacy is higher among men than women, and one can see the absence of wives, and sisters rendering assistance for reading and writing letters. This may be explained by the fact within families, illiteracy is higher among women than men.

READING HABITS

An attempt was made to establish the familiarity, respondents have with locally available/produced magazines/newspapers. Such familiarity, it was reasoned, while not reflecting that the named magazines/newspapers are read, would help in identifying how well the rural communities know the magazines which are being produced locally for their consumption.

Table 9 summarises the findings concerning which magazines/newspapers are known to the respondents.

TABLE 9: TITLES OF NEWSPAPERS/MAGAZINES IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS

Name	Village (1) N = 253 (%)	Village (2) N = 277 (%)
Boma lathu	33	36
Moni	18	27
Odingi	10	8
Daily times	6	12
Police magazine	5	12
Malawi news	6	5
Za Achikumbi	10	1
None/No response	55	54

Items named by less than 1% were; Kamuzu military magazine, and Southern Africa today.

The government news magazine Boma lathu is the most widely known in both villages, followed by two popular magazines Moni and Odini. While the agricultural extension magazine Za Achikumbi — is fairly well known (10%) at village (1), it is hardly known at village (2) (1%) which as was stated elsewhere suffers from a very weak agricultural extension network. As would be expected in a society where illiteracy rates are very high, the largest category of respondents are those who either said none or did not respond. However, in many homes, information materials like books, pamphlets, posters, magazines, pictures and newspapers are available.

What is of significance here is that in spite of the high rates of illiteracy, the overwhelming majority of respondents do have publications of one sort or the other in their households. This may partly be explained by the fact the almost every household has at least one or two people who are literate — including school going children, of course. Indeed many of the publications are old, having been collected fairly long ago, and having very little current use.

Respondents were asked to indicate the items which they read regularly (if at all). The stated items are indicated in table 10. The table reveals the current reading habits as being at an early stage of development in both communities in which the survey was carried out. What is remarkable, however, is the fact that the bible and Koran are the most frequently read materials, followed by non-fiction books, and then newspapers; leisure reading of magazines and novels is still largely absent. The percentage of respondents who do no reading at all are 59% and 66% in villages (1) and (2) respectively.

TABLE 10: TYPES OF PUBLICATIONS READ REGULARLY BY RESPONDENTS

Name	Village (1) N = 253 (%)	Village (2) N = 277 (%)
Bible/Hymn Books	30	16
Koran	—	12
Non Fiction Books	9	4
Newspapers	6	7
Boma lathu	1	1
Literacy Books	—	1
Novels	1	2
Pictures (Looking)	—	1
None/No Response	59	66

The major objective of this study was to find out the information needs of rural people, thus respondents were asked to indicate what information they (and their fellow villagers) required in order to develop their community. The data from the responses is summarised in table 11 below.

TABLE 11: INFORMATION NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS

Topic	Village (1) N = 253 (%)	Village (2) N = 277 (%)
Adult Literacy	34	42
Agriculture	31	32
Home Craft	15	23
Health/Hygiene	19	4
Leadership	4	6
Government/Party Policies	0	5
Vocational Trades	0.3	3
Islamic Education	0	2
Christian Education	1	1
Don't know/None	31	16

Table 11 presents data on information needs derived from direct interviewing of respondents. Adult literacy was expressed as an information need by 34% and 42% of of the respondents in village (1) and (2) respectively. In elaborating on this, respondents said that they wanted more literacy primers on which to practice their newly acquired skills. Agriculture, health/hygiene and home crafts were cited as areas where information support is most needed. Similarly, in both communities, there were some serious health problems but the need to get information which will assist in understanding these health problems was not felt strongly in the abstract. The table reveals that a large group of respondents 30.6 and 15.5% in village (1) and (2) respectively said they had no information needs.

Whenever respondents were asked to state their information needs in the context of an ongoing activity, quite often they were able to articulate information needs in very specific terms, contrary to situations when these needs were asked for in abstract terms. In a livestock keeping project, the owner drew our attention to a book he had purchased the previous week with which he was very dissatisfied because it had failed to provide the information he was looking for in a simple and practical style. He pointed at the graphs, and columns of figures in the book and said this is not what he wanted.

What I want is a book which gives me ideas on how to feed my dairy cattle on locally available materials, and practical ideas on how to care for small animals and poultry, for example, how to cross breed local chicken with hy-lines.

Perhaps what was brought out forcefully (apart from the farmers information needs) is the fact that relevant content must be supported by appropriate presentation if information products are to have the desired impact. The content might be right but if the presentation is inappropriate the communication process will not be successful.

INFORMATION SEEKING HABITS THROUGH THE RADIO

It is frequent claimed that radio is the main (if not only) means of mass communication in rural areas considering the inaccessibility of roads, high rate of illiteracy, and oral based culture. Data were therefore gathered concerning radio ownership and the programmes which those who own or have access to radios like to listen to. In village (1) the findings reveal that about 18% of the respondents have a radio in their house-

holds while 32% of the respondents in village (2) have. In both villages, respondents who said they had no radio in their households were 82% and 88% respectively. Respondents were asked to indicate the radio programmes which they listen to frequently. The findings are presented in Table 12.

TABLE 12: PROGRAMMES OF INTEREST TO RESPONDENTS

Programme	Village (1) N = 253 (%)	Village (2) N = 277 (%)
Current affairs	2	3
Music and entertainment	12	37
Extension/advisory programme	35	26
Traditional songs	1	5
News	2	8
Adult education	0	0.3
Does not listen to any	80	60

presented in table 12.

The programmes preferred by respondents show that the most popular programmes are music and entertainment, extension and advisory programmes. News bulletins, while slightly popular in village (2) is not popular in village (1). Perhaps of significance here, is the fact that a majority of people do not have radio sets of their own and hence any advantages this medium may have over other may not be fully realized.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study indicate that the rural development information needs cannot be determined by simply questioning of the rural people. There is a tendency to under-express information needs, particularly if the needs are requested for as an abstract concept; in some instances up to 30% of the respondents said they had no information needs. On the other hand, when respondents were asked to discuss their information needs in a specific context e.g. (economic projects,) they were able to clearly articulate their information needs. The approach taken by this project was to look at information needs and information seeking behaviour in the context of production, social problems, rural organisations, and rural development perspectives of the different players in the rural development process. The main findings from this ongoing research project may be summarised thus:

1. Level of Education

The data analysis shows that although most of the respondents were illiterates the situation varies between the two villages with village (2) accounting for most (58%) of the illiterates while village (1) had a slightly lower proportion of illiterate respondents (45%). Most of the remaining respondents were primary school leavers.

2. Participation In Political Activities

The findings also indicate that there is a low level of participation in self-governance structures in the two communities the most popular association being religious associations. The majority of the people do not participate in any political activities in the village.

3. Pattern of Productive Activities

The most dominant activity is farming, followed by household work/food processing, (involving mostly women), and fishing in the village along the lake. The main source of cash income are sale of agricultural produce and sale of fish in the village along the lake. Other sources are the sale of local beer, and sale of handcrafts.

4. Information Sharing Patterns

Respondents rely more on the information provided by the Headman/woman, followed by the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) Chairpersons, and extension workers in that order. However, when it comes to problem solving information, those consulted most are Government Officers followed by friends and family members. The present pattern of information sharing indicate that it takes place in a number of places where people usually congregate, and both the modern and the traditional settings can be utilised as information exchange points.

The findings indicate that reading is not a wide spread activity given/ the high rate of illiteracy; however, the skills of reading and writing are used by a small minority of respondents for personal communication and to a lesser extent official communication. The favoured reading materials by the few who read are religious materials. Information needs identified directly by respondents include Adult literacy support, information support for agriculture, home craft and health.

According to the findings of this study, the radio is over-estimated as a means of obtaining rural development information as the majority do not own radios — only an average of 25% of the respondents have radio sets in their homes. However, the few who own radio sets are interested listening to extension programmes. In both villages it was an average of 30% who listen to extension programmes. The medium is popular for music and entertainment.

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PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY INFORMATION SERVICES IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Public libraries in most countries in tropical Africa rarely provide relevant materials and hence they are ineffective. They are stocked mainly with foreign literature that is both out of date and irrelevant to the information needs and interests of the people that are expected to read them. It is argued in this paper that libraries in Africa need to put emphasis on the provision of Community Information Services by building basic collections on subjects like sanitation, health, agriculture, civil rights and other issues that are relevant to the needs of the people.

INTRODUCTION

According to Working Party on Community Information of the Library Association, (1980), Community Information Service can be defined as, service which is designed to assist individuals and groups with their daily problems through the provision of information or by putting them in touch with a helping agency. These services concentrate on the needs of the lower social groups because they lack access to other sources of assistance.

From a historical view point, community information services have their origins in the American war on poverty programme of the 1960s. It was discovered that some of the problems faced by the people in the lower social groups were due to lack of information. As part of the programme, some libraries set up information services aimed at linking the clients with problems to appropriate agencies which could assist them with solving such problems. Because these services were grassroots, the term community information services was coined to describe them. Later, the idea spread to Britain and other countries in Europe. Today, the provision of information and referral services to the public is an integral part of the range of services offered by public libraries on both sides of the Atlantic.

Since the attainment of "flag independence", most African governments have taken measures aimed at reforming the inherited social, political and economic set up of the colonial state. However, little effort has been made to define the role of the public libraries to suit the ideological, political, social and economic aspirations of present society. It can be argued, and rightly so, that our public libraries are still perpetuating as the colonial legacy. These libraries are imported European institutions in an African setting. Their aims, objectives and the services they provide are essentially European in orientation. It is time, therefore, that we examined critically, the aims, objectives and services of public libraries in an African setting. The time

has come when the traditional functions and services of the public library should be put to vigorous scrutiny in the light of the social, cultural, and economic situation prevailing in Africa.

Closely related to this ideological problem is the fact that our public libraries are mainly stocked with foreign literature that is not only out of date but also irrelevant to the information needs and interests of the people expected to read them. The majority of the people in Africa are struggling to earn a living. They are daily afflicted by disease, hunger, poverty and droughts. They are also at the mercy of corrupt and dictatorial governments that amass wealth at their expense. Such people do not need books on Kim Il Sung, Chairman Mao, nor do they need the generous donations of books that are not relevant from the British and Americans. What they need is information on modern farming methods, importance of vaccinations for children, sanitation, and civil rights. There is plenty of such in the offices of various government ministries and departments as well as the offices of some non-governmental organisations (NGO's). This information, which for so long has been neglected, should be collected, repackaged and put at the disposal of the people by public libraries.

RELEVANCE OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION SERVICES IN AFRICA

Information is power. It is an essential resource to which individuals in every society should have easy access. Peasants, government officials, professionals, the unemployed youths, etc. all need information in order to play their respective roles in the society and to lead meaningful life. In most countries in tropical Africa, the national information networks are biased against the lower social groups. Most of the information meant for public consumption is disseminated through newspapers, television or radio stations which for various reasons are out of the reach of the common man, both in the rural and urban areas. In Zambia, for instance, the two national daily newspapers published in English do not reach the rural districts. In the urban areas most of the people from the low income group live in the squatter settlements where facilities such as electricity do not exist. As a result, they are denied access to radio and television programmes. The people in the lower socio-economic groups are, therefore, denied access to a lot of information on issues that affect them. But, information is a commodity, which should be enjoyed by all citizens (National Consumer Reference Council, 1980):

People will not be able to get their due as citizens of present day society unless they have a continuous access to the information which will guide them through and where necessary the advice to help them translate that information into effective action, and unless they get their due, they are unlikely to recognise the reciprocal obligation that all citizens have to the society.

There is a need, therefore, to redress this imbalance in the dissemination of information. The institution most suited for this task is the public library. It is a public institution that should offer services to all people in any community, irrespective of their colour, class, race or creed.

The case for community information services is further strengthened by the fact that most community development projects or social programmes have little impact on the people in the low income groups. For instance, while most governments in Africa run National Food Nutrition Programmes, a lot of children still die from preventable diseases like malnutrition. Although there are many reasons that can be advanced to explain this state of affairs, it can be argued that one of the major reasons

why such programmes fail, is the fact that information about these programmes does not reach the people in the form or language that they understand. Further, the timing of launching such programmes is often poor — when the intended target groups are at work in the fields, etc. These programmes could have had more impact if the right information were issued at the right time, as Matogo, (1976) argues:

The right kind of information issued at the right time can help avert an imminent plague and save many lives from perishing. Most illiterate people will not understand that insects germs or worms can cause fatal diseases. They will have to be persuaded that mosquitoes which cause malaria thrive in swampy surroundings, broken posts etc. where water stagnates.

It is absolutely essential that information meant for people in the lower social groups should not only be prepared and repackaged in forms suitable for them, but it should also be delivered at the right time. Until such time that the relevant authorities are made to realise this fact and corrective measures taken, the less fortunate members of our communities will forever be attacked by preventable diseases such as malnutrition.

Furthermore, public libraries in most countries in sub-saharan Africa are not only ineffective but also of little relevance to the people they claim to serve. This is due to the origin of libraries in the region and the failure of the post colonial governments to reform these inherited service patterns. The founders of library services were European settlers, because of the prevailing colonialist ideology and attitude of the Europeans towards Africans, libraries were set up mainly to serve the small settler communities. When library services were extended to Africans it was to expose them to western culture and education.

WHAT LIBRARIES CAN DO

In order to design effective community information services programmes for their respective communities, each public library would need to assess the social, ethnic and cultural set up of the population it serves. Various government departments, such as the Central Statistical Offices in various countries, should collect information that could be used by public librarians in analysing their respective communities. Besides carrying out community surveys, public libraries would need to identify the scale and diversity of information needs of individuals in the lower social groups.

Furthermore, the provision of specialist information services from a library implies far more than simply improving its holdings of locally produced pamphlets, booklets or leaflets. It calls for careful planning. Public libraries would have to plan in advance the forms, language and method of disseminating information to individuals and groups and also how to handle sensitive information from clients.

By providing community information services, public libraries would be offering a new service for which there is little or no past experience on the continent to guide them. Consequently, public librarians have no option than to study critically community information programmes of public libraries in the developing countries. This would equip the librarians with the knowledge necessary to select, design and disseminate community information programmes suitable for the local environment.

Public libraries, therefore, have to set up a mechanism to capture this information in order to make it available to the people. Since the present structure of public libraries has no provision for this function, it is proposed that public library authorities

establish community information departments or sections depending on the size of the library system and the population of the target group. In addition to planning, designing and managing the community information service programmes other functions of these departments or sections could include:

1. Monitoring government policies and legislation and where necessary interpreting them to the people, for example explaining to them how the particular policy or legislation would affect them.
2. Liaising with government ministries and departments as well as various non-government organisations working in their communities.
3. Building up collections of books, journal articles and other sources of information on their communities.
4. Developing collections of pamphlets, booklets and newspaper articles on subjects like health, sanitation, agriculture and civil rights.
5. Repackaging relevant information produced by government ministries and departments, mass media and non-government organisations into form suitable for the lower social groups.
6. Disseminating relevant information to the people through various means such as displays, meetings, talks, demonstrations and film slide or other audio-visual presentation.

The list of functions given here is neither comprehensive nor is it intended as a prescription for public libraries. It is simply a guideline. In the final analysis, the information needs of the lower socio-economic group in each community and the priorities of the library authority would dictate how these services would be offered.

MATCHING NEEDS WITH SERVICE

Public libraries could provide community information services to individuals and groups within the library in three possible ways: Firstly each library could develop an information and referral service to be provided directly by its staff. This would involve inquiry work over the desk and the service would emphasize the preventive and educational role of information. In other words, the type of information given would be geared towards helping people know where to go to find the best assistance for personal or group benefit.

Secondly, libraries could offer such services in conjunction with other agencies, e.g. National Food Nutrition Commissions. Such agencies could develop information packages in conjunction with the library. The library staff would be responsible for disseminating the information to the people. Alternatively, the library could host other agencies by providing information or advisory services to specific groups. Public libraries could provide a room from which these agencies could offer their services at regular intervals and specific times. For instance Government lawyers from the Legal Aid Department could use such rooms once a day every week to give legal advice to individuals.

Thirdly, library staff, particularly those in small branch libraries could participate in community contact schemes. This would involve library staff going out into the community, therefore, actively participating in community affairs. For instance library staff could attend meetings of political parties at local level. From such meetings, the library could learn a lot about the problems that people are facing and consequently devise means of alleviating the sufferings through the provision of information.

Besides providing these direct services to individuals and groups, public libraries could provide back up services to government ministries, departments, churches, and voluntary organisations, and running community development projects in their respective areas. Librarians would not only provide information about the populations, languages, ethnic, cultural and social settings of their communities to these organisations but also, where necessary, repackage information about the projects into forms and languages suitable to the people!

PROBLEMS THAT COULD BE ENCOUNTERED

The need to improve public library services in Africa through community information programmes is not an easy one. It is an uphill task. There are likely to be problems. Finance is an important factor in the development of a community information service, especially where the service is run entirely by library staff. Expenditure on materials would likely be minimal since publications required would usually be inexpensive or free. However, financial expenditure on staff salaries would increase because it would be absolutely necessary for libraries to recruit extra personnel to answer queries, liaise with local groups and gather local information by going out into the community. The public libraries which are already underfunded would find offering such services too expensive. It is advisable for libraries to offer these services as a joint venture with other agencies. Otherwise the little money that libraries receive would be diverted to this service alone.

Another problem that libraries would face is knowing where to find the sources of information produced locally. Publishing in Africa is not only in its infancy but there are no directories to the materials produced locally. Ideally, this problem could be overcome by publishing a directory of local publications. However, that is a long term project. In the short term, libraries could deal with this problem by contacting government ministries, departments and voluntary organisations for copies of their publications. Furthermore, most of these publications appear in formats that cannot be displayed on the shelves. Libraries can get round this problem to a certain extent by arranging materials in vertical files, and/or pamphlet boxes. Libraries would have to devise their own schemes of organising these materials as the conventional classification schemes have no provisions for literature that cuts across classes.

Obviously, to offer community information services, public libraries would need staff who are trained not only in librarianship but also specialists in other fields such as law, social work, development studies or public administration. It is unlikely that the libraries would be allowed to employ personnel with these qualifications. Public libraries, in the initial stages would have to concentrate on recruiting those graduates with double major bachelors degrees into librarianship or information science and public administration or development studies.

Community information is about solving people's problems. This calls for change in the attitude of librarians not only towards their communities but also towards information services. This is not easy to achieve. As Asheim (1966) points out even when there is a disposition towards change conditioned by external or internal strivings it may be impeded by one or more crucial elements in the process. Librarians in each country would have to come together through seminars, workshops, and short courses in order to provide guidelines on how to offer such services and also to prepare the staff that would be involved in the programmes for their new roles. Librarians would also be expected to mount aggressive publicity campaigns to promote these services

and they would also need to lobby for support from the government, voluntary agencies and business concerns.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that the need to define the role of public libraries to suit the ideological, political, economic and social aspirations of present day African societies is of immediate concern to practising librarians. As long as they continue to mirror foreign concepts, objectives and values, their impact and usefulness will be negligible. The emphasis that has been placed on traditional functions and services of public libraries should change and become more oriented community information service.

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AN EXAMINATION OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS REGISTRY

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ABSTRACT

The life-cycle concept of records management in the University of Lagos Registry was examined. The study reveals that various categories of records are created and kept at the Registry, and that finding aids such as an index and a simple list are used. The paper recommends that a centralised archives and records centre should be established. Such a centre will be staffed by a records manager and an archivist. On a long term basis, the paper advocates that the Registry Department should be computerised.

INTRODUCTION

Records management evolved during the years of the Great Depression and the second world war. The aim was to control the accumulation of papers in the Government agencies. Records management first took place at the National Archives in the United States of America in an attempt to improve records keeping methods which were in chaotic condition in many government departments and agencies.

Voluminous records were created without any organized plan for their disposition after the second world war. Efforts were made to dispose of records that were no longer useful but this idea was rejected in 1877 on the grounds that every paper worthy at anytime to be recorded and placed in public files may be of value at some future time. Therefore, in order to improve the management of records, the National Archives inaugurated "Records Administration Programme" on records disposition in the Federal government agencies. This programme surveyed, appraised and evaluated current records in the agencies. This became the "schedule for the retention and disposal of records. (Chatfield, 1968).

The second phase of the programme focused on the communication process and records documentation came into existence. Since then, "Records administration" changed to "Records Management". (Chatfield, 1968).

Records management spread from the United States of America to other countries like Great Britain, Canada and the Scandinavian countries. (Bissonette, 1975). In Nigeria, it started as early as in 1914 when the colonial office issued some guidelines on the management of records. Another effort is the records survey conducted by Dike between 1951-1953 which was to determine the nation's non-current records or historical records and to prevent them from loss to posterity. This survey led to the establishment of the National Archives of Nigeria. The findings reported damages to records by insects, fungi and damp. (Dike 1954).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Records: Records management is aimed at solving the problem caused by uncontrolled accumulation of paper work created by modern technology such as typewriter, computer, photocopying machines which has led to a spate of literature in records management.

Records are necessary documents needed in the smooth running of any organization or institution and many countries make conscientious efforts to provide improved facilities for the care of records. According to Mary Calire Griffin, (1962) the records of a company are its memory which are used to supplement human memory. Rhoads and Smith (1976) opine that records are information, regardless of the media on which they appear. Information is essential in decision making, planning, operations, assessment of results and the effectiveness with which this information is recorded, managed and retrieved has a direct influence on the efficiency of the activity which is involved.

Leahy (1949) appraised massive records making and keeping operation of the United States Federal Government and concluded that they are the largest consumers of salaries, space and equipment of all the service activities of the United States Federal Government.

Records Creation: Records creation at any level, be it in the Federal Government organization, private sector or institutions of higher learning, is a fast growing activity leading to heaps of files in various offices. There is every need for records creation because of its importance in the administration of government, organizations and institutions. The problem lies in the effective control of creation of these records.

Margaret Norton, an archivist of Illinois, wrote that in the days when all documents were written by hand, records were not made unless there was need for their creation. (Northon 1945). Therefore, it was necessary to preserve them whenever they are created. It should be noted that the interests of archivists are merged with the requirements of good administration to demand the establishment at all level of government of an effective programme of records management to eliminate the creation of unnecessary records; to provide for economy and efficiency in the creation, maintenance and use of those that are necessary and to devise an orderly system for the preservation of important records and the disposal of those that have served their useful purpose.

Penn (1983) says that the record's life cycle consists of creation, maintenance and use, and its disposition. He stresses that if a record is not necessary, do not create it. He furthermore stresses the need for the maintenance and use of records that are created. He lays emphasis on the need of the consideration for the disposition of records and that the aspect of disposition is very vital because of creating a lot of information that are not needed. Therefore, all the stages involved in the records life-cycle must be considered before any record is created.

Lilienfeld (1966) asserts that for a proper form control work, every form request must be scrutinized whether new, revised or reprinted. Form analysts should carefully analyse the existing procedure or new procedures in which forms are involved; examine a functional file for duplication or overlapping and for forms which may be common to several departments, check how the form is made out; justify the number of copies, how they are filed and how long they are retained, where the forms will be printed or purchased commercially with detailed specification.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

Records management at the university level is a new development in Nigeria. Therefore, there is every need to create awareness of the importance of records management in the universities. Universities in Nigeria generate an immense quantity and bewildering variety of records everyday.

Files are multiplied in their hundreds without much control over their creation. Problems of storage of these records/files continue to increase while the retrieval of information from these records becomes more and more difficult because they are done manually. Most of these records are vital in the sense that they are referred to very often for the smooth running of every department.

Records management involves planning, implementing and review of the functions for the administration of the records of an organization. A well organized records management programme saves a lot of money for the administration of the organization. Records management helps to control the quantity and quality of information that is created. The information can be maintained in a manner that effectively serves the need of the organization. Such information that are no longer necessary can be efficiently disposed of.

Schmidt (1968) opines that successful records management programme in the university must begin with an inventory of the records at hand which requires extreme care, tact and patience. The inventory cuts across departmental and school lines — Registrar's Office. According to Jones, (1980) records inventory is a careful exercise during which every record series is measured to permit a retrospective study of the nature and value of the series.

Chatfield's view on the role records management should play in the administration of College and University archives is that the archivist should focus attention on the intangible informational content of the document. (Chatfield, 1968).

Bott and Edwards (1978) propose that authority for a records management programme in the university be vested in the Assistant Registrar or an officer of equal rank. They opine that one person in each office should serve as a records clerk and another should operate a records centre receiving, storing and destroying inactive records.

Harding (1977) asserts that university operation does not always utilize the knowledge which is available to it. This applies to records management in the University of Lagos. A few universities have staff members with the assignment of developing and operating a programme to cope with the paper work problems which exist in most campuses.

For a successful records management, Atherton (1983) gives three basic pre-requisites: a clear mandate and policies communicated and explained to all concerned, clear definition of responsibilities and central control over the scheduling/disposal function to ensure that information is retained as long as needed.

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND ITS PLACEMENT WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

An archive has been defined as an organization of a scholarly character which has certain administrative functions — that of preserving records and providing access to a mass of documentation by all possible ways.

The university archives is seen as the corporate memory of the institution and the final point of reference when all human memory has been exhausted. It should be the official depository for records of enduring administrative and/or historical significance.

The university archives should keep official records of various offices, departments and schools in the university, the official publications of the university, such as circulars of information, catalogues of courses offered and bulletins; theses, dissertations, monographs and serials publications of the student body and Alumni Association and sound recordings.

Wasson (1968) says that anything produced by the university in a planned and official way is archival and should be kept in a university archives.

On the placement of the archives, both the Registry and the University library have archives. Burkel (1975) argues that the place of the archives in the organization of the university is perhaps the most important determinants of how successful it will be. Wilson (1950) and Miller (1967) suggested that archives should be in and part of the main university library building. Alegbeleye (1983) says that under the supervision of the Vice-Chancellor or the Registrar, the archivist functions in an administrative support capacity which under the University librarian, he functions in an instructional support capacity. Wilson (1952) contends that the archives should be a service unit at par, administratively with the library, equal to and independent of it. He linked the library to the 'heart' of a university and the archives to the 'life blood' of the institution.

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS RECORDS

The records at the University of Lagos which are created in the daily administrative functions of the different departments of the University of Lagos are not created randomly. These records are co-ordinated at the Registry. The need for the creation of such records is established and decisions are taken as to whether the creation of such records is useful or not. The various types of records created consist of the following: letters, forms, reports, correspondence, files of marksheets, finance papers, examination results, council papers, admission papers and others. These records are stored in their different units in various filing cabinets and shelves. They are consulted when the need for them arises, while some are of current use, some are stored away for only future references in the archives.

METHODOLOGY

In examining the records management of the Registry department of the University of Lagos, three types of research instruments were used in collecting data. These are interview technique, direct observation, and questionnaire administration.

Personal interviews were held with the principal officers in the various units in the Registry department and the life-cycle of the records they keep was discussed at length. Discussions were held on the creation of records, maintenance and use, retention, disposal and security of these records. Questions were asked on the storage and retrieval facilities of the records and the type of modern technology in use.

Discussions during the interview led to a trip to the records storage areas which are located near the units for easy access. The direct observation proved very useful and interesting because it gave me the opportunity to assess the activities of these units as regards the life-cycle of their records.

Both the interview and the observation helped in drawing up the questionnaire for this research. The questionnaire technique was a follow up of the interview and observation held previously. The questionnaire contains fifty questions with a combination of both open-ended and closed form type of questions.

Thirty-five copies of the questionnaire were administered and thirty were returned. This represents 85.7% response to the questionnaire. Three people could not fill the questionnaire due to pressure of work while two misplaced their own copies.

The questionnaire was designed in such a way as to ascertain the extent of control over records creation and the purposes of such records. The questionnaire was also to elicit from the respondents where active and inactive records are kept, the condition of the records stores and the conservation facilities available. Respondents were also asked to indicate their reaction to the role of modern technology facilities in keeping records and the provision of in-service training on records management.

DISCUSSION

The responses and observations obtained can be categorised into the following:

Records Creation and Control: The responses show that the Registry department as the centre of administration of the University of Lagos creates and keeps various categories of records for the purpose of achieving the objectives of the university. It was also revealed that directives were given by heads of department or the Registrar before creating any records. According to Macdke, (1974), the records manager has the greatest responsibility to any employee for control over the written records of an organization. On this note, it is pertinent to mention that heads of departments who apparently are not records managers because they do not have any records management training, lack professional expertise to be able to apply effective control over records creation. Therefore, there is need for a records manager in the University of Lagos to take up the responsibility of controlling written records of the institution.

Reitzfeld, (1966) reports that lack of centralized control of records contributes to lack of knowledge of records volume in records management and vital records programme. Although there is control of records creation, it is not centrally done. There is need to have a centralized control of records creation to guard against records explosion thereby having fewer but better records.

RECORDS MAINTENANCE AND USE

It was observed that the Registry has finding aids such as an index and a simple list. In spite of this, there is still problem in filling and retrieving records. User education on finding aids and introduction of a filing procedure manual will effect a noticeable change.

The condition of records should be improved so as to prolong their life span since a lot of fund and man hour have been spent in creating these records. A more effective conservative method such as installation of air-conditioning units in the record stores and occasionally fumigating the records to safeguard insect infestation will prevent the records from deteriorating fastly. The records need much careful handling and a more durable type of file jackets will enable the records withstand the heavy usage to which they are subjected to.

PERSONNEL TRAINING

It was also observed that it is very essential to have well-trained personnel in records management. Seminar/workshops, lectures and in-service training for records staff are very essential in improving records management skills. Such facilities provide opportunity for acquiring new techniques in record management and this will enhance their rate of productivity.

Alegbeleye (1982) points out that the importance of trained personnel in records management cannot be over-emphasized. He stresses that records management has prospect of success unless the services of trained personnel are employed. Therefore, there is an urgent need for professional personnel in the Registry to co-ordinate all the activities involved in records management. At present, the number of trained personnel in records management is inadequate. The application of professional expertise will enhance a positive result in fulfilling the activities of the university.

SECURITY OF RECORDS

Although a closed access method is used to guard records from theft and mutilation, it is very important to have fire detector or fire alarm system in records centres as a tighter security measure.

MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT

It was observed that students records from 1962-1977 were microfilmed so also were some records of the Council Affairs unit. This attempt is highly commendable and should be continued because microfilming conserves a lot of space and acts as a security measure. Microfilm if stored in a security proof area away from the records store will be of immense importance if there is any fire outbreak in the record stores.

The importance of automated equipment cannot be over-emphasized. They extend workers potentials, relieve tedium and quicken the pace of producing and disseminating information. The use of computer should be introduced as this will enhance storage and retrieval of information without much difficulty.

Photocopying facility which is very essential in records management is lacking in most of the units. There is need for photocopiers but much control should be exercised in their usage to avoid over production of records.

Modern equipment for proper storage of records such as steel cupboards and metal shelves should be sufficiently provided so as to prevent fast deterioration of records.

RECORDS APPRAISAL, SCHEDULLING AND DISPOSITION

The responses show that the Registry has not inventoried its records. These records need to be inventoried so that there will be a record of the type of records that are stored in the Registry. It was also observed that there is no retention/disposition schedule. There has not been any disposition of in-active records, hence each unit keeps piling up its in-active records which occupy a lot of space. There is need for a records retention/disposition schedule. A committee that will design the schedule should be constituted and their decisions on what to retain or destroy must be made on sound logic. Records retention/disposition schedule is a very vital document in any organization because it stipulates what should be retained or destroyed at a given period of time. Therefore, it must be an action document which must be complied with if it is to accomplish its objectives of fewer and better records.

REGISTRY ARCHIVES

The Registry though has an archives, does not store all the records of historical value of all its units, hence records stores and mini-archives are scattered all over the university. There should be a centralized archives as this will enhance proper work flow and eliminate duplication of records since all records will be documented.

There is need for all the records of historical value to be transferred to the central archives for keeps which should be directly under the supervision of an archivist. According to Saffady, (1974) the university archivist is to be the university official responsible for the identification and systematic transfer of inactive records from individual offices to the archives.

Since the archives store all academic and administrative records of an institution that are of permanent value, the archives should be a department of its own. The archivist should be responsible to the University Registrar because the archives core collections are mainly administrative records.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the responses, positive changes are needed for the improvement of records management in the Registry department of the University of Lagos. The importance of records management cannot be over-emphasized in the successful administration of any institutions. Therefore, the following are recommended for the improvement of records management in the University of Lagos:

Establishment of Centralised Archives and a Record Centre

There should be a centralised archives for the purpose of collating and keeping all the records that are of permanent value whether they are administrative or academic. This is to ensure easy reference. The centralised records centre should be where inactive records will be retained for a certain period of time for administrative purposes, after which they could be transferred to the archives for keeps. In order to achieve the purpose for which this centre will be created, it will be necessary to appoint a records manager who will co-ordinate the records management of the University. Similarly an archivist who will take charge of the archives should be employed. His main duty will be to determine the records that are of permanent value and store in the archives for future reference. To ensure that this centre functions effectively, there will be the need for heads of departments to form a record management committee which will include the University archivist and the records manager.

Provision of Modern Technological Facilities

There should be provision for a modern microfilming machine. This will enable old records to be microfilmed and it will also alleviate the problems of space. Photocopying machines, steel filing cabinets that can hold 400-500 files, pre-plastic files and other necessary gadgets should be acquired. Also security measures for records should be improved by installing fire detectors and fire extinguishers in the archives.

Computerisation of Records

On a long term basis, the records in the Registry Department, especially the students' records and admission records should be computerised.

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LIBRARY SERVICES TO THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED AT ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the historical development of education for the handicapped and describes the provision of library services to blind students of Addis Ababa University. The University since 1961 has been admitting visually handicapped students to its various faculties and programmes and it started providing library services to these people in 1976. The Handicapped Unit of the Library is staffed by two library staff members and has 3500 braille books, two braille writers, one braille copier, one rolls cassette recorder, 1700 audio recorders, 11 radio cassettes and 43 tape recorders.

INTRODUCTION

Like any other developing country, the incidence and magnitude of disability in Ethiopia is enormous. Though there are no nationwide statistical figures, there are meagre and incomplete indicative studies about the extent of disability in the country. The agricultural sample survey conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the Rehabilitation Agency for the Disabled conducted by the Central Statistical Office in 1979-80 is one of the major works on this subject. According to Tirussew Teferra, (1989) there were 1.5 million disabled children out of a population of 25,704,786. Among these 1.5 million disabled children, 263,540 were of ages 0 - 14 years and the most common disabilities were amputation of legs (12.87%), deafness (12.57%), blindness (8.35%), mental disorder (8.2%). Other types of disabilities (51.51%). The World Health Organisation in 1981 estimated that 10-15% of the population in the developing countries suffer from either mental or physical or sensory impairment.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

In a document prepared for the Secretariat of Economic Commission of Africa (ECA), it is estimated that there are about 300,000 blind or weak-sighted people in Ethiopia, and out of these three hundred thousand, thirty thousand are children of school age. In addition, the Ministry of Health estimates the current prevalence of blindness to be about 3 million. In Ethiopia, there is no legal definition as to who is supposed to be

considered a blind person. This article defines the blind people as those — "who differ from the average visual sight to such a degree that special curriculum adaptation and/or additional instructional materials are needed to assist them in achieving a goal commensurate with their abilities". (Tirussew Teferra, 1989).

Among the millions of people suffering from various deficiencies of various degrees in Ethiopia, only a few are registered as disabled and receive or utilize any kind of rehabilitation services offered to various types of handicapped. The most relevant service to this group of the visually handicapped is rendered by the Ministry of Education. This Ministry has three units of special education under the Departments of Formal Education, Teacher Education and Curriculum. The unit under the Formal Education is the oldest and is responsible for running governmental special schools for the visually and aurally handicapped.

As at 1989, there were six special primary schools for the visually handicapped with a total number of 576 students. Studies generally indicate that these special schools are overcrowded and understaffed. According to the report of the Department of Formal Education, not more than 1,600 handicapped children received education either in special schools or in integrated schools. Thus, the vast majority, about 95% of school age children do not have the opportunity to attend special schools. In the current ten-year development plan of the country, the Government has allocated one million Birr (2.07 Birr = US \$) for this sector, and projected nine new special schools for the visually and aurally handicapped to teach a total of 27,000 pupils.

The history of braille in Ethiopia started from the Presbyterian Mission of North America when they started a residential school for a few blind children in the late 1920s. In 1948, another religious organisation, the Swedish Lutheran Mission took an active interest and started a small school in Addis Ababa where both blind children and adults could receive both academic and vocational training. In 1952, the Emperor Haile Selassie I founded a school for blind male children.

In 1960, the blind students were integrated with sighted pupils at both junior secondary and senior secondary levels in various schools. But the facilities for broad-based education were inadequate. At that time, the education was purely academic and could only lead them to higher education at Addis Ababa University.

BLIND STUDENTS AT ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

When Haile Selassie I University was granted its charter in 1961, one blind student was enrolled, thus he was the first blind student of the University, who graduated in 1965. (Almaz Gebre Kidane, 1972). The number of visually handicapped students increased considerably in 1970 making a total of 16, 15 males and one female. This number was quite high according to the UNESCO expert as it was 4.4% of the total blind people receiving education in Ethiopia at that time. In 1988, according to Tirussew, (1989) there were 45 visually handicapped students registered for different courses in the various faculties.

LIBRARY SERVICES TO THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED AT ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

The Library formally started providing services to the visually handicapped students in 1976. Before then, services were provided to them on an ad hoc basis.

According to UNESCO report (Rigby, 1970) the programme of assistance involved

1. Voluntary readers who read directly to the students. There were 24 of them

2. Voluntary readers who taped books from the University Library collection for the blind students. They were two.
3. There were 9 tape recorders and two braille writers in the library to assist them.

It was also reported by Almaz (1972) that foreign and local housewives used to read books to blind students.

The section of the library devoted to visually handicapped students has good resources to enable it perform effectively. The section, occupying five rooms, has one room full of shelves with braille books and 20 seating spaces, one room has 4 shelves with braille books and 10 seating spaces. The other three rooms are used for recording or listening to tape recordings or for voluntary reading.

The library has 3539 books, among which 1,267 are textbooks and 2,272 are fictions. Most of the books have been acquired through the Library of Congress, Washington (DC) U.S.A. and Braille International, India. Some materials have been donated by the Ethiopian National Association for the Blind. A few books have been transcribed by the library Staff-in-Charge of the section. Normally when they get the books from the Library Congress, the books would have been classified with Dewey Decimal Classification scheme. The library has a small catalogue, of six drawers, in which cards typed in braille are arranged by author, subject, and title. This section also has *World Book Encyclopedia* braille edition of 1970 in 145 volumes and *Little Oxford Dictionary* in 16 volumes as reference books.

Apart from books, this section has some audio tapes. It has a total of 1,700 audio cassettes of 60 minutes play time, out of which 124 are recorded, 11 radio cassettes and 43 tape recorders. All these materials can be borrowed by the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students; since the 1st year students are not allowed to borrow any material from the library according to the University library rule. Tape recorders can be borrowed for a semester. The section is headed by a blind librarian and she is assisted by a normal sighted girl. In addition, there are eight braille writers. These writers work for both staff and students. There is one braille copier, by which the desired number of copies of a certain braille document can be produced. The section has also acquired a cassette tape copier in which three copies of a cassette can be produced simultaneously.

This section is used heavily whenever students want to come and listen to their tapes, listen to their voluntary readers and study on their own. In spite of these resources, they have suggested that to facilitate and promote a conducive learning-teaching atmosphere, the library should increase the supply of braille papers, braille writers, tape recorders, and other reading materials in braille, increase the number of voluntary readers as well as introduce a cassette library. It is also suggested that the special reading room of non-visuals should be expanded.

CONCLUSION

One is impressed about the efforts of Addis Ababa University Libraries to cater for the visually handicapped students. The braille library for university students in a Third World Country is very novel. This should be a matter of great pride for Addis Ababa University, that since its inception it has been catering for blind students and since 1976 it has been trying its best to formally serve this group through its library. It has allocated five rooms, employed two staff members and acquired a lot of materials within a period of 25 years. It is hoped that other universities in Africa will follow the example of Addis Ababa University Library.

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TOWARDS IMPROVED SECURITY MEASURES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT

One of the greatest problems that has bothered librarians from the earliest times to the present is how to ensure the security of library materials especially against theft. This paper enumerates the reasons for book theft in libraries, manifestations and methods used. It concludes by proffering solutions to how book theft in libraries can be minimised if it cannot be completely eradicated.

INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest problems that the bothered librarians from the earliest times to the present is how to ensure the security of library materials. Librarians have tried to preserve their materials against such threats as theft, mutilation, insect, fungus, fire, flood, dampness and so on. Of all the problems mentioned above, that posed by theft of library materials is the most devastating.

In ancient Egypt, writings on papyrus and leather were restricted to tombs and temple archive rooms under lock and key to prevent them from theft. This problem is therefore not new.

On January 26, 1972, the British Broadcasting Corporation devoted five minutes to the problem of book theft in British university libraries. This, according to Arden (1972) was brought about by the Edinburgh University Librarian's annual report which reported nearly eight hundred volumes of books missing in the previous academic year. In trying to find reasons for the upsurge in book losses in academic libraries all over the world, Maurice Line (1969) said the problem had got to a point where no student minds being seen by another student in the act of illegally removing a book.

The problem of book theft is even more pronounced in these days of economic crunch when books are not only scarce but their prices are also highly exorbitant. Perhaps this and some other difficulties contribute to the unfortunate situation observed by Lester Asheim (1966) that in developing countries emphasis is on preserving the book rather than on satisfying the customer or reader.

Reasons for Book Theft

Several reasons have been adduced for book theft in libraries in developing countries. Prominent among which are:

- a) *Indigency of students:* Due to the poor economic situation that has virtually slowed down every development in the country, resulting in students not having enough money for the purchase of books. In the early 70's for example, apart from the fact that textbooks were readily available, they were relatively cheap too. During this period, virtually all university undergraduates or postgraduates

were on one form of sponsorship or the other (Federal or State scholarships, bursaries or students loans). Very few students therefore depended entirely on the library for their book needs. This of course did not make the 70's theft free era, but the incidences of book theft were fewer.

- b) *Drastic reduction in book votes:* Recently there has been drastic reduction in the book votes of libraries, resulting in their purchase of few new additions to the existing stock and very few copies. Yet, students population increases annually without corresponding increase in the purchase of books for the library. This probably made Scheffrin (1971) assert that many thefts result from difficulty in initially obtaining books and a competitive atmosphere concerning their use. According to him, by eliminating these difficulties the number of thefts will most likely be reduced. He argued further, that the librarian must correlate the need for a certain title with the number of copies he purchases. This confirms the view that books in high demand are susceptible to theft, where sufficient copies cannot be made available. The ability of the library to adequately cope with the increase in students' population, introduction of new courses and the expansion of existing ones has been hampered by insufficient funding. A library whose books vote in 1980/81 session was over ₦1.5 million and in 1990/91 session is given ₦.4 million cannot adequately meet the needs of its users. (Alafiatayo, 1983). This amount is not even enough to pay for that year's journals subscription. Find below comparative prices of the same books as recorded in British Books in Print (now Whitakers Books in Print) 1981 and 1990 editions respectively. In 1981 the official exchange rate was ₦1.20. In 1990 it was ₦17.

Title	Cost	
	1981 (x ₦1.20)	1990 (x ₦17.00)
1. Library buildings, planning and design	£14.95 2nd ed. (₦17.94)	£60 3rd ed. (₦1020)
2. Biological oceanographic processes	£8.75 (₦10.50)	£34 (₦578)
3. Drug therapy reviews	£14.40 (₦17.28)	£40.43 (₦687.31)
4. Engineering fundamentals for professional engineers examinations	£18.50 2nd ed. (₦22.20)	£36.50 3rd ed. (₦620.50)
5. Judicial review in a democracy: people and the court.	£10.95 (₦13.14)	£30.95 (₦526.15)

The inability of the library to meet adequately the needs of its users has further increased book theft in libraries.

- c) Poor security is another reason for theft in libraries. If the security is porous more cases of thefts are likely to occur, porters manning the exits should be conscientious and of high integrity. One area of security that has not been properly investigated by librarians is the probability that porters manning exits gates, might

- connive with students to steal library books. Such accomplices might be friends or relatives to the porters.
- d) There might also be the desire by the culprit to build his own library and since he has no money to buy the books the other option left to him is to steal library books.
 - e) There is the belief that public property belongs to nobody, so nobody in particular is hurt by stealing library books. Some even claim that the books were bought through taxes paid by them or their parents.
 - f) Others steal with the aim of preventing other students from using particular books, especially the core textbooks.
 - g) Absentmindedness, forgetfulness and haste on the part of the reader may be another reason for book losses in libraries. Removal of such books from the library might not be intentional. But like Richards (1979) asserted, long term retention of a such book may follow inadvertent or intentional removal, which may be classified as outright theft.

Manifestations

In many academic libraries, stocktaking has not been a regular feature. A review of the related literature on the system of determining missing books by checking records of books possessed by the library with copies on the shelf shows a deep concern among librarians for losses. Some librarians wonder if their losses are not too low to justify the extensive costs in staff time, an assumption that a library's book losses are small may probably be inversely expensive too. In libraries where regular or periodic stocktaking is carried out they discovered that their losses resulting from thefts are enormous.

A pilot study was conducted by Daniel (1986) at Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, to determine missing books in certain subject areas. A total of 1,713 items randomly selected were searched at all possible locations and 1,360 or 79% were found, 353 items or 20.6 per cent of the samples were missing or stolen. In 1974 a stocktaking exercise in the same library revealed that 4.7% of the total holding had been lost and another study in 1976 showed a loss of 6.7% in African History alone.

In an investigative study carried out by Okoye-Ikonta (1981) in which thirteen Nigerian Universities were asked to indicate the security problems encountered by their libraries, theft ranked highest, followed by mutilation. A mutilated book can sometime be regarded as stolen, most especially if the most valuable pages have been ripped off.

In the University of Lagos Library 0.6% of the stock was lost in one particular year. In Ondo State University Library, Ado-Ekiti, where stocktaking is carried out regularly, by the 1989/90 stocktaking exercise about 1.3% of the total collection were found to be missing.

Methods Used

Various methods are employed in stealing books from University libraries. Nwamefor (1974) in his study of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka discovered two methods by which books were stolen from the library. One was by throwing books down the tiny windows which have no barriers to hinder book passage.

Another method of stealing uncovered involves borrowing one book legally and using its date due slip to remove other desired books from the library. Other methods include female students getting "pregnant" with stolen books while their male counterparts stock their trousers, shirts and flowing garments with books. There might be other methods.

Prevention of Book Theft

Despite the high incidences of book theft in libraries, librarians have not been able to find a perfect solution to this problem. Several measures have been embarked upon by libraries to ensure that book losses resulting from theft are reduced to the barest minimum. The underlisted are some of the measures:

- a) Electronic security system is the most effective of all the security system used by libraries. There are two basic elements of this system. One is a device or "trigger" that is fitted into each book-hardback, paperback or journals. Protected by this device are also cassettes, records, disks etc. This trigger is very discreet and when concealed within the books is virtually undetectable. The other is a free-standing sensing unit at the exit of the library. Books left on the shelf or on the reading table are *sensitised* and remain so until a book to be borrowed by a patron is *desensitised* at the issue desk by library staff, and the patron then exits normally from the library. One very great advantage of this system is that, if a patron attempts to steal or forgetfully walks out with a book that has not been desensitised, the trigger sets off an alarm within the sensing unit and the exit gate locks. Books are sensitised or desensitised using a book check unit. Also books cannot be shielded by the human body, bags or conventional brief-cases. It is therefore difficult to hide library books in any part of the body without being detected.
The problem of finance and basic infrastructures may be the militating factors against installing such a system in third world libraries where book thefts are more rampant. In some libraries, Close Circuit Televisions have been installed to check the menace of book theft. One does not know however, to what extent this has reduced the cases of theft in such libraries.
- b) In libraries where exists are manned manually, the porters should be more vigilant. Akpata (1979) his study remarked that the greater number of books are lost through the exits and therefore suggested the reduction of exits to just one in each library and a thorough check of all readers using this one exit. Windows within the library should be well secured because a reader can open a window from inside and hand out books to an accomplice outside.
- c) At the end of each stocktaking exercise, the list of missing books by subject area could be displayed on notices boards, sent to Heads of Departments and Deans of Faculties. The attention of students in a particular subject area with the highest number of missing books should be sought and where necessary the department concerned should be blackmailed.
- d) Libraries should acquire multiple copies of textbooks and should be made available to readers. The temptation to steal library books would be reduced if the reader is aware that he could get hold of any textbook without much difficulty. Lecturers could also be of help in this regard. They should not lay too much emphasis on one particular textbook as the "gospel truth". As many textbooks as possible treating the same topic should be recommended. Where a special

emphasis is placed on a particular textbook, such a book is susceptible to theft. It could however be kept on reserve.

- e) The provision of photocopying services within the library should be given high priority. Such services should not be made only constantly available but also cheap. Where possible, it could be subsidized by the library. The presence of an effective photocopying service in the library is likely to reduce book theft to the barest minimum.
- f) The University Librarian or his representative could use part of time slated for the use of libraries in the General Studies Programme and the library orientation period to educate the students on the negative effect of book theft on both the library and users of the library. Some of these include, diluting library budget allocation, replacing stolen books when you could be investing in new ones, time lost looking for stolen books and the effect on users when irreplaceable or important books are lost. The library could also form "Friends of the Library Club." Members of the Club could meet at regular intervals to proffer solutions to the menace of book theft in the library.
- g) Stern disciplinary measures could be taken against culprits. If they are students, they should be suspended from the University for a whole session and at the expiration of their suspension disallowed from using the library for another session.
- h) Periodic searching of students hostels, mostly in residential universities could also be done. The approval of the appropriate authority should be sought before embarking on this.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that book loss as a result of theft by users is on the increase in Nigerian University Libraries. In libraries where stocktaking is a regular exercise, one would be amazed at the alarming rate of book loss. It is of paramount importance therefore, to identify and quantify actual loss, causes and sources of loss with a view to preventing and reducing the loss rate. This is necessary more today than ever before, especially in the face of dwindling library funding and general declining global economy. Also as librarians, one of our primary responsibilities should be to protect today's resources for tomorrow's readers.

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CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that book loss is a result of theft, but there is on the increase in book loss in libraries. In libraries where book loss is a regular feature, one would be amazed at the alarming rate of book loss. It is of paramount importance to identify and possibly arrest loss causes and sources of loss with a view to preventing and reducing the loss rate. This is necessary more today than ever before, especially in the face of dwindling library funding and general declining global economy. Also as librarians, one of our primary responsibilities should be to protect

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SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

BOSTID PROJECT ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION (STI) NETWORKS IN AFRICA

Around the world, data and information are being viewed more and more as resources that affect the quality of human decision-making and problem-solving. Science and technology information (STI) is central to economic and social development, both in the generation of new knowledge and for its application in the process of development. Recognizing that information collection, management, and dissemination are key elements in the development of a modern science-based society, the Board on Science and Technology for International Development (BOSTID) of the U.S. National Research Council (NRC), with funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, is working on a project to expand and improve the planning, design, and management of STI resources and networks in Africa.

It is easy to explain the rationale for information activities in Africa. Some refer to these countries as information poor; the information have-nots. African libraries and information centres have been particularly hard-hit by the financial crisis that has gripped that continent. In many countries, acquisitions have been almost entirely suspended and aging, deteriorating collections offer little benefit to the researchers and students. Increasing costs of books and journals make it unlikely that libraries will ever be able to make up the gaps in their collections. Information specialists, usually in short supply anyway, are afforded very little prestige or esteem. Harsh environmental conditions make traditional storage media expensive for long-term purposes and, unless carefully maintained, almost useless.

Facing isolation because of poor or expensive communication channels, developing country scientists also face a chronic shortage of funds, particularly hard currency, for purchasing books, periodicals, and subscriptions to international sources of information. If information is not readily available or even identifiable, then the tendency to use information declines drastically. If demand for good information falls, so too does the already-limited resource base for information services: libraries lose funding; publications fail; and the scientific isolation becomes even more severe. This ever-increasing downward spiral of information use must be stopped.

Despite this dire situation, information specialists throughout Africa are initiating new systems, purchasing new personal computers and software, and benefiting from improved telephone connections. There is a strong interest among governments and technical assistance agencies in improving scientific and technical information services. Some countries have active projects that are proving that much can be accomplished with relatively simple and inexpensive technologies.

Low-cost, computer-based technologies for communication and information management are available today and have already proven to be effective in international scientific, business, educational, and government institutions. Projects that demonstrate how these technologies can be used to empower the local scientist to do better science merit support from the donor community. Since communication and

information management and exchange are intrinsic to the scientific endeavor, projects that improve communication and information access can contribute greatly to the development process. In most developing countries the need to improve the communication among scientists within a country is just as great as the need to improve communication with scientists abroad. Easier communication and more readily available channels for information exchange create new opportunities for international cooperation: scientists can collaborate more easily; problem-solving models can be developed; and important issues can be discussed without the need for expensive or time-consuming travel. Many of the latest information technologies appear to be custom-made for developing country situations:

- o Because of its low cost, durability, vast storage potential, ease of use, and the fact that it by-passes telecommunications problems, CD-ROM seems to provide answers to a number of developing country difficulties;
- o Desktop publishing offers an attractive means of producing textbooks and other scientific material of interest to a limited audience; and
- o More reliable and less expensive telecommunications will allow for the broader application of electronic mail and computer conferencing for information exchange among local, national and regional centres.

BOSTID's project, then, will look at all aspects of STI activities, including database access and management, library development, scientific publishing, and science communication and the role information technologies play in supporting these. In essence, this project will build a collaborative network of people concerned about these issues. The word network is used here in its broadest sense and is meant to include a wide range of interactions among individuals and groups, from informal discussions to electronic communications. Those interested in joining this "network" — where in Europe, North America, or Africa — will be asked to provide some basic information about their work and projects that will then be entered into a database, on micro cdis, that can be shared with network members.

Using this database, BOSTID will, for example, be able to call upon an expert to advise a member on hardware and software selection and installation, training opportunities, or new developments in the field. African members of the network will be encouraged to become actively engaged in the development of the communications and information infrastructures in their countries by attending international meetings and preparing background papers on the key issues that are limiting the growth of this sector. BOSTID will also work with the donor community to help plan better information projects and with computer industry representatives to address the needs of the African market.

Through this activity, BOSTID will become a focal point in the United States through which those in Africa who have an information need will be put in touch with those who have a service or product that can fill that need. BOSTID will work with vendors, distributors, publishers, and entrepreneurs in Africa and in the developed world to help communicate both the need and the unique opportunities now in Africa.

Another focus of the BOSTID project is on the development of small projects. African colleagues with whom BOSTID has discussed information services and technologies consistently and continually urged that a specific fund for small projects be established by the donor agencies. In designing information systems and services in

developing countries, most people think in terms of large, integrated systems. Many donors are encouraging the growth of national networks that require massive amounts of financial and human resource support. Implementing large, complex projects often goes beyond the mandate of the organization that the donors are trying to help and puts a severe strain on already limited resources. While the need for such large-scale, multi-million dollar programs is clear, especially in the development of the telecommunications infrastructure, there is also a need for smaller projects. Projects that require less than \$100,000 of funding per year allow the principal investigator to demonstrate or experiment with the application of information technologies to a very specific task.

One African scientist explained it this way. He said that if you walked into a U.S. college classroom and asked the students when they first put fingers to keyboard, none of them would remember the specific time. They all grew up with the technology and many computer functions are so intuitive that most students can sit at a keyboard and teach themselves the fundamentals of a new software programme with only a little coaching. This is not the case in Africa. Information technologies are not as pervasive or prolific. The freedom to experiment with software and hardware is simply not there. This is why projects that encourage the use of computer technologies in everyday settings are so important. Scientists and information specialists alike need to establish the link between information technologies and productivity. They need to demonstrate that these technologies are simply tools that allow the better management of project resources.

They listed the following as types of projects for which they would like to receive funding:

- o Pilot projects that allow for experimentation and demonstrate the use and costs of CD-ROM, desktop publishing, electronic mail and computer conferencing, and software development using personal computers and off-the-shelf database management software.
- o Training programs — both for information providers and for organization directors and managers. This training should include broad overviews of microcomputers and networking, as well as consciousness raising about the importance of information.
- o Experiments with the "last mile" problem, that is, the inclusion of rural or distant communities in the communication and information network via packet radio or other technologies.

There are successful information projects underway in Africa. Virtually all of the information technologies mentioned above are already in use in African institutions. Dedicated information professionals are providing information services to targeted groups of users. As these projects receive recognition from the local community, they have many beneficial impacts. By being in a position to provide better service, the information specialist is able to interact with the requestor on a professional level. Using information technologies in an everyday setting demonstrates to the users that these technologies need not be feared but that they can be manipulated to give the user the information wanted. Successful projects pull people into the information centre and thus encourage them to take advantage of resources. They even encourage the users to ask more sophisticated questions. Thus can the frightening downward spiral of information use be halted.

developing countries, most people think in terms of large, integrated systems. Many donors are encouraging the growth of national networks that require massive amounts of financial and human resource support. Implementing large, complex projects often goes beyond the mandate of the organization that the donors are trying to help and puts a severe strain on already limited resources. While the need for such large-scale, multi-million dollar programs is clear, especially in the development of the telecommunications infrastructure, there is also a need for smaller projects. Projects that require less than \$100,000 of funding per year allow the principal investigator to demonstrate or experiment with the application of information technologies to a very specific task.

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A shortage of funds, lack of trained personnel, lack of an enabling environment, and technological problems all impede the development of information networks. A friendly environment for the development of information networks needs to be established. This will require training programmes for managers and users alike, projects that promote the understanding of the value of information to economic development, and the formulation of national policies that encourage and support the growth of the information sector.

We know too well the constraints faced by the African scientist and information professional. They must overcome political, economic, social, cultural, and technical barriers before being able to take full advantage of information technologies and services. But these barriers should not be used as an excuse. There is no reason for anyone to discount the potential existing in Africa now to exploit information technologies and use these technologies to increase productivity, to guide decision making, and to allow scientists to interact with the global community to solve global problems. I have witnessed that things ARE happening in Africa. Small projects are leading the way in demonstrating how effectively information technologies can be used in Africa. Each day, small project managers are learning valuable lessons about which information technologies work best in which settings and these lessons are being shared. These project managers are developing into a network of experts, ready to assist other Africans in the adaptation of information technologies and services. They are building an experiential base that will be useful in future projects. In short, I cannot imagine a more exciting time or place to be in the information field.

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the "African STI Network" is encouraged to contact Wendy D. White, staff officer for the project, via one of the following: Wendy D. White, Senior Program Officer, Africa STI Network, BOSTID/NRC, 2101 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418. Phone: 202-334-2639. Electronic mail, CoSy-wwwhite; Dialcom-57: NRC2200; Bitnet-WWhite@NAS; Envoy 100-BOSTID.

-Wendy D. White
Senior Program Officer
BOSTID

SPOTLIGHT ON THE FACULTY OF INFORMATION SCIENCES, MOI UNIVERSITY, KENYA

Diana Rosenberg,
Dean, Faculty of Information Sciences

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The establishment of undergraduate and graduate programmes in the information sciences in Kenya was proposed from the 1970s onwards. These proposals were given a home in 1981, when it was recommended that "a Faculty of Information Sciences be established at the Second University". The Faculty was given the mandate of offering education and training for six of the information professions: librarianship, information science, archives and records management, publishing, printing and the book trade. Rather than offer a series of separate degrees programmes for each of the information professions, it was decided to first plan for a broad-based undergraduate course, leading to a BSc in Information Sciences. This decision was based on the concept of harmonization developed by UNESCO and on subsequent discussions in Kenya which favoured a more unified approach in the teaching of the information sciences.

Before the curriculum was designed, a survey was undertaken to enable the Faculty identify the type, nature and range of information-handling skills needed in Kenya today. As a result of this survey, specializations related to specific information professions were introduced in the final year and it was decided that the needs of printing within a harmonized degree required further examination. The areas identified as shared competencies became part of the core curriculum. Practical experience within the degree course was deemed essential.

The Faculty accepted its first students in 1988, when 56 students enrolled for the three year BSc in Information Sciences.

PROGRAMME

At the moment the Faculty offers one course leading to a BSc in Information Sciences. This now lasts four years, following Kenya's change to the 8-4-4 pattern of education. The aims of the course are:

- i. To introduce students to current thought and practice in information sciences work;
- ii. To provide basic professional education in a broad range of information sciences, so as to develop persons who are capable of operating in a variety of working contexts;
- iii. To improve the professional standard and status of the disciplines in the information sciences.

During the first year, students are introduced to the information sciences, take courses common to all programmes (e.g. communication and quantitative skills) and deepen their knowledge of subjects in other disciplines. Courses common and core to

all the information professions are studied in the second and third years. These courses fall into one of four areas: Communication; Information Resources Management; Information Sources and Services; Information Storage and Retrieval. In the final year subject specializations related to one of the information professions are offered and students also undertake a project in their chosen specializations. At the end of both the 2nd and 3rd years, during the long vacations, students are required to spend six weeks in practical training.

The Faculty is planning to start postgraduate courses: MPhil (for those with graduate qualifications in the information sciences) and MSc (for those with graduate qualifications in another subjects). Both will last for two years. The M.Phil course is scheduled to start in September 1992.

An annual short course for practising professionals is being organized by the Faculty. The first of these – in Thesaurus Construction – took place in July 1991 and attracted 26 participants from Kenya.

FACILITIES

At the moment the Faculty's accommodation is in one of the University's teaching blocks. Lecture and seminar rooms are shared with other faculties. The Faculty has its own small computer laboratory, but uses university labs for teaching students. There is also a small a-v facility and a resource collection of reference materials and cataloguing and classification tools. The main university library houses the books and journals purchased for Faculty use.

In 1993, the Faculty will move into purpose built accommodation. The British government is at present constructing a building for the University Library and Faculty of Information Sciences. The Faculty accommodation, on the lower ground and ground floors with a separate entrance, will contain offices, teaching space and laboratories for computing, information resources, printing and publishing, media, and conservation.

STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

The Faculty has four departments: Archives and Records Management; Information and Media Technology; Library and Information Studies; Publishing and Booktrade. It is also responsible for the management of the University's Desktop Publishing Unit. This edits and published low cost textbooks for sale primarily to students of Moi University. It is hoped that the Unit will evolve into a fully-fledged University Press. The full-time academic staff of the Faculty are 17, thirteen of whom are Kenyans. Out of these, two are on study leave and a further two are leaving during the 1991/92 session to undertake Ph.D. courses.

STUDENTS

Before the Faculty opened, a number of studies were carried out to determine the manpower requirements of Kenya in the information sciences. However, these were overtaken by the expansion of the Kenya public universities so as to cope with the growing number of school leavers qualified to enter university. At the moment the Faculty accepts a minimum of 50 students through the Joint Admissions Board. These are fresh school leavers, who have selected the B.Sc. in Information Sciences as their first or second choice. There is also provision for the faculty to accept upto

five 'mature-age' entrants, i.e. persons already working in one of the information professions. The annual intake is therefore between 55 and 60.

The first batch of students will graduate in early 1992, having been delayed by the closure of all public universities in Kenya in June 1991.

LINKAGES

In May 1990 a four - year project was signed for Overseas Development Administration (ODA) to support the Faculty of Information Sciences. The support includes training awards and training attachments for staff, provision of UK lecturers both on long-term and short-term basis, resources, assistance in running annual short courses for professionals, and for collaborative research. Under the project, a link has been established with the Department of Information Studies and Technology at the Polytechnic of West London. The end objective of the project is to ensure that the Faculty is adequately staffed by Kenyans and has appropriate curricula and teaching materials.

During the 1990/91 session, the Faculty hosted a visiting professor from USA, under the Fulbright programme. She was attached to the Department of Library and Information Studies. One of the lecturers in the Department of Information and media technology is sponsored by the British Voluntary Service Overseas. The faculty's external examiners come from outside Kenya - Dr. Anthony Olden from UK and Dr. L. O. Aina from Botswana.



Second from right is Diana Rosenberg, Dean, Faculty of Information Sciences and fourth from right is Dr. L. O. Aina, the editor-in-chief, who is also the external examiner in information science at the University. Others are some members of staff of the Faculty.

**PERSONALITY INTERVIEW WITH DIANA ROSENBERG,
DEAN, FACULTY OF INFORMATION SCIENCES MOI
UNIVERSITY, ELDORET, KENYA.**



The first female personality to be interviewed by this Journal, appears in this issue. Diana Bryant Rosenberg was born on 22nd April, 1940. She obtained M.A. (Modern History) from the University of Oxford in 1962, Associate of the Library Association (ALA), 1967 and Fellow of the Library Association (FLA), 1987. Mrs Diana Rosenberg, the pioneer Dean of the Faculty of Information Sciences, Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya has worked extensively both in U.K. and Africa. She was a senior Library Assistant at Paddington Technical College, London, 1966, Architecture and Building Librarian, City of Leicester Polytechnic, Leicester, U.K., 1966-1969, Site Librarian, Bristol Polytechnic, Bristol, U.K., 1969 -

1973; Cataloguer, Tanzania Library Service, Dar - es Salaam Tanzania where she was also a lecturer in cataloguing and classification on the National Library Assistant's Certificate Course (Tanzania), Acquisitions Librarian, Library of Congress Field Office, Nairobi, Kenya 1977 and University Librarian, University of Juba, Juba Sudan from 1977 to 1987.

Mrs Rosenberg is a distinguished scholar, she has many publications to her credit. She received the Member of the Order of the British Empire award (M.B.E.) in 1988 for services to Sudan in education and library development. She was awarded an honorary F.L.A. in 1991 by the Library Association for the promotion of librarian-

ship in Africa. Her main research interests are history and development of libraries in Africa, information storage and retrieval. Based on her experience and her pioneering role in establishing the first faculty of information sciences in an African university, she was asked questions on a number of topical issues especially with regards to the Faculty of Information Sciences Moi University, Kenya. Here are her views:

THE TRAINING OF INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS IN AFRICA

The Faculty of Information Sciences and Education and Training in Africa

First let me make one thing clear: we were not set up as a regional school. Our primary objective is to meet the education and training needs of Kenya. And, at the undergraduate level, all available places on the BSc course are taken up by qualified Kenyans. It would only be possible to offer places to non-Kenyans, through country to country agreements.

However, we are the first programme in Africa to be fully harmonized in that our degree aims to produce professionals who can work in libraries, archives, records management, information technology, publishing or the booktrade, with printing as a possibility for the future. We shall be evaluating the success of this programme as our graduates move into the working world. I expect other information schools to be awaiting this evaluation with a view to the development of their own curricula.

Moi University is unusual in that it has set up a Faculty of Information Sciences. Other institutions involved in education and training usually have departments which are part of other faculties e.g. education, management, social studies, etc. Faculty status recognizes that the information sciences are a discipline in their own right, just like medicine or engineering. To me, this is an important step forward.

Problems In Implementing the Programmes In the Faculty

Problems are something we don't lack! Perhaps I can just highlight three out of the many:

Finding staff is difficult. We require both high level academic qualifications, evidence of research and working experience. These are hard to find in the same person. Work experience may be there on paper, but may not be very valuable if undertaken, for example, in a declining library. In new areas of teaching, like publishing and information technology, there is just no pool of people from whom to recruit.

Funding is problematic in most African universities. Yet we must give students a good in-depth education in the new technologies. It is they who will be introducing and implementing systems based on these technologies. But computers, databases, telecommunication networks are extremely expensive. Maintenance is equally expensive.

Finally, do we know and understand the information world into which we are sending our students? Our curricula need to be a blend of what is internationally accepted with what is appropriate in our own countries. Too little research has been done on information needs in Africa and how these can be translated into a curriculum.

Manpower Requirements for Information Professionals in Africa in the Next 10 Years

If data gathered from Kenya is valid for the rest of Africa, then there would seem to be a current unfulfilled need for professionals in information-related work. In Kenya,

the total number of jobs available each year is in the region of 115. Around 70% of vacancies are in organizations funded by government and 40% in libraries.

But the potential is much, bigger. Traditional areas, for example school libraries, are still virtually untouched at the professional level. Publishing and booktrade must surely be a growth area as both the population and the literate population expand. In the private sector the employment of information workers is rare. There is a general lack of awareness of what competencies an education in the information sciences will produce and of how such competencies can improve the performance of an institution or organization. It will be necessary for the programmes to sell themselves and thus generate jobs. Another change is the trend for jobs which demand and involve a wide variety of information-handling skills in one person.

However, for this potential to become a reality will depend on whether the economies of African countries recover and begin to expand. And information and its organization must be accepted as valuable to the economy. There is no use in educating school librarians, if schools have no money to buy books. Why publish, if people have no surplus income to buy books.

Foreseeable Changes in Information Sciences Professional Education in the Year 2000

The year 2000 is now nearly upon us! I don't think that any dramatic changes will take place in the next 8 years. I am convinced that the various information professions are drawing closer together and that more and more programmes will therefore offer harmonized degrees. There has been a tendency to emphasize information technology at the expense of the book; I hope that during the next 8 years we may be able to recognize that both electronic and printed media have their own values. Education in information handling has taken as a *sine qua non* the importance of information. But if information is not used then it is not important. And in Africa the level of use of information is low. This is a problem that I would like educators to address before the year 2000.

FORTHCOMING INTERNATIONAL SEMINARS CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOPS

June 1-12 1992, Gabon: *Boissier - Training Course on the Use of Microfilm*
CD/ISIS, *Software Package for Anglophone African Countries*. Jointly sponsored
by the University of Botswana and the *Boissier Foundation for Information Technology*
and CD/ISIS. The course content includes a survey and comparison of CD/ISIS,
information retrieval and related functions, data entry functions, installation and
individual projects. Applicants will be considered from those with the experience

AFRICAN JOURNAL OF LIBRARY, ARCHIVES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1 APRIL 1991

CONTENTS

Nat. M. Adeyemi

Issues in the Provision of Information Services to Developing Countries

J. R. Neill

The Marginalised Work Force: Africa's Library and Information Profession

Harry Akussah

The Preservation of Traditional Library and Archival Materials in the
"Harsh" Ghanaian Environment

Olu Olat Lawal

A Survey of Task Performance in Library and Information Work:
The Nigerian Perspective

Andrew B. J. Metzger

The Role of Libraries in the Development of Literacy in Sierra Leone

A. A. Alemna

The Characteristics of Past Postgraduate Diploma Students of the Department
of Library and Archival Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, 1981/82-1987/88

BOOK REVIEW — The Quiet Struggle

Spotlight on the Centre for Black and African Arts and
Civilization (CBAAC), Lagos

Personality Interview

Professional News and Events

NEWS

Forthcoming International Conferences and Workshops

Reports of Conferences and Workshops

Completed Research

Current Research

Abstracts of Selected Professional Literature Published in Africa

of working with the mini-micro CDS/ISIS software. There will be vacancies for a maximum of 18 participants and the selection will be restricted to those candidates whose institutions have not previously benefitted from this type of training. For further information contact Mr. B. Grand, Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana, Private Bag 0022, Gaborone. Tel. 351151, Telex 2429BD, Fax 356591. OR Mr. Lutz Huttemann Head, I&D Training Section, German Foundation for International Development, Hans-Böckeler Strasse, 5 Postfach 300-308, 5300 Bonn 3 Federal Republic of Germany. Tel (0228) 4001-0, Telex 888710 (dsebn-d), Fax (0228) 401111. A copy of the application form is made available in this issue for those who are interested.

June 27 - 8 August, 1992. Aberystwyth, Wales - International Graduate Studies School, 1992. For further information, contact the Director IGISS, Department of Information and Library Studies. The University College Wales, Llanbadarn Faw, Aberystwyth SY 23 3AS, Great Britain.

July 27 - 1st August, 1992, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, - Tenth Standing Conference for Eastern, Central and Southern African Libraries (SCECSAL - TEN) organised by the Tanzania Library Association. Theme: Improving Access to Information and Knowledge for Socio-economic and Technological Development in Africa. For further information contact National Organising Committee SCECSAL - TEN, P. O. Box 21659, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania or Mr. Theophilus E. Mlaki, Chairman of the Organising Committee, SCECSAL - TEN, P. O. Box 4302, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

August 19 - 21, 1993, Barcelona, Spain - Second World Conference on Continuing Education for the Library and Information Science Professions, IFLA Pre-Conference, under the auspices of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), The Continuing Professional Education Round Table (CPERT). Theme: Continuing Education: Progress, Issues and Challenges. For further information contact Blanche Woolls, Co-ordinator IFLA/CPERT 2nd World Conference, School of Library and Information Science, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260 USA.

TRAINING COURSE ON MICRO-ISIS JUNE 1992:

APPLICATION FORM

1. Personal Details

Surname:

First name:

Male Female (Please tick as appropriate)

Passport No: Date of Expiry

Date and Place of issue:

2. Experience with Mini-Micro CDS/ISIS Software

a. Do you use Micro-ISIS in your Library/information centre?

Yes No (Please tick as appropriate)

b. How long have you been using Micro-ISIS Software:

1 – 5 months

6 – 1 yr

1yr and above

c. How many hours per week do you work personally with it?

(be honest):

d. Which version of Micro-ISIS are you using?

e. State any features of CDS/ISIS where you have experienced problems:

f. State any features of CDS/ISIS which you are especially interested in elaborating on:

g. What own applications have you developed?

h. What are your expectations of the course?

3. Employment Details

a. Position held:

b. Employers name and full address:

Telephone:

Telex:

Fax:

(Please note that it is absolutely essential that each applicant provide above details to facilitate easy communication with course organisers).

Applicant's signature: Date:

Employer's signature (approving the attendance of this course)

..... Date:

Return 1 copy to B. Grand, University of Botswana
1 copy to L. Huttemann, DSE

COURSE ANNOUNCEMENT

IFLA SCHOLARSHIP TO ATTEND ASIAN INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY COURSE

Information professionals will be offered an opportunity for training in the use of state-of-the-art information technologies and computer applications at the Library and Regional Documentation Centre (LRDC) of the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand. The LRDC Course on New Information Technologies and Computerised librarians and information officers in designing and preparing information services and products and in the use of the latest software for effective library services.

The 3-month course consists of lectures, practicum sessions, projects, and field trips covering six major areas namely: Computer Applications for Library/Information Centre Services, Specialised Information Services, Management and Marketing, Production and Publishing, Audio-visual Communication, and Effective Communication Skills. IFLA/ALP has approved in principle, to fund a few scholarships for the LRDC course scheduled on August 31 – November 20, 1992.

Please find application form attached. Feel free to make as many copies as needed.

(sgd)

Pensri Guaysuwan
Regional Manager
December 16 1991

Issued by the Regional Office
for Asia and Oceania
c/o Thai Library Association
273, 275 Vibhavadee Rangsit Road
Phyatahi, Bangkok 10400
THAILAND.

APPLICATION FORM

IFLA ALP SCHOLARSHIP TO AIT

"COURSE ON NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AND
COMPUTERIZED LIBRARY SERVICES"

31 AUGUST, 1992 TO 20 NOVEMBER, 1992

(PLEASE: TYPE OR USE BLOCK LETTERS & USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS AS NEEDED |
SEND THE FORM BACK TO THE REGIONAL MANAGER C/O THAMMASAT
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, BANGKOK 10200, THAILAND

Applicant (Mr./Ms/Dr.) Last Name: First Name:

Nationality: Date of Birth:

Address, Telephone, Fax (Home)

(Office)

Education and Training:

Work Experience:

English Language Proficiency:

Computer Background

Present Position:

Present Employee/Company:

Reason for Attending this Course (State Objectives, Expected) Achivement, etc.):

A few Words from Immediate Supervisor:

Signature(Supervisor)

Signature (Applicant)

Date:

REPORTS OF CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Information Experts Meeting, Harare, Zimbabwe, 25 – 29 June, 1991 – The Meeting was hosted by the National Library and Documentation Centre of Zimbabwe and organised by the German Foundation for International Development (DSE). The theme was "Continuing Education Programme and Training of Trainers' Courses for Library and Information Personnel in Eastern and Southern African Countries". The meeting was attended by 19 participants from Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The current state of training continuing education courses for the future and the development of training of trainers' courses were discussed.

(Excerpts culled from *Information Trends*, Vol. 4, No. 3 1991)

Training of Trainers Course on Mini-Micro CDS/ISIS, Bonn, Germany, 15 – 29 September, 1991. – The course was jointly organised by DSE and UNESCO PGI. Participants were mainly from a number of training institutions in Anglophone African countries which are considered as multipliers for Micro- CDS/ISIS training. The course was attended by 15 participants from 10 different African countries drawn from library training schools and other potential multiplier institutions like PADIS, ESAMI and CODESRIA. The course featured the use of soft ware Micro-ISIS features, plus an introduction to an advanced use of the software. The course programme also contained lectures on topics as "How to finance training courses" "How to select participants for training courses" and "how to produce and use audio-visual aids in training courses."

(Excerpts culled from *Information Trends*, Vol. 4, No. 3 1991)

First Commonwealth Library Association Regional Workshop for West Africa on Rural Community Library and Information Centres, Accra, Ghana, 23–27 September, 1991 – The Workshop was jointly organised by the Ghana Library Association and the Ghana Library Board on behalf of the Commonwealth Library Association (COMLA). The theme was "Rural Community Library and Information Resource Centres". Participants were drawn from the COMLA Executive Board, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. Resource persons came from Botswana, Canada, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and representatives of the International Federation of Library Associations/Advancement of Librarianship for the Third World Programme (IFLA/ALP). The theme covered

- the concept of rural community resource centre
- the facilities and resources needed
- the role of rural community librarians in adult and functional literacy and rural development in Africa
- communicating development information to rural communities in Africa available options.

A number of recommendations were made at the workshop. They include among others:

1. That since the concept of rural resource information centres may need to be modified to suit the context of each and every community, library associations should encourage as many different projects as possible to be developed, sustained and evaluated so that conclusive guides can be determined.

2. That COMLA should ensure that their newsletter collects and contains information on rural resource information projects and should ensure that the newsletter is widely distributed in commonwealth countries.
3. Library schools should encourage research into the nature of rural information needs, so as to provide conclusive evidence on the value of information transfer in rural areas. They should also examine how their curricula could cover subject areas which would encourage the implementation of the concept of rural community information centres.
4. That traditional libraries should open up a new dimension to include the rural library and community centre in the lowest branch. They should have their personnel retrained or oriented as library information facilitator with a background in agriculture, health, communication and life skills.
5. That library and information associations should set up programmes of continuing education with specific inputs relating to the requirements of information personnel. (Excerptts from the Report by Kay Raseroka, University librarian, University of Botswana).

Management of Agricultural Databases, Maseru, Lesotho, 4-15 November, 1991 -

This was a follow up course to an earlier workshop held in Malawi in 1990. Participants came from agricultural libraries and agricultural research centres in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The workshop focussed on the features of CDS/ISIS and CARIS project. The workshop was jointly sponsored by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation (CTA) and the Southern Africa Centre for Co-operation on Agricultural Research (SACCAR), Gaborone. The resource persons came from the Department of library and Information studies, University of Botswana, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Rome, Italy and the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, Holland.

(Information supplied by Dr. L. O. Aina, University of Botswana).

IFLA Workshop on Micro-Computer Applications for Library Managers, Gaborone, Botswana, 7-17 December, 1991. - The workshop, organised for university librarians and directors of national libraries in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa, was sponsored by the International Federation of Library Associations/Advancement for Librarianship in the Third World Programme (IFLA/ALP). It focussed on the basics of computer in a library environment, and also exposed participants to the basics of systems analysis and design, so as to sensitive participants to the process of identifying their needs. There were 17 participants from Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. A message from the Chairman of IFLA Africa, Mr. Gboyega Banjo of Nigeria was read at the opening ceremony. He advised participants to seize the opportunity of the workshop to acquaint themselves with the computer. The secretary of IFLA Africa, Mrs. Kay Raseroka, who is also the University Librarian, University of Botswana delivered the welcome address. The resource persons of the workshop were mainly from the Department of Libray and Information studies, University of Botswana, and Damelein, a private computer company in Botswana.

(Information supplied by Dr. L. O. Aina, University of Botswana).

COMPLETED RESEARCH

Information provision for Rural Development. A final Report on phase one of the Research project on Information for Rural Development (INFORD) Gaborone, Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana, (1991), 177p. Kingo Mchombu (Tanzanian) lecturer, Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana. Research Funded by the International Development REsearch Council (IDRC). Ottawa, Canada.

CURRENT RESEARCH

Patterns of Agricultural Information Use in Egypt by Nawal Abdalla (Egyptian). Doctoral Programme, University of Cairo, Egypt.

ABSTRACTS OF SELECTED PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE PUBLISHED IN AFRICA 1991

Bibliography

Lippma, Marc (1991) An Africa Index Medicus. *Information Trends* 4(3) 120 – 122.

An index of medical literature in Africa developed using bibliographical records from the World Health Organisation (WHO) Office Health Literature and Information Service, the Malawi Ministry of Health Library and the Documentation Centre at the University of Zimbabwe Medical Library was reported. The paper expects other related library institutions in Africa to contribute to the database. It is suggested that WHO Regional Office for Africa or the University of Zimbabwe Medical Library should serve as the focal point for the collection and dissemination of database records from individual institutions.

Bibliometrics

Abifarín, F. P. (1991). A Bibliometric analysis of the literature of Nigerian civil war. *Nigerian Library and Information Science Review*, 9 (1) 20 – 27.

The characteristics of the literature of Nigerian civil war were analysed. The analysis shows that most of the literature were newspapers and magazines, and English language was the predominant medium of communication. The study also shows that most of the authors were single authorship.

Metzger, Andrew J. B. (1991). Bibliographical contributions of students of the Department of the Department of Library Studies, University of Zambia. *Zambia Library Association Journal*, 19 (1) 30 – 44.

The paper analyses the two hundred and five bibliographies compiled in the Department between 1978 and 1989. The study shows that the subjects covered were mainly politics and government, economy, history and agricultural sciences. Expectedly, the African country covered most was Zambia, followed by Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania and South Africa. Other countries that featured prominently include Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria and Botswana.

Collection Development

Doust, Robin W. (1991). The Problem of book supply in Zimbabwean Libraries. *Zimbabwe Librarian*, 23 (1) 9 – 14.

The problems of book supply are listed as the falling rate of Zimbabwean dollar compared with the United States dollars and pound sterling, the currencies used in the countries where most of the books are published and the continued cuts in current foreign allocations to bookshops. The paper advocates the need for local publishing, improved inter library loan scheme and readers treating books with care.

Library Abuse

Okotore, Kayode (1991) Mis use of library materials at Oyo State College of Education, Ilesha, Nigeria. *Nigerian Library and Information Science Review*, 9(1) 12-19.

The various types of mis-use of library materials identified include book theft, mutilation, withholding of books beyond due dates and rough handling. Poverty on the part of users, scarcity of needed books in the library and inadequate number of books in the library were identified among others as the causes of misuse of library materials. The paper recommends harsh punishment for users responsible for the mis-use of library materials.

Literacy

Chitambo, A. M. (1991) library support services for literacy and literacy programmes. *Zambia Library Association Journal*, 19 (1) 19 - 29.

The relationships between literacy and development on one hand, and literacy and libraries on the other hand, were examined. An inventory of activities which would enable libraries in developing countries to contribute to the national efforts aimed at reducing illiteracy were discussed. The paper recommends that libraries should take up their place in the promotion of literacy as one of the ways of contributing to the development of the communities they serve.

School Libraries

Fayose, P. Osazee (1991) The Case for toys in school and children's libraries in West Africa. *Nigerian Library and Information Science Review*, 9 (1) 8 - 15.

The paper advocates the provision of toys and other play materials in children's and school libraries so as to make children to be more interested in books and reading. The paper discusses the monitoring of a group of pre-school children at Abadina Media Resource Centre, University of Ibadan over a period and found that these children fared better than other children in school subjects such as writing, drawing, arithmetic and composition. The study also reported that in their dealings with teachers and peers, they were less inhibited than other children (who had no access to toys) at the beginning of their school career.

Tewete, Felix (1991) The Plight of school libraries in Africa. *Information Trend*, 4 (3) 123 - 138.

The paper discusses the problems of school library programme in Africa. The problems identified, include inadequacy of funds to support the level of library services required, lack of properly trained personnel, absence of adequate and relevant book stock and poor accommodation. The paper recommends that school library policies in Africa should be developed by government, possibly by legislation.

Women Studies

Mbambo, Buhle (1991) Gender and women studies collection: The case of the University of Botswana Library. *Botswana Library Association Journal*, 12 (1) 23 - 28.

The paper describes the University of Botswana's library collection on the literature on gender and women studies. It identifies the users of the collection as Gender Research Workers, Women in Development Committee members, and Gender and Education Committee members of the University. The paper, however, points out that the collection is dominated mainly by publications from Europe and America.

LIST OF JOURNALS ABSTRACTED

Botswana Library Association Journal (Editor, Joe Asamani, University Library, University of Botswana).

Information Trends (Editors: Kingo Mchombu and Richard Neill, Department of Library Studies, University of Botswana).

Nigerian Library and Information Science Review (Editor, Dr. B. C. Nzotta, Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria).

Zambia Library Association Journal (Editor, Raphael E. Jere, P. O. Box 33127, Lusaka, Zambia).

Zimbabwe Librarian (Editor, E. R. T. Chiware, P. O. Box 3133, Harare, Zimbabwe).

AIMS AND SCOPE

African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science is established mainly to provide a forum for librarians, archivists, documentalists, information scientists and other information related professionals in Africa to report their research findings but with emphasis on African setting. The Journal is refereed by distinguished scholars. Emphasis is on empirical research; however manuscripts of high quality on theoretical aspects of the three information related disciplines will be considered for publication.

NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

Three copies of the manuscripts typed double space on one side should be submitted. Ample margins should be provided. The title, author's name, position and place of work should appear on the first page. Subsequent pages of not more than 15, should include an informative abstract of not more than 100 words. Manuscript will be considered only if it has not been published elsewhere.

References and notes should be indicated in the text by names of authors and date of publication in brackets. The list of references should be listed at the end of the text.

References to journal articles should be in the following order: Author(s) date, title, journal's name, volume number, issue number and inclusive pagination e.g.

Mazikana, P.C. (1987) "Archives and Oral History: Overwhelming Lack of Resources" *Information Development*, 3 (1) 13 - 16.

References to books should be in the following order: Author(s), date, title, place of publication, publisher, pagination e.g.

Aboyade, B. O. (1989) *The Provision of Information for Rural Development* Ibadan: Fountain Publications, 104p.

References to contributors in collected works should be in the following order: author(s), date, title of contribution, name of the editor, title of the collected works, place of publication, publisher and inclusive pagination e.g.

Neill, J. R. and Kotei, S. I. A. (1981) "Towards a National Information System for Botswana" in Inganji, Francis (ed.) *Use of Information and Documentation for Planning and Decision Making*. Gaborone : NIR, pp. 36 - 53.

No charge is made for publication. Twenty five copies of reprints of each major article will be supplied to the principal author.

Manuscripts and other editorial materials should be directed to the Editor in Chief, Dr. L. O. Aina, Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana or to any member of the editorial board nearest to you.