

# Patterns of Information Products Advertising in Newspaper Media in Nigeria

**Rafiat A. Oyekunle**

*ummusumayya1@yahoo.com*

*Department of Information and Communication Science, University of Ilorin, Nigeria and*

**Mutawakilu A. Tiamiyu**

*mutatiamiyu@yahoo.com*

*Africa Regional Centre for Information Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria*

## Abstract

*The nature and contents of adverts of types of products and services may be used to understand the evolution of different product and services markets in a country. This was the main objective of this study, which analysed the nature of adverts of information products and services in Nigerian newspaper media. A secondary objective was to understand the advertising strategies that were used. Data were collected through the content analysis of two Nigerian newspapers that circulate extensively in Nigeria – the Guardian and the Nigerian Tribune. Data were collected from all the editions of the newspapers published during 2006 and 2007. The study revealed that conduit information products and services were much more frequently advertised in the newspapers than content information products and services. This illustrates the relative underdevelopment of content information products and services sub-sectors of the Nigerian information industry compared to the conduit information products and services sub-sectors. The majority of the adverts bought small spaces in the newspapers, except for the majority of adverts of conduit information services (e.g. mobile telecom*

*services) which bought relatively bigger spaces, and probably because of the high growth and profitability of the markets for such services. The majority of the adverts aimed at presenting a combination of factual information and image, but the use of other message delivery strategies such as message tone, message icons and money-off strategies was not common. The study recommended that Nigerian governments pursue complementary information industry development strategies that pay adequate attention to growing both the conduit and content sectors of the industry.*

## Keywords

Content information products, conduit information services, advertising, newspapers, information industry, Nigeria

## Introduction

Successful organisations in both competitive and non-competitive markets have found out that a critical success factor in their operations is effective internal and external dissemination of information about their existence and status, and about their products and services. Advertising has proven over time to be one of the most vibrant and flexible means for disseminating such information. Accordingly, to De Mooij (1997), successful advertising is a key requirement for overall success in national and international markets.

Print and electronic media have served human society very well over the ages for the dissemination and exchange of information about innovations and developments in society. Moreover, the messages communicated through adverts and other formats in the media often reflect development trends and issues in the societies where they are used. Thus, periodic analyses of the patterns of

advertising in various print and electronic media provide potentially very useful means for tracking trends in innovations in the different socio-economic sectors and in the markets for various products and services.

The information age has been witnessing phenomenal growth in the volume and variety of print and electronic media that carry adverts of all types of products and services, and an increasing proportion of the advertised products and services are information products and services. Information products and services are the objects, activities or events through which different types of data, information or knowledge are communicated or exchanged in information systems, organisations and societies. Earlier, Tiamiyu (1993) had distinguished between tangible information products and intangible information services, where information products are physical objects, and information services are discrete real-time activities or events that contain, convey or facilitate the creation, communication or use of information. Clearly, adverts are information products that convey messages about other information and non-information products and services.

It is from the perspective of these introductory remarks that this study seeks to analyse the patterns in the emerging markets for different information products and services in Nigeria by analysing the nature of the adverts of such products and services in the Nigerian print media.

## Literature Review

Advertising has been perceived from divergent viewpoints, some of which are positive and others negative. Wright, Winter and Zeigler (1982) (cited in Akpan, 1996: 157) describe advertising as “ubiquitous ... brash ... pervasive ... materialistic ... dynamic ... annoying ... indispensable ... fascinating...” This view provides a somewhat balanced appraisal of advertising, with both positive and negative attributes. Ogilvy (2005) notes that “the trouble with most advertising is that it insults the intelligence of the public and bores you to death”, while Crystal (1994: 35) says “...advertising has pernicious effect on individuals, social groups and whole societies”. From a positive perspective, Winston Churchill (cited in Dunn and Barban, 1986:

11) said ‘advertising nourishes the consuming power of men. It sets up before a man the goal of better home, better clothing, better food for himself and his family. It spurs the individual exertion and greater production.’”

A consumer’s purchasing behaviour may be influenced by various factors, including family and friends, religious beliefs, cultural attitudes, social expectations, work requirements and professional standards, as well as advertisement messages and strategies. One of the most important responsibilities of advertisers is to place an appropriately designed advert message in the most appropriate medium so as to bring the advertised product to the attention of the targeted consumers. A wide range of media are available for this, including newspapers, magazines, television, radio, direct unsolicited mail, outdoor billboards and posters, transit advertising, dealer or point of purchase displays and promotional items such as match books and calendars (The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998). Additionally, a growing proportion of the adverts is being published on the Internet through corporate websites and portals, popular search engine sites, chat rooms, blogs, etc. Nevertheless, adverts in print media, such as newspapers and magazines are still very common and popular, particularly in developing countries.

Among the various media, the newspapers have certain beneficial features that make messages placed in them very convenient for consumers to access. Newspapers convey signs and messages that its readers can interpret at their leisure without a real-time mental constraint. This means that the reader can take time to decode and therefore give the information more scrutiny. This quality is also shared by magazines, but the latter enjoy lower readership, are often targeted at specific groups, cover a limited range of subjects or issues, and cost more. The quality of message permanence or durability is conspicuously lacking in radio and television, which convey transient auditory and visual messages that are thus likely to target emotions and on-the-spur of the moment behaviour and would not be easily amenable to careful interpretation and evaluation unless recorded (Dominick, 1998).

Most markets - regardless of size - have some kind of local newspaper coverage, which may include daily, weekly and weekend newspapers, shoppers’

guides, and social or special interest publications. Many newspapers often also feature advertising supplements dedicated to specific products and services. Typically, advertising makes up about a large percent of a newspaper's content and generates a high percent of a newspaper's revenue. While newspapers lack the intrusiveness of radio and television, they enable advertisers to reach readers of all age groups, ethnic backgrounds and income levels (Microsoft Encarta, 2006). Two types of advertising appear in newspapers: classified advertising, such as the want ads, and display advertising (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia, 2006). Display adverts range in size from as large as a full page to as small as one column in width and less than one inch 2.5 centimetres) in length. Display adverts often contain illustrations or photographs and usually provide information about where the product or service being advertised can be purchased.

QuickFacts (2006) revealed that a strong creative advertisement will perform well regardless of its size or position in a newspaper. In other words, a "bad" advertisement will not perform well even if it is placed in the front page. Advertisers often invite readers into their texts through photographs or pictures of admirable persons. In most cases, these serve to link products with the positive attributes, which such models have (Olaosun, 2005). Adverts which evoke notions of personal enhancement or advancement have been found to be highly effective (Kover, Goldberg and James, 1995). They explained that messages that play to consumers' desires for achievement or the ideal self arouse high levels of message empathy and, in turn, high liking of the advert and high purchase desire. They also serve also to construct a social identity for the audience, and there is always the sense of "use this product and be like this personality" in this device. Its overall persuasive focus is that of "authentication" of products (Oha, 2002:80). Other strategies that are usually used to ensure effective and successful advertisement pertain to message, media or channel selection, message and message tone, advert space and prominence, etc.

Cognitive researchers tend to agree, that compared to text, images are the first thing we see and the last we forget in media, and that the right image has the power of a thousand words. However, some researchers have suggested that visualisation may be

more effectively induced using a combination of words and images (Sheikh, 1986). Kover, Goldberg and James, (1995) also note that humour or the evocation of fear may be used in an advert. They observed that use of humour may be an effective emotion-stirring technique, but that it should be used carefully so that the technique does not result in a loss of product message. Zeitlin and Westwood (1986), had also observed that if the fear instilled by an advert is either too severe or not followed up with a reasonable solution, the reader or viewer of the advert message will not be able to surmount the instilled sense of dread and process the message.

### Research Objectives

As noted above, the adverts and other news stories featured by newspapers are likely to provide indications of the evolving developments in information products and services markets in the country. Hence, the first of the two main objectives of this study is to provide insight into the emerging nature of information products and services markets in the Nigerian economy. The second main objective of the study relates to providing insight into how the advertisers of the information products and services use various message delivery strategies in their adverts. Thus, this study was carried out to identify the different types of information products advertised in some selected newspapers over a specified period, as well as the nature of the advertising strategies that were used.

### Methodology

A research design, based on a content analysis of selected Nigerian newspapers over specified period, was used in the study. Newspapers were chosen out of the available media for advertising because of their high frequency of publication and permanence, which makes them excellent documentary sources for content analysis research.

Newspapers can usually be classified on the basis of the spatial area of their circulation into national, regional and local. Among the major Nigerian national daily newspapers are: *Punch*, *Guardian*, *This Day*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *Vanguard*, *Nation*, *News Nigerian*. The study focused on two of the national newspapers in Nigeria. The papers selected are the *Guardian*,

which was established in 1983, and the *Nigerian Tribune*, established in 1949. The two newspapers were chosen purposively for the following reasons. The *Guardian* newspaper is a national newspaper with high circulation within and outside the country and is patronised mainly by corporate institutions and white collar professionals, while the *Tribune* is the oldest national newspaper in Nigeria.

For the data extraction from the two newspapers, information products and services were classified into four main categories, following McLaughlin and Birinyi (1980):

- (a) *Content Products*: are physical entities that can hold information until it is needed (e.g. books, newspapers, etc.)
  - (b) *Conduit Products*: include pieces of equipment used to facilitate processing and transfer of information (e.g. computer and telecommunication equipment)
  - (c) *Content Services*: intangible time-based activities that are performed to simultaneously create and deliver information to clients (e.g. management consultancy services, IT human resource training and help desk services)
  - (d) *Conduit Services*: are provided through computer and communication equipment and infrastructure to enable consumers to create, access or exchange information (e.g. ISP services, cybercafé services, ISP services, telephone network services, library services)
- (d) *Information/Image orientation*: (Informational, Image, Both). Information-oriented adverts emphasise provision of factual information regarding the product or service. Image-oriented adverts seek to influence emotions and attitude through the presentation of carefully designed pictures, symbols and slogans.
  - (e) *Appeal strategy*: Appeal strategy refers to the emotion stirring strategies that advertisers use to engage consumers through the message tone (Humour, Fear, Self idealization, Indeterminate).
  - (f) *Icons strategy*: Use of icons in an advertisement in order to perpetuate, through the icons, thoughts of a product or service in the minds of consumers (Present, Not present)
  - (g) *Money-off strategy*: Use of temporary reduction in the price of a product or service in order to influence consumers demand for it (Used, Not Used).

Data were collected through the content analysis and coding of all the editions of the two newspapers published during 2005-2006. Information was extracted from the featured adverts and coded in terms of the following dimensions and values:

- (a) *Information product/service category advertised* (content product, conduit product, content service, conduit service)
- (b) *Size of advert* (Double facing pages, One page, Half page, Quarter page (QP), Other (smaller) sizes).
- (c) *Location* (Front page, Inside front, Back page, Inside back, Centre page, Other locations)

## Results and Findings

### Volume of Adverts

A total of 1462 editions of the two newspapers were examined, and only 365 editions (25.0%) of the editions did not contain any advert of an information product or service. Although both newspapers had roughly equal number of separate editions, the *Guardian* newspaper contributed 91% of the adverts of information products and services (4,194 adverts), while the *Nigerian Tribune* contributed only 9% (416 adverts). This finding could be due to different reasons. The *Guardian* is considered to be a national paper more than the *Nigerian Tribune*, and this could limit the ability of the *Nigerian Tribune* to attract advertisers from other regions of the country, as well as the number and spread of consumers that advertisers could hope to reach with adverts in it. Secondly, the *Guardian* had had a longer tradition of featuring information technology sections and inserts than the *Nigerian Tribune*, and advertisers might have caught on to this tradition thereby placing more adverts in it.

**Categories and Types of Information Products and Services Advertised**

Table 1 provides a cross tabulation of the frequencies of adverts of the four main categories of information products and services. It can easily be seen that a clear majority of the adverts in the Guardian are conduit products (55.8%), by a distance by conduit service (20.3%), content service (14.9%) and content product (9.1%). By contrast, the most advertised category of information products or service in the Nigerian Tribune was clearly conduit service (85.8%), followed by content product (9.9%). Thus, the evidence shows that the Guardian, which also carried 91.0% of all the adverts in the two newspapers, features adverts on such conduit products as computer, communication and office equipment such as computers, telephone handset, etc almost all of which are imported. This was followed by conduit services, such as communication and computer processing services such as value added telecommunication services, and ISP, cybercafé and data processing services. Content services, exemplified by management consultancy and training services, occupied the third place. However, for the Nigerian Tribune, as many as 85% of all adverts were on conduit information services, with very small proportions on the other

three types categories of information products and services.

Additionally, the Chi-square statistics at the bottom of the table shows that the differences in different proportions of adverts of different categories of information products and services in the two newspapers were also significant. However, the adverts in the two newspapers also exhibited peculiar features. As presented earlier, the majority of the adverts on conduit information services were in the Nigerian Tribune. This is probably because the adverts of conduit information services were placed mostly by firms based in South Western Nigeria, and the firms might be targeting customers based in that region. Services are usually client-customised and targeted. By contrast, the majority of the adverts on conduit information products were in the Guardian. Conduit information products comprises of computer and telecommunication equipment and devices most of which are imported and marketed nationally by large local firms or multinational companies.

Table 2 provides information about the different particular types of the four categories of information products and services advertised. In the table, *Telecom Service* includes all types of services that provide communication using some type of

**Table 1: Frequency of Adverts on Categories of Information Products and Services**

Category		Newspaper		Total
		<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Tribune</i>	
<i>Conduit product</i>	Count	<b>2339</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2350</b>
	Expected Count	2137.9	212.1	2350.0
	% within Newspaper	55.8%	2.6%	51.0%
<i>Conduit service</i>	Count	<b>850</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>1207</b>
	Expected Count	1098.1	108.9	1207.0
	% within Newspaper	20.3%	85.8%	26.2%
<i>Content product</i>	Count	<b>382</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>423</b>
	Expected Count	384.8	38.2	423.0
	% within Newspaper	9.1%	9.9%	9.2%
<i>Content service</i>	Count	<b>623</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>630</b>
	Expected Count	573.1	56.9	630.0
	% within Newspaper	14.9%	1.7%	13.7%
Total	Count	<b>4194</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>4610</b>
	Expected Count	4194.0	416.0	4610.0
	% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Pearson Chi-square: Value= 878.921; df = 3; Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .000				

signalling by radio or television signals, phone lines, etc. *Internet service* includes providing data communication through dial-up access, ISDN, cable, ADSL, wireless devices, satellite, etc. Phone service includes services using land, fixed or wireless infrastructure. Computer includes all types of computers and computer parts and accessories. Consumer electronics includes all electronic gadgets that facilitate the transfer and use of information like radio, television, video CD, audio CD, VHS, MP3 players, etc. *Network tools* refer to all network building devices and software, such as routers, VSAT, switches, etc. Compact disks include all types of video and audio disks that may be used to package data, information, video or music for sale. Audio-visual includes all kinds of audio and visual presentation equipment like cameras, projectors, public address systems, etc. The other labels are as generally understood.

As noted above, conduit products and conduit services dominated the adverts in terms of numbers. The main types of advertised conduit products were computer equipment and accessories, consumer electronics, printers and audio-visual equipment (projectors, electronic boards, etc), while the main types of conduit services were telecommunication and phone services, with Internet services coming a distant third position. Content services were more advertised than the content products, although both trailed by a great distance the adverts of conduit products and conduit services. Among the content services, training services led, followed by seminars and workshops, with only very few adverts of consultancy services. Adverts of newspapers led the content products category, followed in a distance by books and, thereafter, magazines. Absent were adverts of electronic content products, such as CD containing data, information and knowledge or containing video and music, although both legal and illegal copies of the latter types are widely bought and sold in the country.

Product type	Frequency	%
<b>Conduit products</b>		
Computer equipment	518	11.2
Consumer electronics	335	7.3
Printer	216	4.7
Audio-visual products	214	4.6

Scanner	92	2.0
Network Tools	90	2.0
CD/DVD (blank)	86	1.9
Copier	55	1.2
Fax Machine	11	0.2
Audio tape	1	0.0
<b>Conduit services</b>		
Telecom service	989	21.5
Phone service	816	17.7
Internet service	187	4.1
Courier service	33	0.7
Printing service	2	0.0
<b>Content products</b>		
Newspaper	237	5.1
Book	70	1.5
Magazine	29	0.6
<b>Content services</b>		
Training	365	7.9
Seminar	151	3.3
Workshop	101	2.2
Consultancy	12	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4610</b>	<b>100</b>

### Use of Advertising Strategies

Generally, the ways the adverts of information products and services were placed in both newspapers were similar. Also, more than half of all the adverts in each newspaper contained both informational and image-oriented messages, with only very few containing only image-oriented messages. Most of the adverts occupied the 'other' size category (i.e. smaller than quarter page) in both newspapers.

Table 3 provides a cross tabulation of the frequencies of page space sizes of the adverts by the four main categories of information products and services. The percentages in the final column of the table show that half of the adverts (49.8%) were of the 'other' sizes, which were smaller than quarter page. This was followed by the proportion of the adverts that occupied whole page (24.1%), half page (15.6%) and quarter page (9.3%). The percentages within the table provide further insight. The majority (63.1%) of the adverts of conduit products fall into the smaller 'other' sizes category. By contrast, the majority of the adverts of conduit services fall into the whole page category (56.5%), followed by those in the 'other' category (27.4%). By contrast, the content product adverts were distributed across different sizes, with 37.4%, 27.7%, 23.9% and 10.9% of the adverts falling into the half

**Table 3: Size Frequency of the Adverts by Category of Information Product or Service**

Advert size		Product category				Total
		Conduit product	Conduit service	Content product	Content service	
<i>Double page</i>	Count		<b>10</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1 1</b>	58
	Expected Count	29.6	15.2	5.3	7.9	58.0
	% within Product category	4%	3.8%	.2%	.2%	1.3%
<i>Whole page</i>	Count	<b>296</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>31</b>	1110
	Expected Count	565.8	290.6	101.9	151.7	1110.0
	% within Product category	12.6%	56.5%	23.9%	4.9%	24.1%
<i>Half page</i>	Count	<b>307</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>137</b>	718
	Expected Count	366.0	188.0	65.9	98.1	718.0
	% within Product category	13.1%	9.6%	37.4%	21.7%	15.6%
<i>Quarter page</i>	Count	<b>255</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>96</b>	429
	Expected Count	218.7	112.3	39.4	58.6	429.0
	% within Product category	10.9%	2.7%	10.9%	15.2%	9.3%
<i>Other sizes</i>	Count	<b>1482</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>365</b>	2295
	Expected Count	1169.9	600.9	210.6	313.6	2295.0
	% within Product category	63.1%	27.4%	27.7%	57.9%	49.8%
Total	Count	<b>2350</b>	<b>1207</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>630</b>	4610
	Expected Count	2350.0	1207.0	423.0	630.0	4610.0
	% within Product category	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-square: Value= 1360.990; df = 12; Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .000

page, other sizes, whole page and quarter page categories, respectively. Adverts of content services were distributed mainly among the other sizes (57.9%), half page (21.7%) and quarter page (15.2%) categories.

Analyses of data revealed that most of all the adverts (88%) were located in other pages of the newspapers other than the front page, middle pages, back page, inside front page and inside back page. Although the Nigerian Tribune featured most of the adverts that were on the front page (99.4% of those adverts), QuickFacts (2006) revealed that the position or location of an advert in a medium does not alone determine the readership or effectiveness of an advert, and that a strong creative advert will perform well regardless of its placement in a newspaper. In order words, a poor advert will not perform well even if it is placed in the front page. In view of this, other analyses were undertaken to ascertain the informational, image creation, tone and other content strategies that were used in the adverts.

Cognitive researchers agree that, compared to text, images are the first thing we see and the last we forget in media, and that the right image has the power of a thousand words. However, Table 4 shows that the number of the adverts that used only images was only ten out of 4,610. However, other researchers have suggested that visualisation may be more effectively induced using a combination of words and images (Sheikh, 1986). Likely in line with this reasoning, less than 40% of the adverts provided only information, while about 60% provided both textual information and images. In addition, Table 5 shows that only 2.7% of the adverts used icons in delivering their messages.

**Table 4: Use of Information and Image Provision Strategies**

	Frequency	%
Information only	1792	38.9
Product Images mostly	10	.2
Both Information and images	2808	60.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>4610</b>	<b>100.0</b>

	Frequency	%
Icons not present	4484	97.3
Icons present	126	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>4610</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Furthermore, Table 6 reveals that most of the adverts (92.8%) did not employ any of the emotion-evoking strategies, such as self idealisation, humour or fear. Adverts which evoke notions of personal enhancement or advancement have been found to be highly effective (Kover, Goldberg and James, 1995). They explained that messages that play to consumers' desires for achievement or the ideal self arouse high levels of message empathy and, in turn, high liking of the advert and high purchase desire. However, only a meagre one percent of the adverts used this strategy. Kover, Goldberg and James, (1995) also note that humour is another frequently effective emotion-stirring technique, but that it should be used carefully so that the technique does not result in a loss of product message. However, only 5.7% of the adverts used the technique. Also, only 0.6% of the adverts used 'fear' as an advertising technique. Zeitlin and Westwood (1986), had observed that if the fear instilled by an advert is either too severe or not followed up with a reasonable solution, the reader or viewer of the advert message will not be able to surmount the instilled sense of dread and process the message.

	Frequency	%
Fear	26	.6
Humour	262	5.7
Self idealisation	44	1.0
None	4278	92.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>4610</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Adverts sometimes try to persuade a purchase decision by offering temporary reductions in the normal prices of a product or service. This is referred to as the some 'money-off' strategy. Is this strategy used by advertisers of information products and services? Table 7 shows in the last column that money-off strategies were used by only 11.4 percent of the adverts. Furthermore, the percentages in the table show that money-off strategy is used most by

conduit services (20.1% of the adverts in this category), followed by some distance by adverts in the conduit products (9.2%) and content services (8.6%) categories, and least by adverts in the content products category (2.4%). The differences in percentages were also significant, as shown by the chi-square statistics.

## Discussion

A key finding of this study is that conduit information products (which are essentially information technology equipment), and conduit information services (which are services based on information technology infrastructure) were the most advertised, whereas content information products and content information services were least advertised.

Conduit information products are essentially physical information technology products such as computers, office equipment and telecommunication equipment. Most such equipment are presently imported into Nigeria, and this has negative economic consequences, including low local value added and substantial foreign exchange outflow. The equipment may be purchased and used individually (e.g. laptops, telephone hand sets) or interconnected to form information technology infrastructure (e.g. servers, VSAT equipment), upon which conduit information services are based. In turn, conduit information services provide scope for various local value-adding activities by service support personnel and by the ubiquitous roadside mobile phone kiosks. For instance, Olubamise and Awe (2007) report that growth in these services has been phenomenal because Nigeria's large population had been starved of such services for decades. They observe that roadside call centres now abound especially in urban areas and small towns, and that these are operated mostly by women aged 20-29 years who had completed secondary school, although increasing numbers of unemployed male youth are also venturing into that business. Obayelu and Ogunlade (2006) also report that many unemployed youth also run shops for the sale of cell phone accessories as a major form of self-employment and livelihood. Generally, conduit services have greater local labour content potential than conduit products because most of the latter are imported, while services are often geared to local markets and usually supported by customised and personalised service support.

**Table 7: Use of Money-Off Strategies by Category of Information Product and Service Categories**

		Product category				Total
		<i>Conduit product</i>	<i>Conduit service</i>	<i>Content product</i>	<i>Content service</i>	
<b>Money-Off not used</b>	Count	<b>2133</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>4086</b>
	Expected Count	2082.9	1069.8	374.9	558.4	4086.0
	% within Product category	90.8%	79.9%	97.6%	91.4%	88.6%
<b>Money-Off Used</b>	Count	<b>217</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>524</b>
	Expected Count	267.1	137.2	48.1	71.6	524.0
	% within Product category	9.2%	20.1%	2.4%	8.6%	11.4%
<b>Total</b>	Count	2350	1207	423	630	4610
	Expected Count	2350.0	1207.0	423.0	630.0	4610.0
	% within Product category	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-square: Value= 141.584; df = 3; Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .000

The observed low volume of adverts of content information products and services indicate that the industrial sectors and markets for such products and services are underdeveloped in the country. The implication is that content products (e.g. books, journals, databases, packaged industry or market reports, etc) that contain pre-packaged and customised data, information or knowledge are yet to gain commercial vibrancy in the Nigerian information industry. As shown by the data in Table 2, newspapers are the most advertised content products in the newspapers themselves, with books a very distant second. Only very few adverts of electronic content products, except the online versions of newspapers, were advertised. This also shows the underdevelopment of markets for local electronic content products, such as local commercial websites, databases or search engine sites, government websites, electronic journals and magazines, etc. These findings confirm the usual lament by researchers of the general underdevelopment of the online content that African countries could share with the rest of the world through the Internet, as noted by Mutula (2008). This also indicates the under development of the commercial marketing of packaged data, information and knowledge products from government and private sector organisations targeted to personal and institutional consumers.

Another important finding is that on average adverts of conduit information services tend to buy

much bigger spaces in the newspapers than adverts of conduit information products, while adverts of content products and services buy the least space. Advert space in newspapers is expensive; therefore, size of adverts may depend on the extent of competition and profitability of firms in the markets for the advertised products and services. Adverts of conduit products mostly occupied small ‘other’ spaces in the newspapers, most probably because these product markets are dominated by large numbers of small scale distributors of computers and consumer electronics which are, consequently fiercely competitive with low profit margins. Most such small firms clearly cannot afford huge advertisement budgets, although a few large marketers of established brands like LG and Samsung products can afford them. The vibrancy, competition and profitability in the Nigerian telecommunication (particularly mobile phone) services markets at the time of this study was not in doubt as the sector was rated as one of the fastest growing in the world (Olubamise and Awe, 2007). This probably explains why the firms marketing conduit services (such as MTN, Glo and Zain) in the sector could afford the high costs of repeated whole page adverts.

**Conclusion**

This study has shown that it is possible to gain some understanding of developments in emerging markets

for information products and services by analysing the content of adverts of these services in newspapers and other mass media. In that direction, this study has provided some baseline knowledge about such markets in Nigeria.

The findings of the study signposts the need for Nigeria to implement appropriate information industry development policies to promote the development of the information content sectors of its economy, alongside the usual emphasis on the development of information technology infrastructures. It is important to emphasise here that, although information technology products and services (also referred to in this paper as conduit information products and services) are most valuable when they are actually exploited to create, exchange content information products and services that contain useful data, information and knowledge.

Finally, it is appropriate to note some limitations of this study. The study surveyed adverts in only two newspapers that circulate in Nigeria. Also, adverts based in other media (e.g. radio, television, web sites) might yield similar or different findings. Finally, Nevertheless, it is important to note also that lack of adverts may not portray the total picture of the vibrancy of different markets in the Nigerian information industry. This is buttressed by the relative lack of adverts of video and music on CD/DVD, although there are thriving markets for these in the country. Adverts often serve both awareness creating and competitive purposes, and would be more frequent in new and/or competitive products and services markets, and less frequent in established markets.

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**\*Rafiat Ajibade Oyekunle** is a Lecturer at the Department of Information and Communication Science, University of Ilorin. She holds B.Sc. Public Administration of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria and Master of Information Science of the University of Ibadan. Her research interests include information communication, e-business and social informatics.

**\*Mutawakilu Adisa Tiamiyu** teaches at the Africa Regional Centre for Information Science which he heads as Director. He holds a master's degree in Economics of the University of Ibadan and a doctorate degree in information science of the University of Western Ontario, Canada. His research interests are in e-government systems, design of data banks and other information products and services, and economics of the information industry.



# Coverage of Library Issues in Ghanaian Newspapers, 2001 – 2006

**Gladys Kwadzo**

*gkwadzo@libr.ug.edu.gh*

*Balme Library, University of Ghana, P. O. Box  
LG 24, Legon, Accra, Ghana*

## **Abstract**

*The study examined the frequency and prominence of library-related articles in state-owned newspapers in Ghana. The editions of the four newspapers, two dailies and two weeklies, published from January 2001 to December 2006 were examined. The editions contained a total of only 174 libraries-related articles, showing that library-related articles were seldom published. The majority of the articles (63.2%) presented what-took-place information on library-related events and episodes, and lacked in-depth background information and analysis of issues. Most of the articles were also on community libraries. Only 23.6% of the articles comprised feature or thematic articles, while 13.2% were letters. Only two of the articles were editorials. The articles were not placed in prominent locations in the newspapers, as only one article was published on a front page and the caption of that article was not as bold and prominent as the other articles on the page. All the other articles on libraries appeared in the second half of the newspapers. Library professionals should work toward writing stories frequently about library issues as they would be able to articulate the issues better than non-professionals. They should also provide information tips and feeds to journalists to enable them write informative stories on libraries.*

## **Keywords**

Libraries, newspapers, news stories, Ghana

## **Introduction**

Newspapers, like any other news communication media, aim to inform, educate and entertain. They are usually inexpensive, easily accessible, have diverse social uses, and can be read and reread. They often circulate widely, thereby having potential impact on large numbers of people in a country. Xu (2006) also pointed out that 47.2% of China's huge population consider newspapers as their first source of information, a proportion much higher than for television and radio. Although newspapers' pre-eminence continues to be challenged by radio, television, periodicals and websites, they still remain popular and influential. Yanovitzky (2002) reported that on average, legislators spent 1.8 hours each day reading daily newspapers and 1.5 hours a day watching television news programmes. Kawamoto (2003) also noted the power of the press through which was unfolded, the Watergate scandal that led to the resignation of President Nixon of the USA in the 1970's. Much of the credit went to the Washington Post newspaper whose investigative prowess exposed the deal and led to important social reforms.

Newspapers usually feature news stories, feature articles, advertisements, letters to the editor, editorials, among others. They usually report general interest events that occur within 24 hour periods, although non-daily newspapers provide news covering a longer period of time. They also serve as primary sources of general information due to their local origin. Due to these features, newspapers have become a principal media for serious reporting and analysis of social issues. Government agencies,

commissions as well as individuals have relied heavily on newspapers for the enumeration and characterisation of events. People have investigated what proportions of news as a whole are devoted to specific subject matters of their interest. Some people and businesses advertise their products and services in the newspapers to persuade and to attract customers. But where one wants to promote without directly advertising, one can seek newspaper coverage. Because newspapers serve as an important source of information for many including opinion leaders and policy makers, the frequency and prominence of library-related content in newspapers may influence libraries-oriented policies in government and public opinions and attitudes in communities at large.

Libraries play a major role in the educational system and in the development of a strong human resource base in the socio-economic development of a country. They collect, organise, preserve and make available information and knowledge as and when it is needed. Thus, people use libraries to acquire information and knowledge to improve their lives. Ghana continues to implement various educational reforms in order to provide improving access to quality education by its citizens. One of the factors affecting quality education in the country is lack of well-stocked and well-equipped libraries, which some also attribute as one of the primary contributors to the poor reading habits among Ghanaians. Unfortunately, the promotion and development of library systems in Ghana have not been accorded the priority they deserve (Alemna, 2006). The document, *Meeting the Challenges of Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2002) elaborated on the current state of libraries in Ghana, noting that the libraries in Ghanaian schools are bedeviled with inadequate and obsolete materials, inadequate library buildings and infrastructure, inadequate staffing and inadequate funding. Inadequate funding has negative effects on all aspects of library management, from acquisition of new/current reading materials and equipment, subscription to journals and to staffing.

Alemna (2006) also noted that the poor recognition of the importance of libraries in the educational and development processes was also getting worse, and library facilities and services were getting poorer. Could this be due to inadequate

coverage and reporting of library issues and problems in the most easily accessible social communication media such as newspapers, radio and television? This question, as well as recognition of the great potential influence stories and articles in newspapers can exert on the awareness and attitudes of opinion leaders, politicians, policy makers and members of the society at large motivated this study, which sought to find out the frequency and prominence of libraries-related stories and articles in the national newspapers in Ghana.

### Literature Review

Previous studies that looked at newspaper coverage of different issues suggested that the way in which stories and articles on the issues are portrayed in terms of frequency, prominence and framing influences perceptions and decision making. These studies supported the assumption that intense media attention and coverage of issues are instrumental in attracting policy attention to the public problems that are low on policy-makers' agenda. It also creates a sense of urgency among policy makers to generate immediate short-term solutions to the problems. Yanovitzky (2002) studied effects of news coverage on policy attention and actions in relation to drunk-driving from January 1978 to December 1995. Lexis-Nexis on-line database was searched to generate the census of all drunk-driving related stories that appeared in the New York Times, Washington Post and the Associated Press. One of the findings was that as the average number of news stories per month increased, so also did bills passed to check drunk-driving increase. For example in 1978 to 1980, when the average number of 14.8 stories was published in a month, five bills were passed. From 1985 to 1998 when the average monthly news story rose to 93.4, bills passed increased to 39.

Myhre et al (2002) investigated the nature and extent of alcohol coverage in California newspapers by examining the frequency, positioning and framing of alcohol-related articles in nine newspapers. A sample comprising 1,377 editions of the newspapers was content analysed. One of the findings was that alcohol was mentioned at least once a day in nine daily newspapers serving California communities. It was commented that although alcohol content in the daily newspapers is a small fraction of all news,

the fact that it was mentioned on a daily basis merits attention. This daily mentioning would give California newspaper readers the opportunity to read at least one story mentioning alcohol a day. In addition, the cumulative effect of consistent alcohol coverage suggested that reporters and editors had the opportunity to educate the public on numerous alcohol-related issues. Other studies were of the view that when topics did not receive much publication, it means much importance was not accorded the issue (Essegbey, 1996; Amoakohene, 1995; Woodruff, Berends & Agron, 2003).

Beyond sheer frequency of news stories, how the stories are presented or displayed also influences the way the public interprets and responds to them. A news item which is placed on the front page of the paper in bold title or at the right corner of a page attracts more reader attention than articles placed less prominently. Woodruff, Berends and Agron (2003) examined the news in California's major newspapers during 1998-2000 to determine how newspapers cover childhood nutrition. They noted that substantive articles on childhood nutrition policy were rare. However, whatever substantive news that was available were well placed. They also realized that in-depth articles on important factors that affect children's health were mostly contributions from public health professionals.

Another way of giving prominence to an issue is publishing it as an editorial. Editorial contains the opinion of the editor or the newspaper. It provides a kind of interpretation, comment or opinion that gives the reader added perspective on stories carried on other pages. According to Habel (2006) editorials are viewed as the opinionated extension of what is reported in the news sections. They are perceived as the voice of a community of experts or representing the views of an informed group which can sway the public or serve as a reflection of the views of ideologues. He argued that editorials are under no obligation to present both sides of arguments or to moderate other people's view. They challenge, rebuke or praise as they deem fit. They make statements potentially valuable to serve as instruments for political influence because they have policy influence in mind. Editorials thus have policy ramifications and can change attitudes and behaviours of readers towards matters.

In his study of assessing the level of editorial influence on national policies, Habel (2006) examined all speeches made on the floor of the US Congress (House and Senate) for references made to editorials published by the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal newspapers in 1985, 1989, 1993 and 2002. He found out that the frequency of citing editorials on the floor was 595 times, with 1985 featuring the highest of 229 for the two newspapers during the period. He stated that during the 600 days that congress was in session during the four year period, editorials were cited 331 times, roughly every other day. The trend for both parties – Democrats and Republicans – was also similar. He said those references were made most often to support their positions on issues rather than to criticise opponents. In a similar study Yoo (2001) noted that editorial coverage of newspapers on older immigrants in the United States influenced federal policy reform on supplemental security income (SSI) to those immigrants.

Framing or portrayal of people, situations, or events in the media not only affect policy or decision making but can also damn or enhance the image of a person, profession or event, (Luthman, 2007); Robinson, 2006); Dilevko and Gottlieb, 2004). Whatever is published about a people or a profession, or an issue reveal much about how the public understands that issue. The result from such publications can disprove the initial contentions already published or perpetuate stereotypes already held.

Rooney-Browne's (2007) study focused on how to get journalists and others to write stories on issues. She looked at how a library festival in East Renfrewshire changed the way people look at libraries. She discussed how this library and its information service adapted to changes in cultural demands and user expectations to deliver a concept that communicates its social value to all of its stakeholders. She highlighted all the preparations and activities undertaken to make the festival a success. The end result of this festival was that the library service enjoyed free editorials across a variety of publications among other worthy news generated for the press.

In Ghana, Essegbey (1996) undertook a limited content analysis of some state-owned and private

newspapers published in the country in 1995 with the aim of assessing their coverage of science and technology issues. He found that none of the stories carried by the papers was a front page story.

## Methodology

This study was based on a content analysis of the articles written on libraries during the period January 2001 to December, 2006 in two national dailies (*Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*) and two state-owned weeklies (*Spectator* and the *Mirror*), hereafter referred in this article as *Graphic*, *Times*, *Spectator* and *Mirror*, respectively. They are papers which have been established long ago and are still publishing. These papers were selected for analysis based on their respective size of circulation and spread of readers. News stories whose headlines had the word library in it were selected. The categories of news items covered were feature articles, editorials and letters. Advertisements were excluded. The stories were examined to determine the types of libraries covered, the kind of issues presented and the kind of prominence given to the stories.

## Analyses and Results

### Frequency of Coverage

The total number of library-related articles (editorials, features and news) published during the period is shown in Table 1. There were a total of 174 articles on libraries during the five-year period. Only 25 articles were published each year in 2001 and 2002, and 26 articles in 2003. The number of articles improved to 32 in 2004, dropped to 28 in 2005, and rose to a new high of 38 in 2006. The annual average was 29 articles.

Year	Number of articles	%
2006	38	21.8
2005	28	16.1
2004	32	18.4
2003	26	14.9
2002	25	14.4
2001	25	14.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The rate of publication of articles on libraries was very low. *Graphic* and *Times* are daily newspapers published six days in a week, while the *Mirror* and *Spectator* publish once a week. This means about 312 editions for each daily newspaper and 52 editions for each weekly paper per year, for a total of 4,368 editions in the six years. Thus, the library articles per issue rate was a very lowly  $174/4368 = 0.0061$ . The clear implication is that library-related stories were not frequent. Ameh (1996) suggests that this may be because newspapers focus on political issues more than other social issues such as education under which libraries are usually categorised. Another reason could be that journalists or other persons who wrote stories for the newspapers were just not interested in library issues. Yanovitzky (2002) pointed out that interests, cultural ties and proximity, among others, are factors that affect the selection and presentation of news in newspapers.

Year	Coverage of Newspapers				
	Daily Graphic	Ghanaian Times	Weekly Spectator	Mirror	Total
2006	22	11	3	2	38 (21.8%)
2005	14	10	2	2	28 (16.1%)
2004	10	17	1	4	32 (18.4%)
2003	14	8	2	2	26 (14.9%)
2002	14	8	3	-	25 (14.4%)
2001	8	14	1	2	25 (14.4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>82 (47.1%)</b>	<b>68 (39.1%)</b>	<b>12 (6.9%)</b>	<b>12 (6.9%)</b>	<b>174 (100%)</b>

### Articles published by the Different Newspapers

There was a great difference between the number of issues published by the daily newspapers and the weeklies. Out of the 174 articles the two dailies accounted for 86%. Graphic published 47.1%, Times published 39.1%, and each weekly paper published 6.9%. The statistics in Table 2 shows that during the six year period, Daily Graphic recorded 82 issues; Times recorded 68, Mirror 12 and Spectator 12. One could not explain why Spectator and Mirror covered such low figures. It could only be speculated that since these are weeklies there were other news items that were of priority to them than library issues.

### Types of Libraries Covered by the Articles

The types of libraries covered by the newspaper articles fall into the following categories: Public, Special, national, school, community, academic, and children’s libraries. Articles that did not mention any specific type of library, were placed in the General category. Table 3 shows that community library received the most coverage by the newspapers during the period, accounting for 54 articles (31.0%). This was followed by public libraries (24.7%), school libraries (15.5%), and the general category (10.3%). National, academic and special libraries accounted for less than 10 issues each.

Libraries	No. of issues	Percentage
Academic	9	5.2
Children	14	8.1
Community	54	31.0
General	18	10.3
National	4	2.3
Public	43	24.7
School	27	15.5
Special	5	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100</b>

Community libraries received so much coverage because their services and materials are community oriented and accessible to all categories of people. They normally provide local information service to

small geographical areas and provide information on any topic, including those on social, domestic, health, educational and other matters. Their information services are expected to focus on the needs of the community. Moreover, community libraries enable the public to gain access to its information services at little or no cost, thereby play vital roles in the eradication of illiteracy. Public libraries were the second most covered category. In Ghana, public libraries have been established all over the country and they provide services similar to those of community libraries. Each region has a public library situated at the regional capital. School libraries are also found in almost all senior high schools in the country. Where a facility is being used by many people much attention is also on that facility, and this could explain the moderately high coverage of public libraries. The least covered type of library, the national library, does not exist in the country. Therefore, only professional librarians and a few other people who know about the importance of national libraries would talk about it. Accordingly, library professionals should motivate journalists to write about national libraries, or write articles about national libraries themselves. Such articles would help push for the establishment of a national library in the country.

### Types of Information Reported

The majority of the articles provided episodic or event-based information pertaining to news about inauguration and commissioning of new libraries, on-going library projects and donations to libraries. These were usually reported after the event. These articles had very little or no background information and analyses. Examples of such articles were those captioned “Suhum Library Inaugurated”, “Gold Fields Supports Tarkwa Library”, “Rotary Club Donates Books to Osu Children’s Library”; “US-based NGO Donates to Balme Library”. Table 4 shows that 63.2% of the articles was informational or episodic following an event, 23.6% were substantive feature articles and 13.2% was letters. The episodic articles lacked in-depth background information and analyses. The thematic articles on the other hand provided background information and interpretations and offered recommendations for improving libraries. Only news stories with background data leads readers to focus on solutions

involving policy makers and public institutions (Myhre et al., 2002). Mu'azu (1991) had emphasised that news stories pertaining to libraries should be written by individuals with knowledge rather than reporters working for the various newspapers. He observed that reports filed by reporters most often reflected the reporters' lack of background information about the subject, and recommended that issue-oriented articles should be written alongside event-related news so that a broader perspective of issues would be reported.

Content type	Frequency	%
Feature Article	41	23.6
Informational	110	63.2
Letters	23	13.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100</b>

Furthermore, as shown in Table 5, the daily newspapers Graphic and Times carried most of the informational news items, as well as all the feature articles. Out of the 110 informational news items Graphic carried 53.6%, Times carried 37.3%, Spectator carried 8.1% and Mirror carried only 1%. The length of the stories also varied. Some were long and well researched, whilst some talked briefly about the importance of libraries in the educational reforms and the need to inculcate reading habits into the general public, especially school children, in order to improve their reading skills. Some of the stories also took the opportunity to inform the public about other projects that the donors/philanthropists were undertaking and their future plans. Some of these articles were written on events that were organised by librarians or on libraries. It is interesting to note that although Graphic carried more articles on libraries (56.1%), Times published more (56.1%) of the thematic articles.

Letters on and about libraries were also few and far between. Table 5 also shows that Mirror (a weekly) published the largest number (47.8%) of the 23 letters. This was followed by Graphic with five (21.7%), Times had four (17.4%) and the least with three (13%) was carried by Spectator. The impression gained from some of the reviewed literature is that state-owned newspapers and dailies normally carried fewer letters than other types of newspapers. Ameh (1996) noted that daily newspapers published fewer letters than non-dailies. In his study, he found that *Daily Graphic* carried 1.3 letters per issue, whilst *Chronicle* (a non-daily and a privately-owned newspaper) carried 6.5 letters per issue. Citing Karikari, he opined that the reason for state-owned newspapers publishing fewer letters was that the public had little confidence in the state-owned newspapers and fear that such newspaper would censor public opinion by not publishing some of the letters they received. It is rather unfortunate that not many letters were published as, according to views from the literature, letters are supposed to provide a feedback mechanism that shows public participation in the discussion of public issues. The few letters on libraries that were published in the newspapers suggest that members of the public were not voicing their views adequately on the condition of library services in the country.

### Prominence of the Library-Related Articles

According to Dominick (1996), stories that are given page one space and eight column headlines are obviously judged to be more important than others, thereby indicating the strong newsworthiness of the issue. Stories about libraries in the newspapers were not given much prominence in terms of positioning on the newspaper page. Only one story was on the front page, and the caption of even that story was not bold as the other stories on the same front page. The reason for the rare front page library story could

Content type	Newspaper				Total
	Graphic	Times	Mirror	Spectator	
Feature Article	18(43.9%)	23(56.1%)	-	-	41
Informational	59(53.6%)	41(37.3%)	1(1%)	9(8.1%)	110
Letters	5(21.7%)	4(17.4%)	11(47.8%)	3(13.0%)	23
Total	82	68	12	12	174

probably be that because the story was an outcome from a long strike that affected many people throughout the country.

The feature articles included only two editorials, which means that over a period of six years and out of 4,368 editions of the four newspapers, only two editorials were written on libraries. One was written when the Minister for Women and Children's Affairs commissioned the children's library at the Ghana Book Trust, on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2001. The second one was written on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006 when the first librarian in Ghana was inducted into the Academy of Arts and Sciences. The explanation for the editorials on these events could be the personalities involved. Dominick (1996) pointed out that for a story to be newsworthy it should have five qualities – timeliness, proximity, prominence, consequence and human interest. One of the stories involved a government minister who was an important political person. The second story above was an uplifting story bordering on the principle of human interest. This principle posits that stories that arouse emotions among people or those that are ironic, bizarre, dramatic uplifting, etc become newsworthy. The emotional story was that of *First Librarian in Ghana* being inducted into such a *prestigious* fellowship.

## Discussion

In spite of the importance of libraries in our educational systems and for promoting development as a whole, the major national newspapers that are read nationwide did not carry many stories on libraries. There were only 174 libraries-related stories out of the probably hundreds of thousands of stories that were published in various editions of the newspapers during 2001-2006. This finding is in stark contrast with Myhre et al. (2002), which showed that alcohol – the subject they studied – was mentioned at least once a day in the daily newspapers serving communities in California. This gave the readers in those communities the opportunity to read news on alcohol daily. By contrast, the findings of the present study imply that Ghanaian readers and public policy makers would not have the opportunity to read and be educated about libraries frequently. As stated in the reviewed literature, heightened media attention on issues

attracts greater policy attention and may pressurise policy makers to find solutions to the issues.

A related finding of the present study is that only the daily newspapers – Graphic and Times — published all the substantive feature articles on libraries, whilst the weekend ones – Spectator and Mirror – published none of the substantive articles. This is at variance with Essegbey's (1996) finding that the *Spectator* (a weekend newspaper) published substantive articles on science and technology. This finding of the present study is difficult to explain, but it may be speculated that Spectator was less interested in library issues compared with other matters.

The news stories were not only few but were also not placed prominently. Only one story appeared on front page and only two editorials were published on libraries. This finding corroborates Essegbey's (1996) finding that science and technology news stories did not receive front page appearance because the newspapers were more interested in political news than developmental ones. By contrast, Woodruff et al. (2003) had reported that out of the 88 food and nutrition stories analysed, one-third of them appeared on the front page, indicating the strong newsworthiness of such issues. They also noted that although substantive news stories on food and nutrition were few, they were however often prominently placed.

Most of the articles were also episodic or just informational. This finding corroborates findings by Myhre et al. (2002), Yanovizky (2002), Amoakohene (1995), among others. Such articles lacked important detailed background information that would enable the reader to think deeply and draw appropriate conclusions. Amoakohene (1995), for example, reported that although some of the newspapers she surveyed regularly discussed environmental issues often in a well researched manner, substantive well researched stories were not many as compared to event related news. She recommended that to make the desired impact the media must make the necessary linkage between environmental issues and development, and that such linkage must be presented in a comprehensible manner to readers, as well as to policy makers and authorities. Myhre et al. (2002) also pointed out that even though episodic natured stories may be effective initially in grabbing the attention of readers, thematic stories

are better able to give detailed information and suggest policy solutions to readers. The deduction is that both substantive and non-substantive feature articles are important. There should therefore be a balance in the type of presentation of the stories.

## Recommendations

Library issues are connected with education, literacy, research and innovation, and are therefore as important to social development as political, sports, economic, entertainment and other social issues. The findings of this study have significant implications for both the journalists and the librarians. Government and the news media have need to support libraries in the country. Providing well stocked libraries should go hand in hand with any educational reform programme. The attention of the authorities however depends on how much and what reporters publish in the media on libraries. Reporters should do more by writing well researched news and feature articles on libraries in order to articulate library issues adequately, educate the public and galvanise policy makers to necessary developmental action. They should not limit themselves to mere news reporting. Library managers as well as the Ghana Library Association should also network with journalists and news reporters and provide regular news sheets to news media or educate and motivate journalists on what and how to write about libraries. Newsom and Carrell (1991) have suggested that getting news media to cover a story is often the key to getting better coverage. However, background information should also be provided to them, and quickly. This is because media professionals will write their stories from whatever scraps of information they can find if detailed and accurate information is not provided to them in time.

## Conclusion

This study has found that news stories on libraries were rarely published in Ghanaian newspapers. Moreover, the few news stories that are published are mostly about events and also not given adequate prominence in the newspapers. It is of concern that not many news stories were reported to highlight the poor condition of libraries in the country and the effects it has on pupils, students, the whole educational system, as well as the life-long learning prospects

of the population. As at the time of writing this paper, news items on libraries continue to follow the same trend as reported in this paper. Stories on libraries are few and far in between, and are mostly informational, episodic and event driven. The findings of this study should galvanise librarians, library advocates and journalists to action towards promoting all types of libraries and information services in the country.

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**Gladys Kwadzo** is a Librarian at the Balme Library, University of Ghana, Legon. She holds BA (Hons) Sociology, Graduate Diploma in Library Studies, and MPhil (Library Studies) from the

University of Ghana.

# Library Automation in Nigeria: The Bowen University Experience

**Aderonke O. Otunla**

*aderonkeotunla@gmail.com*

*Bowen University Library, Iwo, Nigeria.*

and

**Esther A. Akanmu-Adeyemo**

*estade7@yahoo.com*

*Bowen University Library, Iwo, Nigeria.*

## Abstract

*An automated library environment is quite different from that of a library whose operations and services are still done manually. The paper shares Bowen University Library, Iwo, Nigeria automation experiences using Open Source Library Management Software, Koha. The paper explains the automation process such as choice of software, installation and configuration, training of staff and users, retrospective conversion, challenges and experience after automation. The paper carries out survey of library user satisfaction with the system. The result shows that users prefer the automated system to manual system. It also explains how automation has enhanced operations and provision of information services. The paper among others encourages libraries to consider the use of an open source software for their automation project, advises that they should be open to changes that ICT introduces to library profession, and settle the issue of regular power supply with management before embarking on automation project.*

## Keywords:

University Library; Bowen University; Library Automation; Bowen University Library; Academic Library Automation.

## Introduction

The application of ICT to almost all spheres of life is no longer a new phenomenon. Shiloba (2005) stated that for libraries and librarians to cope with the information demands by the users they need to have the knowledge, skills and tools in handling digital information. Libraries in Nigeria are trying to automate their functions. According to Agha (1986) library automation has been a subject of attention since the mid 1970s because of the spreading knowledge of the new technologies. However, there have been challenges and constraints facing library automation which could be general. The challenges and/or constraints include, among others: erratic power supply, inadequate professional librarians to execute the project, absence of maintenance and support agreement, poor ICT infrastructure, poor funding, and poor ICT skills among library staff. (Agha, 1986; Alabi, 1986; Agboola, 1993; Ondari-Okemiwa 1999; Agboola, 2000; Ani, Esin and Edem 2005; Oduwole, 2005; Igun, 2006; Nok, 2006; Igben and Akobo, 2007; and Adeyomoye, 2008).

Libraries in Nigeria are at cross roads in their attempt to automate their operations. One of the major issues has to do with choice of software to deploy. Just as Onohwakpor and Anre (n.d.) observed, software selection decision in libraries is basically based on report from other colleagues through conferences on what they feel and heard the software could offer. They also note that some of the libraries do not do a thorough system analysis to ascertain what their library needs are. Onohwakpor and Anre further note that, dependence on software vendors has been of great disadvantage. This is true especially where the library staff input is inadequate in the acquisition and installation, with the library ending up with an inappropriate automated system. Despite these challenges, Agha (1986) observed while carrying out a survey observed that Nigeria

library workers are enthusiastic about and willing to use new technologies. In spite of this interest, findings on automated services in Nigerian universities by Sani and Tiamiyu (2002) revealed that the services were far from adequate and that out of about 29 different automated services that one will expect from a modern university, only 40% were available and utilised.

In spite of the challenges automation brings, its benefits quite outweigh its disadvantages. It is a known fact that automation of library enables easy access to library materials, and allows staff to better serve the patrons and facilitate a multitude of tasks such as acquisitions, cataloguing, circulation and reference etc. Tamuno and Ojedokun (1997) observed that once a library is computerised there are some intangible benefits that staff and students gain such as computer literacy, introduction of new services such as internet searches, online database searches, CD-ROM searches, etc. Kadiri (2004) also stated that automation of library will address the problem of manual processing of materials with short comings of filling and typing errors, retrieval errors, time consumption and drudgery. He stated further that the advantages of library automation includes less drudgery, easy generation of records, space conservation, improvement of information services, and easy retrieval among others.

The objective of this paper is to share Bowen University Library automation experience, explain the automation process as choice of software, how it has changed her operations and services, and challenges faced during the automation process.

### **Bowen University Library Experience**

Bowen University Iwo owned by the Nigerian Baptist Convention was established on the 17th of July 2001 but commenced her academic activities on the 4th November 2002. Bowen University started with three faculties namely: the Faculty of Agriculture, the Faculty of Science and Science Education and the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences. The College of Health Sciences was added in 2008. The student population as at the time this study was carried out was 4,200 while the staff population was 600. The University Library was established in 2002 at the same time the academic activities commenced. The library collection is constantly being improved upon to

support the information needs of the various programmes in the University and to support teaching and research. Currently the library has over 16,000 volumes of books, made up of 10,817 titles, 95% of which were published from 2000 to date and 233 journal titles both local and international of which 95 are current. There are 35 electronic resources which are accessible through the library database.

The library personnel includes seven librarians, one system analyst, three library officers, seven library assistants and seven supporting staff which gives a total of twenty (25) staff in the library.

The library operations at inception were done manually in reader and technical services. This involved functions such as charging and discharging of books, acquisitions of materials, cataloguing and classification including typing of cards with manual typewriter and filling of cards in catalogue cabinets. The whole operation was quite monotonous and hectic both for the library staff and customers. In addition, there was difficulty in the correction of typing errors on cards. In order to reduce the stress of printing cards over and over, the library sought ways of using CorelDraw and later Adobe Page Maker software to produce catalogue cards. This seems to have temporarily solved the problem because of ease of making corrections on the cards however, this was also short-lived. This was because the cards were still many for each entry which made the process confusing. In addition, the cards still had to be cut carefully and filed in a catalogue cabinet which is quite a monotonous task.

In the light of all the above, the library started making enquiries about suitable library management software that will meet the needs of the library. In the course of enquiry, software like the CDS – ISIS, TINLIB, ALICE for windows etc were considered. The library realised that these software were no longer used by the academic libraries contacted due to inadequate support among other shortcomings. As a result, the library opted for open source library management software and came across Koha.

### **Koha Attraction**

Apart from catering for all the library operations with its full compliments of acquisitions, cataloguing, serials and circulation modules, the underlisted attracted the library to the adoption of Koha:

*Budget* - the budget was considered first in terms of software that will be within a particular budget limit both for the acquisition, installation, and purchase of necessary machinery i.e. not too expensive but serves the need. The library found out that Koha is a free software where there is no vendor lock in and there is no hidden code, since there is no need to pay for the software except the cost of customisation and installation of the software the library decided to go for it.

*Who are the developers* - Whether an institution, or reputed company or few individuals. The first thing the library considered was institutional support and secondly the reputation of the company responsible for the development of the software. One has to be sceptical about the software developed by individuals as there may be no continuity. Koha was found to be developed by a reputable company.

*User friendly* – The library thought of software that will be user friendly in its interfaces such that both the users and library staff will interact easily with the software.

*Marc compliant* – The software has to be able to produce a machine readable catalogue (MARC). Thus it was important to find out if the software has facility to import bibliographic data. Since the library uses the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* and *Schedules*, the library wanted software that will meet this need and as such make for easy migration in future. This is also found in Koha.

*Accommodate all library resources* – Furthermore, the library wanted a software that could accommodate her present resources and new additions for some years before future migration if need be. Fortunately, the library was able to identify that Koha library management software could meet the need.

*Revision* — How many times the software has been revised since the time of its first launch. The library found out that the revision was done regularly based on various suggestions from the community of users.

*Training and guidance after installation* – The library considered the possibility of guidance after training and installation, this is very important because if there is any problem the library can easily

ask for help. The company that did installation agreed to train and as well as ready to assist in case the library runs into any problem. Also, problems encountered are discussed at users' forum and the library enjoys the assistance from user community.

*Possibility of logins at different times and places* – The possibility of users being able to login at different times within the campus and outside the campus was seriously considered. This was also possible with Koha.

*How many installations it has got in the country and elsewhere, since when and major clients* - In Nigeria, there was no university using Koha, as at the time Bowen adopted it, but there were research institutes that were also installing Koha about the same time Bowen was considering using the software e.g. the Nigerian Institute of Social Economic Research (NISER) library in Ibadan and National Teachers Institute library, Kaduna. There are libraries abroad that are using Koha; this includes academic, research and public libraries in United States, Middle East, Asia, Europe, Africa, etc. (The list of libraries using Koha can be viewed at [http://wiki.Koha.org/docu.php?id= Koha users](http://wiki.Koha.org/docu.php?id=Koha%20users)). There is also an online community of users a forum, for rubbing minds together when there is any problem in the use of the software by the participating libraries. This community of users' forum encouraged Bowen library to use Koha library management software. Although there is no academic Library that is using Koha in Nigeria but Bowen library decided to use it since it met the library's needs and of course there is always the first person to start a project before others follow.

### **The Koha Library Management Software**

Koha is currently maintained by a team of software providers and library technology staff from around the globe. It features all major modules expected in a library management system including provision for On-line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), acquisitions, serials, cataloguing, circulation, budget management, membership management, fines management and other modules associated with a lending library.

Bowen started with the 2.9 version of Koha in 2007. In 2008 the library upgraded to 3.0.1. Koha as a free and open source has an active developer and user's online forum, in which Bowen library is a participant. The new version of Koha was a result of discussion at user's forum where the concerns/problems of users are promptly attended to. The developers also take suggestions from the forum, which may result in the introduction of additional features that constitute a new upgrade.

### Koha Features

Koha version 3.0.1 Integrated Library Management System has among others, basic features needed to run a library. It has the following features:

- *Online public access catalogue (OPAC) of the library holdings:* the OPAC is web based and there is no need to install any software on user's machine.
- *Web-based circulation interface:* can handle issues, returns, transfer, etc. There is no need to install any special software on staff computers once there is intranet in place.
- *Patrons' records management:* It allows management of detailed information about each patron that registered in the library.
- *Online renewals and reservation of item by users:* library patron can self renew their checkouts and make reservations. This has reduced the traffic at the circulation desk/counter and freed some circulation staff for other duties.
- *Branches relationship:* this can be done easily without any problem. Since the software is web based it is easy to borrow a book in one branch and return it in another branch.
- *Borrower history, comments and tags:* patrons can comment/review books, tag them and view their reading history. They can also view their records and make purchase suggestion.
- *Customisable search:* it allows a library to choose the field they want on their search

form. For example a search by author, title, subject, and keywords. There is also an advance search option.

- *Full acquisitions:* this includes orders from vendors, budgets and pricing information.
- *Serials modules:* it allows easy cataloguing of journals and patron can view the catalogue through OPAC.
- *Book bag and virtual shelves:* patrons can have a virtual library where they keep books specific to their needs.
- *Multi -language OPAC support:* Koha allows patrons to view OPAC in different languages depending on the language chosen by the library.
- *Overdue Fines and overdue Notices:* it manages overdue fines and overdue notices. This can be sent to patrons via their e mail address.
- *Barcode printing and Barcode reader:* Koha fully supports the use of barcodes thereby removing the chance of human error.
- *Security:* Koha provides an effective security measure to protect unauthorised person from accessing the system. For example registered patrons are required to sign in with their user name and password to perform certain functions on the library database.
- *Reports and statistics:* Koha can generate management reports and statistics in cataloguing, acquisitions, serials, and circulation.

The additional features in version 3.0.1 includes news, label /patron card creator, upload patrons image, task scheduler, overdue notice, log viewer, SQL builders, comment, export Biblio, Biblio, just to mention a few.

### The Automation Process

Before the commencement of the automation process, key management officials (Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Bursar and deans of faculties) in the University and users of the proposed system were fully briefed. After ensuring that the University

Community had been fully involved in the project and securing the University's commitment with regards to funding, the software was installed. The library acquired the hardware and other accessories needed for the successful installation of Koha Library Management System as recommended by the consultant. The required hardware and networking cables acquired were 19 Pentium IV Personal computers, 24 Stabilisers, 24 Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS), 4 Printer, and 2 Bar code reader. Other accessories include Bar code label papers, trucking pipe, cables etc. For the server, the hardware configuration was 2 Pentium IV, 1 GB RAM, 160 GB HDD, Linux 11.0 Operating System and 2 NIC Cards. The activities for phase II includes networking of the Library (i.e. LAN), installation and configuration of Linux – the operating system for Koha deployment, installation and configuration of Koha, including optimising the back end database server (MySQL), customisation of Koha OPAC interface to reflect Bowen University brand, customisation of staff client report, and installation of automated backup scripts to ensure safety of the library data.

The next phase was the training of all the library staff in the various sections by the consultants earlier appointed for the installation of the software.

Following the completion of automation of the library functions, is the phase IV of the project. This is the conversion of the card catalogue records into the digital records. The retro conversion exercise was a bit easy in Bowen library because the records were already in CorelDraw and Adobe Page Maker templates. What was then required was just a situation of copying and pasting from either the CorelDraw or Page Maker records into the Koha cataloguing modules.

The final phase, phase V, which is the training of library customers was done after installation and testing of the software.. The users were all trained on how to use the OPAC as well as check their account. It was not easy to train all the users initially because some are not computer literate so library staff members have to show them how to handle the mouse, use keyboard and other basic things on how to use the system. The library had to train some on one-on-one. Now majority of the library users can use the OPAC, renew their books as well as check their own records.

The library discovered that for easy circulation transaction and elimination of human error there was a need for barcoding of customer I.D. card. The library management decided that library will no longer issue separate I.D. cards to customers but the university I. D. card will be accepted in the library. The library then suggested to the University management to put barcode on students and staff's I. D. card. The management agreed and in 2008/2009 academic session a new barcoded I. D. card was issued.

### **Requirements for Successful Library Automation Project**

Bowen University Library experience revealed that for a successful library automation project there is the need for adequate finance, constant power supply, infrastructure, an experienced consultant, and dedicated members of staff and proper training of library staff.

*Adequate finance* - The University authorities were gracious enough to release funds for the automation project particularly for the procurement of software and hardware and training of the staff on the automation project. As soon as it was agreed that the library should go ahead with the automation project provisions were made for all that were required.

*Constant power supply* – for the automation project to be a success there is need for constant power supply. To ensure this the library was connected to a standby generating set. This is important because without constant and consistent power supply, the project will not be realised and where it is completed it will not be properly operational. The generating set which also serves the central administration is switched on when the power supply goes off. As a result the library does not have problem with power supply.

*Infrastructure* – the infrastructure in terms of computer hardware need to be in place, i.e. having workstations for all the various routine activities. This also involves the networking of the library. The University management gave the library the number of work stations requested. Subsequent requests were similarly granted. Air conditioners are also very important in an automated environment in order to

ensure effective cooling of the hardware. All offices in the library have split unit air conditioner except circulation desk.

*Experienced consultant* – identifying an experienced consultant on library automation is very important, particularly one that is based in Nigeria. The reason being that where there are problems with the system such can easily be contacted so that the library does not start what it will not be able to continue. In Bowen's case, the library was able to identify Projeklink Konsult Nigeria limited in Ibadan which supported the library for a period of three months after installation and training.

*Dedicated members of staff* – for any automation project to be successful there is the need for all members of staff to be dedicated and committed to the project. This can be achieved by regular communication with staff about what is going on and the need for cooperation in making the project a success story.

*Library staff must be computer literate*- for a successful automation programme all library staff must be computer literate. It is better to start training the staff on computer appreciation before embarking on automation. In Bowen's case all library staff except the porters was computer literate even before the library started the automation project. This helps to make the training very easy.

### Library User Satisfaction

A survey of the system user satisfaction was carried out among the library staff. For the library staff, total enumeration technique was adopted for the study since the population was too small, questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents which include all librarians, library officers, library assistants and typists who are using Koha in their daily routine. However, the University Librarian, the Deputy University Librarian and the library porters were excluded. This is because they do not make use of Koha in their daily work. Fifteen copies of the questionnaire were distributed and collected. The returned copies of the questionnaire were analysed using simple percentages. Library patrons who have been using the library before automation were also interviewed.

As of the time this survey was conducted, 3 out of 15 respondents used Acquisitions modules, 4 used cataloguing modules, while 8 used circulation modules and only 1 used serials modules. The sum gives a total of 16 because one person was working with two different modules. All respondents indicated that they were using Koha daily. Eleven respondents had been using Koha for the past two years, two for the past one year and another two for six months. When the respondents were asked if Koha had been performing to expectation, all the 15 responded that Koha performed to expectation as indicated.

Items	Very	Good good	fair	poor
Acquisitions	4	8	0	0
Cataloguing	5	6	0	0
Circulation	6	5	0	0
OPAC	6	5	0	0
Patrons				
Authentication	6	8	0	0
Report				
creation	5	5	0	0
Interface with				
Internet	7	8	0	0
Reliability	6	9	0	0

Respondents were asked to rate Koha library management software on a scale very good, good, fair and poor. From table 1 above, 8 (53.3%) respondents rated acquisitions modules as very good and good while others did not respond. This is because they had never worked on Acquisition modules before. Cataloguing and circulation modules were both rated as very good and good by 11 (73.3%) respondents. The reason is that some had opportunity to work with cataloguing and circulation modules before moving to another unit in the library. OPAC was rated as very good and good by 11(73.3%). Also patrons' authentication was rated as very good and good by 14(93.3%) respondents. Report creation was also rated as very good and good by 10 (66.6%). Interface with Internet was rated by 15(100%) as very good and good. On reliability of Koha, i.e. whether Koha was dependable, consistent and trustworthy, 15(100%) respondent indicated that it was very good and good.

Items	SA	A	SD	D	U
Using Koha has greatly increased my productivity	10	4	0	0	0
It does everything I would expect Library software to do	4	10	0	0	0
It is easy to learn and use	8	7	0	0	0
It is users friendly	8	7	0	0	0
I quickly became skilful with it	8	5	0	1	0
I do not notice any inconsistencies as I use it	6	8	0	0	0
I am satisfied with it	4	9	0	0	0
I can recommend it to another library	9	6	0	0	0
I can use it without written instructions	6	8	0	0	1

Table 2 shows statistics on level of agreement with the statements in the table on a scale strongly agree; Agreed; strongly disagree; disagree; and undecided. A total of 14(93.3%) agreed that using Koha had greatly increased their productivity. Also 14 (93.3%) agreed that Koha did everything they would expect a library software to do. All respondents (100%) agreed that Koha was easy to learn and use, user friendly, and that they quickly became skilful with it. Fourteen (93.3%) respondents agreed that they did not notice any inconsistencies as they use Koha. Also 14 (93.3%) respondents agreed that they are satisfied with Koha Library Management software. All respondents (100%) agreed that they would recommend it to another library. Fourteen (93.3%) also agreed that they could use it without written instructions while 1 (6.6%) was undecided.

On the question of constraints in the use of Koha, all respondents stated that there was no constraint. However, respondents advised that the library should always upgrade to the latest version of the software whenever it was released.

### **Findings from the Interviews**

The interview was conducted to elicit information on the changes that automation brought to library service and operation. One library staff from each unit was interviewed to include information that the questionnaire did not capture. A staff in cataloguing was asked to state if there were any changes in the unit since automation. He responded that the unit no longer went through the rigour of producing cards catalogue and that the use of card catalogue in the

library had been eliminated since automation. With the OPAC; users can search by using many access points that were not possible in manual catalogue.

Respondents also mentioned the elimination of filing of cards in the catalogue cabinet and the consequence that library staff had time to do other tasks. Cataloguers now do less original cataloguing because it is now easy for them to import data from the Library of Congress Online Catalogue, as well as other online catalogues. Editing was now easy compared to when one had to edit so many cards. The circulation staff also stated that the circulation control was now easier, as there was no need of filling borrowers' ticket again; fines which were calculated manually before are now calculated and paid electronically. Also, there was less traffic at circulation desk as charging of library materials is done without delay, the usual queue at catalogue card cabinet had been eliminated since the automation. This is because users can access the OPAC anywhere on campus. Also, patrons' records are better managed than before. Statistics can be generated easily.

The library patrons who have been using the library before automation were also interviewed. From their responses they preferred the automated system to the manual system. Some of them stated that OPAC search was easier and faster and better compared to when the library was using catalogue card. According to them, OPAC was user friendly and enabled them to know the status of an item in the library, i. e. whether the book was on loan or available in the library before proceeding to the shelf. Also, patrons were happy with the automated system because it allowed them to view their

accounts, check their loan status, fines and also renew borrowed items on their own without physically visiting the library. Some stated that they could access the library from their offices and viewed the catalogue and obtained a link through the library to electronic resources. However, some complained of inability to access the library holding after the library closing hours. The reason is that the library has to shut down the server when closing because the generating plant that supports the library will not be available after the library closing hour, except the library has inverter to power the server for the period when there is no power supply.

### **Challenges of the Project**

Like any laudable project, the automation project in Bowen Library faced some challenges.

The first challenge was the identification of software that would cost less and meet library need, then how the University management can be convinced of the need to automate the library system. The library was able to overcome this after the demo of Koha to the University management. Another challenge was overcoming the initial phobia of working in an automated environment by the library staff and training of staff on the new software. Initially the typists, whose daily routine was to type the catalogue cards were afraid of losing their jobs since the cataloguer can enter data directly into the system. However, this was overcome after few months of using the software as some of them testified during the interview that they enjoyed working in an automated environment and the typists were giving another task to do within the library.

Erratic power supply was a problem that faced automation everywhere especially in Nigeria. In Bowen's case, it was difficult for the University management to buy a new generator dedicated for use in the library because of the cost involved. It was however, agreed that library would be placed into the category of priority unit of the University. This means that the maintenance unit must ensure that the library was supplied with electricity each time light goes off. The Library has been enjoying constant power supply since the automation. Since the Library's OPAC is web based, the only problem now is that as soon as the library closes the server will be shut down. This means users cannot access the library until the next day when the server will

be put on again unless the library has an inverter that can power the server when light goes off.

Despite these challenges, Bowen Library automation is a success story because it has influence on the University community in that the students' and staff' I.D. now have barcodes for easy circulation transactions based on library's recommendation to the University management. More academic staff and students now patronise the library more than before because of the electronic resources and services provided. The library serves patrons better as e-mails are sent to inform users on latest addition to the library database, overdue notices and other information. The automation of Bowen University Library has made the university community see the library and the library staff as relevant partners. The automation at Bowen University Library has also influenced other academic and research libraries in Nigeria to go into automation project. Some of this libraries visited Bowen University Library to ensure that it is actually working before they embark on the automation project. Among the libraries are Osun state University Library, Osogbo; Salem University Library, Lokoja; Joseph Ayo Babalola University Library, Ikeji Arakeji; Federal Polytechnic Library, Ado Ekiti; Osun state Polytechnic Library, Ire; National Mathematical Centre, Abuja; Cocoa Research Institute, Ibadan; and recently Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomoso.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

There is no doubt that library automation enhances the operations and services of the library. It shows automation can improve library's relevance to the University community. The paper also revealed library user satisfaction with Koha Library Management software. It further revealed that library staff enjoyed working in an automated environment and the patrons enjoyed services rendered using OPAC to card catalogue. It however requires adequate planning as this paper reveals. No less required is the need to ensure availability of technical support.

For Nigerian libraries to progress alongside libraries in other climes, they should move away from traditional to modern ways of providing services. They should also consider library automation a must in that quest, and look for ways of overcoming the challenges facing the automation project in Nigeria.

Nigerian libraries, especially academic libraries that are still struggling with automation project in Nigeria, it is recommended that:

1. libraries should be on the look out for opportunities of open source software that can be used instead of waiting to acquire software that cost so much and may discourage management from granting the request.
2. librarians and other library staff should be open to changes that ICT introduces to the library profession. In addition, library staff should be computer literate prior to automation as this will help a lot during the training,
3. there is a need to get technical staff (System Analyst/System Librarian) on ground who will attend to the problems that may crop up with the system,
4. the need for regular power supply should be settled with management before embarking on automation project. Erratic power supply will affect the smooth running of library services in an automated environment because as soon as power goes off the entire automated library operations and services will come to a standstill.
5. the management should be informed well on time when the need for upgrading to a new version of the software is due. However, upgrade should be done only if there are new features required by the library.

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- Aderonke O. Otunla is a Librarian I at Bowen University Library, Iwo, Nigeria. She holds DLS, BLIS, (ABU Zaria), MLS (Ibadan). She is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Esther A. Akanmu-Adeyemo is a Librarian I at Bowen University Library, Iwo, Nigeria. She holds BLS, (Abraka), MLS (Ibadan). She is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

# Abuse of Library Materials in Academic Libraries: A Study of the University of Cape Coast Main Library

**Harry Akussah**

*hakussah@yahoo.com*

and

**Winifred Bentil**

*winnycoop@yahoo.com*

*Department of Information Studies*

*University of Ghana*

*Legon, Ghana*

## Abstract

*The study examines the extent to which materials in the University of Cape Coast (UCC) Main Library are abused. Using questionnaire, interviews and a collection survey, the various forms of document abuse, causes of abuse, and categories of documents mostly abused, categories of users that mostly abuse documents and the extent of physical damage to the documents were investigated. The findings of the study indicate that UCC main library materials are under serious threat of abuse through acts of vandalism, mutilation and theft, particularly by student users. The study recommends orientation and awareness programmes for new and old users, periodic stocktaking, better security and supervision, provision of multiple copies and investment in electronic resources.*

## Introduction

The threat to intellectual property through theft, mutilation and other forms of abuse has posed tremendous challenge to the library profession

worldwide. According to Jackson (1991) incidents of theft, non-return of materials and mutilation of library stock are on the increase. Lorenzen (1997) in his study of security issues of Ohio public and academic libraries in America showed that 62.5% of university libraries in Ohio believed that periodical mutilation was a problem, whilst a considerable number of public libraries (60%) did consider this a problem. This shows that periodic mutilation is a big problem for both public and academic libraries. He further states that 12% of library books in Ohio were missing while 3% had become unusable due to deterioration. Switzer (1991) in his survey of libraries revealed that with a collection size of 5000 items, a library can lose 3% per year. Sornam and Shyla (1997) reported that the theft and mutilation of library materials was common in many libraries and only the magnitude of the crime differed from place to place. Lorenzen's (1997) report on security in the public libraries in Illinois indicated that over half of the respondents believed their library had a problem with security and theft of its materials. Covington (1996) reported that in De Soto Public Library in Louisiana, computer monitors and virtually all other equipment had been stolen. In a report by Burrows and Cooper (1992), books not returned from loan accounted for almost a third (29 per cent) of all losses across the sectors of UK libraries.

Studies reveal that these anti-social activities are more pronounced in the Third World countries. Ajegbomogun (2004) states that theft and mutilation of books and non-books is a common phenomenon in Nigerian university libraries and if not checked will create a serious threat to Nigerian libraries' collection and preservations. Alemna (1992) having considered abuse of library materials in Ghana, found out that there was a general agreement by the university libraries in Ghana that students make up about 90% of the book thieves and vandals;

library staff 5% and other users 5%. Students steal popular textbooks and mutilate pages from journals, whilst staff steal unprocessed books. In a survey of security, book theft and journal mutilation within the library system of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Senyah(2004) identified the scarcity of needed books (90.9%) and selfishness (81.81%) as being the main cause of book theft and mutilation. His study was however not conclusive on the perpetrators of the abuse. He concluded that the absence of regular stock-taking or inventory has made it practically impossible for the libraries to quantify the extent of losses.

Various writers have expressed their views on what contributes to the causes of different forms of abuse in the library. However, many researchers base their argument on economic depression and security as the main causes of abuse of library materials. These include Ajegbomogun (2004), Agboola (2001), Afolabi (1993), Akinfolarin (1992) and Bello (1997) among others. Some other studies reveal that theft is motivated by societal problems. Verner (1983) listed a series of factors that contribute to library malpractices, which include inadequate service staff at night and during the weekends, lack of multiple copies of library materials in high demand and inadequate photocopying facilities. Any shift from this, may cause a negative impact on users' disposition to library materials.

A study conducted by Ajegbomogun (2004) reveals that the focus of abuse is predominantly on reference books and journals. The results of the study tallied with those of Bello (1997) and Luke (1991). Abuse of library materials is not confined to hardened criminals. It spans all categories of users. In a survey of high schools in London, Brian (1993) found that 43% of the sample reported having stolen, mutilated or marked library materials during their school years, an indication that security problem developed in early life among students. Most researchers are of the view that students are the guiltiest in this area. Library staff however are also guilty. A number of researchers agree to this fact and these include Ewing (1994), Omoniyi (2001) and Gerlenter (2005).

According to Holt (2007), every profession has its "closed areas" which are little studied and seldom discussed publicly. In librarianship, theft by staff is one of those "closed areas." He further states that

staff theft is a "hot-potato" issue from a manager's perspective because any action around this issue is complicated. The complications arise from allegation of illegal behaviour and, therefore, arrests and court cases; union contract negotiations, risks of bad publicity, loss of public support; possible changes in policy or procedures; recruitment of replacement employees; problems with staff morale; changes in training; and the possibility of new costs of increased security whether through technology or additional staff. All of these issues have economic dimensions. Taken together, these studies offer a significant body of evidence to suggest that the abuse of library materials is prevalent in all types of libraries in all parts of the world. The intensity may vary from library to library. This article discusses the results of a study of the abuse of library materials in the University of Cape Coast (UCC) Main Library in Ghana.

The University of Cape Coast Main Library is one of the largest academic libraries in Ghana. The collections are housed in a magnificent five-storey library complex in the heartbeat of the University popularly called 'New Site'. It has the capacity for holding 750,000 volumes excluding pamphlets and journals. It can seat 2000 users at a time. It is a hybrid library with approximately 227,414 hard copies of books and a substantial number of e-books and databases to be accessed on the Internet. Its main function among others is to assist in the advancement of learning, research and dissemination of knowledge, serving the information needs of the University and its communities. Its resources have been grouped into six collections: Ghana Collections, Ghana Medical Schools Collections, Student Reference Collections, General Reference Collections, Digital Collections, and Development Information Collections. Some of the services the library renders include library orientation for fresh students, loaning out books and receiving them when they are due, inter-library lending/document delivery (ILL/DD) and book binding. The library also supports the departmental and hall libraries of the University (University of Cape Coast Library, 2007)

The vision of the Library is to create an intelligent library for the University of Cape Coast that will meet and satisfy the information needs of the community without any forms of discrimination so as to provide effective leadership in Ghana and elsewhere.

### The Objectives of the Study

The study was designed to examine the extent to which materials in the UCC main library are abused. Specifically, the study investigated the following amongst others:

- The various forms of documents abuse.
- The causes of abuse.
- The categories of materials mostly abused.
- The category of users that mostly abuse library materials.
- Suggestions to curb the abuse of library materials.

### Methodology

The study covered the post graduate students of the University of Cape Coast, the library staff and the collections of the library. It concentrated on paper documents, specifically on the reference collection since this category is usually on high demand and mostly used and thus suffers mostly from the various forms of abuse. The study was undertaken in August, 2008.

Four professional library staff out of eight (8) and the University Librarian were interviewed by one of the researchers. The interviews were used to collect data on policy issues, procedural matters, and matters relating to the general management of the library collection. Twenty (20) other library staff out of seventy-five (75) and one hundred (100) postgraduate students out of a total of three hundred and ninety (390) were administered with questionnaire. The questionnaire sought to solicit data on a wide range of issues such as the use of the library; forms of abuse; motivation for abuse; documents mostly abused and the most offenders of abuses. The focus was on postgraduate students because of the research oriented nature of their study which requires them to use the library more often. Also, they had passed through the undergraduate system and thus were better informed on the abuse of library materials and their precipitating factors as compared to the undergraduate students.

As stated earlier, the total population of hard copy documents in the library was approximately 227,414 as at the time of study. This was made up of textbooks, reference books, fiction and non-fiction books, periodicals, journals and newspapers. The target population of this study was the reference materials located at the reference section of the

library. This is because this category of documents is usually on high demand and is mostly used. The approximate number of items in the reference collection was 14375.

In order to assess the physical state of the documents in the library, a systematic sampling method was used to select two hundred and fifty (250) documents for examination. Two hundred and fifty items were used because it was a manageable figure which could be handled within a short period without disrupting reference services of the library. Shelves were used as clusters on the basis of which the selection was made. In all, there were 125 shelves in the reference section. Each shelf had 5 bays with an average of 23 documents on a bay giving an average of 115 items per shelf. Two documents were selected from each shelf to give a total of 250 items. The 2nd and 4th bays of each shelf were used in the selection whilst the 12th items on the 2nd and 4th bays were selected. Specially designed survey sheets were completed for each item to describe their physical state after thorough examination. Items on the survey sheet include among others missing pages, stains, and markings in books, creases, torn pages and metallic objects.

### Findings

The findings of the study as presented are derived from the analysis of data collected from students, staff and the examination of the collections. The findings are presented separately in terms of the results from the surveys of students, library staff and collection items.

### Students Survey

#### Frequently Used Materials

Materials most frequently used by respondents were reference books (61%). Journals (27%) and textbooks (12%) follow closely. Since reference materials were the most frequently used, it can be deduced that there is a high probability that this category of materials were the most abused. (See table 1).

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Reference books	61	61.0
Journals	27	27.0
Textbooks	12	12.0
Total	100	100

### Library Materials Mostly Abused

As shown in table 2, most of the respondents (55%) pointed out that reference books were the ones mostly abused. The rest (45%) agreed that text books are materials that were mostly abused. This compares favourably with the views of Ajegbomogun (2004), Bello (1997) and Luke (1991) who stated in the findings of their researches that the focus of abuse was predominantly on reference materials. The possible reason for this could be the strict control imposed on them and the fact that they are mostly on closed access and are normally not lent out for home use

**Table 2: Respondents' Views on the Category of Library Materials Mostly Abused**

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Reference books	55	55.0
Textbooks	45	45.0
Journals	—	—
Fiction	—	—
Total	100	100

### Forms of Abuse

As shown in Table 3, 35% of respondents cited writing in books, as the major form of abuse. This was followed by hiding of books which formed 32%, with 24%, 8% and 1% indicating tearing of pages, mutilation and stealing of books respectively (table 3).

**Table 3: Forms of Abuse Mentioned by Students**

<i>Forms of Abuses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Torn out pages	24	24.0
Writing in books	35	35.0
Stealing of books	1	1.0
Mutilation	8	8.0
Hiding of books	32	32.0
Total	100	100

### Motivation for Abuse

Majority of the respondents (47%) intimated selfishness as the number one motivation. This compares favourably with the views of the Librarian of the library who also indicated selfishness as the key reason. This was followed by 33% who said it

was due to the inadequate number of library materials. This finding however contrasts with the views of the Librarian who stated that inadequacy of materials was not a problem at all in the library. The high cost of photocopying which at the time of conducting the study was five Ghana pesewa (0.5 US\$) per page was cited by 16% of respondents, while 4% intimated that it was as a result of the fear that one may not find a particular book at the next visit to the library (table 4).

**Table 4: Students' Opinions on the Reasons for Abuse**

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Selfishness	47	47.0
Inadequate number of library materials	33	33.0
High cost of photocopying	16	16.0
Fear that one may not find the material at the next visit	4	4.0
Total	100	100

### Collection Protection Strategies

When asked as to what library authorities could do to curb the problem of document abuse in the library, most of the respondents (56%) called for the running of educational programmes on the use of the library for prospective patrons as well as the current users. Other responses indicated in table 5 included the need for the library authorities to constantly exhibit abused and mutilated books (26%), encouragement of users to be each others watchdogs (8%), installation of security cameras (6%) and the provision of electronic materials which will not be handled (4%). These suggestions compare favourably with the recommendations made by Ajegbomogun (2004), Opaleke (2002), Lorenzen (1997), Bello (1997) and Ewing (1994).

### Disciplinary Measures

On disciplinary measures to be meted out to abusers of library materials, most of the respondents (31%) said that offenders should pay for the full cost of the abused materials. This compares with

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Education on the use of the library	56	56.0
Library must constantly display mutilated books	26	26.0
Encourage users to be watchdogs	8	8.0
Installation of security cameras	6	6.0
Provide electronic resources	4	4.0
Total	100	100

Ajebomogun's (2004) when he called for full cost recovery for abused books. Those who asked for the banning of offenders formed 28% and this also compares with Fox's (1991) view. In an interview with the Librarian of the UCC Main Library, he also opined that offenders should be banned from using the library. Respondents who called for the need to exhibit photos of the abusers for all to see formed 24%. This also compares with the view points of Ajebomogun (2004). The remaining respondents, constituting 17% asked for the suspension of abusers from the library for a period of time. Table 6 vividly reflects the views of respondents.

### Library Staff Survey

As stated earlier, it was prudent for the research to investigate the views of staff (professional and non-professional) in the direction of collection abuse since they have the mandate to manage the library. Some of the findings conform with the views of the students whilst the rest point to new revelations.

### Forms of Abuse

As summarised in Table 7, the majority of staff (70%) indicated that tearing of pages from books was the most widespread manifestation of the abuses of library books. This confirms Kisiedu's (1993) conclusion that mutilation, the worst type of physical damage was common in Ghanaian libraries. This position may be more tenable than that of the

students that scribbling in books was the most prevalent abuse since the library staff are more conversant with the collection and they fish out the abused copies for restoration.

### Category of Users that Abuse library Materials

Fifteen (75%) of the 20 sampled library staff perceived that students were the most frequent abusers of library materials (Table 8). This agrees with the views of Antwi (1989) Alemna (1992) and Bello (1997), as well as the Librarian of UCC who stated that students were the category of users who mostly abuse library materials. Students of the University (17,000 regular, 4,000 sandwich and 20,000 distant learners) constitute a greater number of users of the library and as such it is not too surprising that they are most often mentioned as the most liable to abuse library materials. Lecturers, external users and staff were respectively identified by 15%, 5% and 5% of respondents as other categories that abuse library materials.

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Pay for the full cost of the abused material	31	31.0
Banned from using the library	28	28.0
Exhibit their photos with names	24	24.0
Suspend them for some time	17	17.0
Total	100	100

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Tearing of pages	14	70.0
Stealing of books	4	20.0
Writing in books	2	10.0
Total	20	100

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Students	15	75.0
Lecturer	3	15.0
External users	1	5.0
Staff	1	5.5
Total	20	100

### Materials Most Frequently Abused

The opinions of most of the library staff (65%) concurred with those of the students that reference materials were the materials mostly abused (Table 9). Other studies such as Ajegbomogun (2004), Bello (1997) and Luke (1991) also concurred. Other materials that were abused, according to the library staff, were textbooks (15%), journals (10%) and fiction (10%).

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Reference books	13	65.0
Textbooks	3	15.0
Journals	2	10.0
Fiction	2	10.0
Total	20	100

### Motivation for Abuse

Contrary to the views of the students, 70% of the library staff who were surveyed with the questionnaire asserted that limited copies of library materials being the main factor accounted for the abuse of library materials (Table 10). Most of the students mentioned selfishness as the key motivating factor. The views of the library staff conflicted with the position of the University Librarian. The Librarian was of the view that the library was financially sound; hence, the inadequacy of materials could not be a major factor for abuse. The four professional librarians who were interviewed mentioned diverse factors: high demand, influence by friends, inadequate photocopying machines and fear of not finding materials on the next visit as motivating factors. All these factors are connected

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Limited copies of library materials	14	70.0
Strict control of library materials	2	10.0
High cost of photocopying	1	5.0
Fear that one may not find a particular material at the next visit	1	5.0
Inadequate supervision	1	5.0
Photocopying procedure too bureaucratic	1	5.0
Total	20	100

with the inadequacy of materials, and have been highlighted by earlier researchers, including Akinfolarin (1992), Afolabi (1993), Bello (1997), Agboola (2001) and Ajegbomogun (2004). These researchers agree that financial constraints had deprived librarians of the opportunity to acquire adequate number of essential books in high demand, thereby exposing the few available ones to theft or mutilation.

**Effect of Abuse of Library Materials on Services**

The majority of the library staff (30%) indicated that the abuse made it difficult for the staff to assist users effectively. Another 25% of them said that other users were unable to get access to the materials they needed easily. In addition, shelving of abused materials was made difficult, as indicated by 20% of the library staff (Table 11).

**Table 11: Staff’s Opinions on the Effects of Abuse on Services**

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Makes it difficult to assist users	6	30.0
Other users do not get needed materials	5	25.0
Makes shelving difficult	4	20.0
Valuable materials are lost	3	15.0
Makes it difficult to retrieve information	2	10.0
Total	20	100.0

**Security of Library Materials**

Respondents were asked to suggest ways in which the abuse of library materials could be minimised. As indicated in table 12, the need to improve supervision in the library formed the highest response of 25%. Other measures suggested were the installation of surveillance cameras (15%), mounting of orientation programmes for users (15%), and the provision of multiple copies of materials.

**Collection Survey**

Documentary materials are prone to deterioration because they are organic in nature. Certain factors, however, determine the rate of deterioration. According to Harvey (1992), the rate of deterioration is determined by two factors and these are the inherent chemical stability of the material and the external actions that affect the material. The major objective of the collection survey was to identify and establish the physical, structural and biological damages to the collection of the UCC Main Library using a sample of 250.

**Physical Damages**

The mismanagement and abuse of documentary materials contribute greatly to physical degradation. These include mutilation, careless handling, excessive photocopying, mis-shelving, and flicking documents over. The results of the survey revealed a high degree of physical damage to the collection. Out of the 250 books surveyed, 80% had underlined

**Table 12: Staff’s Opinions on How Library Materials can be Secured**

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Improve supervision	5	25.0
Provide regular orientation to users on library use	3	15.0
Provide enough library materials	3	15.0
Provide surveillance cameras	3	15.0
Search users	2	10.0
Janitors and security officers should do their work well	2	10.0
Books should be examined after return	1	5.0
Abusers should pay huge fines	1	5.0
Total	20	100

<b>Types of Damage</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Underlined words or scribbles	200	80.0
Marks in document	193	77.2
Stain in document	168	67.2
Books having spilt ink	152	60.8
Books tightly Shelved	144	57.6
Creased books	135	54
Books with torn or removed covers	118	47.2
Books having missing pages	116	46.4

words or scribbles in them, while 77.2% of the books had marks in them in the form of highlighting and insertion around the text. Also, 60.8% had ink stains and 67.2% had stains other than ink in them. In addition, 57.6% of the books were found tightly shelved, 54% had been creased, 46.4% had torn pages, and 47.2% had their covers torn or removed (Table13). On the whole, the problem of physical damage was serious, as also observed by Kisiedu (1993).

### **Structural Damages**

The method used to hold documents together also determines the rate of deterioration of the paper. For instance, the use of paper clips stains the pages through rusting, and the practice of using strings to tie-up books facilitates brittleness and damages fragile covers. Only 17.2% of the documents surveyed had steel pins in them.

### **Biological Damages**

Biological agents are a major cause of deterioration of documentary materials. Some of the agents are fungus, insects and rodents. The damages they cause include staining, tearing, chewing up of the documents and weakening of paper. They thrive in conditions where there is poor ventilation and lighting, dust, high temperature and high relative humidity. The analysis of the data collected revealed that 39.2% of the documents surveyed were defaced by insects. This is an indication of poor environmental where the documents are being stored.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

There is no doubt that for as long as library materials are physically handled and are intellectually explored, there is bound to be some form of abuse or the

other. The results of the study have clearly indicated that the documents of the UCC Main library are under serious threats of abuse. These documents are variously under the threats of theft, mis-shelving, vandalism, non-return and mutilation – tearing of pages, highlighting, among others.

The following are being recommended to prevent or minimise the abuse of library materials in the UCC Main Library in particular, which would also be useful to other libraries.

- (a) Users should be conscientised on the harmful effects of library abuse on reading and research. The use of signs, notices, circulars and newsletters would be of help. Mutilated materials should be exhibited with focus on the damages done, and how expensive it will be to repair or replace them.
- (b) Many thefts occur in libraries because of difficulties in getting access to the materials. It is recommended that efforts should be made to provide multiple copies of materials as well as adequate facilities for photocopying. Further, a much more liberal lending policy should be embarked upon by the library. This may call for an amendment of policy which will ultimately lead to an increase in the number of books library patrons are allowed to borrow.
- (c) A library collection can be more properly secured if there are proper records on the stock of the library at any particular point in time. It is recommended that the library should embark on periodic stock taking. It is only through this that information on actual losses can be ascertained and proper measures adopted to arrest the situation. In addition, computerised methods of checking or detecting offenders should be adopted. An example is the electronic theft detection

system. Young and energetic security personnel could also be engaged to man the entrances of the library. Again surveillance cameras could be used to monitor the activities of both staff and patrons.

- (d) It is recommended that library staff should vary their periods of supervision by making it part of their duties to patrol the stacks and reading halls from time to time. This is because, when patrons know that they are under the surveillance, they will be discouraged from acts of abuse. The circulation desk should also be properly supervised. In addition, staff should also be monitored. Again, exposures of book theft and mutilation should be rewarded in cash or kind in order to encourage whistle blowers.
- (e) Disciplinary measures relating to theft, document mutilation, refusal to return borrowed books, and keeping books long after they are due should be enforced. Offenders should be made to replace or pay for lost books irrespective of their status and to pay fines for over-due books.
- (f) Finally, it is recommended that the library should invest more in electronic resources which will reduce to a large extent the incidence of users physically handling documentary materials. This will also enhance multiple accesses to library materials with little damage.

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\***Harry Akussah** is an Associate Professor and the Head of the Department of the Information Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. He is a professional Archivist



\***Winifred Bentil** is a Master of Philosophy (Library Studies) student in the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

# Literacy Growth and Book Development in Africa: Is there Any Relationship?

**Nkechi M. Christopher**

*nmxtopher@gmail.com*

*Department of Communication and Language  
Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria*

## **Abstract**

*Literacy rates in African nations continue to rise as the nations pursue various educational programmes in their bid to promote social development. But, have the improvements in literacy rates been matched by commensurate book industry and readership development in the countries? If increased literacy actually translates into improved readership, then book industries in Africa should be expected to expand sufficiently to meet the book needs of different groups in the countries. However, the findings of this study indicate that growth in book production in African countries does not seem to reflect the achievements in literacy development in the countries. The study therefore recommends that literacy development programmes in African countries should emphasise strategies that promote functional literacy and healthy reading habits among Africa's increasingly literate populations.*

## **Keywords**

Book development, book output, culture, literacy, readership, reading habits

## **Introduction**

Literacy is fundamental to national development, and this explains why nations buy into global literacy development agendas so as to eliminate illiteracy which often affect, social development. African nations are fully aware that the consequences of illiteracy are detrimental to the achievement of national goals. However, it has become crucial for African nations to also appreciate that basic literacy skills may not be sufficient for achieving personal or national goals (Desrochers & Major, 2008). In Africa, the rampant incidences of low adult literacy, often occasioned by poor education or limited time spent at school, is compounded by the absence of literacy activities in society that ensure that individuals become and remain fully functionally literate. In today's world, individuals need to be adequately and functionally literate in order to be fully capable of living healthy, enjoying long life, participating in social interactions in communities, taking good care of a family, acquiring knowledge and expressing one's thought.

In an information-driven and digital world the ability to read and write is no longer considered an adequate definition of literacy. Thus, as gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is no longer good enough on its own for determining nations' socio-economic wellbeing, so also has a gross literacy rate is inadequate for judging literacy development of countries. Instead, book output and use statistics, in terms of number of titles and volume of copies produced might give a better picture of how much a society is involved in reading and writing, and therefore literacy and knowledge advancement. Valdehuesa (1985) points out that "the quality,

quantity, and diversity of books produced by a society are important indicators of that society's level of development, intellectual sophistication, capacity for technological innovation, and industriousness." Accordingly, both literacy and book production rates would be good indicators of a nation's level of development.

True literacy development should engender increased readership and increased demand for books and other print and non-print reading materials, as well as drive the writing and production of diverse reading materials locally. African countries may not present a typical case, considering that reading and book publishing are not indigenous cultures. Reading and book publishing cultures are yet to be firmly rooted as video films and video clubs in urban areas. The economic misfortunes of Africa's relatively young nations which were yet to establish infrastructures required of a modern society such as vibrant book industries greatly hampered advancement in book and reading development in the 1980–90 decade, disrupting the growth of a fledgling industry. Other media and industries may be better-placed to resist, withstand or easily recover from shocks than the book industry. As a consequence, Nigeria for example lost the book buying and reading mentality that obtained prior to the mid-1980s. Indeed, book apathy presently bedevilling the country can be traced to politico-cum-socio-economic crises of the mid-1980s through to the 1990s, and the effects of a devastating cure that was tagged "Structural Adjustment Programme" (SAP).

The major reason why such crises have grave impact on the book industry is because the book as a cultural good is yet to take its rightful place in people's and governments' lists of priorities (Adesanoye, 2005), and literacy is still being perceived in its rudimentary definition of being able to read and write. According to Adesanoye (2005), "Nigeria is still far from being a book aware society, where whatever the circumstances, the book must be bought and read at all cost." In addition to economic recession and poor management of economies, are wars that have ravaged some African countries and vitiated development earlier recorded. Fortunately, Liberia and Sierra Leone are recovering from the throes of war, but Somalia and parts of Sudan have remained under indecisive

internal disturbances for a long time, and there are ever frequent flashes in other countries, all of which deal brutal blows on books and libraries, as they engender, exacerbate, and prolong emancipation from poverty and illiteracy (Turay, 2005a). Turay (2005b), in addition to briefly summarising the book publishing situation in Africa, paints an unenviable picture of book publishing in Sierra Leone that probably also depicts situations in other countries where wars have torn down systems that were beginning to take root.

Nonetheless, unlike previous years, literacy is imperative in today's world, especially because people are gravitating away from agrarian life and occupations to urban areas and modern life. In an attempt to extend development to rural areas and dwellers, some forms of urbanisation are enacted, thereby exposing people to the influences of globalisation. In a fast-tracked world, the word of mouth is no longer adequate for survival, just as man's brain cannot hold all the details required for any aspect of a people's socio-cultural life, as did the orators in pre-modern African kings' palaces. This makes literacy and books the next option for the socio-political development of African societies. Literacy is a means of developing one's knowledge and potential, and enables participation in one's immediate community and the wider society (Desrochers and Major, 2008). Further, apart from being a repository of information and knowledge, the book reaches where the information carrier cannot reach, as it preserves, updates and revises knowledge. Incidentally, many societies seem to be unaware that their cultures and traditions are gradually dying away because pains have not been taken to write them down in books that can be read and preserved.

In spite of the efforts of international and national bodies to eradicate illiteracy, a high level of functional literacy is yet to obtain in many African nations, thereby limiting the number of those who can really read books. In keeping with the tenets of Education for All and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) agendas, governments have to increase literacy programmes in their effort to increase access to formal education and eradicate illiteracy. However, the quality of the output of some educational programmes leaves a lot to be desired and put in question the expediency of putting "a mass" all at

the same time through school at the expense of functional education. Poor learning environments, inadequacy of teaching/learning materials, and insufficient capacity for the development of teachers are some of the problems that militate against superior educational performance of pupils and students. But most disturbing is the attempt to develop literacy (in some cases by not-so-literate teachers) in environments with devoid, or with limited number, of books and other printed matters (Christopher, 2008).

If improving the basic literacy rates in African countries actually translate into improved book readership, then one should also expect growth in book imports or in the output of local book industries in order for the countries to be able to meet the increasing demand for books to read. In order to ascertain the extent to which this reasoning is correct, this paper compares literacy rates with book output ratios in African countries and compares Africa's situation with other regions of the world. The paper also evaluates Africa's levels of literacy in terms of the individual literate person being equipped with enough education that can engender healthy reading habits. The final section of the paper then discusses the implications of the findings for literacy and book development in Africa and proffer appropriate recommendations.

### **Recent Book Publishing Development in Africa**

The number of publishers listed for some African countries may give an impression of healthy book activity situations. Taking Nigeria for example, the Nigerian Publishers' Association's (NPA) website as of February 2010 indicated a membership of 144 publishers (<http://www.nigerianpublishers.org/memberfirms.htm>), which is perhaps a large portion but not all of Nigerian publishers. Kenya has more than 40 (Odini, 2002), although the website of the Kenya Publishers Association lists only 30, and South Africa has 2,951 publishers according to 1998/99 statistics (Hendrikz: 2002). However, African Book Collective, which markets books by African publishers in Europe, observes that publisher mortality rate in Africa is high (Ljungman and Singh, 2000). This is not only attributed to frequent and sudden changes in political and economic climates,

but also, many who do not understand the intricacies of the business enter into it with a lot of naivety (Kotei, 1981) only to quit after a few titles are published.

Nevertheless, remarkable progress has been recorded in African publishing since 1990 when some ECOWAS countries had no publishing outfits. Then, Mali had one state publishing firm, and Burkina Faso and Niger had none (Adesina, 1991). But, according to Apnet/Aeda (2007), Mali now has 18, Burkina Faso 11 and Niger 10. But sizes and publishing output vary from country to country; thus, while the medium-sized publisher in Togo produces four or five titles a year, in Tunisia it produces 10–25, and a large-sized publisher in Senegal produces about 10 titles. Yet, it is those publishers whose books are adopted for teaching that have a greater chance of surviving and succeeding.

### **Methodology**

To achieve the objective of this study, available secondary data obtained from various UNESCO publications, including *UNESCO Institute for Statistics* [UIS] and *World Culture Report* were subjected to various analyses and interpretations. The profiles of literacy rates and book output ratios of African countries are presented and compared, and then compared with those of countries from other regions to sufficiently illustrate Africa's relative status on both variables. Thereafter the study attempts to establish whether countries with higher literacy rates also have higher book ratios. Tables and charts are used for presenting results and showing relationships. Further, to compensate for the paucity of data in pursuing the argument of the influence of literacy development on book production, countries' literacy and educational development are investigated more closely by examining current literacy rates alongside the transition from primary to secondary levels of education.

A correlation between book ratios and education index was considered ideal for establishing a realistic relationship between book output and literacy rate, but data on education index could not be obtained. The education index is based on adult literacy rate and the combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education, and would have been preferred over mere adult literacy

rates because the bulk of Africa's book production is curriculum based (Machet, 2005; Odini, 2002), and also because using adult literacy rates would exclude the most significant portion of the population that consume locally produced books. However, under the circumstance, adult literacy rates had to be used in the analysis of relationship between literacy and book development.

## Analysis and Discussion

UNESCO projects that sub-Saharan Africa's average literacy rate would rise from 60.3% in 2000 to 73.9% in 2015, having stood at 49.2% in 1990. (<http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/files/25430/10669996915table2.22.pdf/table2.22.pdf>). But, have African publishers and book outputs contributed to current literacy developments in the region? Increase in literacy should lead to increased book demand and production, and one may also expect that a fall in literacy rate could lead to a drop in book demand and production. African countries' data on literacy rates (UNESCO, 1998, 2000) for different periods reveal that all African countries have made progress in reducing illiteracy rates among their people. Of 34 countries with data for 1990 and 1995, only one (Burundi) experienced a drop in literacy rate from 37% to 35%. However, by 2004 Burundi's literacy rate had shot up to 59.3%. Between 1995 and 2004 all of 40 countries but six had increases in literacy rates. All together, the average literacy rate for these countries

increased from 52.5% (Standard deviation (STD) The paucity of statistics on book production does not permit comparison of many countries' performance across periods as only Mauritius has statistics on ratio of copy output, and only Algeria on ratio of title output for four periods (1980, 1981–83, 1991–94 and 1994–1996) for which data were found for some countries. The table below shows book output for some countries in Africa in the different periods, as well as other non-African countries.

Table 1 indicates that some African countries produced less than a title per 100,000 people and that none produced up to 10 titles annually for any of the periods. Further, only Guinea Bissau showed improvement in performance during 1991–94, while others suffered decline.

Often time, poor performance of Africa's indicators of development is demonstrated by comparing them with statistics from US, UK and USSR. For a difference, this study compares Africa's performance with countries from other regions of the world (listed on the table). The examples from other regions buttress the evidence that title output in Africa is grossly inadequate, to say the least. As Table 1 reveals, title output for Japan and Portugal suffered a decline in 1991–94 but recovered by the 1994–96 period. Table 2 (below) shows the performance of African and other countries in volume output, that is, the number of copies produced per 100 inhabitants.

**Table 1: Ratio of Title Output (Number of Titles per 100,000 People)**

	African Country	1980	1981–83	1991-94	1994–96
1	Algeria	2.70	2.70	1.20	2.20
2	Ethiopia	0.40	0.40	0.20	...
3	Kenya	1.30	1.30	0.90	...
4	Nigeria	2.30	2.30	1.50	...
5	Zimbabwe	7.50	7.50	2.20	...
6	Mauritius	8.00	3.90	...	7.30
7	Guinea Bissau	...	0.10	0.20	...
Example from other Regions					
1	UAE	8.40	8.40	12.00	13.00
2	Sri Lanka	13.00	13.00	16.00	22.00
3	Japan	37.00	37.00	28.00	45.00
4	Malaysia	17.00	17.00	21.00	27.00
5	Argentina	15.00	15.00	26.00	27.00
6	Portugal	88.00	88.00	68.00	80.00

Sources: Generated from *World Culture Report*, UNESCO (1998 & 2000).

**Table 2: Ratio of Volume Output (Number of Copies per 100 People)**

	African Country	1980	1981 – 83	1991 – 94	1994 – 96
1	Dem. Republic of Congo	0.40	0.40	1.30	...
2	Ethiopia	0.40	0.40	1.20	...
3	Malawi	1.20	1.20	1.50	...
4	Mauritius	18.00	18.00	8.10	15.0
5	Niger	0.10	0.10	0.10	...
6	Kenya	...	1.30	1.80	...
Example from other Regions					
1	UAE	159.00	159.00	213.00	208.00
2	Sri Lanka	119.00	119.00	86.00	106.00
3	Japan	561.00	561.00	253.00	317.00
4	Malaysia	58.00	58.00	88.00	136.00
5	Argentina	52.00	52.00	143.00	110.00
6	Portugal	591.00	591.00	272.00	273.00

Sources: Generated from *World Culture Report*, UNESCO (1998 & 2000).

While African ratios of volume of books available to individuals is similar to its title output in poor performance (with the exception of Mauritius), those of countries in “other regions” are quite different, indicating that there is an abundance of books at people’s disposal in those countries. The data show that print runs per title of books produced in Africa are equally small. The data suggest further that publishing in Africa is very different from elsewhere in the world, and that, consequently, knowledge and literacy-based development would be retarded in Africa.

However, if literacy and readership levels in African countries are comparable with those elsewhere, one could infer that the books required

to satisfy literacy and readership demands are sourced from outside the continent. It is however doubtful that enough books could be brought in. Although Machet (2005) says Africa produces only 3% but consumes 12% of world book output, it remains to be seen how much books can be imported in situations where exchange rates are unfavourable and funds highly limited. On the other hand, we can surmise that census adult literacy rate is inadequate to support book production, since many people so defined would usually not have acquired adequate comprehension skills that can be applied in making meaning out of available texts.

To examine the relationship between literacy rates and book outputs the table below presents data

**Table 3: Comparison of Book Output with Adult Literacy for Two Periods (Africa & Others)**

	African Country	Adult Lit. 1990 <sup>a</sup>	Titles 1991-94 <sup>b</sup>	Copies 1991-94 <sup>b</sup>	Adult Lit. 1995 <sup>a</sup>	Titles (1994-96) <sup>b</sup>	Copies 1994-96 <sup>b</sup>	African Country
1	Ethiopia	28.60	0.20	1.20	36.00	...	...	Ethiopia
2	Algeria	52.90	1.20	1.80	62.00	2.10	...	Algeria
3	Madagascar	58.00	0.90	2.20	...	...	2.00	Madagascar
4	Kenya	70.80	0.90	1.80	78.00	...	Kenya	
5	Mauritius	79.80	...	8.10	83.30	7.30	15.00	Mauritius
Example from other Regions								
1	UAE	71.00	12.00	213.00	...	13.00	208.00	UAE
2	Malaysia	80.70	21.00	88.00	...	136.00	27.00	Malaysia
3	Portugal	87.00	68.00	272.00	...	80.00	273.00	Portugal
4	Sri Lanka	88.70	16.00	86.00	...	22.00	106.00	Sri Lanka
5	Argentina	95.70	26.00	143.00	...	27.00	110.00	Argentina
6	Japan	...	28.00	253.00	...	45.00	317.00	Japan

Sources: Generated with data from (a) Electronic Data Centre of UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS); (b) UNESCO (1998 & 2000); *World Culture Report*.

for different countries. Due to the paucity of data, book output for the 1991–94 period is compared with the adult literacy rates for the preceding period 1990, and that for 1994–96 with literacy rates for 1995, since, logically an earlier period would yield literate book readers for a subsequent period.

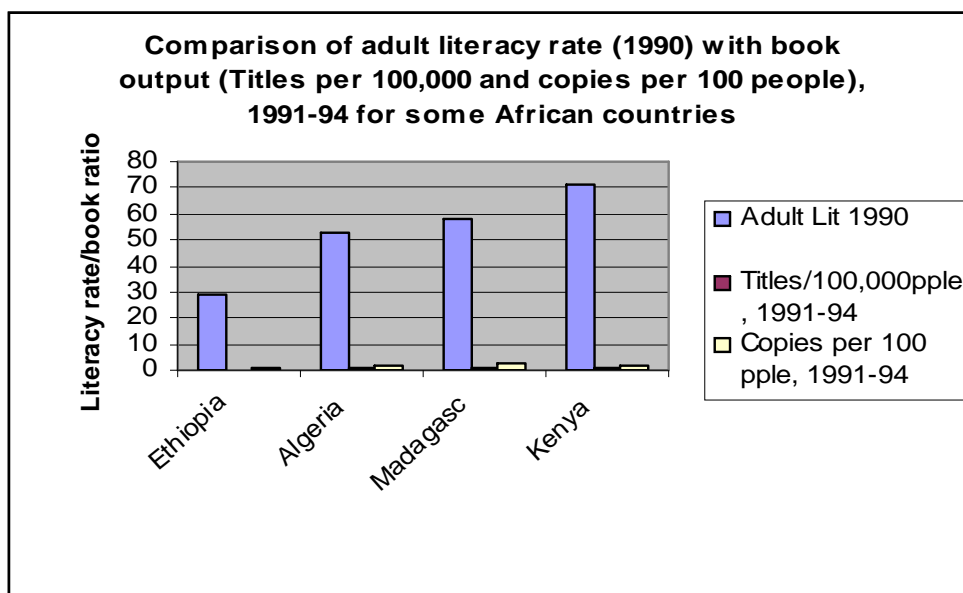
In Table 3 is presented the available (corresponding) data on book production and adult literacy for two periods: 1990–94 and 1995–96. Paucity of data for the second period (1995–96) does not permit rigorous statistical analysis that would reveal trends of performance for the selected countries. Nonetheless, the data from the second period show that there are improvements in performance in adult literacy rates and book ratios for Africa and “other regions.” In Africa, Algeria’s adult literacy rate, as well as titles/people ratio improved. On the other hand, in “other regions,” United Arab Emirates and Argentina experienced a drop in copies/people ratios but increase in their titles/people ratios.

The two periods’ data for the different regions indicate that unlike “other regions” book publishing is grossly lagging behind growth in literacy rates in African nations. In fact, Africa cannot be a player in the global knowledge and information systems if its book ratios are below one where other comparable countries have tens (of titles per 100,000 people) and below ten where other regions have

tens and hundreds (of copies per 100 people). Although it may be difficult to be categorical about the relationship between literacy level and book production, it could safely be said that countries in other regions are more capable of translating literacy development into readership than the African countries. Kenya and United Arab Emirates, for example, have similar adult literacy levels just as Mauritius and Malaysia, yet the book ratios are incomparable. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate graphically the relationship between literacy rates and book output ratios. (The reader should note the difference in the scale along the vertical axes in comparing the charts).

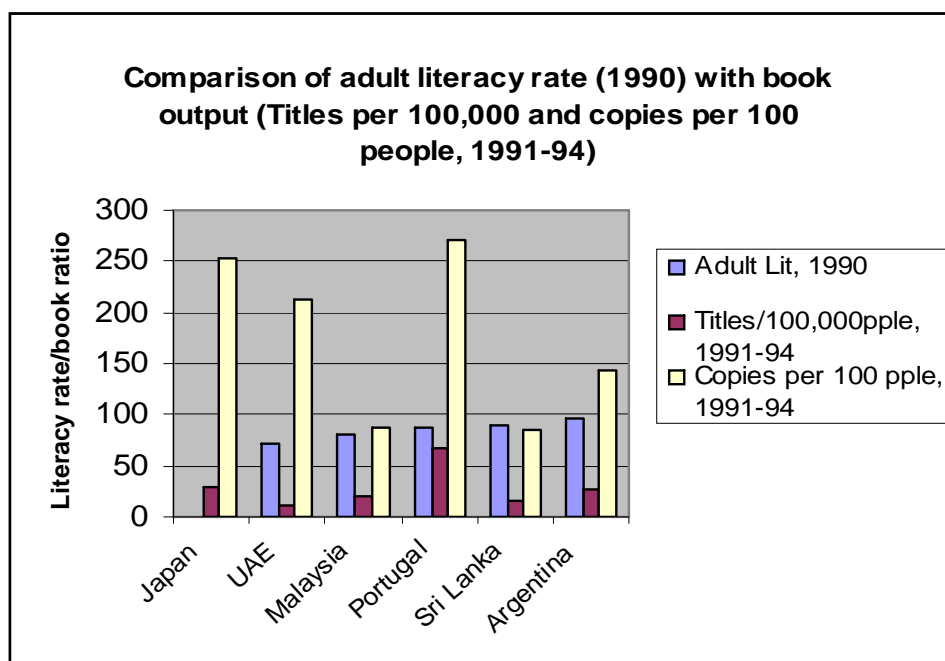
Both graphs show that the ratio of volume (copies) output is better than that of title output. However, despite the gross difference in ratios between book production in Africa and other regions, the charts confirm that literacy rates are astronomically higher than book ratios in Africa, whereas in “other regions” the ratio of copies per people surpasses adult literacy rate, tripling it in some cases. Further, although titles/people ratios are lower than adult literacy rates in all cases, copies/people ratio favours availability of local books in “other regions” but does not in African countries. Again, the charts reveal that literacy has impact on

Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Literacy Levels and Book Ratios for African Nations



Note: Titles/100,000 people is very low and does not appear on the graph

Figure 2: Graphical Representation of Literacy Levels and Book Ratios for 'Other regions'



readership and book production in “other regions” but does not make much difference in the reading and book production levels in African countries. Obviously, individuals, publishers and governments should seek to optimally utilise literacy achievements by translating them into readership. Meanwhile, many African countries need to import to meet shortfalls in book needs.

### Assessment of Africa’s Literacy Rates

If literate people do not buy and read books, we need to ask why. Are there obstacles to reading? Is there a misalignment in the perception and reality of literacy and reading? Is the expectation that improved literacy will translate into improved readership and then into increased book output misplaced? In actual fact, low literacy level should be seen as a key factor militating against the growth of readership, and consequently, development of book publishing, in Africa. Obanya (2005) observes that “Basic Education is not determined by years of schooling, but by the extent to which an education programme is able to lay the foundations for lifelong learning.” This assertion is instructive for African governments. One cannot but agree with Obanya, considering that in many respects the products of

some educational institutions of past decades seem to exhibit more literacy capabilities than their counterparts of the last decades or so. Besides, higher literacy levels are required in today’s information-driven world than earlier years. One may then ask what in the present dispensation constitutes sufficient education that can sustain functional literacy or lifelong learning.

In many African countries functional literacy may be associated with being educated enough to find a job and read when it is necessary (say to complete a form or read job-related instructions). Thus, descriptions of job requirements may no longer admit primary education only. Further, although a person applying for the job of a driver will at least be expected to have gone through secondary school education, available data suggests that substantial proportions of people described as literate in most African nations may have undergone only primary education, as the Table 4 reveals.

Except for Burkina Faso (21.8%), the countries have literacy rates that fall between 47.8% (Mozambique) and 90.7% (Zimbabwe). Together the 18 countries have a mean literacy of 69% in 2009. However, these countries’ mean for secondary enrolment as a percentage of primary school enrolment is only 28%. Only four out of the 18 countries have literacy rates similar to their

**Table 4: Literacy Rates, Secondary School Enrolment and Textbook Provision of Some African Countries**

	Country	Literacy Rate (2009) <sup>a</sup>	Secondary Enrolment as % of Primary Enrolment <sup>b</sup>	Free Textbooks (Secondary) <sup>c</sup>
1.	Cote d' Ivoire	48.70	2.50	Yes
2.	Kenya	85.10	3.29	No
3.	Mozambique	47.80	5.04	No
4.	Zambia	80.60	6.27	Yes
5.	Tanzania	69.40	6.96	Yes
6.	Ghana	57.90	8.28	Yes
7.	Namibia	85.00	8.33	Yes
8.	Uganda	66.80	8.90	No
9.	Lesotho	84.80	19.38	No
10.	Burkina Faso	21.80	21.33	No
11.	Togo	60.90	22.31	No
12.	Rwanda	70.40	22.73	No
13.	Malawi	62.70	25.86	No
14.	Zimbabwe	90.70	35.60	No
15.	Nigeria	68.00	42.31	No
16.	Tunisia	74.30	78.57	No
17.	South Africa	86.40	89.23	Yes
18.	Mauritius	84.40	89.26	Yes

Data sources: (a) Country Report (2009), (b) worked out with data from APNET/ADEA Study; (c) APNET/ADEA Study (posted online 2007)

percentage of secondary school enrolment over primary school enrolment (i.e. Burkina Faso, South Africa, Mauritius and Tunisia). Despite positive changes that may have taken place in school enrolments in the past decade, it may still be found that over 50% of pupils do not progress from primary school to secondary. This poor progress obtains even in cases where school textbooks are supplied free to secondary schools.

This level of literacy/education is not adequate to support literacy activities and growth in book publishing and cannot drive development in African countries. In as much as education is important, governments should also address issues that have to do with literacy capacity enhancement, especially through increased access to books, by addressing the book issue through the design and implementation of book policies.

### Implications, Problems and Progress

The APNET/AEDA study (2007) reveals that countries are at various stages of book policy design or adoption, and that some countries (such as Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe) were yet to

commence the process as at the time of the report. A book policy would enable a nation to draw up machineries for effective and efficient book publishing and distribution activities as literacy is being developed. The necessity for adopting a book policy by each African nation is because of the nature and nascence of the *written* (or print) knowledge industry in a predominant oracy culture, and also because the industry is struggling in not-so-friendly economic environments. Government effort is needed to address issues in book development, as well as ease the development of linkages among practitioners in the industry for the development of a virile knowledge industry. In Nigeria for example, established booksellers should be allowed to handle book supply contracts; and they on their part should aggressively work with publishers to promote general interest books. Further, to support the development and sustainability of more publishers, functional libraries of all types are to be created to absorb publications from publishers and make them available to readers. As Bahta and Mutula (2002) recommend, "it is important for the book policy to have detailed provisions to address all the actors in

the book chain such as authors, publishers and distribution outlets.”

Considering that book and reading are not native sub-Saharan African cultural activities, and that books, publishing and reading are the most important elements for the liberation of man and nations, the book sector should be supported by government to enable it rise above the quagmire of financial and professional insufficiencies militating against its development and growth. Practitioners in the industry are unable to control extenuating factors in book publishing and distribution, such as those that have to do with paper production/supply, transport network and system, electricity supply, economic and financial policies, etc. Therefore, African governments have a responsibility to create enabling environments for publishing to thrive, and for printed (and electronic) materials to be disseminated across regions in their individual countries. Fortunately, several reports of conferences and workshops starting with that of the 1968 Accra meeting (UNESCO, 1969) abound which could provide important information and strategies for putting in place those elements still missing in book production and provision procedures.

Moreover, literacy that enables reading is a *sine qua non* for citizens to access education and information needed for self and national development. It is now necessary to redefine “literacy” in line with a nation’s aspirations so as to design a pragmatic path to its attainment. It may be useful to address illiteracy as a socio-political problem, borrowing a leaf from those communist countries which, in addition to literacy development, produced literature along the lines of ideological beliefs for people’s reading pleasure. By design or error, African citizens are not encouraged to participate actively in national issues, economic development and other matters that affect their lives. Also, people are not led to develop personal and cultural identity, are not made aware of their rights as citizens, and are uneducated on matters of equality of opportunities, governance, and civil society (Desrochers and Major, 2008). A government determined to keep its people informed provides access to information and literacy. To achieve this may further require that

issues of language of communication, language of education and language teaching are addressed.

Since African countries cannot afford the cost of employing native-speaker teachers or overseas training of their nationals, proficiency in *lingua franca* has been declining. Meanwhile, most Africans do not want mother tongue education, where it exists. Obviously, there is much need for public enlightenment on the language issue so that people can accept their local languages as veritable medium of development and advancement; but this can only be if proficiency in those languages is actually an asset and a means of advancement, rather than a burden. First and foremost, language policies that assign functions to languages and guide the teaching of languages could eliminate ambivalence in the teaching of mother tongue. In this vein, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o (2009) has consistently reminded Africans that they cannot write in strange languages if they are writing to their own people. Many works by Africans fail to speak to their audience who are Africans, first by not writing in the language they understand and secondly by not writing in ways which African readers can identify with. Secondly, capacity development should produce quality teachers that can lead their learners to become sufficiently literate in any language of education. Thirdly, relevant materials for every definition of literacy or literacy level are to be provided to ensure that children/students are made to enjoy reading and use their literacy skills from very early stage and become lifelong learners.

In fulfilling their responsibility to society, publishers should seek to produce suitable material for identified levels of literacy – emergent, developed, willing and unwilling readers and learners. More training on know-how by all sectors of the industry should improve professionalism beyond producing educational books, getting them adopted by government and distributing same to schools. Poor book marketing and distribution result in potential market not being tapped, and makes it difficult to reduce prices through increased print-runs which will engender economies of scale. Ogunleye’s (2005) has observed that the Nigerian booksellers association is weak and that bookshop managers are poorly trained; accordingly, they are unable to fully appreciate their central role in promoting readership, and book promotion and

distribution. These observations probably apply to the situation in other African countries. The burden of near exclusive educational publishing is a serious limitation to the growth of the book industry as it limits significant development of indigenous publishing in other genres. Exclusive concentration on educational books could work against the creation or framing of the histories of African nations in years to come as peoples' lifestyles, past and present, and "human libraries" are slipping away unrecorded in literature and other general interest texts.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, we know that information/knowledge is power, and that knowledge and power create the gap between African and other more developed and more powerful countries. Nations develop by accessing information/knowledge that has been distilled from pooled cultures, tradition and learning over time; utilising it and contributing to that pool. However, that information/knowledge is available and accessible only to those who know how to read and will read. Ensuring that people really learn to read and write by the time they are going through school, and are reading thereafter is a task for governments and the publishing industry. It is obvious that literacy and reading are fast becoming the tools for survival and advancement in today's Africa. Although we of necessity should preserve and live by our cultural heritage, no nation is depending on its historical past to survive or advance, especially when this is synonymous with illiteracy.

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**\*Nkechi M. Christopher** is a lecturer in the Department of Communication and Language Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She brings to bear in this paper her publishing experience, her doctoral work on the book publishing industry and her interest in the development of reading culture in Nigeria and other African countries.

# Electronic Government Initiatives in the Public Service of Namibia

**Cathrine T. Nengomasha**  
cnengomasha@unam.na

**Kingo Mchombu**  
kmchombu@unam.na

*Department of Information and  
Communication Studies,  
University of Namibia,  
P. Bag, 13301, Windhoek, Namibia*

and

**Patrick Ngulube**  
ngulup@unisa.ac.za

*Department of Information Science,  
University of South Africa,  
P. O. Box 392, UNISA, 0003*

## Abstract

*The paper highlights e-government initiatives in the public service of Namibia based on a study that was carried from February to August 2007 employing literature review, observation and interviews with 85 respondents that included desk officers, records keeping staff and information technology (IT) personnel in seven ministries, two regional councils and two local authorities. The study established that Namibia is still at the initial phase of her e-government implementation strategy, i.e., publication of information level of e-maturity. The problems associated with failure of e-government in African and other developing countries are discussed in the Namibia context. These problems include: inadequate data systems; underdeveloped legislative, institutional and human capacity*

*including leadership; inadequate technological infrastructure; and poor records management. The paper provides a number of recommendations aimed at ensuring that the Namibian Public Service captures details of transactions, takes account of privacy, confidentiality and security issues, and provides timely, reliable and useful information.*

## Keywords

Electronic government, governance, electronic records, Namibia

## Introduction

There are many definitions of e-government, but all reflect the same thing; that is, it is about government employing information and communication technologies (ICT) to democratise access to information and enhance service delivery to its customers which include citizens and businesses. Fang (2002) cited in Rose, (2004) defines e-government as 'a way for governments to use the most innovative ICT, particularly web based Internet applications, to provide citizens and businesses with more convenient access to government information and services and to provide greater opportunities to participate in democratic situations and processes'. This is not far from the definitions such as 'the online exchange of government information with, and the delivery of services to, citizens, businesses and other government agencies' (International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) Standing Committee on Information Technology, 2005). Some countries use a wide definition of e-government to include all electronic delivery of services including telephone, fixed lines or mobile in addition to the use of the Internet (INTOSAI, 2005).

Namibia's electronic-governance (e-governance) policy (Republic of Namibia, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), 2005a) refers to e-governance as 'the use of information and communication technologies in public administrations, combined with organisational change and new skills, in order to improve public and democratic processes and strengthen support to public policies'. Namibia's e-governance implementation strategy is in four phases: Phase 1, information; Phase 2, government interaction with the public; Phase 3, entire transactions online; and Phase 4, single electronic point of contact for all government services (Republic of Namibia, OPM, 2005). These phases correspond with the following four levels of e-Maturity defined by INTOSAI Standing Committee on IT Audit as (1) Publication - of information only; (2) Passive interaction – transactions can be initiated but cannot be completed electronically (3) Active interaction – citizens and government are able to complete basic transactions electronically; (4) Seamless e-government – government and citizens obtain optimal value from their electronic interaction. (INTOSAI, 2005).

E-government is growing in Africa and countries are at different stages in its implementation. Whereas developed countries have sophisticated integrated e-government programmes, most developing countries are not yet fully computerised. The majority is still rolling out e-government strategies and the rest already supplying e-service to the extent of publication of information (INTOSAI, 2005). Most African countries are said to have undertaken only a limited number of e-government projects and most e-government projects have been reported to fail in some way (Heeks, 2002). Several writers have discussed possible reasons for failure of e-government implementation in Africa.

This study discusses the challenges of e-government in Namibia's context highlighting possible factors which stand in the way of successful implementation of e-government. The paper also highlights the records management implications of these challenges. The study attempted to assess the extent to which the challenges are applicable to Namibia's Public Service, whose records management situation has been described as weak by the participants at a workshop on Evidence Based Governance (2003). The participants that resolved

that although the Namibia Government had initiated a programme to promote e-government, the full benefits of e-government would only be realised when improvements have been made in the management of recorded information throughout government. The findings of the study, as summarised in this paper, will be useful to policy makers and planners in the design of e-government projects, particularly to minimise risk and ensure that the public service gets the most benefit from investment in e-government initiatives. The records management dimension of this paper also contributes to knowledge on the subject of e-government.

## Literature Review

### Namibia's ICT Landscape

Information and information and communications technologies (ICT) are pivotal to e-government. This is why governments are looking at ways to distribute information to their customers i.e. the citizens and businesses. The Africa Information Society Initiative (AISII), an action framework to build Africa's information and telecommunications infrastructure has a vision for an information society. However, the various specific objective of AISII have turned out to be more idealistic than a reality considering the various stages in which African countries are currently regarding ICT development. However Namibia has set itself more realistic time frame and goals with its Vision 2030 (Republic of Namibia, OPM, 2004) and subsequent National Development Plans. Hesselmark and Miller (2002) carried out a survey on ICT in Namibia and concluded that there 'has been a shift towards a more developed information society'. The following give a brief overview of Namibia's ICT infrastructure indicating Namibia's preparedness for e-governance.

### Connectivity and Access

The United Nations (UN) categorises Namibia as a lower-middle-income country and when ranked with other countries in this category, Namibia is lagging behind in terms of mobile and fixed lines coverage (Stork, 2005). Vast lands with low population densities in Namibia, which covers 825,418 square kilometers with a population of only 1,830,330 (according to 2001 population

census), are an obstacle to telephone connectivity (Stork and Deen-Swarray, 2006).

Telecom Namibia, which is government owned, is the sole provider of fixed lines. The number of fixed lines has increased, from 57,000 at independence in 1990 (Hesselmark and Miller, 2002) to about 140,000 in 2006 (Stork and Deen-Swarray, 2006). Namibia's teledensity for fixed lines increased from 0.96% in 1998 (Stork and Aochamub, 2003) to 6.96% in 2006 (Stork and Deen-Swarray, 2006). Payphones have been installed across the country, particularly in areas with previously low telephone coverage. There are about 5,000 payphones, which translate into 2.8 public phones per 1000 people (Stork and Aochamub, 2003). In 2007, Telecom Namibia introduced fixed-wireless services which are cheaper than any mobile products in South Africa, Botswana or Namibia (Stork and Deen-Swarray, 2007). Fixed wireless services refer to mobile technologies that do not allow roaming between cells. Although constrained by mobility, for Namibia it provides users, most of whom rarely leave town hence always within the cell, with what they want at affordable cost (Stork and Deen-Swarray, 2007).

There are two mobile service providers, MTC and Leo (formerly Cell One). They are fairly new in the market having started operating in 2007. In 2006, MTC had about 516,000 mobile subscribers with a mobile teledensity of 25.66% (Stork and Deen-Swarray, 2006). In 2007, Cell One had around 70,000 subscribers (Haarhoff, 2007). The 2003/2004 Household Income and Expenditure Survey found that 33.5% of Namibians owned telephones or cell phones, while a further 33% had access to one (Republic of Namibia, Ministry of Education, 2007).

### Internet Services

Namibia claims to have the third highest Internet usage in Africa (Republic of Namibia, OPM, 2005b). There were roughly 14,000 Internet users using fixed lines for Internet access and 8000 users accessing the Internet via leased lines in 2002 (Stork and Aochamus, 2003). Access to the Internet is bound to improve if plans for a multi-purpose community centre for each of the thirteen regions materialise. In his address at an e-governance awareness workshop in 2005, the then Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting,

Mocks Shivute, informed participants that the 'Government had made provision for the establishment of one multi-purpose community centre in the 13 regions to give ordinary people access to information and to introduce them to the latest technologies' (Shivute, 2005). He also acknowledged that the rural communities are poorly serviced in terms of fixed and mobile telephone services and Internet connectivity. However, there are plans to expand access to ICT to rural areas through a project Government is involved in that will create a national Internet gateway (Gurirab, 2005).

### Training and Human Resources in ICT Sector

Namibia's ICT sector suffers from lack of trained and skilled ICT human resources (Asino, 2005; Republic of Namibia, OPM, 2004). Most organisations therefore, import these skills from other countries. Table 1 illustrates the understaffing in the public service and reflects the situation in the country. These are 2005 figures and some of the zero per cent figures have changed. For example, this study established that there are IT officers in the Ministries of Agriculture, Water and Forestry; and Regional, Local Government and National Housing; however, the situation in the public service overall has not changed much. This is confirmed by the *OPM Annual Report 2007/2008* which states that "the Office continues to struggle to get qualified ICT assistance with the implementation of the e-Governance Policy..." (Republic of Namibia, OPM, 2009).

The shortage of staff becomes even more pronounced when Namibia is compared with other countries. In 2005, the Namibian Communications Commission (NCC) had only seven employees, compared to sixty-seven at Botswana Telecommunications Authority and three hundred and twenty one at the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Stork, 2005).

There are three main tertiary institutions in Namibia - University of Namibia, Polytechnic of Namibia and International University of Management. In addition to these, there are seven vocational training centres, four colleges of education, three agricultural colleges and one police training college.

**Table 1: Understaffing in the ICT Sector of the Public Service of Namibia**

Institution	Understaffing (% indicates positions filled)
Office of the Prime minister	50%
Office of Attorney General	0%
National Planning Commission	88%
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry	0%
Ministry of Regional, Local Government and National Housing	0%
Ministry of Trade and Industry	0%
Ministry of Mines and Energy	33%
Electoral Commission of Namibia	0%

Source: Asino, ([2005], p. 201)

There are also parastatals such as Namibia College of Open Learning and private colleges like Damelin and the Higher Education Institute, which offer a variety of programmes (Hesselmark and Miller, 2002). As a way of accelerating the implementation of the e-Governance Policy, the Office of the Prime Minister has engaged the University of Namibia and the Polytechnic of Namibia to train Government employees for a period of five years (Republic of Namibia, OPM, 2009).

The improvements in the teaching of ICT in schools and training in institutions of higher learning are set to improve the situation of lack of skilled manpower. The Ministry of Education, in partnership with SchoolNet Namibia, aided by numerous donors is involved in establishing computer laboratories with Internet connectivity in all schools in Namibia. About 300 of Namibia's 1500 schools have been provided with IT facilities, providing some 130,000 learners with access to the Internet (Republic of Namibia, OPM 2005b). How adequate these computers are, is subject to another investigation. Relevant to the present study, however, is that efforts are being made to equip citizens with the skills to communicate with government online. One of the objectives of The Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) is to enhance ICT training (Republic of Namibia, Ministry of Education, 2007). The ICT Policy for Education aims to enhance the use and development of ICT in the delivery of education and training (Republic of Namibia, MBESC, 2005).

### **The Namibian Government in the Information Age**

In 1990, the Department of Public Service Information Technology Management (DPSITM) was created in the Office of the Prime Minister, to guide and oversee all aspects of ICT usage in the Public Service. The Department set up standards, guidelines and procedures that assisted in hardware and software acquisition, IT training and the establishment of a government wide network (GRNNet), as well as in web development (Republic of Namibia, OPM, 2005c). An IT policy was formulated in 1993 and was updated in 2003.

A Cabinet Committee on IT (CCIT) was established to ensure that ICT matters are considered at the topmost decision levels of the country. DPSITM became the technical arm of CCIT. DPSITM also worked to develop standards and cooperative architecture. A GRN Intranet/Internet Gateway was developed which now links all Government ministries. However this study established that due to shortage of space, some ministries have offices operating in rented buildings which are not networked. A GRN Website was created where some information about the Namibian Government can be accessed (Republic of Namibia, OPM, 2005c). The study also confirmed the situation reported by Hesselmark and Miller (2002) that, 'Although there are several government websites, these are not informational and not necessarily up to date'.

The Namibian government is using computer technologies to support business activities. There has been an increase in the number of computers in the Namibia public service from 40 in 1990 personal

computers to 4,000 in 2004 (Asino, 2005) and 3,500 civil servants have e-mail and Internet access (Amutenya, 2005). This study confirmed the increase in access to computers, e-mail and Internet, as all the 59 (100%) officers interviewed had access to these. However, the study also established a number of factors hampering the effective use of e-mail and Internet, and the effective management of electronic records created by computerised system and services.

Like e-government, there are many definitions of records management. However the various definitions are in agreement on the goal of records management, which is to ensure the efficient and effective management of records in any form, produced by an organisation in its normal course of operation. Many development goals meant to be supported by e-government depend on trustworthy evidence and unless there is adequate infrastructure for managing e-records, the intended benefits of e-government will be compromised (World Bank, 2005).

In many instances electronic records are created in a complex environment of fragmented and incompatible information systems and standards, for example computer systems and metadata standards (Lipchack and McDonald, 2003).

Records management challenges posed by electronic records particularly to the public sector in East and Southern Africa Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) region have been highlighted by several writers including Keakopa (2003), Ngulube and Tafor (2006) and Mnjama and Wamukoya (2007). The challenges facing ESARBICA are summarised as follows: absence of organisational plans for managing e-records; low awareness of the role of records management in support of organisational efficiency and accountability; lack of stewardship and coordination in handling paper as well as electronic records; absence of legislation; absence of policies and procedures to guide the management of both paper and electronic records; absence of core competencies in records and archives management; absence of budgets dedicated for records management; poor security and confidentiality controls; lack of records retention and disposal policies; and absence of migration strategies for e-records (Mnjama and Wamukoya, 2007).

## Methodology

This study, qualitative in nature, employed the following data collection techniques: literature, observation and interviews. The study combined the interview guide approach and the standardised open-ended interview for the face-to-face interviews, thus making the interviews semi-structured. Interview guides, integrated with observation checklists were developed for data collection. Separate interview guides were developed for records keeping staff, action officers, and heads of records sections, information technology personnel and the National Archives.

The population of this study comprised the employees of Namibia's Public Service. The units of analysis were the ministries, as well as the 85 individuals interviewed. All the 20 ministries, which made up the Namibian Public Service, were to be a part of the study but in the end the survey could not be comprehensive and the researchers settled for those ministries that availed themselves. Seven ministries, two regional councils and two local authorities were surveyed. The individuals interviewed comprised action officers, IT staff, records keeping staff, heads of records sections, and National Archives staff. The selection of participants within the ministries was based on purposive and accidental sampling. This paper cannot mention the names of these institutions in line with the conditions for confidentiality set during the study.

## Findings and Discussion

### E-Government Initiatives in the Public Service of Namibia

The study found that Namibia was still at phase one of her e-government implementation strategy. This phase is characterised by "government being on the web, providing the public and businesses with relevant information in order to promote transparency and democracy" (Office of the Prime Minister, 2005a). The researchers wanted to establish the extent of e-government in the public service of Namibia. Sixty respondents were asked the question: 'What e-government initiatives are taking place in the organisation?' The responses are highlighted in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: E-government Initiatives in the Public Service of Namibia (N=60)**

Initiative	Frequency	% of responses
E-service/e-system	14	23.3%
E-mail	11	18.3%
Websites development	10	16.7%
Expansion of network to regional councils	7	11.7%
Access to electronic journals and scientific databases	6	10%
E-governance policy	2	3.3%
Web-based systems	2	3.3%
Electronic/video conferencing	2	3.3%
Plans to computerise registry/electronic filing	2	3.3%
E-government awareness workshops	2	3.3%

The responses showed that e-government was being felt mainly through the e-service/e-system, which is the public services' website where officers are able to get information on statutes, public service charter, etc; e-mail systems; websites development; expansion of network to regional councils; and access to electronic journals and scientific databases.

### Access to Computers and E-mail Use

All 60 respondents had computers. An IT officer in one Ministry said that in that Ministry 'all staff members have e-mail as a rule and access to Internet'. An Acting Chief Executive Officer in one of the local authorities commented that he did not believe in e-mail for all staff and remarked 'I am careful not to install e-mail for each and everyone due to virus and misuse of e-mail. This is a good indication of the disparities between central government and local government in terms of e-government awareness.

### Websites

All the seven ministries were busy working on their websites, according to the seven IT officers interviewed. In five of the cases, existing websites were being updated. This is confirmed by the 2007/2008 *Annual Report* of the Office of the Prime Minister which reports on three websites having been developed and published, six reviewed and updated and a number being designed in four ministries and the Office of the President (Office of the Prime Minister, 2009). The e-service also referred to by other officers as e-system was cited by 23% of the respondents as evidence of e-government in the public service.

### Access to Electronic Journals and Scientific Databases

In Ministry B, officers (10% of the respondents) spoke passionately about the ability to access electronic journals and access scientific databases. An officer spoke about an e-government initiative where the ministry is piloting a system where some published good practices in farming will go to farmers electronically. 'Our people are able to log on to a certain website and down load information and adapt it for farmers. Before, we would waste a lot of time going to the library'.

### Web-Based Systems

The respondents highlighted the fact that the public service is aiming towards making all systems web-based. One IT officers remarked 'OPM wants all systems to be web-based'. These sentiments were voiced by yet another IT officer in a different ministry 'Most of our information systems have been client-server but the trend now is to have web based, for an example, Finance, Human Resources and Agriculture Statistics'. In a different ministry an IT officer explained 'There has been migration from an older SQL to new web-based HRM (human resource management) system'. This is confirmed by the 2007-2008 Office of the Prime Minister Annual Report (Office of Prime the Minister, 2009). According to the OPM one of the e-government initiatives is to 'have web-based enquiry of exams. The system is being enhanced so that each school can register its students. ICT in education initiative TECHNIA aims to get computers in every school, library etc. (This was confirmed by the Office of the Prime Minister Annual Report for 2005/2006 (OPM, 2007).

### Expansion of Network to Link Regional Councils

The Government of Namibia has embarked on a decentralisation exercise and the Ministry of Regional Local Government and Housing (MRLGH) is the leading agency for the implementation of the decentralisation process (Republic of Namibia, MRLGH, 1997). This study revealed that 'Regional councils are linked to the Ministry of Regional Local Government and Housing and not linked to the rest of the public service through OPM'. However there are plans to link regional councils to the rest of the public service (OPM, 2009).

E-government is considered one of the key elements in the decentralisation process as the success of the decentralisation process rests upon efficient and effective local and regional administrative and service delivery capacity as well as on the management of information and knowledge processes within local and regional authorities: and between them and the line Ministry, MRLGH (Republic of Namibia, MRLGH, 2004). MRLGH initiated a Decentralisation Extension Programme in 2006, which aimed at providing all staff members of the regional councils with 24-hour access to the Internet and e-mail (Shilongo, 2008). According to the late Minister of MRLGH, John Pandeni, the programme has changed the working conditions of staff at regional level, providing them with valuable research and communication resources that were not previously available (Shilongo, 2008). However,

the study found out that there are a number of problems which hinder effective access and use of the Internet and e-mail. These and other problems hampering e-government in the public service of Namibia are discussed below.

### E-Government Readiness and E-Records Readiness

A number of reasons have been put forward for the slow diffusion of e-Government in Africa. According to Heeks (2002), there are six factors which are of vital relevance to e-government in Africa. These factors can be posed in terms of "e-readiness for e-government" questions'. Based on findings of this study, the paper has tried to answer them in relation to Namibia's situation.

#### Is the Data Systems Infrastructure Ready?

This question addresses the issue of information management systems, data standards, records and work processes in place to provide the quantity and quality of data to support the move to e-government (Heeks, 2002). The data systems infrastructure for the public service of Namibia is not yet ready. This is based on the following findings. There was not enough awareness for records as evidence of official activities which should be preserved for evidence and good governance. Poor records keeping was evident, with cases of missing records reported. Records were threatened by viruses and poor or absence of back up procedures. Cases of changes

**Table 3: Systems development: Local or Foreign Companies**

Institution	Consultants involved in systems development? Yes/No	If yes, consultant's country if foreign
Ministry A	Yes	South Africa
Ministry B	Yes	Australia, Finland
Ministry C	Yes	
Ministry D	Yes	
Ministry E	Yes	Sweden / South Africa
Ministry F	No	
Ministry G	Yes	Mauritius, South Africa
Regional Council A	Yes	
Regional Council B	Yes	
Local Authority A	Yes	South Africa
Local Authority B	Yes	South Africa

in data format and failure to access data were reported. Electronic information systems such as the Integrated Financial Management System and Human Resources Information Management System generated transactional records which were not captured and maintained in a records keeping system. This compromises the creation and preservation of reliable and authentic records for evidence, accountability and transparency. Most electronic information systems were developed, and maintained by external consultants who kept the systems documentation. The whereabouts of documentation for most electronic information systems were not known by the IT officers with serious consequences for future access to information created by these systems and digital preservation strategies.

### **Is the Legislative Infrastructure Ready?**

Legislation plays a significant role in records management. From the experiences of other countries, relevant legislation includes laws concerning records and archives, e-commerce, freedom of information and data protection. Namibia is in the same category with most African countries where 'digital signatures cannot be accepted' (Heeks, 2002). E-commerce legislation is currently at the bill stage, the *Use of Electronic Communications and Transactions Bill* of 2005 (OPM, 2005b). The *Namibia Archives Act 12* of 1992 does not specifically spell out electronic records although they are implied in the overall definition of archives. The revision of the *Namibia Archives Act* currently underway, will hopefully spell out what electronic records are and the mandate of the National Archives regarding their management. There are no Freedom of Information (FOI) and data protection laws which are important for democratisation of information whilst protecting the rights and privacy of individuals. Namibia's e-governance policy (OPM, 2005c) calls for regulation to "protect consumers, protect privacy and communications, and security of electronic signatures". Namibia's legal framework is not yet ready to support e-government.

### **Is the Institutional Infrastructure Ready?**

This question addresses the fact that e-government can only progress if the institutions exist as a focus for awareness and act as a means for facilitation of e-government (Heeks, 2002). As the study established, there was lack of awareness of e-government amongst some officers in the public service of Namibia. In most African countries, there are no institutions to coordinate, lead and drive e-governance (Heeks, 2002). In Namibia, the Office of the Prime Minister is driving e-government. The study discovered that an e-government committee set up to spear head e-government was never active. Such a committee would bring together key stakeholders including IT, legal, business/operational, regulatory and records management experts as well as top management representatives.

The findings of the study also indicated that the absence of such a committee threatened the success of some initiatives such as the electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) acquired for managing meant for the entire public service. The Office of the Prime Minister feels it is in charge of electronic records management since it is in charge of e-government. The Office of the Prime Minister, through the Department of Information and Technology Management is in charge of IT, which is just a tool in managing records. However, the mandate for managing records, including electronic records, rests with the National Archives. Failure to clearly demarcate and assign roles and responsibilities for e-government can compromise the success of e-government projects.

Records management is one of the building blocks for e-government. Lessons from best practices show that records managers should coordinate the effort among records creators, recipients, and computer systems management in organisations to ensure that records are maintained and protected in accordance with acceptable records management principles (United States, Department of Energy, 1996). The Office of the Prime Minister claims that the piloting of the project was done in consultation with the National Archives (OPM, 2007) and yet interviews with the National Archives revealed that the National Archives had 'no knowledge of the specifications for the system' that was acquired.

### **Is the Human Infrastructure (Human Capital) Ready?**

This question addresses the issues of attitudes, knowledge and skills required to initiate, implement and sustain e-government initiatives (Heeks, 2002). The study found that there was a lack of skills and training in IT as well as in records management. The same problem is highlighted in the *OPM 2007/2008 Annual Report* (OPM, 2009). Attitudes towards records keeping and lack of commitment to follow laid down procedures as spelt out in the Archives Code are other examples which show that the human infrastructure is not ready yet. A deputy director in one ministry was of the opinion that records management does not need skilled personnel. Of late, there has been realisation in the Public Service of the need to establish a records management cadre (OPM, 2010). The Department of Information and Technology Management confirmed that there was still a shortage of staff; hence, the extensive use of foreign based consultants for systems development and maintenance. Table 3 illustrates the extent of the use of foreign based consultants for systems development.

The study found out that the use of consultants poses problems of continuity and sustainability, for example, when there is need to carry out systems upgrades, as well as interoperability, a necessary condition for e-government. Successful implementation of Phase Three of Namibia's e-government implementation strategy, i.e. entire transactions online will require systems that can 'easily talk to each other'. Systems interoperability in the public service of Namibia was not a focus of this study, but it is an area that requires investigation. The Office of the Prime Minister has taken this up and reports that efforts to ensure "compatibility, interoperability and portability in the acquisition of Government's ICT resources" are underway (OPM, 2009).

### **Is the Technological Infrastructure Ready?**

The study discovered problems such as limited bandwidth and viruses. The bandwidth problem affected the use of Internet and electronic conferencing facilities particularly at regional council level. In its *2005-2006 Annual Report*, the Office of the Prime Minister reported on a system which

had "grown beyond its capacity" and had "almost come to a halt due to aging equipment ... mail and web servers were obsolete and could no longer cope with the traffic to and from the system per second (OPM, 2007). The findings of this study suggested that there was still a lot more that needed to be done to achieve fast access to Government online services. The 2007/2008 Annual report shows that this problem has not yet been resolved. Namibia is still a long way short of the computing and telecommunications infrastructure on which e-government initiatives have been based in the Western countries (Heeks, 2002).

### **Is the Leadership and Strategic Thinking Ready?**

Considered to be the most critical pre-condition for successful e-government is leadership "with a vision who put e-government onto the agenda, who set e-government within a broader reform agenda, and who make it happen" (Heeks, 2002). The results of the study indicated that generally there is a lack of commitment from senior management, and there is over reliance on delegation to juniors who cannot influence decisions. Most senior members of staff mandated to direct records management delegated this responsibility to junior staff. The following remarks by an IT officer highlight the problem of leadership. "As experienced by many officers our leaders are not conversant with IT issues so they are not able to give instructions on what the ministry should use ICT for. It is left to juniors. We are expected as a ministry to make progress but since introduction, very little has been achieved as those in management are not aware of what they should do to accelerate the e-governance process". This confirms, within the Namibian context, the assertion by Udo and Edoho (as cited in Heeks, 2002) that "the limited number of senior officials willing or able to champion ICTs in governments in Africa acts as the most serious constraint to e-government diffusion".

### **E-Records Readiness**

The study concluded, from the findings and application of the Electronic Records Management Tool (IRMT-International Records Management Trust, 2004) for assessing e-records readiness, that Namibia is not yet e-records ready to support e-

government. The tool assesses countries at national and public service level using criteria broken down into 12 components listed below (IRMT, 2004):

1. Legal mandate for the government-wide management of public records and information.
2. Legal framework for e-commerce.
3. Freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation.
4. Government-wide ICT infrastructure and capacity.
5. Government-wide e-records management standards and guidelines.
6. Government-wide digital preservation strategy.
7. Policies and responsibilities for records and information management.
8. E-records management products and technologies.
9. Resources and training for records and information management personnel
10. Tools and procedures for records and information management
11. Internal and public awareness of records and information management
12. Compliance with records and information management policies and procedures.

Namibia scored 55 out of 120 for national e-records readiness (components 1-6), signifying high risk. This means that “government records produced in digital form will be at risk of misuse and loss without government wide strategies and standards for e-records and digital preservation” (IRMT, 2004). Furthermore, The public service of Namibia scored 40 out of 120 for public service e-records readiness (components 7-12). This also signifies high risk, which means that “funds and effort will likely be wasted unless e-government initiatives are supported by a solid records management programme...” (IRMT, 2004).

## Recommendations

The challenge for Namibia is to put in place an infrastructure that will ensure that government captures all the details of transactions made, takes account of privacy, confidentiality and security of issues, whilst providing reliable and useful

information in return. This could be achieved by doing the following:

- Strengthening the legal and regulatory framework.
- Restructuring the public service records management programme. This will entail determining the resource requirements, and reviewing records management standards and procedures.
- Implementing an electronic records management system following best practices.
- Training all members of the public service who create and use records, on the management of records.
- Collating and preserving system documentation of the electronic systems running in the public service.
- Strengthening the safety and security of records through proper backup procedures and management of back-ups including offsite storage of backups, addressing the problem of virus attacks and ensuring that all offices have access to fire fighting equipment such as extinguishers and fire hoses, which should be regularly serviced.
- Commissioning a study of systems interoperability in the Public Service of Namibia.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study show that Namibia is neither e-ready nor e-records ready for the successful implementation of e-government. Namibia is facing the same problems that have accounted for the slow diffusion of e-government in Africa in general. These problems pertain to the absence of appropriately supportive data and records systems, and inadequate legislative, institutional and human technological infrastructure. Namibia needs to strengthen these infrastructure components if it is to benefit from the number of e-government initiatives it has put in place.

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**\*Cathrine Nengomasha** (PhD) is a lecturer and Head of the Department of Information and Communication Studies at the University of Namibia. She has collaborated with a number of organisations in revamping their records management systems. Her research interests are records management, knowledge management and e-government



**\*Kingo Mchombu** is Professor of Information and Communication Studies at University of Namibia. He is currently Dean: Humanities and Social Sciences, and serves on the board of several journals and national and international NGOs. His research interests are: knowledge management, community libraries and indigenous knowledge systems.



**\*Patrick Ngulube** (PhD) is a professor of Information Science at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and has served in various portfolios within the East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA). His research interests are indigenous knowledge systems, knowledge management, records management, e-government and the preservation of access to information.



# Preservation and Management of Audiovisual Archives in Botswana

**Nathan Mnjama**

*mnjamanm@mopipi.ub.bw*

*Department of Library and Information Studies,  
University of Botswana  
Gaborone, Botswana*

## Abstract

*This paper reviews the state of the audio-visual collections held by different government institutions in Botswana. The rationale of such review rests on the observation that although audiovisual materials constitute a vital information resource in such institutions, they are often not adequately managed after they are created. The paper identifies the types of audio-visual materials found in the public sector and the challenges in the management of the materials. The paper shows that many of the problems related to the management of audiovisual materials in the country emanate from weak legislative framework, lack of trained personnel in the management of audiovisual materials, technological challenges, inadequate storage facilities and the perception by users that audiovisual materials are not as valuable as records in other formats. The paper proffers strategies for dealing with the challenges of preserving and improving the use of audiovisual materials in Botswana.*

## Keywords

Audiovisual materials, records management, preservation, National Archives, Botswana.

## Introduction

All over the world, nations are increasingly becoming aware of the role played by audiovisual materials. The value of audiovisual materials was perhaps clearly stated by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2003) when it stated:

In no circumstances should audiovisual materials be regarded as additional luxury materials but rather they should be considered as necessary components in a fully integrated library service.... In developing countries the provision of audiovisual materials and their associated equipment might be regarded as of greater importance than the printed word because the level of literacy is such that oral and visual communication is essential for the purposes of communication.

Despite the fact that audiovisual materials play a vital role in the preservation of cultural heritage, they are very often neglected. Matangira (2003), an archivist from the Zimbabwe National Archives, argues that most archival institutions in the Eastern and Southern African regions are “still struggling to develop their archival collections”. She went further to state that “audiovisuals are much more complex and expensive to handle, preserve and provide access to in comparison to paper archives”. As indicated above, this is particularly so in the case of developing countries where audiovisual materials have not received the same attention as paper based records. This paper looks at how audio-visual materials are currently managed in Botswana and suggests possible ways to address the challenges facing the collection and preservation of these materials in the country.

The major objective of archival and library services is to facilitate access to collections in their care so that the collections are accessible for education and research purposes. A second and also very important objective of such services is the preservation of materials in the collections so that they can be available to future generations. Strategies to attain these two objectives often conflict with one another as there is now way collections can be used without them being damaged accidentally or intentionally during use.

According to Harvey (1994) preservation includes “all managerial and financial considerations, including storage and accommodation provision, staffing levels, policies, techniques, and methods involved in preserving library and archive materials and the information contained them.” He further define conservation as “those specific policies and practices involved in protecting library and archive materials from deterioration, damage and decay, including the methods and techniques devised by technical staff.”

According to the National Preservation Office (2001) “libraries and archives contain an irreplaceable accumulation of human knowledge and experience. The written and documentary heritage which they house provides the raw material that allows us to try and understand, explain, order and enjoy the visible and invisible world. Access to the past enables us to understand and locate ourselves in the present and gives us the opportunity to inform the future... in preserving our shared past, we are preserving the collective memory for future generation.” The importance of preserving library collections was summed up by Cloonan (2001) when he stated “preservation allows for the continuity of the past with the present and the future.” Nevertheless, it would be a waste of resources if after institutions have devoted considerable sums of money in acquiring and processing the collections if these remain inaccessible to scholars and other bona fide users.

Although preservation challenges are known throughout the world, many experts in the field have gradually began to realise that there are specific problems faced by conservators in different parts of the world. Teygeler et al. (2001) have noted that the problems encountered by conservationists in many developing countries are “often more complex

than those in developed countries. There is therefore need to undertake studies that relate to specific areas and suggest solutions that address these issues. A preservation strategy involves three aspects; assessment, planning and action. A preservation assessment is usually undertaken to determine the preservation requirements for the collection and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the building, policies and guidelines, storage environment, archives’ holdings (collection media), holdings maintenance and disaster management.

Audiovisual materials are usually described as “non-print” documents, in the sense that they convey their information in some way other than text on a printed page. They have also been called “non-book” or “special formats” and sometimes require equipment to use. It is for this reason that audiovisual materials are sometimes classified into two groups - “projected materials” and “non-projected materials”. Audiovisual materials include sound recordings, film and video, graphic materials, electronic resources, three-dimensional objects, maps, and microforms. Some audiovisual formats, like film loops, have become obsolete, while others such as gramophone records are in the process of becoming obsolete. Yet, others are new and are still being tried in the market place to see if they will receive wide acceptance. Edmondson (2004) proposes a wider definition of audiovisual heritage which he suggests ought to include:

- (a) Recorded sound, radio, film, television, video or other productions comprising moving images and/or recorded sounds, whether or not primarily intended for distribution to the public,
- (b) Objects, materials, works and intangibles relating to audiovisual documents, whether seen from a technical, industrial, cultural, historical or other viewpoint, this shall include material relating to the film, broadcasting and recording industries, such as literature, scripts, stills, posters, advertising materials, manuscripts, and artefacts such as technical equipment or costumes,
- (c) Concepts such as the perpetuation of obsolescent skills and environments associated with the reproduction and presentation of this media,
- (d) Non-literary or graphical material such as photographs, maps, manuscripts, slides, and other visual works selected in their own right.

As can be seen from the above definition, audio-visual materials encompass different materials. Generally audiovisual materials may be divided into four major groupings: (i) visual materials (still and motion pictures); (ii) audio materials (discs and tape recordings); (iii) objects and manipulative materials (realia and game models); and (iv) machine readable data files (magnetic tapes, punched cards and aperture cards). The focus in this paper is however on the first two categories, i.e. visual and audio materials in Botswana.

Zinyengere (2008) avers that “audiovisual records are vital elements of our collective memory, determining our achievements over the years, documenting our past, present and determining our future.” They are major information carriers comparable to books and other well known archival documents. Materials such as audiotapes, compact discs, videos, films etc are very useful for entertainment purposes. Some of these materials are readily found in homes and social centres where communities often gather to enjoy listening to them. Others are used purely for educational and research purposes. For instance, it is common practice these days to find audio-visual materials such as documentary films, audiotapes and photographs being used in educational establishments as teaching aids. The fact that some of them such as videos and films appeal to both sight and hearing senses makes them ideal for educational purposes.

Other audio-visual materials such as photographs, maps and painting are used as decorations in homes and in offices. Maps and plans are more often used for planning purposes and land utilisations. In the past, maps have also been used for legal purposes or in conflict resolution between individuals or among nations. For instance, not so long ago, archival maps from Botswana National Archives proved very valuable in determining a boundary dispute between Botswana and Namibia which had been referred to the International Tribunal at The Hague in February 1999 (Al-Essawi and Nthuli, 2007; Lekaukau, 1993). Within African societies, many audio-visual materials especially music, photographs and films are useful for the transmission of culture. As cultural norms and values are constantly changing, one of the best ways of looking at the past is through the use of audio-visual materials. The other way in which audio-visual materials have been found to be very useful is in the study of history. Photographs and

films as well as audio recordings of major historical events have been captured and preserved in audio-visual formats (Setshwane, 2004).

### Objectives

As explained above, audio-visual materials constitute part of the cultural heritage of any nation. Yet, despite the critical role played by audiovisual materials in documenting societal memory, they are rarely accorded the same treatment as other documentary materials. This study therefore sought to answer three basic questions:

1. What is the legal and regulatory framework for managing audiovisual materials in Botswana?
2. What are the major challenges facing the management, preservation and use of audiovisual materials in Botswana?
3. What recommendations are needed for the effective management and utilisation of audiovisual materials in Botswana?

The findings of this study will be very valuable in charting the way forward for the improved management of audiovisual materials in Botswana.

### Methodology

A substantial part of the data for this paper had been collected over many years through this author’s personal visits and interaction with librarians responsible for managing audiovisual materials in Botswana. Over the last thirteen years, the author has supervised students on industrial attachments at various records offices and audio-visual centres in Botswana. This has provided the author with numerous opportunities to inspect records storage facilities and discuss various records and audio-visual management issues with the host records officers and librarians. The author has also supervised two graduate dissertations on the management of sound records at Radio Botswana and the preservation of photographic materials at the Department of Surveying and Mapping. A review of literature on audiovisual materials, especially empirical literature emanating from the Southern African region has also been undertaken. Furthermore, the ongoing compilation of *A Guide to the Contents of Botswana National Archives*

has enabled the author to experience, first hand, the challenges of managing audiovisual materials at the Botswana National Archives and Records Services.

## **Managing Audio-Visual Materials in Botswana**

Botswana as a nation has a rich and varied collection of audiovisual materials. Photographic materials are held by the Department of Information and Broadcasting while Radio Botswana holds an extensive collection of phonographic and compact discs and lately DVD's (Setshwane, 2004). Botswana Television has an excellent video library and the Department of Surveying and Mapping has an equally good collection of ordinance survey maps and other aerial photographic materials (Tamulha, 2001). Botswana National Archives holds private, as well as public photographic collections and videos and also serves as a depository for selected Radio Botswana and Botswana Television programmes (Mnjama et al., 2009). Various departmental, ministerial, educational, and private and non-governmental organisations also collect and maintain their own audio-visual collections which support their organisational needs.

Virtually all the different formats of audio-visual materials are found in Botswana. The Botswana National Archives, which is the overall department charged with the responsibility for managing public records in the country, has been involved in the collection of some of these materials and has a small audiovisual section within the Archives Administration Division (Mnjama et al., 2009). The National Archives has also made arrangements with the Botswana Television and Radio Botswana for the acquisition and permanent storage of audiovisual materials considered to be of national interest. According to Keakopa (1998), the National Archives have also been engaged in the collection of oral history and a reasonable amount of audio recordings has been acquired through this programme. Despite these efforts, a recent study conducted by Kalusopa (2008) indicates that only 28.6 percent of organisations in Botswana had a programme for the digitisation of audio-visual materials.

Audiovisual materials, just like other information resources, have not received the attention they deserve. In many of the institutions surveyed, audiovisual materials are not fully processed and are not easily accessible. At the National Archives of Botswana, the photographs have been catalogued while at Radio Botswana CDS-ISIS software is used to access the materials (Setshwane, 2004). In some other institutions, there are still heaps of unprocessed or partially processed collections. In many of the institutions surveyed the collections are stored in environments that are not conducive for the storage of such materials.

Many of the challenges facing the management and preservation of audiovisual materials are not unique to Botswana, but are common to many developing countries. As Zinyengere (2008) has rightly observed that "audiovisual recordings in many African countries are endangered because of various factors including but not limited to political and economic factors, legal statutes towards audiovisual materials, staffing, lack of training and funding, obsolescence of playback equipment, perception of society towards archives, climatic issues, technological awareness and the preservation and access of recordings."

## **Inadequate Collection Acquisition Policies**

The collection and preservation of audiovisual materials must be supported by the law, clearly defined policies and procedures, well equipped building and storage facilities, a well trained team of audio-visual specialists, and well educated and informed users on the value and importance of audio-visual materials. Unfortunately, in the case of Botswana, the law is silent on the audiovisual materials. Neither the National Archives Act, nor the Library Act makes mandatory for creators of audiovisual records to deposit their works with the National Archives or the National Library. For this reason, the creators of audiovisual materials have no legal obligations or contractual arrangement with these national institutions to deposit their works with them. As a result of this apparent weakness in the legislative framework, major gaps exist in audiovisual holdings held by the Botswana National Archives and Records Services.

Moreover, one of the greatest challenges facing Botswana today is inadequate or lack of a comprehensive and uniform national collection policy for audiovisual materials. Whereas, there are well defined policies and procedures for the transfer of paper based collections to the national archives, the same can not be said of audiovisual materials. For instance, the Botswana Broadcasting Act stipulates that broadcasters are required to “keep and store sound and video recordings of all programmes broadcast or re-broadcast for a minimum period of three months after the date of transmission of the broadcast or re-broadcast, or for such further period as may be directed by the Board”. The provision of this Act while demanding that sound and video recordings be preserved for up to three months, is silent on the long term retention period and disposition of such recordings (Republic of Botswana, 1998).

Although it is assumed that audio-visual materials are part and parcel of archival materials and therefore are included in the archival legislation, presently there seems to be greater emphasis on the acquisition of paper based materials at the expense of audio-visual materials. An examination by the author of the holdings of Botswana National Archives reveals that initially the institution focused its efforts towards the collection of public records, but of late it has began to collect photographic materials, videos, compact discs, DVD's and audio-tapes. But the focus still remains on the collection of paper based records.

Discussions with the Director of Botswana National Archives and Records Service revealed that an arrangement between Botswana Television and Radio Botswana to transfer to the National Archives selected televised and broadcast programmes exists and through this activity a sizeable portion of audio-visual materials have been deposited with the National Archives. This arrangement does make sense for as Derges (1998) has rightly observed “it would be unrealistic to attempt to preserve all broadcasts, so the archivist has to decide which broadcast will have historical value. How to obtain these broadcasts can be problematic since state run broadcast authorities can be reluctant to relinquish “control” over their productions. Some way of purchasing the broadcasts has to be found either by buying them outright or by making copies”.

Moreover, even if the Botswana National Archives was to acquire all audiovisual materials in the country created by government agencies, the national archives building would not be adequate to store these items and neither would the building be able to meet the different environmental conditions for all the different media formats of the items.

Accordingly, this article suggests the formulation of a national policy clearly defining which institutions should be charged with the responsibility for the collection and preservation of specific audiovisual formats. The National Archives Act Chapter 50:04 provides for such an arrangement under section 4 where it is clearly stated that:

If it appears to the Minister that facilities exists for the safekeeping and preservation of public records and their inspection by the public in some place other than the National Archives and that convenience so requires, he may with the agreement of the authority or person responsible for that place declare that place to be a place of deposit for public records of any category.

Section 6.1 of the same Act further stipulates that “the director shall have access to every place of deposit, and may exercise, in relation to any place of deposit and to the public archives therein, the functions and powers conferred on him by this Act in relation to the National Archives and the public archives therein, and may delegate to the custodian of the public archives in any such place any of such functions and powers other than the power of affixing the seal of the national archives.” This arrangement is informally in place with the Department of Surveying and Mapping focusing on the collection and preservation of maps and plans, Radio Botswana currently involved in the collection of music, Botswana Television collecting video materials and film, and the Department of Information collecting photographic materials. Time has now come for this informal arrangement to be incorporated into a national collection and preservation policy for audio-visual materials (Republic of Botswana, 1998).

### **Inadequate Storage Facilities**

A major challenge facing the collection of audiovisual materials in the country pertains to storage. In virtually all the repositories visited over several years by the author, it was established that audiovisual materials are kept under the same environmental conditions as traditional archives. These observations are similar to those of Kukubo (1986), Matangira (2003) and Abankwah (2007). Botswana as a country has two climatic extremes. The summers are very hot and dry with temperatures rising up to 40 degrees Celsius, while winters are dry and very cold with temperatures falling to zero in the evenings and in the early morning (Botswana Review, 2002). These fluctuations in temperature are not ideal for the management of audiovisual materials. An earlier study carried out by the Standing Committee on Preservation and Conservation revealed inadequate storage conditions in most of the information centres surveyed (Monageng, 1997). Apart from the National Archives, Radio Botswana and Botswana Television Station that have purpose-built buildings, many of the other information centres are currently housed in buildings not designed for the storage of audiovisual materials. It is advisable to store audiovisual materials in institutions where appropriate storage and handling equipment is available. Indeed experience gained in Mozambique indicates that it makes economic sense for national archival institutions to relinquish any attempts to bring in its custody audio-visual materials. This is a view supported by Derges (1998:64) who argued that "film was not stored at the National archives, but at the National Film Institute. This was a good use of resources because the Film Institute had a laboratory and it had cold rooms and all editing and viewing equipment. If the National Archives had taken upon itself to store film, they would have had to duplicate all these resources at great cost." This article suggests that Botswana should follow suit and allow Botswana Television and Radio Botswana to retain audiovisual materials as these institutions have cold rooms and the equipment that is needed. However, as the department charged with the responsibility for collecting and preserving records, the National Archives should set standards and guidelines which should be regularly monitored for compliance.

Apart from inadequate storage facilities for audio-visual recordings, there is also a lack of restoration of such facilities in the Nation Archives. Restoration of damaged audio-visual materials requires specialist equipment and trained personnel, both of which are not available locally. For instance, up to now Botswana National Archives has only one trained conservator. The second conservator is currently undergoing training in the UK.

### **Access to Audio-Visual Materials**

A survey of retrieval tools at the Botswana National Archives and at the Radio Botswana audiovisual materials indicates that many of these materials are partially processed or not processed at all. This is particularly true for photographs which tend to occupy large areas. In the absence of detailed descriptive catalogues, indexes and registers, access to these to these materials is hampered. Moreover, as many of these materials are machine dependent, the absence of playback equipment may hinder access to the information contained in these records. Financial constraints have also hampered the libraries from converting their holdings to modern storage media.

### **Lack of Skilled Manpower in Audiovisual Materials**

The nation also faces the challenge of lack of trained personnel in audio-visual archiving. While Botswana has well established programmes for the training of librarians, archivists and other information providers, the same can not be said of audio-visual archivists. The training of such professionals requires special facilities which are currently lacking in the country. Currently, many of the institutions holding audio-visual collections are headed by librarians seconded from the Botswana National Library Services (Tamulha, 2001). These librarians are doing a commendable job in the area of processing and accessing the materials, but due to their limited technical expertise in restoration of audio-visual materials, they are unable to deal with the repair of damaged materials. The need for training in the management of audiovisual materials has been compounded by the emergence of new media such as compact disks and DVD's and the need to

migrate materials from older formats such as phonographic collections into digital formats.

As the country lacks the facilities for the training of audiovisual archivists, it is suggested that the country explores various options in order to train audiovisual archivists. One option would be to invite an expert from the West who can come and deliver a specialist in-house course to librarians who are engaged in the management of audiovisual materials. This option would enable a larger team to be trained and the costs involved will be less. For this to work, proper arrangements would need to be made with institutions such as Botswana Television and Radio Botswana for all materials needed for the training so that they are ordered in advance. The second option would be through placing identified personnel on attachments with audiovisual centres in South Africa or outside the Southern African region as currently there is no known institution in the African continent offering training in audiovisual archiving (Zinyengere, 2008). The main disadvantage with this option is that financial resources may not permit more than one employee to be sent on attachment. The third option is to send audiovisual librarians for formal training in the West. The last option is to provide the specialist training in audiovisual materials either at the Department of Library and Information Studies or the Department of Media Studies at the University of Botswana. The Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Botswana has been offering courses in library studies since 1979 and in archives and records management since 1996 (Mnjama, 2002). The Department of Media Studies was established in 2000 and provides training to mass media specialists. It has some basic recording and playback equipment which can be used for training of audiovisual archivists. Training in these two departments could be supplemented with practical sessions at the Botswana Television and at the Radio Botswana. If this option was to be adopted, there would be need for one of the lecturers from either department to pursue some additional training in audiovisual archiving.

### **Inadequate Funding**

Funding of archives and records management programmes in Botswana has been very good and the government must be commended for its

continued support to the national archives. The government has also been very supportive in the acquisition of audiovisual materials and equipment (Lekaukau, 1993). However, financial support for training of audiovisual archivists and the acquisition of specialist storage equipment for the storage of audiovisual materials have been limited. Many of the audiovisual centres visited lack a line budget for audiovisual resources. The problem of funding was highlighted by Modise (1998) in her study of Radio Botswana Gramophone and Tape Library.

### **Lack of a National Register on Audiovisual Materials**

One of the greatest challenges facing the collection and preservation of audiovisual materials in the country is lack of sufficient information on what materials exist locally. To date, no surveys have been carried out to establish the nature, volume and content of audio-visual materials and the conditions under which they are held. Neither is there a national register indicating the institutions currently holding audio-visual collections. Apart from Botswana Television, Radio Botswana, the Department of Mapping and Surveying, and the Department of Information, very little is known on what exists locally (Tamulha, 2001). The need to compile such information in the form of a register can not be overstated. The information will not only assist in the formulation of collection policies, but will also be useful in the formulation of preservation strategies and establishing priorities on materials to be restored. The question which arises is who should compile such a register. This responsibility lies with the National Archives, but the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Botswana may also consider carrying out this task as part of its research agenda. Once compiled the register will need to be updated regularly as the locations of where these holdings are liable to change from time to time.

### **Technological Challenges**

Many audiovisual materials with the exception of photographs and maps are machine dependent. This can present challenges when users are not familiar with the use of the equipment. Apart from familiarity with technology, changes in recording and playback

equipment very often results in inability to access information created in some models. The need to constantly migrate information from one storage medium to another is major challenge to developing countries such as Botswana where resources are limited for the acquisition of each new version or model of equipment. In order to avoid audiovisual centres being converted into museums of outdated audio-visual equipment, it is suggested that each audiovisual centre restricts the brands of equipment it purchases. The challenge posed by changing technologies and obsolete equipment is not unique to Botswana alone. Lihoma (2008) recently reported that “for a long period of time, up to 2006, National Archives of Malawi’s film archive collection was inaccessible because of the lack of playback equipment (i.e. film projectors). Spare parts for the equipment were scarce on the local market due to the phasing out of the equipment by the manufacturers.

### **Copyright Law and Infringements**

Copyright is a major concern for most audiovisual materials as they can easily be copied or the information migrated into newer formats and mediums. Moreover, more than one copyright may exist side by side for recordings. Librarians and archivists managing audio-visual materials need to familiarise themselves with copyright requirements. A new Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act was passed in Botswana in 2000 repealing the old copyright Act of 1911 (Republic of Botswana, 2000).

The new act is more elaborate and seeks to protect the intellectual property rights of creators of original works, many of which include audiovisual works. Botswana is a signatory to the Berne Convention since April 1998, and is also a signatory to WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty since January 2005. The Ministry of Trade and Industry has overall responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, but just like other developing countries in the region there is strong evidence to suggest that copyright infringements, in as far as audiovisual materials are concerned, are rampant.

### **Overcoming the Challenges**

In order to overcome the challenges discussed above, there is a need for new and effective strategies for managing audiovisual materials that take into account the unique challenges faced by developing countries, including Botswana.

In the case of Botswana, a beginning has already been made through the construction of a new mass media complex of the Department of Information Services where both the Music Library and the video collection are now housed under suitable climatic conditions. Efforts have also been made at the CD Library and the Music Library to organise the collection. The Botswana National Archives has also made efforts to organise its video and photographic collections, and efforts are ongoing to repair and maintain the air conditioner at the National Archives building. Although attempts are being made to provide cold storage facilities in the new extension to the National Archives building, any attempt to bring all audiovisual materials together would be futile as it would be impractical to meet the environmental storage conditions for each type of media. It is for this reason that this paper suggests that the Director of Botswana National Archives identifies specific institutions which have adequate storage facilities and declares them places of deposit for specific audiovisual materials as provided for in Sect 4(i) of the Botswana National Archives Act. The responsibility of the National Archives would then be limited to setting standards and monitoring for compliance of those institutions designated as places of deposit for public records. The other recommendations of this paper are as follows:

1. The Botswana National Archives, in collaboration with the institutions holding these materials, should develop collection policies which will assist in the systematic collection and preservation of valuable audiovisual materials. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a national coordinating office or agency for the preservation and restoration of audiovisual materials.
2. Earlier efforts to establish a vibrant standing committee on preservation and conservation seem not to have worked out well and there is a need to examine why the committee has not been functioning. The Standing Committee on

Preservation and Conversion should be revived or in its place a new office be established charged with the mandate of establishing and setting of standards for audio-visual centres in the country. Whether such an office should be housed at the National Archives or at the Department of Information Services is a subject that should be discussed by the parties involved.

3. The Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Botswana should launch a specialist short course for the training of audiovisual archivists. Such a course should be geared to training librarians who currently manage audiovisual centres. Alternatively, efforts should be made to send on attachments librarians responsible for managing audiovisual archives to other institutions outside the country where they can experience and learn best methods for managing such archives.
4. A nationwide survey should be carried out to establish the extent of audiovisual archiving in the country and measures should be put in place to rescue any audiovisual materials that might be endangered. Risk assessments should also be undertaken and disaster preparedness plans assessed or prepared in the institutions where audiovisual materials are currently being stored.
5. There is also need to adhere to basic archival standards in as far as the acquisition of audiovisual materials is concerned. The acquisition of low quality audiovisual materials should be avoided in all information centres as this will only result in major preservation problems in the not too distant future. As new technologies are being introduced in the country, new ways of migrating information into new media and formats be explored.
6. In order to minimise incidents of copyright infringement, it is suggested that the Ministry of Trade and Industry works closely with law enforcement agencies in order to deal with the problem.
7. The funding of archival programmes including the preservation of audio-visual materials will always be a challenge. The burden cannot be borne by the government alone and there is an urgent need to explore funding from other sources particularly from the private sector.

## Conclusion

This paper has reviewed the state of audio-visual materials in Botswana. It has identified the major challenges facing the collection and management of audiovisual materials to be inadequate collection/acquisition policies, lack of a national register, and infringement of copyright laws, inadequate storage facilities, inadequate funding and lack of specialist training. The article recommends that certain institutions can be designated as repositories under the provisions of the Botswana National Archives Act, specialist training be organised, a national register on manuscripts be compiled and that new methods for persevering and increasing access to the collections through digitisation be investigated.

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**\*Nathan Mnjama** is Associate Professor in the Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana. He specialises in Archives and Records Management.

## Professional News and Events

### **Managing Editor of AJLAIS Becomes NLA President**

The Managing Editor of the African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science, Prof. L.O. Aina, who is also the Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences, University of Ilorin, was elected the President of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) at its 48th Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting, held in Abuja, from 18 - 23 July, 2010. The Nigerian Library Association was established in 1962 and currently has over 5000 members practising in Nigeria and the Diaspora.

In his acceptance speech, Prof. Aina promised that he would ensure that all librarians were computer literate through various capacity building workshops. This would enable them to render more effective services. He also said he would increase the visibility of the association by ensuring that the association's voice was heard on all current issues in Nigeria, especially those that are related to library and information service. He also stated that he would ensure that library and information science schools used the online platform to expand access to education of librarians in Nigeria. Finally, he assured all members that there would be accountability and transparency in his administration.

Professor Aina, who is also the Head of the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Ilorin, started his librarianship career in 1976 after successfully completing his Post Graduate Diploma in Librarianship programme at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He graduated from the University of Lagos with B.Sc. (Hons) Chemistry in 1974, Postgraduate Diploma in Librarianship from the University of Ibadan, 1976, M.Phil. Information Science, The City University, London in 1980 and PhD Library Studies, University of Ibadan in 1986. Professor Aina belongs to many professional national and international associations.

### **University of Botswana hosts Third International Conference of Teaching Information Ethics in Africa**

The Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana hosted the International Conference on Teaching Information Ethics in Africa from 6-7 September, 2010 in Gaborone, Botswana. The conference entitled "Teaching Information Ethics in Africa: Current Status, Opportunities and Challenges" was co-sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, USA and the South African government, with additional support from UNESCO, and the International Center for Information Ethics, attracted participants from Africa, Europe and North America. Representatives of African universities from Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe presented papers on the status of teaching information ethics in their institutions. The focus of the conference was on research and future development of African information ethics curricula. The conclusion of the participants was that the teaching of information ethics was recognised by African universities but the subject was not taught as an independent course; rather, it was merged with existing courses. It was resolved that African universities should endeavour to make information ethics an independent course in their curricula.

### **IFLA Conference 2012 to hold in Finland**

The International Federation of Library Associations and Affiliated Institutions (IFLA) has announced the World Library and Information Congress 78th General Conference and Assembly, 11-16 August 2012, Helsinki, Finland. Theme: "Libraries Now! - Inspiring, Surprising, Empowering". For further information contact: IFLA Headquarters- E-mail: [ifla@ifla.org](mailto:ifla@ifla.org) or [Josche Ouwerkerk](mailto:Josche Ouwerkerk), Conference Officer ([josche.ouwerkerk@ifla.org](mailto:josche.ouwerkerk@ifla.org)).