

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE



Editor in Chief,
Dr. S. J. Deshmukh
Editor
Prof. P. B. Ghante





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Contact 0257-2239666, 9764694797

Email atharvapublications@gmail.com

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CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES DELIVERY IN AN ICT AGE: THE COVENANT UNIVERSITY LIBRARY PERSPECTIVES.

NKIKO Christopher
IDIEGBEYAN-OSE Jerome
ILOGHO Julie
ESSE Ugwunwa

ABSTRACT

This article discussed creativity and innovation in Library and Information Services: the Covenant University Library Experience. It highlighted the essence of creativity and innovation, the creative and innovative ideas at Covenant University Library was also discussed, such as the establishment of escapist reading section, spiritual and leadership section, capacity building initiative, use of ICTs skills for effective services delivery. The paper recommends that Libraries should be creative, they should think of better ways of doing same thing, they should think outside the box, Library management should occasionally call for library staff meeting / discussion where staff should think on how to improve library services, Library schools should also inculcate in students philosophical thinking and analytical skills that will in turn develop creativity and innovation in the mind of the students. It is therefore concluded that 21st century libraries are faced with series of challenges, therefore, the present day librarians must have creative and innovative mind so as to render effective and efficient services to users and also remain relevant in this present age and ages to come.

INTRODUCTION

The dawn of the 21st century witnessed dramatic and introvertible changes in all facets of human endeavour including the library and Information profession. The emergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a major driver of globalization has placed unprecedented demands on libraries. The concomitant effect is the need to understand and use new technologies, build competencies to match current trends and best practices as well as tailor services to meet diverse peculiarities. The underlying essence of this perspective is creativity and innovation.

Creativity and innovation rule the world. The key for introducing a change, new invention, new idea, new products, new concept, new strategy, new approach or methodology is to employ creativity and innovation in every human endeavor. It is required in all disciplines including the sciences, arts and social sciences. Creativity and innovation according to Akinboye (2002) are the most fundamental of all human resources and skills, thus the quality of thinking determines the quality of human prosperity and wellbeing. The more creative and innovative a person is, the more self-reliant he becomes to the quality of his own life, his family, group, community and society. Creativity and innovation are the cheapest ways of getting benefit from any existing assets; creativity and innovation brings about dynamic change, leaps of progress and channels of success. Mathernova (2009) observed that the capacity to develop new ideas and turn them into innovative products and services is essential for regional development. A creative mind is open to change and adaptive to new living imperatives (Torsater, Bertil 2009).

INNOVATION

The New Oxford Dictionary of English (2010) defines innovation as making changes to already established norms. Innovation involves deliberate application of information, imagination and initiative in deriving greater or different values from resources and includes all processes by which new ideas are converted to products. In business, innovation often results when ideas are applied by the customers. In a social context, innovation creates new methods for alliance creation, joint venturing, flexible work hours, and creation of buyers purchasing power, and transformation of creative ideas into wealth is called innovation (Akinboye, 2002). Innovation is the implementation of new ideas to produce a new service or products (Terblanche, 2003). Innovation and transformation are important concepts in today's libraries, especially in the light of the libraries' ongoing transition from acquiring serials in print to providing access electronically, thereby moving toward the virtual library (Carr, 2009).

Thus virtual libraries can only be guaranteed on the basis of following the fundamental rule of business that is, to supply what is demanded by customers, thus library staff skills and library services all have to shift from book-centric to user-centric (ACRL Research planning & Review Committees (2012).

CREATIVITY

Siefertzi, Eleni (2000) citing Newelladshow (1972) suggests that creativity is the generation of imaginative new ideas, involving radical

newness, innovation or solution to a problem, and a radical reformation of problem. Ogilvie (1998) observes that imagination, which involves the generation of ideas not previously available as well as the generation of different ways of seeing events, is important to achieve creative actions. Boden (1998) therefore suggests three main types of creativity, involving different ways of generating novel ideas.

- a. The “combinational” creativity that involves new combinations of familiar ideas.
- b. The “exploratory” creativity that involves the generation of new ideas by the exploration of structured concepts.
- c. The “transformational” creativity that involves the transformation of some dimension of the structure so that new structures can be generated.

Jeffrey and Craft (2001) opine that current creativity discourse encompasses:

- operating in the economic and political field
- acting as a possible vehicle for individual empowerment in institutions and organizations
- being used to develop effective learning

INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Creative and innovative library services are novel ways of providing library services to patrons or users. Creativity describes the generation of new ideas, new concepts, new approaches, new methods and new ways of doing things. Innovation on the other hand describes actual application of creative ideas, concepts, approaches, and methods with the view of bringing about change and improvement. Creativity involves bringing into existence something new, it is using new ideas to solve problems (Burke, 1994). Ilako, Caroline and Ikajop-Oongo, Roberts (2011) view creativity in the library parlance as aggregates new ideas introduced into routine practices, procedures and processes whereas innovation is the actual application and adaption of fresh insights and conceptualization to enhancing effective and efficient service delivery to library patrons. It is noted in the consciousness of paradigm shift. The overarching motivation of transcending traditional modes and nomenclatures to creating new vistas. It is about consistent and continuous questioning of existing normative and empirical realities in an attempt to expanding the frontiers of librarianship

The focus of creativity and innovation is to bring change to bear on all human organizations/systems including those concerned with

information products and services, such as the library. Thus, change and improvement is the reason for creativity and innovation. There has been a steady growth in library practice from early stage of library development to the present where library practice, products and services have transverse different epochs through the instrumentality of creativity and innovation. A time there was when librarians organized library materials based on size, colour, and shape until Melvil Dewey in 1878 invented the first classification scheme called Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), which gave rise to other popularly known classification schemes used by big libraries, like the Library of Congress Classification Scheme (LC) and several others. Moreover, several other creative and innovative developments have taken place in the field of library practice. Presently, we are at the age of information explosion, the outcome of advancement in the use of ICT. Today we have global libraries in the form of digital and virtual libraries. These, libraries are not bound space is time but are accessible anywhere in the world.

Benefits of Creativity and Innovation in Library and Information Services

Creativity and innovation has many benefits some of which include:

- promotes development and growth in library practices
- enhance discovery of new and better library practices, information products and services
- facilitating better usage of library organizations / managements
- ensure sustainability and continuous relevance of librarians
- make for better services and increase users satisfaction with the library resources and services.

COVENANT UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (CENTRE FOR LEARNING RESOURCES): HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEPARTMENT

Covenant University was established in the year 2002, through a Vision given to the Chancellor Dr. David Oyedepo. The Institution is growing and also dynamic, committed to pioneering excellence at the cutting edge of learning and founded on a Christian Mission ethics. The institution, being committed to pioneering excellence in all field of human endeavour, began the Center for Learning at its inception.

The Centre for Learning Resources, which is the University Library, is an automated library, which is fully computerized in all its routine operation. At the inception of the Library, an in-built software, was

being used, and the software was on the Microsoft Access platform. As years passed and collections began to grow, exceeding 10,000 volumes, there became a need to migrate to more standard software for effective Library Operations, the Alice Software was then acquired. In 2011, the stakes became higher and with a vision to become a World Class University, and the library being the back-bone of the institution, there became need to migrate to a Web-based software, which lead the Library to acquire MILLENNIUM ILS, which enables the resources of the Library to be accessed anywhere in the world over the internet.

Readers Services

The Section provides a critical interface between patrons and library resources. The whole gamut of activities involved in acquisition, classification, cataloguing, indexing would amount to fruitless efforts if readers' service is defective. The functions of the section include: Circulation of materials, Shelf management, User education, Current Awareness Services, Publication of library guide, Compilation of subject reading list for students, Maintenance and Analysis of statistics, Management of WEBPAC, Provision of secured aesthetic and conducive reading environment, Evaluation of services.

Technical Services department

Technical services department is responsible for processing of the Library materials; they are in charge of Cataloguing and Classification of Library and Information resources. This department generates the bibliographic data of Library Information materials which the users can access in the Web Pac.

Reference and Repository department

Beyond online referencing services, this unit ensures continuous digitization of Covenant University documents, theses, newspapers, past question papers and other publication of useful archival value with a view to creating a most robust Institutional Repository. Open source software; Dspace and Eprint as well as first rate scanners are deployed for this project. In addition to a professional librarian overseeing the assignment, three Digital Content Creators with strong information technology skills are part of the regular work force

COVENANT UNIVERSITY LIBRARY PERSPECTIVES ON CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Escapist Reading Section of The Library

Recognizing the fact that there exist now plethora of information-bearing formats other than books, patrons are provided with alternative

to conventional reading through educational video documentaries, cable networks and other audio-visuals. The essence is to make for relaxation, group discussion, entertainment and learning under less structured and comfortable platform. This section is equipped with exquisite furniture, large screen Television set, DSTV and fully air-conditioned.

This innovation helps to constructively engage students and effectively accommodate any form of restless idiosyncrasies.

Spiritual And Leadership Development Unit (SLD)

In pursuance of Covenant University's mandate of raising a new generation of leaders with unparalleled strength of Character rooted in Godliness and development of holistic leadership competencies and qualities, a unit known as Spiritual Leadership Development (SLD) was set up in CLR to provide a platform for building such required capacity and confidence requisite for solving life's challenges at all times. The section is made up of latest collections on leadership and spiritual growth. It operates full multi-media services using audio-visual equipment such as television sets, MP3 players, video players, Compact Disc etc. The establishment of the section recognizes the triune nature of man as constituting spirit, soul and body as well as the need to pay equal attention to the development of these vital components to have a complete well-rounded person.

Capacity Building Initiatives

The library believes in continuous personal development and improvement of its entire staff. It seeks to imbibe in all librarians and para-professionals the need to embrace acquisition of new skills and knowledge to become more productive, maintain relevance and competitive advantage. The library organizes regular in-house training for its staff to enhance their capacities. Experts from within and external contexts are usually invited as Resource Persons to facilitate first rate delivery in their areas of specialization. Librarians are sponsored to various international and local conferences or workshops annually. There is also an entrenched monthly seminar series where librarians present research papers on current trends and best practices in librarianship. The papers are usually subjected to rigorous intellectual discussions by colleagues, invited guest from the university and neighbouring university libraries. This has boosted research and presentation skills of the staff as well as resulted in publications in reputable journals

THE USE OF WEBPAC FOR ONLINE BIBLIOGRAPHIC ACCESS OF MATERIALS.

The ALA Glossary of Library and Information Science (2010) defines

OPAC/WebPAC as a computer-based and supported library catalogue. It is designed to be accessible via terminals, so that library users may directly and effectively search and retrieve bibliographic records without the assistance of a human intermediary. This implies that an OPAC/WebPAC is a computerized library catalogue that is available to the public which provides bibliographic information about information resources in the library. It is noteworthy that this definition specifically state that searchers use OPAC/WebPAC without human assistant who suggest that information searchers should be information skills and computer literates. Similarly. In CLR, the catalogue is web based that is why it is called Web Public Access Catalogue (WebPAC). The CLR catalogue can be access anywhere in the world where there is internet access. This is in support of globalization access to information materials anytime anywhere. The CLR WebPAC is accessible 24/7 with internet access. Users do not need to physically come to the library to know the materials that are available in the library, track their loan or make reservations.

LIBRARY WEB PAGE

According to Tang and Thelwall (2004) as cited by Ibinaiye (2012) Libraries have existed for thousands of years and are thought of as places to gather information and gain knowledge. Websites have become an essential component of library services and designing these websites involve both technical and administrative decision making. The vision of libraries is to serve everyone; therefore, library websites in academic institutions have become an increasingly large and complex repository of documents in the form of hyperlinked WebPages. The use of websites have granted educational institutions an unprecedented capability and eliminated constraints of time and distance.

Recent developments has brought about: web enhanced teaching and learning which has rejuvenated older faculty and has improved student's participation in their own learning, the emergence of librarians as information technology educators that further improved developments in the methods of accessibility to information resources and contents of academic libraries websites. It has also opened up more opportunities for libraries to digitize their resources, upload, manage, upgrade, migrate and emulate contents of library websites CLR has a functional website where users can access the library page , ask questions, reserve material for use and so on. Its website is manage by the Systems Librarians. The CLR WebPAC is linked to the website so that at a glance the users can access the materials in the library at the same time. All other

electronic resources in CLR are integrated to and can be accessed through the website. Some of the electronic resources include are EBSCO- HOST, JSTOR, AGORA, HINARI, OARE, SCIENCE-DIRECT, NUC VIRTUAL LIBRARY, MIT OPEN COURSEWARE, EBRARY, MYLIBRARY, RESEARCH PROFESSIONAL AFRICA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Innovations and creativity are the hall mark of the present day libraries. The following recommendations are advised:

- Librarians should be creative, and think of better ways of doing same thing, they should think outside the box.
- Library management should ensure regular brain-storm sessions where staff would think on how to improve library services.
- Library schools should also inculcate in students philosophical thinking and analytical skills that will in turn develop creativity and innovation in the minds of the students.
- Nigerian Library Association should organize library competition of creativity and Innovation where outstanding libraries in these respects are rewarded

CONCLUSION

Creativity and innovation are central to effective and efficient services delivery to library patrons in the twenty-first century. There is a growing demand on the librarian's capacity by the dynamic environment and daily challenges occasioned by globalization. It is expected that new skills, methodologies and strategies would be applied to hitherto basic routine tasks to adequately cater for the interest and seeking behavior of the emerging clientele of the modern library

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