

STUDENT'S PERCEPTION OF E-BOOKS IN NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES LIBRARY

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Abstract

This paper aims to study the student's perception of e-books in Universities library in Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study and the instrument for data collection was the questionnaire, which was designed to obtain information from students in the universities library in South-West zone of Nigeria. The purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting 12 universities library which met the criteria for the study being fully computerized with functional internet access. The author found that students are aware of what e-books are, and the major mode of reading them is on the screen, while the main purpose of using e-book is to find material and facilitate research. The following features of e-books were the major factor while students make use of it; searchable, available round the clock etc. hyperlink, e-book reader support, were the major problems encountered while using e-books. The following recommendations were made; more e-book should be acquired, creating a separate e-book collection, viewing facilities should be freely provided among others.

Keywords: e-book, perception, problems, south-west, students

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, evidences proved that leathers, stone, bones, clay, metals and leaves etc, have been used by human beings to record and store information and knowledge (Avrin, 1991). However, these objects were replaced by papers, centuries ago, due to industrial revolution in general and printing industries in particular. The printing industries made significant changes for stoning and preserving information and knowledge as in case of printed book. The printed book has not fundamentally change over centuries, despite transformations in other inventions and the development of new technologies (Grening, 2012). According to Eco (1996), new technologies will render obsolete many kinds of books like encyclopedias and manual's. He goes further to identifies two types of books, serving two types of reading needs, books for systematic or *linear reading* and books for *non-systematic or non-linear reading*. Rao. (2005) believes that e-books is the most important development in the world of literature after Gutenberg.

An electronic book is commonly referred to an e-book, and is simply a print book in an electronic format. E-book can be produced in numerous format that range from very basic text files to well structured, purpose built files that use one of the emerging standards for e-book such as the e-pub and Adobe PDF standards. (Lal, 2014), affirmed that from the day of its introduction, libraries realized the importance of e-book and made them as part of their collection development. Libraries acquire e-books through subscription or purchase licences polices and provide them to the user via library OPAC, website etc (Hermon, 2007).

A large part of the interest in e-book is that they offer a new type of user experience for reading books that provide potential benefits such as new ways to access a book catalogue and flexible choices for delivery. The potential for interactivity (e.g. hyper linking) and the inclusion of multimedia, is where they differ from traditional print based book and is where they can possibly have an advantage to support learning and teaching (Payare, 2014). He goes further to explain that print book is commonly linear and with limited features; a content list, content and an index, an e- book is structured like web page providing the reader with additional features that enable fast navigation through hyper linking, annotation and keyword searches supporting multiple reader journeys through the content. It is these features that will be of interest to those thinking of building their own e- book. It can also be delivered or accessed via a number of channels; the delivery methods are emails or download, either from a repository or e- book store. E- Book are viewed using e- reader, which may be either desktop software or by using a mobile device.

E-book save time, space and effort. and are used more than printed books. They also allow multi-user access concurrently by users of geographically distributed environment (Abdoulaye & Said, 2012). However there is the need to investigate the choices for making an effective use of e-books, therefore the aim of this study is to examine the student's attitude toward the use of e-books. The students in South-West University in Nigeria were surveyed to know their perception and acceptance of e-book.

The objectives of this study are:

- a. To find out students understanding of e-books
- b. To find out perception of students toward the use of e-books
- c. To find out the problem faced by the student while using e-books.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The instrument for the collection of data was the questionnaire which was designed to obtain students perception and understanding of E-book in Universities Libraries in South-West

zone of Nigeria. The purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting 12 university libraries which met the criteria for the study being fully computerized with functional internet access, they include; Lagos state University Ojo, Lagos, Covenant University Ota, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile,Ife, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode, Redeemerr's University Mowe, Osun State University, University Of Agriculture, Abeokuta, University of Ibadan, University of Lagos. Akoka, Lagos, Bells University of Technology, Ota, Badcock University, Ilishan, Remo. The study population is the actual library users of the selected university libraries. The actual library users are gotten from average library users from peak and low periods.

The university porters were instructed to distribute the questionnaire to every twentieth student entering the library. In all 1400 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, out of which 720 were returned and usable, representing 51.4% responses

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of e-book

Hawkins (2000) states that “an e-book is the contents of a book made available in an electronic form”. But Lynch, & Tenny (1999) stress the need to distinguished between a digital book (the content) and the viewing technology (hardware and software) Hawkins (2000) outlines three true electronic publishing implementations of the e-book format to which can be added, the dimension of proprietary and non- proprietary technology.

According to Morgan (1999), limits the definition of e-book, as opposed to e-text, to being a hardware/software combination used to read electronic data on a specially designed portable device. This would simply be one type of viewing technology- with desktop Personal Computers, Notebooks and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) (Lynch, 1999). In the same vein Balas (2000) focuses on the software needed to read the book, pointing out that e-text can be read on any computer system whereas e-books require special software.

One of the simplest and most comprehensive explanations, define e-book as “an online version of printed books, accessed via the internet (leaf, 2003). Armstrong et al (2002) define e-book from a broad angle as ‘any piece of electronic text regardless of size or composition (a digital object), but excluding journal publication, made available electronically (or optically) for any device (handled or desk-bound) that include a screen. Vassilious and Rowley (2008) suggested considering the use of a two- part e-book definition that captures the persistent characteristics of e- books in one part, and changing characteristic in the other;

‘An e- book is a digital object with textual and/or other content, which arises as a result of integrating the familiar concepts of a book with features that can be provided in an electronic environment. E-book, typically have in –use features such search and across references functions, hypertext links, bookmarks, annotations, highlights, multimedia objects and interactive tools’.

Due to constant changes in technologies, diversity and different access options of e-book, made it impossible to have a general acceptable definition. These are a common agreement of terms in all the definition given by various authorities. It has the following features, interactive or digital format, it require reading device, diverse content, different file format and it’s obvious that e-books has come to address the limitation of traditional print books.

Use of e-book

Users discover e-book primarily through the library catalog (Nariani, 2009 & Levine - Clark 2006). Once discovered e-book are used differently than print books. Users tend to read only few chapters rather than the entire book (Levine-Clark 2006, Jamali et al 209, Nariani 2009, & Shellburne 2009). E-books are used as reference books to find discreet answers (Shelburne 2009, Bierman et al 2010, & Staiger 2012). While participants in the study by Muin and Hawes (2013), as quoted in Watens et al (2014) showed careful reading of longer passages for more than discreet answers, students still did not read e-book cover to cover.

A preliminary review of the available literature reveals much recent hype, activity and comment but still little research, especially in the area of electronic books as opposed to journals (Lonsdale & Armstrony 2000). College students have been identified as an ideal starting point for studies (Landoni, Wilson & Gibb 2000 & Wearden 1989) for a number of reasons. These include the amount they spend on textbooks, their need for rapid access to large amounts of information, and their level of computer literacy. Portable e-book readers, in particular, offer other features valuable to them, such as portability of a large amount of information and a lightweight, easy to use design (Simon 2001 & Tennant, 2000) as quoted in (Sawyer, 2014).

Few studies have been conducted on the use of e- book some of the recent research studies addressed the issues related to the acceptance and integration of e- book (Dillon 2001).The results of these studies, showed a slow acceptance of digital resources expect e- journals.

Advantages of using e-books

Berglund *et al.* 2004; Hawkins 2000; Rao 2003; Vassiliou and Rowley 2008; Armstrong and Lonsdale 2003; Berglund *et al.* 2004; Herther 2005; Bennett and Landoni, 2005 and Elgan 2007; identified the following as the advantages of e-books:

- *Availability.* E-books can be accessed by different types of devices: computers, e-book readers, mobile phones, etc. They can be accessed anywhere the Internet is available. Open access e-books can be used simultaneously by unlimited numbers of users. Providers of e-books therefore do not have to worry about the number of copies of e-book titles.
- *Economic advantages.* E-books offer savings on costs of paper, ink, binding, packing, and delivery.
- *Environmental advantages.* Increasing use of e-books can reduce the consumption of paper and save trees
- *Flexibility.* It is possible to change the visual appearance of e-books, their font size or style, etc. Such personalization options enable the same text to be available to different audiences in their preferred format. Print books, in contrast, would require different print runs in, for example, standard and large print
- *Multimedia.* E-books can be enhanced with multimedia features: interactive images, sound, and/or video material. Interactive features such as commentary options and chatting are also available
- *Space saving.* E-books do not require physical space. Unlike print books, there is no limit, in terms of storage space, on the number of e-books held in a collection
- *Portability.* E-books can be forwarded from one computer to another or even to another device).
- *Search possibilities.* While traditional books offer only a table of contents and different kinds of supplementary indexes, most e-books offer a variety of computerized search options such as unlimited keywords, combination of search results, search history, search within a book or the whole collection
- *Security.* It is harder to lose, steal or damage e-books, especially if they are available on the Internet, than print books
- *System of navigation.* Hyperlinked references in footnotes, titles, places, or people mentioned in the text facilitate access to related sources of information in e-books and save time
- *Text processing.* Many e-books provide features like bookmarks, text highlighting and underlining. Cutting, copying and pasting, printing and saving of text for later use are also possible
- *Timeliness.* The publishing process for e-books is much shorter than for traditional books. The electronic environment also enables immediate updates and corrections of information already published

Problems of e-book

Hurdles to using e-books beyond discovery and preference include poor user interface, login requirement, and digital right management issues. In addition, the difficulty in downloading or printing portions of an e-book was cited as a problem

by Cassidy et al (2012) and Shelburne (2009).while interface issues have improved over time, Walters (2013) encouraged librarians to work with publishers to find a model that works for users.

Others problem faced when using e-books according to Shelburne, (2009); Cassidy et al (2012), and Muir & Hawes (2013) include difficulty in simultaneously referring to multiple texts. Researchers that need to refer to multiple texts may prefer print. Additionally, accessibility issues were evident such as when reading sessions timed-out for inactivity before the users was finished reading. They also noted that accessibility issues with respect to functionality on different devices. Students lacked context when landing on an unfamiliar page resulting from a search within text function (Muir and Hawas, 2013) Daniel and Woody (2013) reported distraction when reading from a screen where one has access to e- mail and social media.

Disadvantages of e-books

Despite the advantages of the electronic environment, there is still high demand for printed books and the specific disadvantages are.

- *Availability.* E-book titles are limited and there is an unequal distribution of titles across subjects. Limited access to e-book readers at local stores is also an issue
- *Computer skills.* Insufficient computer skills, lack of experience of e-book use and technophobia create barriers to e-book use
- *Equipment.* E-book reading devices are comparatively expensive, and readers are unused to reading long texts on a small screen.
- *Format.* There are many incompatible e-book formats. Therefore, users are forced to get specialized software or a particular hardware
- *Lack of information.* Users do not know about the existence of e-books or their collections on the Internet or at the nearest libraries
- *Language.* The majority of the released e-books are available in English, only a small proportion is in German and other languages
- *Piracy.* The balance between the interests of publishers and users regarding protection of e-book content is still an internationally unresolved issue
- *Price.* Prices of e-books are almost the same as those of traditional books, despite the savings on costs of paper, ink, binding, packing, and delivery
- *Rights.* A lot of e-books have limitations regarding their printing, sharing and saving options due to copyright issues and publishing models
- *Unpredictability.* A new kind of e-book reading device or format can be released at any time. New inventions can make current technological solutions obsolete. Provision of e-books can change at any time. Providers of e-books have rights to forbid access to some titles or even to remove the whole collection. (Berglund *et al.* 2004; Brary 2007; Brary 2008; Hawkins

2000; Rao 2003; Vassiliou and Rowley 2008; Armstrong and Lonsdale 2003; Berglund *et al.* 2004; Herther 2005; Bennett and Landoni, 2005 and Elgan 2007).

INTERPETATION OF TABLES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Distribution of respondents by level of study

Table.1

| Level of study | Respondents | Percentage |
|----------------|-------------|------------|
| 500 | 35 | 4.9 |
| 400 | 103 | 14.3 |
| 300 | 316 | 43.9 |
| 200 | 186 | 25.8 |
| 100 | 85 | 11.8 |
| Total | 720 | 100 |

Analysis of data in table 1 above shows that majority of the respondents are 300 level students in most universities. This implies that the respondents have in the system for at least three years and would have been familiar with use of the library facilities.

Defining E-books.

Table.2

| E- book | Respondent | % |
|--|------------|------------|
| e- Text | 116 | 16.1 |
| E-text +E –book Devices + E –book software | 574 | 79.7 |
| E- book software | 0 | - |
| E- book reader | 0 | - |
| Don't know | 30 | 4.2 |
| Total | 720 | 100 |

One of the purpose of this study is to find out students understanding of e-book, it can be seen from table 2 above that, when the respondents were asked to select the appropriate definition of e-books from the given list. Majority of the respondents (79.7%) defined e-book as a combine package of E-Text, E- Book reading device and E- Book software. (16.1%) of the respondents define E- Book as E-Text. This finding collaborate with the definition given by Armstrong et al (2002), that ‘an e-book is any piece of electronic text regardless of size or composition (a digital

object), but excluding journal publication, made available electronically (or optically) for any devices (handled or desk-bound) that include a screen.

Modes of Reading E- Books.

Table. 3

| Reading E- Books | Respondent | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------|------------|
| E- Book on E- reader | 30 | 4.1. |
| E- Book on screen | 620 | 86.1 |
| Print a part of book | 50 | 7 |
| Print the whole book | 20 | 3 |
| Total | 720 | 100 |

From the table 3 above it can be seen that the majority of the respondents (86.1%) prefer to read E- book on screen, while (6.9%) read it by printing a part of the book. E- Book on E- Reader (4.1%) and (3%) of the respondent prefer to use the whole book.

Purpose of using E-Book

Table.4

| Purpose | Respondent | Percentage |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| Finding material | 370 | 51.4 |
| Research | 450 | 62.5 |
| Look up answers | 280 | 38.8 |
| Text book | 200 | 27.7 |
| Course book | 180 | 25 |
| Leisure | 6 | 8.3 |

Respondent choose more than one item

In table 4 above respondent were asked to select the purpose of reading e-books, majority of the students (62.5%) use e-book to do their research, (51.4%) of the respondents indicate that they use e-book to find materials for their assignment, 38.8 percent respondents are using e-book to look up answers. While 200 (27.7%) of respondents are using e-book as textbook and only 25 percent use e-book for their course book.

Factors for Using E-Books.

Table.5

| Factors | Respondent | Percentage |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| Available round the clock | 183 | 25.4 |
| Searchable | 274 | 38 |
| Allow easy navigation | 88 | 12.2 |
| Portable | 80 | 11.1 |
| No relevant paper book | 70 | 8.7 |
| Offer timely access | 100 | 13.9 |
| Helpful features | 79 | 10.9 |
| Save space | 89 | 12.4 |
| Allow E- Archive | 60 | 8.3 |
| Versatile | 40 | 5.6 |

Table 5 above shown that majority of the respondents agreed that they use e-book because they are searchable (38%) and available round the clock (25.4%). 13 percent of the respondents indicate that e-book offer timely access, while 88 (12.2%) and 89 (12.4%) of the respondents use e-book because it allows easy navigation and save space. Table 3,4 and 5 above was used to find out students perception toward the use of e-book. It was found out the major purpose why student use e-book is for research purposes, and the factor that necessitated it used is that it is available round the clock and searchable.

Problems encountered while using E. Books.

Table.6

| Problems | Respondent | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Hyperlinks | 321 | 44.9 |
| Footnotes | 60 | 8.3 |
| Need for an integrated dictionary | 280 | 39 |
| Illustration | 250 | 35 |
| E- Book reader support | 200 | 27.8 |
| References | 150 | 21 |
| Full- text search | 88 | 12.2 |
| Other if any please specify | 10 | 1.3 |

The third objective is to find out the problems students encountered while using e-book. The users were asked to indicate the problem they had while using e- books, hyperlinks ranked highest with 321 (44.9%), this is followed by need for an

integrated dictionary with (39%). 250 (35%) said illustrations in an e-books were a problems, 27.8 percent said that e-book reader needed to be support with other devices, 150 (21) percent indicates references as problematic, 12.2 percent that full- text search of E-book is also problematic and remaining 8.3 showed that footnote is also problem. This finding is line with finding of Cassidy et al (2013) and Shelburne (2009) who indentifying the followings as some of the problem of using e-books; poor user interface, hyperlinks, login requirement and digital management issues.

Conclusion

E-book can be seen as an e-text on e-book which can be view on the screen with the aid of e-book software or e-book reader devices. This study showed that the major mode of reading e-book among students is on the screen and through e-reader devices, while the main purpose of using e-book is for finding materials, research purposes and looking for answer etc.

The following features are the main factors that enable students to make use of e-book; it's searchable, available round the clock, it offer timely access, save space, it allow easy navigation as well as it helpful feature etc. Some of the identified problem encountered by students while using e-book includes; hyperlinks, illustration, e-book reader support etc.

E-book is here to stay; it can provide better knowledge delivery and accessibility. Universities Library in South-West in particular and Nigeria in general should encourage more students in the use of e-book by acquiring more e-books, create a separate e-book collection, viewing facilities should be freely provided as well as organizing training and better use of e-books. From the finding of this survey, it is observed that e-book were getting acceptance among the users of the Universities Library in the South-West. Majority of the students state that a large numbers of e-books are available to them.

Finally Universities Library should build closer communication with students to address their need in e-books collection and to teach the skills for locating and using e-books.

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