

# EVALUATION OF NEWSPAPER AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH ACADEMIC LIBRARY WEBSITE

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** Information resource provision is the centre of academic libraries function for an all-round learning and support for the mother institution. Newspaper information has been known to be one major information resource in the library. The advent of Internet and web site in the library has allowed libraries to market their resources through them.

**Methodology:** This research employed stratified and random number techniques for sampling, while content analysis was the instrument to extract data from selected universities library website.

**Findings:** The findings revealed that only 3 out of 28 universities library sampled provided publicity and access for online newspapers, one provided the names but without link, only 13 different online newspaper were available, at average of 8 per institution. No institution provided link to digitised, back-issue or archived copies, the type of access is “public” no subscription from all the sampled libraries. Also no university library had a page or web site dedicated to newspaper information neither link to any foreign newspaper.

**Recommendations:** Libraries must provide access to online newspaper from their site, make it as many as possible and also include foreign newspapers. Also library should subscribe to online newspaper to be able to provide access to all the contents of the newspapers and archive them.

**Originality:** This is the first work that employed content analysis in accessing how Universities library are providing access to online newspaper information in Nigerian Universities library.

**Keywords:** Academic libraries, Universities Library, Newspaper, Online Newspaper Information, Full text, Link.

## INTRODUCTION

Newspapers are known for provision of up-to-date information on local, state, national and international events Edegoh, Ezeh and Samson (2015). It is one of the most available, easily accessed and widely used periodical in the serial section of any library.

Newspapers contains variants of information and news that are of interest to various class and category of people. Ola and Ojo (2007) stated that newspapers are important because they carry current information and keep the readers informed of events and happenings within and outside their immediate environments.

Njeze (2013) stated that newspapers and magazines provide information on current happenings around the world, they also provide information for research, entertainment and leisure. Anaeto (2009) expressed newspapers as an unbound publication that provides varieties of information both in print and non-print form and the content of the paper can be read repeatedly.

Nowadays the internet should make users aware of even more topics in the public spheres. The amount of space available for topical information is definitely large on the internet than in printed newspapers De-Waals and Schoenbach (2008). In order to access news stories online one has to make many individual choices and in doing so encounter a wealth of information, links and details along the way Eveland and Dunwoody (2001). These bring to the fore the need to access how academic libraries are serving their users through provision of links to these online newspaper rather than only the hard copy subscribed in the library. Abdulraheem, Adisa and La'aro (2012) in their work reported that experts in the nations media and marketing communication industries at a forum organised by the Advertising Agencies' Association of Nigeria (AAAN) in 2010 in Lagos raised alarm on the future of newspaper in Nigeria. Majority of them concluded that unless print media braced up to the challenges posed by new media, it might go extinct in the nearest future.

The print media have taken up the challenge and all the major newspapers in Nigeria are now online. The library as agent of dissemination of news and information also need to be appraised to see how they are serving their users in this 21<sup>st</sup> century with newspaper information. This research intends to look at the issue from the online availability and accessibility online newspaper resources. Most academic libraries in Nigeria nowadays have web site either independently or having a page on the university web site. One very prominent thing about the academic libraries web site is the fact that they publicise all the major resources available in the library through their web site or page. This research intends to find out how academic libraries are publicising newspapers on their web site or page as part of their resources and as a way of attracting users to newspaper resources which invariably may attract the users to other library resources and vice-versa. The following are the breakdown of the objective into measurable research questions which answers shall be sorted for in the course of this research.

### **Research Question**

The research questions set out to find out how academic libraries are providing access to newspaper information through their web site or page:

- Are academic library web site having links to newspaper information or newspaper sites?
- How is newspapers availability distributed among Nigerian academic library web sites?

- What are the common newspapers available on Nigerian academic library websites?
- What format of display for link is provided?
- What side of the academic library web site is the newspapers link provided?
- What kind of access is provided by the academic library web sites?
- Is there a link to academic library digitised newspapers from the websites?
- Is there an indication of availability of back-issues of newspapers in the library?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Pandey (2010), Igbeka and Ola (2010) noted that newspapers have been the most conventional and popular medium for conveying local, regional, national and international news to readers, they serve us with the latest happenings in different parts of the world through a network of correspondents and news agencies. Edegoh, Eze and Samson (2015), stated that newspaper whether special-interest or general interest provide important and useful news information to readers. Also Nwabueze, Okonkwo and Nweke (2012) posit that newspapers provide excellent memories of a country's historical events, and landmarks.

Placing newspaper in the perspective of academic purposes, Cheney, Knapp, Alan and Czapala (2006) opined that despite the growing presence of news on the internet, radio, television, etc, a library current newspaper collection can continue to play a vital role in the academic community. In fact they advocated that in order to improve newspaper readership among college-age students, libraries should provide free and unhindered access to newspaper for all library users. Onwubiko (2005) describes it as regular up-to-date sources of information available to students, scholars, administrators, the barely literate and so on, who demand for newspapers through self-acquisition, exchange and borrowing from friends, relatives and libraries.

Njeze (2013) opined that newspaper and magazines provide information on current happenings around the world, they also provide information for research, entertainment and leisure. In academic pursuit, the availability and use of accurate and current information may determine success or failure. Nakinganda (2007) stated that newspaper are sources of textual evidence useful to students, researchers, journalist, administrators, lawyers, politicians and the larger society.

Curpen (2011) noted that all professionals and non-professionals need newspaper for rapid developments in their respective fields. Businessmen need newspaper to keep in touch with economic and commercial trends in the country and see current share prices while, politicians need them to be abreast of recent political events in the country. One of the fastest means of transmitting current information is through the print media especially the newspapers, most students read newspapers to broaden their knowledge and keep abreast of recent developments and to enhance their academic performance Ugah (2009) and Onu (2005). Now that the print media have embraced the new media or electronic version, this has made it more relevant in terms of providing timely information for users.

Generally, newspapers have four basic functions- to inform, to interpret the news, to provide a service to readers and to entertain Abdulraheem, Adisa and La'aro (2012). Bello and Ajala (2004) findings revealed that newspaper plays a dominant and satisfying role.

### **Academic Library Web Sites as Access Channel for Information**

The internet has changed the landscape of communication, publicity and marketing. One of the major platform is the use of institutional web sites- where an organisation acquire an amount of space or presence in the cloud so as to be visible and/or accessible from any part of the world once there is internet connectivity. Universities and their libraries have also key into this to make their existence and programmes known to the wider world. The academic libraries as information dissemination centre saddled with the responsibility of supporting teaching, learning and research in the mother institution have also come up with web sites so as to:

- Be relevant
- Be accessible remotely
- Be current with waves of technological developments.
- To provide technology-bound services to users.
- To advertise, publicise or market their resources and services to the immediate community and also the wider community.
- Increase access in-terms of number of users, duration, volume of resources, etc to its users.

Campbell, Martin and Fabos (2009) noted that internet is facilitating the convergence of media forms, "the process whereby old media and new media are available via the integration of personal computers and high-speed satellite-based phone or cable links. Abdulraheem, Adisa and La'aro (2012) stated that virtually all Nigeria newspapers have been adapting themselves to this new media age, now newspapers have tried certain medium such as online newspaper edition and mobile phone newspaper. As at today about 198 Nigerian newspapers are online (source [www.free-OnlineNewspaper.com](http://www.free-OnlineNewspaper.com)) while about 53 were listed on [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_newspapers\\_in\\_Nigeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_newspapers_in_Nigeria) ).

Murdoch (2005) noted that technology-savvy young people are becoming increasingly likely to turn to the web as their news medium of choice. If library should fail to provide links to these online newspapers on their site, it will be doing a great dis-service to its users.

In a report of Newspaper Association of America, Conaghan (2015) who is the vice president stated that the digital audience engaged with newspaper content reached a new peak in August, 2015. The data reveals that more than nine in ten men (93%) and women (92%) ages 25-44 who were online in August, 2015 engaged with newspaper digital content. Also the newspaper digital audience for age group 18-24, 25-34 and 35-44 also increase greatly. This report showed that libraries also need to play its part in providing

access to link online content of newspapers on their web sites without having to log out of library web sites or opening other sites before they can access newspaper information

McGillis and Toms (2001) in their study of web sites provided concrete evidence that categorisation and labelling of the content had a huge impact on usage of the website. Therefore the need for library web site to create category for online newspaper information links. Marshall (2004) in listing basic features of a library web site stated that larger libraries typically focus considerable effort on providing access to and assistance with their collections of electronic resources. He further stated that it must provide aids on electronic gateways to the library electronic resources and subject-oriented, guide to both physical and electronic collections among others. He equally found that large libraries are evolving into feature-rich web portals that offers their users both information resources and library services.

Diaz (1998) listed various role that a library web site played, one of such is a way of making internal resources or products available. These might be digitised copies of special collections, including manuscripts, images or even locally created databases. He also stated that library web sites can become an agent for archiving and retaining information that comes and goes on other sites.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:**

The theoretical framework adopted for this work is based on Moore's Strategic Triangle, it recognises three major components designed to place the evaluation of public services in context that recognises the differing policy maker, the community, and the operation of a public organisation Moore (1995). This model has been used in public libraries to measure their value addition to the public. Becker, et'al 2010. The three major components of Moore's model are: 1) Substantive value- which is described as the organisations' mission. The organisational mission of library is to provide easy access to all possible sources of information. 2) Legitimacy and political Sustainability: this relates with sources of support and legitimacy, outcomes and the link to broader policy goals. This is made possible by the presence of internet and subsequent creation of website by universities library 3) Operational and administrative feasibility- this relates to how libraries are organised (in terms of resources) to achieve their mission and how they measure performance. The issue of organisation is not new in the library, and part of the agenda to achieve library mission is setting up of website, marketing of resources available in the library.

### **METHDOLOGY**

For the purpose of this research a stratified sampling technique followed by table of random number was used for sampling the universities for a proper reflection of all the categories of ownership of all the institutions. The stratification is a single step, whereby the universities were stratified based on whether they are federal, state or privately owned institutions. The National University commission site was search for all the accredited universities in Nigeria as at 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2015.

A total of 141 accredited universities in Nigeria were used for this work (sourced from: nuc.edu.ng). The distribution for the universities are as follows: federal and stated owned universities are 40 each, while private owned universities are 61. Twenty percent (20%) of the total population was sampled using stratified and table of random number. After the institutions have been stratified based on ownership, then the table of random number is used. The first institution is picked followed by every fifth institution to get the 20% population. Each of the strata provides 8 federal owned universities, 8 state owned universities and 12 privately owned universities; making a total of 28 universities. In the course of using table of random number, nine new universities that were accredited last year were adjusted for by not picking them but choosing the next institution to them.

The web site of the academic library attached to each of these universities were searched for on the internet by their name and/or from their university web site to assess the library site or page for solutions to the research questions. Universities library OPAC page or portal page were both searched for and used. Each academic library web site sampled was thoroughly searched on the first page (which is commonly the page where resources available in the library are advertised) to determine the answers to the research questions and in some cases where necessary a further step was taken to search a page or two into the web site.

## RESULTS

From the search of the sampled academic libraries web site, the table below was generated based on the set of research questions for this research.

Table 1: Showing list of selected Universities with their University Library web site or page URL

S/N	Name of University	URL of Academic Library	Adopted short-form for this work
1	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi	www.atbu.edu.ng	ATBU
2	University of Calabar	Library.unical.edu.ng/#	UNICAL
3	University of Maiduguri	www.unimaidelibrary.com	UNIMAID
4	Federal University, Oye-Ekiti	Libraryfuoye.edu.ng	FUO
5	Federal University, Kashere.	No website/page under the university website. No library website retrieved through search engines.	FUK
6	Federal University of Technology, Akure	Lib.futa.edu.ng/page.php?pageid=107	FUTA
7	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.	www.oauiife.edu.ng/2011/05/hezekiah-oluwasanmi-library	OAU
8	Modibbo Adama University of Tech; Yola.	Mautech.edu.ng/root	MAUTECH
9	Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida University, Lapai	www.ibbu.edu.ng/node/62	IBB
10	Kano State University, Wudil	No separate website or page under the university website. No library website retrieved through	KUST

		search engines.	
11	Ondo State University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa.	Library.osustech.edu.ng	OSUSTECH
12	Nassarawa State University, Keffi.	Nsuk.edu.ng/facultystaff/library/	NUK
13	Taraba State University, Jalingo.	www.tsuniversity.edu.ng/?page=elibrary	TUJ
14	Abia State University	No separate website or page under the university website. No library website retrieved through search engines.	ASU
15	Anambra State University of Science and Technology, Uli.	No functional library website, the page linked to when you click on library menu require students/staff login without any menu	ANSU
16	Delta State University, Abraka.	www.delsu.edu.ng/lib_acc.aspx	DELSU
17	Achievers University, Owo.	No separate website or page under the university website. No library website retrieved through search engines.	AUO
18	Alhikimah University, Ilorin.	Alhikimah.edu.ng/library	AUI
19	Baze University, Abuja.	library.bazeuniversity.edu.ng/public	BUA
20	Caleb University, Lagos.	No separate website or page under the university website. No library website retrieved through search engines.	CUL
21	Covenant University, Sanngo Ota.	Clrmain.covenantuniversity.edu.ng	CUS
22	Evangel University	No functional website, the page linked to when you click on library menu requires staff/students login	EU
23	Igbinedion University, Okada.	No separate website or page under the university website. No library website retrieved through search engines.	IUO
24	Landmark University, Omu-Aran.	www.lmu.edu.ng/resources-offices/clr#VkTgtdkrSM8	LUO
25	Nigerian-Turkish Nile University, Abuja	www.ntnu.edu.ng/?aboutlibrary	NTUA
26	Pan-Atlantic University	No separate website or page under the university website. No library website retrieved through search engines.	PAU
27	Salem University, Lokoja.	No separate website or page under the university website. No library website retrieved through search engines.	SUL
28	Tansin University, Umunya	www.tansianuniversity.edu.ng/library	TU

Key  Federal Universities.

 State Universities.

 Private Universities.

From table 1, the following additional information were also discovered during the search of the universities websites. Among the federal universities library, seven (7) of them had library web site and only one does not have any form of link to library website nor can be located through search engines. OAU has a library page and it has no OPAC and there is no advertisement/publicity of library resources and services available on the page. It

contains just the history, philosophy and mission of the library. Also for UNICAL, FUK and FUTA there are no OPAC pages and FUK link has the statement that 'e-library resources is under construction'. For the state universities library, ASU, ANSU and KSUST has no library web site or page or link does not respond, IBB and TSU university library does not have OPAC page. AUO, CUL, EU, IUO, PAU and SU do not have library web site or page or their link from the main university web site does not respond, while their library name cannot be found on search engines. AUI and BUA do not have OPAC page.

Table 2 Showing Answers to the research questions

S/N	Name of Academic Library	Availability of links	Type of access	Format of Newspaper name display	Location of Newspaper list on website	Names of available Newspaper	Provision of link to library digitised version	Provision of link to notice of back issues
1	UNICAL	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2	UNIMAID	Yes	Full	Typed	Top right side	The Nation, The Guardian, Vanguard, The Punch, Nigerian Tribune and Daily Trust.	--	--
3	FUOYE	Yes	Full	Typed	Top right side	The Punch, Vanguard, The Guardian, Leadership, Nigerian Tribune, This Day, BusinessDay, Daily Trust And Newswatch.	--	--
4	FUK	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
5	FUTA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
6	ATBU	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
7	OAU	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
8	MAUTECH	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
9	IBB	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
10	KUST	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
11	OSUSTECH	Yes	Full	Typed	Lowest bottom middle	The Nation, The Punch, Vanguard, Nigerian Tribune, The Guardian, Hope, This Day, Daily Independent, BusinessDay, Daily Trust and Moment.	--	--
12	NUK	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

13	TUJ	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
14	ASU	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
15	ANSU	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
16	DELSU	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
17	AUO	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
18	AUI	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
19	BUA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
20	CUL	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
21	CUS	--	Not linked	Typed	Middle right	Nigeria Pilot, Blue Print and Business Day.	--	--
22	EU	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
23	IUO	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
24	LUO	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
25	NTUA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
26	PAU	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
27	SUL	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
28	TU	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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**From table 2, the following are some of the findings of this research work:**

**Availability of links to newspapers from library website:** two (2) out of eight (8) federal universities provided link from their website to newspapers site, while only one (1) university library out of eight (8) state universities library has a link on its website to newspaper. None of the private universities library website sampled had a link to newspaper site, CUS has some names of newspapers on its website but they were not linked or active.

**Newspapers Availability Distribution:** from the table it shows that newspapers availability from academic libraries website is just three (3) libraries out of 28 academic libraries sampled. The university library with the highest number of newspaper had 11 newspapers, followed by 9 newspapers while the third institution had 6 newspapers listed and linked.

**Common Newspapers on Universities library website:** the table shows the distribution of the following newspapers among the universities library as below.

Table 3: Showing the Distribution of Newspapers in terms of number of Universities library that provided online access to them from their website.

Name of Newspaper	No of university library
The Punch	3
The Nation	2

Vanguard	3
The Nigerian Tribune	3
The Guardian	3
Daily Sun	1
Hope	1
This Day	2
The Daily Independent	1
Business Day	2
Daily Trust	3
Moment	1
Leadership	1
Newswatch	1

The commonest papers were The Punch, Nigerian Vanguard, The Nigerian Tribune, The Guardian and Daily trust. The Nation, This Day and Business Day enjoy patronage from two institutions while others are available in one institution.

**Format of display:** the web site of universities library was combed for how they displayed the newspaper link either as “the newspapers logo” or by just typing the name of the newspaper or by allowing the newspaper title or first page to stream or be displayed on their web site. The findings shows that all the university libraries web site used “typed” name of the paper.

**Type of Access:** the type of access provided by the libraries were examined whether it is public access or a subscription access, and also whether full stories were available through those link. The result shows that the three academic libraries providing the link were using public access services as it is only the public news that are available as other paid adverts in newspaper were not available through those links. Though there was full access to the public news available. Basically what the libraries did was to link the library site to the newspaper site.

**Website Location side:** it was found that two (2) of the university libraries that provided link placed it at the top right hand side of the website while one library placed it on lowest bottom middle.

**Link to digitised newspapers:** none of the university library sampled provided link to digitised newspaper.

**Link or notification of back issues:** none of the library provided link to back issues of newspaper neither did any of them had information for users on how and where they can find hard copy or back issues that are available in the library.

### Recommendation

The following are some of the recommendations for Universities library on how to implement newspapers availability and accessibility from their website or that may need

improvement in one way or the other concerning their online newspapers information service to their users.

- Newspapers should not be forgotten among online resources that the library should provide for its users. Users should visit the library OPAC or library portal page and be able to get newspaper information without necessarily having to log out or open another web page in order to have access to newspaper information. Newspaper can serve as an attraction for users as they visit the library web site and from there use other resources.
- The library of the past and present are known to provide newspaper services to its users in the hardcopy format, now that information is going electronic and newspaper organisation themselves have taken it upon themselves to provide online newspaper information from their website, it will be good if university libraries can connect with this to serve their users.
- The number of newspapers available in universities libraries that has link is small compared to the total number of online newspaper information web site that are available in Nigeria. Nigerian universities library website has a total of 13 different online newspaper; while each of the institutions has 6, 9 and 11 online newspaper on their sites. The universities library should do more in terms of number of online newspaper that is available through the university library web sites. The more the number, so also the opportunities available to users to read newspaper(s) of their choice.
- While paucity of fund is affecting most libraries, at the same time libraries can subscribe to limited number of hardcopy newspaper and online while they can now provide link to as many as possible online newspapers that users may make their choice out of all these. Those that are interested in matters like scholarship, admission, vacancies and other paid adverts will access the subscribed online newspaper or visit the physical library for the hardcopy newspapers.
- By providing online access to newspaper information, delay time is eliminated in terms of waiting for the vendor, processing the newspaper before it is made available to the users. Universities library need to do more in this direction so as not to waste the time of the users and break the barrier of distance or location.
- Only one out of the three institutions that provided online newspaper has a magazine listed and linked on its website. The only magazine that was linked was Newswatch. There is need to improve on this; as other brand of magazines are also available online for the use of the library users. One major function of the library is to provide materials for relaxation and cross cultural education; so more magazines should be included and linked from the library web sites for online access by the users.
- No single sampled Nigerian University library sampled had page(s) or web site dedicated to newspaper. Unlike other Universities library like Princeton University library, Michigan State University library, University of Durham library, that had pages or web sites for newspaper and includes foreign newspaper. Also reference was made to back-issues, microfilm newspapers and/or digitised version of newspapers.

- Also foreign newspapers title were missing among all the Nigerian universities library sampled. There is the need for universities library to link foreign based newspaper.
- Nigerian universities library should begin to subscribe to the online newspapers more as this will allow the users to have access to “full package” of the news and it will not be public news alone. Libraries are known to provide information on vacancies, scholarship, advertorial etc. these will not be available on the public access platform that the universities library are using and it will not also enable them to archive or keep the back issues. No single Nigerian Library website has a link that shows that it subscribed to Online newspaper
- It is advisable that online newspaper links should be placed at the top right side of the website for ease and quick identification by the users. Since all the universities library did not have a web site or page dedicated to online newspaper access.
- Nigerian universities library should begin to keep back issues of online newspapers and provide link to them for their users use. At the same time provide information about hardcopy back-issues that are available in the library. This is important because some programme or course of the institutions require them to use back issues and in the process of carrying out research, there is always need for back issues to be consulted by some researchers. This will also reduce the cost of personnel and equipment required for digitising hardcopy for preservation and online access.
- Nigerian Universities library that have digitised newspapers should provide a platform for awareness and marketing of such by providing link or including them as part of resources available so that users may access them remotely and there will be more value for the investment made by the library in that direction.
- With the current trend of youths’ interest in sports and as a form of relaxation, no single Nigerian university library web site provided link to any sport online newspaper. Provision of sport online newspaper will be an attraction point for students who are majorly the users of the library and from there use other library resources. There is a need for Nigerian library web site to include sport online newspapers or magazine in their links.
- The format of display adopted by all the libraries that provided link is the “typed” format; this is less inviting as users may be attracted by using the newspaper logo or allowing the first page or their name heading to stream or appear on the web site. The appearance of the newspapers logo or first page will be more appealing to users than just typing the name.

### **Conclusion:**

Online newspaper information services has come to stay as newspaper industries have taken up the challenge to move from only print copy to electronic. The Nigerian universities library should not be behind or overlook this service. Since in the time past libraries have endeavour to preserve and provide access to newspaper information on daily basis and also over a long period of time. Libraries have been digitising or microfilming newspaper in the time past so as to preserve and provide it when necessary. The online platform provided by the media industries should be harnessed by the libraries both for daily and timely provision as there will be no need of waiting for the newspaper

vendor to bring it to the library. Also the cost of preservation is greatly reduced as electronic resources are cheaper to preserve than the hardcopy.

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