Availability, Level of use and Constraints to use of Electronic Resources by Law Lecturers in Public Universities in Nigeria

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Introduction

> Law is a profession that thrives on books and derives its sustenance from the power of the written word. From time immemorial, the library and the legal profession have played mutually inclusive roles with each other, become very indispensable complement, the former being an acknowledged workroom for the latter.[1]

Electronic legal information resources are legal documents, concerned with law which requires computer and its accessories to be accessed. Examples are CD-ROMs on law, electronic databases, and those available freely on the Internet. Electronic resources provide easy and fast access to information in law and

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[1] Dada, T. O. (1984). Reference services for the legal profession: The case of legal profession in Nigeria. Effective law services in Nigeria. A seminar held under the sponsorship of the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of Lagos, June 5.-7. 2p

other disciplines and professions. Palfrey (2010) stressed that legal information is available in a growing number of formats mostly as a result of the digital revolution.

Ahmad (2008) stated that electronic legal information resources offer many advantages, the following being particularly noteworthy; in-depth searches of computer-held files can be carried out at a speed which no human can hope to match, the user is an active participant and can instantly adapt his request to the reality of what is actually in the reference file. Electronic databases can easily be re-searched using new clues, the user has easy access to an extremely wide range of indexes and databases, many of which may not be available locally. Databases searches online often offer a far greater number of access points than the corresponding printed indexes and there is almost no need for the irksome note taking so typical of many conventional searches.

Electronic resources have become widely acceptable in legal education and practice. Their acceptability and use are also growing; they have exploded in popularity and use. According to Omekwu (2003) the use of digital technology has led to migration of lawyer's instrument of trade to electronic formats. Judicial decisions and other sources of information germane to the work of lawyers are now available in electronic format. Law reports, judicial decisions, textbooks, and case laws are now available in electronic formats and available online.

Mafix Digital (2010) emphasized the usefulness of electronic resources and the need for their adoption by law faculties in Nigeria. He stated that electronic legal information sources are designed specifically for legal professionals and lecturers. They make research work fast, save time and also enhance efficiency due to powerful searching and cross-referencing technology. A combination of electronic legal sources is a formidable

information powerhouse for any institution, law practice agency, courts, etc. Considering the above mentioned benefits of electronic legal information sources, we can conclude that the resources have reduced time needed to access print legal resources, monotony, and stress associated with them. Electronic resources are user friendly, and can be easily updated sometime at no extra cost to the subscribers. Several electronic legal products are available worldwide; some of them are available in the Nigerian market through a company, Mafix Digital. These resources are being subscribed to by many institutions in Nigeria, thereby making them available for use by law lecturers and students.

Availability of electronic information sources relates to the provision for and inclusion of the resources in the collection of the libraries at the disposal of users in academic institutions. Legal information resources in electronic formats should be accessible when they are available. In the words of Roberts (2005) availability of electronic resources provides access to authoritative, reliable, accurate and timely access to information. In addition to this, the resources can enable innovation in teaching and increase timeliness in research. Several electronic legal information products are available today; some examples are My Lexis Nexis, Lexis. Com, Nexis.com, Know your Customer (KYC), Lexis Analytics, Lexis Nexis Academic, Westlaw, I-Law, Kluwer Arbitration, Lexis Nexis Professional etc. On the availability of these resources, Mafix Digital (2010) stated that availability of e-resources has changed what users actually read and use. They now tend to use only what is easily available, accessible and easier to search.

Awareness is part of availability and it indicates the extent to which users have information and knowledge of electronic

resources being subscribed to. When users of a law library have adequate information on the electronic resources being subscribed to they are encouraged to use them. Available ICT and e-resources must be known to the users. Madukoma, Onuoha and Ikonne (2014) identified lack of awareness as major contributing factor to non-use of e-resources.

Law is a specialized and highly technical subject; it is a living discipline that keeps growing on a daily basis. Law by its characteristic nature is dynamic and ever growing. This non-static nature of law has made its reliance on information resources unbridled. The professionals in the field of law are lawyers, who practice law, and law lecturers, who teach law in tertiary institutions. Law lecturers teach and conduct legal research in universities in Nigeria. These activities require the use of relevant, timely, and current legal information resources in both electronic and print formats. They operate in information intensive environment because whatever they do, teaching, research, publishing, consultancy and so on require information. In the words of Fowler (2007) "legal profession operates in an information intensive environment."

Anyaogu and Mabawonku (2014) described law lecturers as knowledge workers and social scientists that are invaluable to the nation because their discipline regulates human conducts and interactions in the society. She further stated that the level of the law lecturers' teaching and research productivity is likely to depend on the availability and utilisation of the various legal information resources. In order to establish the relationship between law lecturers and law libraries, Ghalib and Bhatti (2012) stated that

> Law faculty members impart legal knowledge to the students' community to equip them with sound legal

knowledge and skills. They teach different subjects at a time and are engaged in different legal academic activities; therefore, their information needs are diverse and vast. Law library is the most widely-used source of information available to them. Law librarians need to have awareness of the kinds of information being sought by them and how it can be obtained

Law lecturers and other legal practitioners rely on information resources to teach, learn, develop and practice law.

Onoyeyan and Okereke (2014) stated that electronic library resources heighten legal education. They have broadened academic experience because information can be accessed at a faster pace, at anytime and, at any place. Users can also access more information sources than can be found in traditional library. Mafix Digital (2010) averred that the law library is a gateway to online collections of electronic legal materials which include LexisNexis, Westlaw, HeinOnline, Justus and so on. These databases are online legal research services that contain case law, state and federal statutes, law journals, treatise, legal forms, administrative codes, and other information resources on law.

However the use of these resources is likely to be influenced by availability of the resources. This implies that electronic resources must be made available in several brands to the users in their institutions. Their contents must also be publicized by the library in order to prompt their use. Some constraints may also affect the use of electronic resources. Consequently, this study investigated the availability, level of use and constraints to the use of electronic resources by law lecturers in universities in Nigeria.Electronic resources in this study are those subscribed to and made available by the institutions to their staff and students. Those available on Google Scholar, Yahoo search, and other

open source platforms are excluded. Electronic resources that are of concern to this study include CD-ROM databases, online databases and others available via computer and networking facilities that are subscription based.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- find out the level of availability of electronic resources to the law lecturers in their universities;
- investigate the level of use of electronic resources by the law lecturers in their universities;
- identify the constraints to use of electronic resources by the law lecturers in their faculties or universities.

Research questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

- What is the level of availability of electronic resources in the law lecturers' universities?
- What is the level of use of the available electronic resources by the law lecturers?
- What are the constraints to the use of electronic information resources by the law lecturers in their universities?

Literature Review

Electronic resources and law libraries

Tyagi (2011) concluded that law libraries can no longer depend on conventional information sources to cope with the latest development in their respective fields. This accounts for the reasons why law libraries worldwide have increased their holdings of electronic information sources and automated their operations. Mwirigi (2010) reported that over the years, due to the rise of technology, law libraries are now managing and housing more than just books; libraries have transformed into digital and virtual libraries where books, journals and magazines have changed to e-books, e-journals and e-zines. Ukachi (2011) emphasized that the roles of reference law libraries have thus evolved in response to new societal and technological developments. Reference law libraries now use ICT to search for information, to communicate and satisfy patron's reference and information needs. She further identified challenges to adoption and use of ICT in Nigeria. These among others are irregular power supply, limited duration of use and, inadequate number of facilities.

Olorunfemi and Mostert (2013) conducted a study on the ability of academic law libraries in Nigeria to provide access to ICTs and e-resources as part of their information service delivery. The study also investigated the readiness of the law lecturers and students to search retrieve and utilize e-resources. The study found out that ICTs are available, but that the information is insufficient in most of the libraries and E-resources were available in some of the law libraries and inaccessibility of ICTs was a major challenge. Other challenges are lack of awareness of and easy access of e-resources, poor and eratic power supply, low bandwidth, lack of computers etc.

Omoike (2012) considered electronic resources as the resources that entail the use of sets of instructional materials such as audio and video cassettes, CD-ROM, television and radio broadcast as

well as multimedia system such as the computer and satellites. These resources can be printed; searched and saved to be consulted at a later date; they are updated more often than printed tools and; they open up the possibility of searching multiple files at the same time. The author employed survey research method to investigate the attitude of distance learning students to the use of electronic resources using the National Open University of Nigeria as case study. She concluded that there was no significant difference in the attitudes of distance learning students towards electronic resources usage on the basis of gender and socio-economic status. But there was a significant difference in age parameters.

Thanuskodi (2009) investigated the information needs and information seeking behaviour of law faculty members at the Central Law College, Salem. Respondents use a variety of information sources for teaching and research. Books and law reports were considered most important. It is interesting to note that, although respondents perceived the library as effective in meeting their information needs, they prefer to consult their personal collections first. The study also revealed that the respondents use ICT-based library sources and facilities less frequently compared with printed sources. It might be due to the lack of awareness about their availability, improper selection of materials, or unfamiliarity with these products. Similarly, it is also noted that email is the most popular Internet application, whereas other Internet-based services and applications are only used by a limited number of respondents. He concluded that this is a matter of concern, as presently, electronic information sources and the Internet are considered extremely important tools for effective teaching and research. Therefore, the Central Law College library might like to review its electronic information resources.

Other studies that have been conducted on the use of electronic resources are by Shuling (2007) who analyzed the use of electronic resources in Shaanxi University of Science and Technology. The sample consists of 909 respondents of all types of library users. The study found that nearly 80 percent of respondents knew little about electronic resources. Nearly half of the respondents use both printed and electronic resources, followed by print periodicals. Dadzie (2005) investigated the use of electronic resources by students and faculty of Asheshi University, Ghana, to determine the level of use, the type of information accessed and the effectiveness of the library's communication tools for information research and problems faced in using electronic resources. Results indicate that 85 percent of respondents used the Internet to access information, and that respondents mainly accessed information in the library by browsing the shelves.

Use of electronic resources by law lecturers

E-resources are now recognised as being of great importance to academic law and law firms libraries. To meet the users need in the world of digital information, libraries must revise their modus operandi. The collection of law library automatically changes day by day with the change in user demands. Due to the revolution of information communication and technology, modern or higher institutions and organizations have started to subscribe to e-resources to improve their information services facilities. (Omekwu, 2007). Madukoma, Onuoha and Ikonne (2014) investigated the electronic resources information use behaviour of faculty of law members at Babcock University in Ogun state. The study established among others that faculty members use electronic resources available in the library. They were however faced with difficulties such as power fluctuations, inadequate

orientation/training, and lack of awareness of electronic resources in the library. They in conclusion recommended that the library administration should provide modern technologies; create adequate awareness of electronic resources acquired in the library; provision of orientation/training of faculty members; and difficulty in navigating and searching databases.

Anyaogu and Mabawonku (2014) investigated for impact of resources availability and utilisation on the productivity of law lectures in Nigerian universities. Using descriptive survey research design, the study reported that legal information resources such as law textbooks, periodicals, reference materials, law reports, legislations and statutes newspapers, indexes and abstracts, digests, etc. are readily available to the lecturers; Electronic resources and online legal databases are less available; law reports, periodicals, legislature and statutes, indexes and abstracts, law textbooks, e-resources etc are used by law lecturers in the course of research activities. The study concluded that "the research productivity of the law lecturers was higher in publication of journal articles, chapters in books, conference proceedings, and foreign journals but low in co-authored books, textbooks, and occasional papers. In another study, Afro and Lamptey (2012) investigated the information needs and information seeking behaviour of law lecturers in Kwame Nkurmah University of science and technology, Kumasi, Ghana. The study found out that the law lecturers purpose for seeking information were to obtain useful materials for research work, background reading, and to keeping update with knowledge in their field of specialization. Law reports, law journals, and textbooks are the most useful sources of information consulted by the law lecturers, and their preference for information access is normally electronic resources. The law lecturers seek information daily, and there is connection between adequacy of library materials and

their frequency of library visits. The study also reported that the information needs of law lecturers are diverse, and they rely greatly on legal electronic information resources, law reports, law journals and textbooks.

Palfrey (2010) pointed out that many faculty members and students report that the vast majority of their needs are met by online databases such as LexiNexis, Westlaw, and Heinonline. He proposed that the law library of the 21st century will not be entirely digital but a hybrid of yesterday print-based world and tomorrow's digital world. New works will continue to be created and stored in digital formats as a default.

Omekwu (2007) described electronic libraries as complicated interdisciplinary systems with their specific features, requirements and problems. He further stated that "in electronic libraries, core processes of a library become basically electronic in nature". Major features of electronic libraries are: widespread consideration of library resources; deliberate adoption of electronic systems for information storage, retrieval and information services relevant in digital library systems of the future; predominant use of computer systems for network relationship, inter-library cooperation, online access and searches etc; use of interactive software that embeds rules sets that enables them to emulate human expertise within particular areas. Electronic resources have a number of advantages over printed books and journals. Susskind (2000) noted that an electronic text can be searched by any combination of keywords, so that a query can match a very individual or specific need; information retrieved can be downloaded, manipulated and used in other documents; and resources can be updated, daily, and weekly, with no delays in printing. Susskind (2000) observed that the advantages of electronic resources have made more law lecturers

and lawyers to turn to the Internet for legal information. He further predicts that legal education will be transformed through the availability of online, interactive, multimedia systems, which will enable judges, lawyers, and students to learn and be trained remotely.

For effective utilisation of electronic resources Morris (2002) further identified network, hardware and software compatibility, plus compliance with industry standards; availability of network, hardware and software resources and cost implications; availability of electrical and telecommunication lines and cost implications; quality interface, which includes ease-of-use for library staff and users; effectiveness and efficiency of retrieval or search engines and training implications for staff and patrons. Availability of the library based electronic resources to users in institutions has been identified as another component of the electronic information environment. Failure to meet these requirements means that access to and use of information by law lecturers will be a dream. Regular training programmes should be put in place to equip them with the necessary skills to explore the sources (Morris, 2002).

Aderibigbe and Ajiboye (2013) focused on the development of effective user education programs that will enhance the use of electronic resources (ER) in an era of electronic information for the students of the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, which consequently could be adapted for students in other higher institutions of learning. The study was carried out during the first semester of the 2010/2011 academic session (November 2010 to February 2011), employing a survey method. The target population is postgraduate students (postgraduate diploma, Master's degree and Doctor of Philosophy students) of the seven colleges that run postgraduate programs at the University of

Agriculture, Abeokuta. Of a total population of 330 postgraduate students, 250 postgraduate students were selected randomly using a purposive sampling technique since the student population was not evenly distributed across the colleges. Administration and retrieval of the questionnaire lasted for six weeks. The findings of this study revealed that the user education programme of Nimbe Adedipe Library is not adequate; the library provides more library orientation than bibliographic instruction and information literacy skills. It was also found that few of the students received training on electronic resources usage while an analysis of the open-ended questions revealed that the students got to know how to use electronic resources through their own efforts, periodic training in the library, and through the efforts of some library staff and friends. It was also found that use of electronic resources has a great impact on the respondents' academic activities, as reflected in their responses, where the students agreed that their academic work would suffer without the use of electronic resources.

Omekwu (2007) sets out strategic planning issue necessary for electronic legal information environment in Nigeria. He observed that strategic planning is a vital process that critically identifies the ultimate destination and the best means to reaching it from the current position. Three questions appropriately situate a strategic plan: where are we now? - Ultimate destination; How best do we get there? – The most viable, feasible, and economic strategy. He concluded his discourse by emphasizing that legal information resource of the 21st century must include electronic sources. Access to online law reports, journals, books, legislations and statutes which speed up the process of the administration of justice; planning and organizing the electronic library of the 21st century calls for a radical retooling and retraining of the human resources that will operate the electronic

law library; and local and oversea training supported with adequate funding.

Kalbande, Shinde, and Ingle (2013) investigated the use of electronic resources on the collection of print and electronic sources, and awareness of e-resources among users. The study was conducted at the Mahatma Phule Agricultural University. The findings of the study revealed that the impact of e-resources was visible from the decrease in number of printed documents in comparison to the increase in number of electronic resources. Consequently, the use of e-resources has increased in manifold, and the printed materials are being quickly replaced by e-resources.

Gakibayo, and Ikoja–Odongom (2013) assessed the utilisation of electronic resources in Mbarara University Library by students by addressing four objectives namely; identifying the availability e-resources in Mbarara University library, determining the extent of use and the relevance of e-resources in Mbarara University library and lastly proposing strategies to promote the usage of e-resources by students. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to elicit data from library staff and undergraduate students from four faculties of Mbarara University. Two hundred and sixty six respondents participated in the study. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, document analysis and interview guide. The study found that utilization of e-resources was not only affected by lack of computer skills and information literacy skills but also lack of enough computers and slow internet connectivity. The frequency of use of these resources indicated that a lot need to be done to increase e-resource use.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design to conduct a study into availability, level of use and constraints to use of electronic information by law lecturers in public universities in Nigeria. The population of this study was all the law lecturers in public universities in Nigeria. As at December 2015, there were thirty (30) accredited public universities that offer law programmes at the undergraduate level in Nigeria. This number is made up of sixteen (16) state, and fourteen (14) federal universities. There are total of nine hundred and thirty-one (931) law lecturers in the universities. Sixteen federal and state universities were selected from the population at the ratio of two federal to one state university (2:1). All the law lecturers of the faculties of law in the selected universities constitute the respondents. Only one university was selected from the North East Zone, a federal university. The selected one is the only university that offered law in the zone. The population sample of the study is all the law lecturers in the selected public universities which are five hundred and fifty-two (552).

S/N	Name of University	Federal / State	Geopolitical Zone	Academic Staff Strength
1	University of Ilorin, Ilorin	Federal	North-Central	49
2	University of Jos, Jos	Federal	North-Central	40
3	Benue State University	State	North-Central	28

S/N	Name of University	Federal / State	Geopolitical Zone	Academic Staff Strength
	Markudi			
4	University of Maiduguri Maiduguri	Federal	North-East	35
5	Ahmadu Bello University Zaria	Federal	North-West	36
6	Bayero University, Kano	Federal	North-West	35
7	Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto State	Federal	North-West	23
8	University of Nigeria, Nssuka, Enugu Campus	Federal	South-East	40
9	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka	Federal	South-East	35
10	Imo State University, Owerri	State	South-East	26
11	Obafemi Awolowo University Ile- Ife	Federal	South-West	34

S/N	Name of University	Federal / State	Geopolitical Zone	Academic Staff Strength
12	University of Lagos Akoka,	Federal	South-West	43
13	Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	State	South-West	27
14	University of Benin Benin- City	Federal	South-South	46
15	University of Uyo, Uyo	Federal	South- South	30
16	Delta State University Abraka, Ole Campus	State	South –South	25
TOTAL				552

Table 1: Population sample of the study

Research instrument

The main instrument used to gather data for this study is a questionnaire.

It sought information on the availability, level of use, and constraints to use of electronic resources from the respondents on their jobs. Data collection for this study was accomplished through copies of the questionnaire administered to the law lecturers in the sixteen (16) selected universities Due to the

geographical spread and distance in the locations of the universities, the researchers employed the services of an assistant in every university selected. These assistants are librarians and their responsibilities were to administer and collect completed copies of the questionnaire, Data obtained through the questionnaire was coded and analysed using SPSS Statistical Software. Frequency counts, Percentage, Means and Standard Deviation were used for the analysis.

Data Analysis

What is the level of availability of electronic resources in the law lecturers' universities?

The study found out the extent to which notable electronic information sources on law were available to the law lecturers in their respective faculties. The results obtained are presented in table 2.

S/N	Electronic information resources	Available in my faculty	Available within the University.	Not available	Mean	S.D
1	Lexis Nexis Academic	98 23.3%	24 5.7%	298 71.0%	1.52	0.85
2	Criminal Justice Abstract	86 20.5%	26 6.2%	308 73.3%	1.47	0.81
3	West Law	56 13.3%	38 9.0%	326 77.6%	1.36	0.71
4	Butterworth Lexis Nexis	60 14.3%	22 5.2%	338 80.5%	1.34	0.72
5	Nexus	40	42	338	1.29	0.63

S/N	Electronic information resources	Available in my faculty	Available within the University.	Not available	Mean	S.D
	Database	9.5%	10.0%	80.5%		
6	Kluwer Arbitration	36 8.6%	28 6.7%	356 84.8%	1.24	0.60
7	I-Law	26 6.2%	48 11.4%	346 82.4%	1.24	0.55
8	Biblio Online	30 7.1%	38 9.0%	352 83.8%	1.23	0.57
9	World Legal Information	24 5.7%	48 11.4%	358 82.9%	1.23	0.54
10	Lexis Nexis Professionals	28 6.7%	42 10.0%	350 83.3%	1.23	0.56
11	Acts Online	14 3.3%	56 13.3%	350 83.3%	1.20	0.48
12	Lexis Analytics	12 2.9%	54 12.9%	354 84.3%	1.19	0.46
13	Sabinet Online	20 4.8%	38 9.0%	362 86.2%	1.19	0.50
14	Quick Law	24 5.7%	14 3.3%	382 91.0%	1.15	0.49
15	Jutastat	24 5.7%	10 2.4%	386 91.9%	1.14	0.48
16	ProQuest	16	10	394	1.10	0.41

S/N	Electronic information resources	Available in my faculty	Available within the University.	Not available	Mean	S.D
		3.8%	2.4%	93.8%		

Table 2 Availability of electronic resources in universities of law lecturers N= 420

The level of availability of electronic resources in the university is very low. Majority of the respondents indicated that the resources are not readily available as indicated in the column one of Table 2. Specifically, the mean score of every one of the items revealed that Lexis Nexis Academic (mean=1.52) was ranked highest on availability. This is followed by Criminal Justice Abstract (mean=1.47), WestLaw (mean=1.36), Butterworth LexisNexis (mean=1.34), Nexus Database (mean=1.29), Kluwer Arbitration (mean=1.24), I-Law (mean=1.24), BiblioOnline (mean=1.23), World Legal Information (mean=1.23), LexisNexis Professionals (mean=1.23), ActsOnline (mean=1.23), Lexis Analytics (mean=1.19), Sabinet Online (mean=1.19), Quick Law (mean=1.15), Jutastat (mean=1.14), ProQuest (mean=1.10) respectively.

Level of use of the available electronic resources by law lecturers

The level of availability of electronic resources on law influenced their use by the law lecturers. Their responses to question on their level of use of resources portrayed low usage. This is as presented in Table 3.

s/n	Electronic information sources	Very highly utilised	Highly utilised	Occasionally utilised	Not utilised	Mean	S.D
1	Criminal Justice Abstract	24 5.7%	30 7.1%	68 16.2%	298 71.0%	1.48	0.86
2	Butterworth Lexis Nexis	16 3.8%	28 6.7%	76 18.1%	300 71.4%	1.43	0.78
3	West Law	8 1.9%	48 11.4%	32 7.6%	332 79.0%	1.36	0.76
4	Lexis Nexis Academic	6 1.4%	44 10.5%	44 10.5%	163 77.6%	1.36	0.73
5	Lexis Nexis Professionals	14 3.3%	26 6.2%	50 11.9%	330 78.6%	1.34	0.74
6	Acts Online	6 1.4%	34 8.1%	44 10.5%	336 80.0%	1.31	0.68
7	Kluwer Arbitration	12 2.9%	22 5.2%	34 8.1%	356 83.8%	1.27	0.69
8	Quick Law	14 3.3%	22 5.2%	22 5.2%	362 86.2%	1.26	0.71
9	Lexis Analytics	10 2.4%	20 4.8%	34 8.1%	356 84.8%	1.25	0.65
10	I-Law	4 1.0%	26 6.2%	36 8.6%	354 84.3%	1.24	0.60
11	ProQuest	6	28	18	368	1.22	0.6

s/n	Electronic information sources	Very highly utilised	Highly utilised	Occasionally utilised	Not utilised	Mean	S.D
		1.4%	6.7%	4.3%	87.6%		3
12	Nexus Database	4 1.0%	30 7.1%	22 5.2%	364 86.7%	1.22	0.61
13	World Legal Information	8 1.9%	16 3.8%	36 8.6%	360 85.7%	1.22	0.60
14	Biblio Online	10 2.4%	22 5.2%	16 3.8%	372 88.6%	1.21	0.65
15	Jutastast	3 1.4%	16 3.8%	18 4.3%	380 90.5%	1.16	0.55
16	Sabinet Online	8 1.9%	6 1.4%	26 6.2%	380 90.5%	1.15	0.52

Table 3: Distribution resources by use among the law lecturers N=420, Weighted Average = 1.28

A careful look at the column one of Table 3 reveals low usage of electronic resources (EIR). The ranking of the level of the use of the electronic resources in the faculties/universities of the respondents specified that Criminal Justice Abstract (mean=1.48) was ranked highest. This was followed by Butterworth LexisNexis (mean=1.43), West Law (mean=1.36), LexisNexis Academic (mean=1.36), LexisNexis Professionals (mean=1.34), Acts Online (mean=1.31), Kluwer Arbitration (mean=1.27), Quick Law (mean=1.26), Lexis Analytics (mean=1.25), I-Law (mean=1.24), ProQuest (mean=1.22), Nexus Database

(mean=1.22), World Legal Information (mean=1.22), BiblioOnline (mean=1.21), Jutastast (mean=1.16), Sabinet Online (mean=1.15) respectively.

Constraints to the use of electronic resources by the law lecturers

Responses obtained from the law lecturers on the issue of hindrance to their use of electronic resources are quite revealing. All the constraints identified in the course of this study and put across to them were confirmed in the analysis, as presented in Table 4.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1	Absence of sufficient training programme on electronic resources use	224 53.3%	52 12.4%	56 13.3%	88 21.0%	3.48	1.64
2	Non-availability of desired electronic resources within the University	224 53.3%	36 8.6%	42 10.0%	118 28.1%	3.37	1.75
3	Low level of local contents in the electronic resources	220 52.4%	82 19.5%	28 6.7%	90 21.4%	3.23	1.46
4	Poor ICT skills on the part of law lecturers	132 31.4%	130 31%	44 10.5%	114 27.1%	3.07	1.59
5	Lack of time due to tight academic	108 25.7%	164 39%	46 11.0%	102 24.3%	3.05	1.50

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
	and job schedules						
6	Lack of publicity on the contents of the available electronic resources by the University	194 46.2%	122 29.0%	34 8.1%	70 16.7%	3.03	1.57
7	Unorganised nature and proliferation of electronic resources on law	98 23.3%	148 35.3%	64 15.2%	110 26.2%	2.90	1.50
8	Paucity of workstations to access electronic resources in the Universities	190 45.2%	56 13.3%	34 8.1%	140 33.3%	2.86	1.58
9	Irrelevance of contents of electronic resources to local academic needs	76 18.1%	162 38.6	36 8.6%	146 34.8%	2.74	1.52

Table 4 Table 4: Distribution of electronic resources by constraints to use
N=420; SA= Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree.
Weighted Average =3.88

From Table 4, the extent to which every one of the identified constraints affect the law lecturers use of electronic resources are presented in ranked order. Distinctly, Absence of sufficient training programme on electronic resources use (mean=3.48) was ranked highest by their mean score rating and was followed by Non-availability of desired electronic resources within the University (mean=3.37). Further, Low level of local contents in

the electronic resources (mean=3.23), Poor IT skills on the part of law lecturers (mean=3.07), Lack of time due to tight academic and job schedules (mean=3.05), Lack of publicity on the contents of the available electronic resources by the University (mean=3.03) were ranked high. Also, Unorganised nature and proliferation of electronic resources on law (mean=2.90), Paucity of workstations to access electronic resources in the University (mean=2.86) and, Irrelevance of contents of electronic resources to local academic needs (mean=2.74) respectively were also ranked as constraints.

Discussion of Findings

Level of availability and use of electronic resources by the law lecturers

Several electronic information sources on law are available for the use of law lecturers and students from their producers. Examples of these resources are LexisNexis Academic, Criminal Justice Abstracts, West Law, Butterworth LexisNexis, Nexus Database, Kluwer Arbitration, I-Law, Biblio Online, World Legal Information, LexisNexis professionals, Acts online, Lexis Analytics, Sabinet Online, Quick Law, Jutastat and ProQuest. However, many of them are not readily available to the respondents in their respective universities. Information obtained from the law librarians of the universities corroborates this finding. The law librarians claimed that subscriptions to the resources are not regular; universities usually subscribed to some of them for the purpose of accreditations. Accreditation of law programmes by the national Universities Commission is a four year affair. Upon expiration of subscription done during accreditations, renewals are not fort coming until when another accreditation exercises are around the corner. This finding is also

in tandem with that of Olorunfemi and Mostert (2013) who reported that electronic resources are available in some faculties of law in Nigeria but very low. Also studies by Aforo and Lamptey (2012), Anyaogu and Mabawonku (2014) support this finding. Also, availability of information resources has impact on their use. Consequently, the resources are less used by the respondents.

Constraints to use of electronic resources by law lecturers

Constraints to use of electronic resources on law by law lecturers were identified. These constraints were identified by the respondents and, the law librarians during the interview sessions. These constraints in ranked order are absence of sufficient training programme; non-availability of desired electronic resources within the universities. Further, low level of local contents in the electronic information resources; poor ICT skills on the part of law lecturers lack of time due to tight academic and job schedule, lack of publicity on the contents of the available electronic resources by the universities or libraries. Also, unorganised nature and proliferation of electronic resources on law, Paucity of workstations to access electronic resources in the universities and, Irrelevance of contents of electronic resources to local academic needs. These findings were in congruence with that of Radijeng (2007) who, in his study on Demand for Electronic Information at the University of Botswana, reported technical problem, lack of infrastructure, inadequate computer literacy, limited printers and printing opportunities, computer phobia, irrelevancy of contents to local needs, economic problems and, problems associated with electronic resources access. Bhardwaj and Madhusudan (2013) identified the followings as constraints to use of ER: Lack of proper arrangement of legal information resources, poor description on

legal information sources, lack of online help, poor website design, too many login requirements, lack of expertise in using the databases, lack of printing provision, and confusing search screens.

Summary of findings

This study focused on the availability, level of use and constraints to use of electronic resources among law lecturers in Nigeria. Arising from the analyses of the data obtained for the study are the following findings:

- The level of availability of electronic resources for the use of the law lecturers was very low; most of major electronic information resources on law like LexisNexis, Westlaw, Kluwer Arbitration, and I-law are not readily available. They are being subscribed to during accreditation exercises only.
- Use of electronic resources on law among the law lecturers was low. Majority of them reported non-use of the resources.
- Poor use of the available electronic information resources on law were due to low level of availability of the resources, non-availability of desired electronic resources within the universities, absence of sufficient training on the use of electronic resources, Paucity of work stations to access electronic resources within the universities, and low level of local contents among others.
- Relative contributions of the independent variables revealed significant contribution of availability of ICT equipment while skill in ICT application and, ease-of-use were not.

Conclusion

Electronic resources on law abound and are available for use of law lecturers for teaching and research purposes. However, the resources are less available in law faculties of the universities studied due to poor subscriptions hence, they are being less used by the law lecturers. Thus it can be concluded that availability of electronic resources, and some constraints influence their use by law lecturers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- Facilities for electronic information services necessary to access electronic resources should be located within easy reach or the faculties of the lecturers. This will provide easy access for the lecturers thereby encouraging them to exploit the resources.
- Training and re-training programmes are necessary for the law lecturers to improve their skills in using electronic resources. These should be regularly done by the managements of the universities that offer law.
- Basic information literacy skills with emphasis on how to access, retrieve, download and print electronic resources should be regularly organised for the law lecturers. This will sharpen their skills on information searching and utilisation.
- Subscriptions to electronic resources should be regular and should not be during the accreditation exercises only.
- The law libraries should encourage the lecturers to access and use the available electronic resources by creating

enough access points in their electronic libraries, provision of wireless access that can enable the lecturers to access EIR from their offices, and provision of support services to assist in searching for, downloading and printing information; and laptop hire and maintenance services at a little or no cost.

- Electronic resources on law are relatively expensive and rarely available on open source platform. In order to ameliorate the financial burden of subscription and renewal, law libraries can for form a consortium and engage in collective acquisition just like the National Virtual Library being sponsored by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and Tertiary Institution Trust Fund (TETFUND)

- Publicity of the acquired electronic resources and their contents should be ensured by the law librarians. The librarians can employ social networking tools such as Facebook, Google+, MySpace, blogs and Wikis to publicize the resources. More emphasis should be given to the Nigerian contents of the resources.

- Law libraries are crucial to the study of law. They serve and provide for the needs of law lecturers, students and researchers. Hence, law librarians and other members of staff should be adequately trained and sufficiently equipped skills that would enable them to meet electronic information needs of the law lecturers.

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ABSTRACT: Electronic legal information resources are legal documents, concerned with law which requires computer and its accessories to be accessed. Law is a learned profession; judges and other personnel in legal practice, and students rely on information sources such as law reports, legal encyclopaedias, digests, codes, treatises, etc. for their productivity. However, these resources are today available not only in print form but also in electronic form. As such, there are electronic legal information resources. This development has made access to legal information easy; it has reduced the heavy dependence on printed legal information sources, and it has encouraged self-education. This study surveyed the level of availability, use and constraints to use of electronic resources among law lecturers in Nigeria. Five hundred and fifty-two law lecturers were surveyed and four hundred and forty-two responded. Data analysis revealed that the level of availability of electronic resources for the use of the law lecturers was very low; most of major electronic information resource son law like LexisNexis, Westlaw, Kluwer Arbitration, and I-law are not readily available. They are being subscribed to during accreditation exercises only. Use of electronic resources on law among the law lecturers was low. Majority of them reported non-use of the resources. This is due to low level of availability of the resources, non-availability of

desired electronic resources within the universities, absence of sufficient training on the use of electronic resources, paucity of work stations to access electronic resources within the universities, and low level of local contents among others. The study recommended regular subscriptions to electronic resources and provision of basic information literacy skills with emphasis on how to access, retrieve, download and print electronic resources for the law lecturers.

KEYWORDS: Electronic Resources; Use of Electronic resources; Legal Information Sources; Law Lecturers; Faculties of Law-Nigeria.